

# THE GRANITE NEWS



The Granite News - serving the communities of Caveat, Highlands, Hughes Creek, Ruffy, Tarcombe, Terip Terip & Whiteheads Creek.



26th February 2023 | Volume 17 Issue 7

## Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

Up until last Tuesday it seemed as though this summer was going to be fairly low key when it came to bushfires and then, thanks to an angle grinder, the pace picked up considerably as fire raced across the Minto Range at Flowerdale.

Over 50 CFA tankers, including several from the HCCC area, were called out mid-Tuesday afternoon along with numerous water bombing aircraft. Over the last few days in excess of 1,000 hectares have been burnt and although the fire has been contained it's yet to be fully extinguished.



Therefore, it's probably timely for a reminder that the CFA is concerned March will be the month to be wary of due to all the dry grass around, courtesy of those spring rains. So please check the weather forecast before using any equipment that may shed sparks.

Read on for another excellent issue, Pauline  
And Kenny? Was having fun with Vanessa on an HCCC event.

## HUGHES CREEK CATCHMENT COLLABORATIVE

### APRIL FOOLS' PICNIC (no joke!)



Ruffy Recreation Reserve  
@ noon 1st April, 2023



HCCC will host an afternoon of food, fun and frivolity at Ruffy.

There will be activities for all ages and newcomers to the area are especially welcome.

Save the date and join us for a great family day.

Food and refreshments provided.

Feedback? [editor@tgn.org.au](mailto:editor@tgn.org.au)  
or to subscribe on-line go to  
[www.highlands.org.au](http://www.highlands.org.au)

The Granite News is an open but moderated community forum. Readers are encouraged to contribute articles and we also encourage you to air your views on things that interest or concern you within our community. We certainly welcome feedback from you, positive or otherwise on anything that is published in The Granite News

"Go somewhere emails can't."

Anon



## Are you aiming to claim a weed subsidy?

To claim the subsidy HCCC needs the following information -

- A copy of the invoice or receipt for the chemicals
- Address the spray was used
- Approximate area that was sprayed ( Ha )
- Weed type sprayed
- Bank details for payment

Further info or to claim email Neil  
[neil@hccclandcare.net.au](mailto:neil@hccclandcare.net.au)

NB: Fully vaccinated attendees are appreciated at all events.

## What's On - March 2023



**Friday 3rd  
March @ 6pm**

**FIRST FRIDAY of the MONTH BBQ** at Tablelands Community Centre  
It's time to put the FUN back into Friday nights!  
Enquires: 0427 690970 or [tccruffy@gmail.com](mailto:tccruffy@gmail.com)

**Sat.4th & Sun.  
5th March 10-4**

**DARREN GILBERT'S OPEN STUDIO @ YEA BUTTER FACTORY**  
Open first weekend each month - 13 Rattray St, Yea - discover some stunning artwork!

**NB Date  
change  
again!**

**Tuesday 7th  
March @ 11am**

**HIGHLANDS SPINNING CLUB**  
The Highlands Spinning Club will get together in 2023 at the same place - 450 Caveat Dropmore Rd, the same time 11am and with the same good company! BYO lunch and great tea & coffee will be provided.  
**Enquiries? Jan 5790 4361**



**Friday 10th  
March @ 6.30**

**DRINKS on the DECK** @ Highlands Community Hall  
Starts at 6.30pm, bring food to share and catch up with friends old and new. All welcome, especially new faces. Gold coin donation to cover power. **Contact Paula 0419 551882**

**Details?  
See p.6**

**Sunday 12th  
March @ 4pm**

**THE HAIRY LASSOS at their only RUFFY GIG** @ TCC, Ruffy  
Free event. BYO Food & drinks. All Welcome. **Enquiries? Mel 0404 833388**



**Saturday 18th  
March @ 10-12**

**HIGHLANDS BLACK MARKET** @ 94 Old Highlands Rd  
Bring along your excess produce, buy local and learn from each other.  
**Enquiries? Clare 0428 969366**

**Saturday 25th  
March @ 4pm**

**PHIL PARA - LIVE in CONCERT!!** @ Ruffy Recreation Reserve  
BYO picnic, \$20 or \$10 concession - [ruffartztickets@gmail.com](mailto:ruffartztickets@gmail.com) OR 0407 017090



**Sunday 26th  
March @ 10am**

**HIGHLANDS RAMBLERS** @ Highlands Hall  
Everyone is welcome to come rambling and discover our local district.  
**Enquiries? Andrew 0437 249038 or Robyn 0409 528235**

**Thursday 30th  
March 5.30pm**

**SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS** @ Caveat Church  
All people in the district are welcome, pink note (\$5) donation towards BBQ, BYO & chat



**Every Second  
Wednesday  
10.30-12.30**

**MURRINDINDI MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE** at Highlands Community Hall  
The Mobile Library visits the TGN area, based at the Highlands Hall every fortnight. Why not pop in? **Forthcoming dates are March 8th & 22nd.**

**Every Monday  
@ 10am**

**RUFFY QI GONG** has recommenced - EVERY Monday - at 10.00am.

**Every Tuesday  
8.30 - 9.30 am**

**CUSTOM YOGA is BACK with Ingrid** at the Tablelands Community Centre  
\$20 per class BYO mat and blanket **Enquiries? Ingrid [ingstar.7@gmail.com](mailto:ingstar.7@gmail.com)**



## Creative Decluttering - (or just getting rid of stuff)

We all live with stuff we don't want, need or sometimes we don't even like to keep. Why do we keep it, some of us even hoarding it? Where did it all come from?

From ancestors, family or friends; from work or careers or from ourselves – our purchases (often impulse buying), our hobbies or interests or even what often winds up in the giveaway carton (well-meaning birthday and Christmas gifts?).

Don't even start considering clothes, footwear, toys, tools or ancient rusting equipment. Or the thousands, of images on iCloud, hard drives or in our now outdated photo albums.

### Why is it termed Creative Decluttering?

Because, if decluttering is done thoughtfully and not in frustrated despair of leaving it too late (where it heads into the wheelie bin and landfill where it is irretrievable), one may well feel good about the exercise. One feels good that it may be of use and value to others (individuals or organisations).

Such is the case of Sandy MacKenzie delivering numerous boxes of books and reports to the Ruffy Community Centre at the recent AGM of the Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative. Stuff he has bought or acquired over many years of working with agricultural, land & environmental issues from his time at UNE, Marcus Oldham College; when Principal Orange Agricultural College (Charles Sturt Uni), as a member of the House of Representatives standing committee on environment and conservation, as a Board Member of the Goulburn Broken CMA and involvement with Landcare at local, state and national levels.

As he says...

"When one heads into one's eighth decade, one has to face up to the inevitabilities of life on earth. So now compile yet another To Do List but this time call it a MUST DO NOW List after years of procrastination and 'Oh that can wait - I'm just too busy now!'"

So, making a start and handing stuff over to a worthy and admired voluntary local organisation is easy and not one driven by philanthropic zeal or the expectation of recognition but perhaps the reward of just getting it done for a worthwhile cause."

So here endeth the lesson – but checking out one's life expectancy years ([abs.gov.au life – tables](http://abs.gov.au/life-tables)) is a good and usually sobering start! And have good look at the stuff that you may live with and pass by every day."

Other Granite News readers views, experiences and ideas most welcome.



Many thanks Sandy for an amazingly comprehensive addition to HCCCs reference library. Ed.

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## Happenings in the HCCC area - by Vanessa Malandrin

This week I'd like to share with you an overview of the projects that I've been working on during the past year as HCCC project coordinator. And it goes without saying but, I'd better say it out loud anyway, always with the invaluable support of my colleagues Janet Hagen and Neil Van Buuren.

### 1. Assessment and modelling of Soil Carbon profiles in the Hughes Creek catchment in the Hughes Creek Catchment.

The Soil Carbon project, as we call it, was already set up when I started working with Landcare last year in February, but it had been delayed due to Covid. There are three farms involved, where we have done soil testing and where we are still conducting trials: **Looking Glass, Lawsons Farms and Tarcombe Hereford**. It's been a pleasure for me to work with Cam Stewart and Stephanie Reeves, Rob and Tim Hayes, and Les and Callum Lawson. I will write more about it in the future Granite News Issues, and after June 2023 we should be able to share some conclusive results.

The main reason behind this project is that farmers within the Strathbogie Shire have been concerned about the impact of Climate Change upon their farming practices, as the increase in predicted temperature and variable rainfall will bring more risks and uncertainty into food and fibre production.

Our Soil Carbon project is one of the seventeen projects across the Goulburn Broken Region that have been funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program as part of a bigger project, called **From the Ground Up**, working with farmers, industry and community groups to improve farm soil health, native vegetation and biodiversity to boost the region's agricultural productivity and profitability and the natural resource base on which it depends. You can find out more about it from a Factsheet document produced by the GBCMA.

### 2. Promotion of Regenerative agriculture practices in the Hughes Creek Catchment (also known as "Regen Ag")

This project was approved before I joined the HCCC and was successfully concluded in December 2022. It was funded by the Victorian Government through the Victorian Landcare Grants.

As part of this project, we've organised three events: a training day on soil health and two workshops on the theme "Regenerating Rural Landscapes". They all had a high attendance rate (25 participants at least), with both young and mature farmers showing interest in learning a new way to look at their farming practices, and to reintroduce ecology amongst their priorities.

Overall, there was a great interest in the topic, including from professional and lifestyle farmers (across sectors, e.g., viticulture), and service providers from the public sector (e.g. GBCMA, and other Landcare groups).

The three events were hosted on different farms, but all with the same presenter, David Hardwick from **SoilLandFood**, an agroecologist who has worked in rural extension for over 20 years (mostly in NSW and QLD). We're very grateful to all those that have generously offered to open their farm gates to us to make this happen and they are: our former Landcare president Jenny Webb and Rick, 's property, Cam Stewart and Stephanie Reeves from Looking Glass and the Les Lawson's family on Bluetop Rd.

As a result, we now have a mailing list for Regenerative Agriculture which includes over 40 contacts (and still growing!); amongst those there's quite a few farmers that are already implementing some forms of Regenerative Agriculture on their property, and they are willing to both learn more and to share their experience.

Due to the ongoing interest in this topic, I will soon post an update in the next Granite News. I have also attended a seminar that included a very interesting presentation on "Grazing management, soil and animal health" given by Dr Judi Earl, which I will share more about it in the next weeks.

### 3. Whiteheads Creek Bioblitz

Back in mid 2021 I had applied for the position of coordinator for this project; I didn't get it, but funnily enough that interview landed me my coordinator's role at HCCC. Later on, I ended up coordinating the Bioblitz project anyway, as my predecessor moved on to another job. So, I guess, this story can tell us something about fate. Together with a small group of people we have organised and delivered five very successful events in Seymour:

- a talk on fungi with Alison Pouliot;
- a talk on platypus with Geoff Williams;
- a planting day followed by lunch on Whiteheads Creek for National Tree Day;
- a talk on creek ecology with Christine Glassford (GBCMA) and a demonstration with aquatic macroinvertebrates (also known as water bugs!) with John Laing (Goulburn Murray Landcare);
- and a very popular talk on turtles with Graham Stockfeld (Turtles Australia) to conclude with.

The follow-up of this project will be the creation of a Seymour Urban Landcare group, which I'm currently working on.

All this on top of other workshops, courses, and events... No wonder 2022 has been such a busy year! I've enjoyed it thoroughly and I'm ready to do it all again in 2023.

It's my pleasure and honour to be part of this journey with you all.

**Vanessa Malandrin**

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## HCCC Annual Report - Janet Hagen

While Jenny has been leading us into a new digital technology era, I have been delving into the past. Sorting through the nearly forgotten filing cabinet in the Whiteheads Creek Landcare office. Reading handwritten letters and typed, minutes and faded publications about the very beginnings of Landcare.

Lesley, David and I only scratched the surface last week but it was very interesting to see how Landcare has evolved.

The Seymour floods 1977 stimulated local action and Soil Conservation Authority was around to help with erosion control works.

The Whiteheads Creek Landcare group was formed in 1987 and members attended the first ever Landcare conference which included 10 other groups. Glenaroura, Warrenbayne, Boho were also present.

Famous names from the archives are - Jock & Miriam Wallis, Allan Walton, Bruce Radford, Hubert Miller, Michael Kopanica, Peter Wales, Allan Coulson, James Matters, Dick Waite, Betty Rowath, Geoff Halpin. Don Hall, Ron Halicki and David Hayward.

Dry Land Salinity - WHC was regarded as a High Risk Salinity Area. with salt wields of greater than 200kg per ha - the program finished in 2011

Rabbit Action Groups started in 1988. Most of the Hughes Creek Catchment has a rating 1 which means 50 rabbits per hectare.

Keith Threlfall, Tony Nicholas, Doug Lade

The Decade of Landcare started in 1989.

Over the years the State Rivers Authority became GBCMA and the Upper Goulburn implementation Committee was active along waterways.

The Lands Department became DCE, DNRE, DELWP now DEECA.

The Landcare direction shifted to - sustainable land management practices, biodiversity protection, research and education and information sharing... "all Australians working together in partnership for sustainable resource management".

In the 21st century the urgency increases with species extinction & the effects of changing climate. (I will be calling on members to help with planting koala canopies on crown land later this year.)

Many locals still involved and incredibly are here today.

Looking at old photos we were much younger once. Lesley Dalziel, David Freeman, Rob and Jan Hayes, John Curtis and Sandy McKenzie and me.

**Janet Hagen - Facilitator**

## HCCC Report - Neil van Buuren

### Time to reflect and look forward.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the past and look towards the future. As many of you know, I started working with HCCC Landcare in April 2018, and nearly five years later, I am still here. I have said it many times before, and I will say it again: this is the best job I have ever had.

When I first started, I spent two to three years learning about Landcare, getting to know the members, and understanding the operational issues of the organization. During this time, I had the opportunity to work with some amazing people and learn about the incredible work that HCCC Landcare does.

One of the most significant steps that we have taken was securing funding for the facilitators. With that funding period coming to an end, the next step is to secure funding for the next three years.

In the past five years, HCCC Landcare has made significant progress in shifting its focus from rabbit control to sustainable farming and soil health in general. We now have projects on soil carbon and planted more trees.

Looking to the future, we have some exciting plans. We will continue to work towards more sustainable issues, such as soil health, carbon neutral cattle and sheep farming and increasing soil carbon. We will also continue our tree planting efforts and look at the issues around dams and waterways, and change focus from rabbits to deer.

However, we also face some challenges.

We need to innovate the way we operate to make our meetings more informative and reflective of the needs of our members. We need to increase the proportion of younger members and work towards making HCCC Landcare a leading network. We also need to ensure that funding bodies continue to fund us, so we can continue to make a positive impact in our community.

We also need to promote Landcare, who we are and what we do across the whole catchment, and become a truly community organisation, reflecting the needs of the whole community, both farming and non-farming. Your input is vital in developing a strategic plan for the next 3 years.

These have all been a team effort, with the guidance and support from the president, the executive team, and the members.

I would like to take a moment to thank Janet for her help and guidance in welcoming me to the group, and Vanessa for taking on some of the work and bringing in a fresh approach.

In conclusion, I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such an incredible group of people, and I am excited about what the future holds for HCCC. Let's continue to work together to make a positive impact on our community and the environment.

Thank you.

**Neil van Buuren - Facilitator**



**Tablelands  
Community Centre**

27 NOLANS ROAD RUFFY

**FREE  
ENTRY**

**LIVE  
MUSIC**

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SUNDAY 12TH MARCH 4PM

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The Granite News is usually created on the lands of the Taungurung clans - First people of the Rivers and Mountains.



We thank the Taungurung ancestors and elders who, for millennia, have cared for this country on which we now live, work, play and grow.  
 May the current generations of Taungurung, HCCC residents & landowners continue this important custodianship into the future.