

THE GRANITE NEWS



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



19th February 2023 | Volume 17 Issue 6

Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

Last Thursday the Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative held its AGM. Office bearers were elected with a welcome to new executive member Sue van Buuren and a HUGE thank you to Jenny Webb, who is stepping down after doing an amazing job of President over the last 3 years.

The new executive consists of - President - Justus Hagen

Vice - President - Shannon Roach

Secretary - Sue Van Buuren

Treasurer - Neville Ford

HCCC Facilitators - Janet Hagen

Neil van Buuren

Vanessa Malandrin



L to R - Justus, Sue, Neil, Neville, Janet, Vanessa and Jenny

Read on for another excellent issue, Pauline

And Kenny? Was aiming to catch up with his mates on Koala Country.

HCCC President's Report

The last 12 months have seen us emerge from the worst of the Covid pandemic, which so disrupted our lives and curtailed many of our activities and social events. In this last year, it has been reassuring to have been able to resume face-to-face meetings, to run and attend field days, workshops and community gatherings.

In my report last year, I focused on the achievements of the past which are numerous and truly significant. The Hughes' Creek Catchment Collaborative, including each of its individual Landcare groups, has a remarkable list of achievements in pest management, revegetation, endangered species recovery and erosion control, to name just a few. However, as we recover from the pandemic and move to a 'new normal', the focus is to the future.

During this last year, HCCC has recognised new challenges and opportunities. With the threat of climate change and its far-reaching impacts, both globally and locally, we have embarked upon new projects that will help to inform a more sustainable future and also -

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Feedback? editor@tgn.org.au
or to subscribe on-line go to
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

"It was just a day you never forget, but you wish had never happened."

Geoff Robinson - SA fire control officer

Reflecting on the 40th anniversary of Ash Wednesday



Did you know?

On 18/2/2019 the Bramble Cay Melomys, an adorable little rat, that lived on a tiny island off the tip of Queensland was officially declared extinct. The first mammal to go extinct because of climate change. 140 other species have been up-listed or added to the Threatened Species List since the Melomys went extinct in 2019.

NB: Fully vaccinated attendees are appreciated at all events.

What's On - February & March 2023

Details? See p.6	Monday 20th Feb. 3-4.30pm	RUFFY VEGETABLE PATCH & ORCHARD APPRECIATION SOCIETY @ Janet's Come along to the inaugural 'Vegie Patch' meeting. Enquiries? Janet 0458 904268
	Thursday 23rd Feb. @5.30pm	SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS at Caveat Church All people in the district are welcome, pink note (\$5) donation towards a BBQ, BYO & chat
See last TGN	Saturday 25th Feb. 10-12	CONNECTING KOALA COUNTRY at TCC, Ruffy When Ruffy PS existed its mascot was a koala, come along and find out more about them
	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
	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!	Monday 6th 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
See last TGN	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
	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 Feb. 22nd and 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

HCCC President's Report...continued from p.1.

....protect our precious local environment, its ecology and species diversity.

From an agricultural point of view, it's clear that we need to implement farm practices which will lead to more sustainable and resilient agricultural systems. We know that soil health is a key factor in all agricultural production and that elevated levels of soil carbon will increase productivity and provide some protection from prolonged drought events. The HCCC is investigating some of these issues with its Regenerative Agriculture and Soil Carbon projects. There will also be a "Zero Emissions Grazing Systems" workshop later this year. More detail on all of our projects is available on the HCCC website.

We continue to embrace new technologies to reach a wider audience and to attract new members. The timing, location and format of our monthly meetings is currently under review to enable and encourage greater community participation. (Member feedback is always welcome.) Sue van Buuren has developed, and now manages, our new HCCC website. HCCC will subsidise, and benefit from, a new Starlink connection proposed for the Tablelands Community Centre (TCC) in Ruffy.

Neil van Buuren has developed a new weed mapping app. and Janet Hagen is using a similar app. to record local fauna sightings. Neil has purchased a drone which we hope to use in the near future to monitor deer populations, as deer become an increasing problem and threaten our biosecurity. Drones will also allow us to spray weeds (such as blackberries) in inaccessible terrain. Control of pest plants and animals is an ongoing challenge for all of us.

It has been my privilege again this year, to work with such a wonderful support team comprising our HCCC committee members, our tireless TGN editor, Pauline and our amazing facilitators. Working with them has been both rewarding and stimulating as they have all challenged me to broaden my perspective and have brought fresh and innovative ideas to the group. The importance of our facilitators, Janet, Neil and Vanessa, can't be overstated. Their skills in strategic planning, writing grant applications and project oversight are invaluable. Finally, thank you to all our members who have supported Landcare events, attended meetings and contributed to The Granite News.

I have no doubt that 2023 will be another year of successful Landcare projects and events.

Jenny Webb - Emeritus President HCCC

Terip Trivia Night - WINNERS!

Congratulations to the "Hughes Crew" for taking out the 2023 Terip Trivia challenge.

A great night was had by all with lots of friendly rivalry. The nail-biting final double points round saw the "Ruffians" failing to close the gap and the "Young'uns" making a dramatic leap up the ladder. Many thanks to our fabulous quizmaster Frances and her multi-skilled offsider Tim and everyone who attended.



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.



DON'T FORGET!

Now that The Granite News is back for 2023 if you have any events to advertise or anything to buy, swap, sell or give away for free - copy will need to be sent to the editor - editor@tgn.org.au

by the Thursday evening prior to the Sunday publication/distribution.

Vanessa Malandrin

HCCC
Landcare
Project
Co-ordinator



Letter to the Editor

From your new Landcare project coordinator, Vanessa Malandrin

Dear Granite News readers and Landcare members,

It's one year since I've started working with the Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative, and I'd like to say out loud how much I've enjoyed being in this position.

There are many things that I really enjoy about it. First, it comes with a lot of freedom and flexibility, allowing me to manage my own time and work schedule. That can end up being a bit chaotic at times, I admit that, but you've got to love a bit of chaos!

Then, I get the chance to attend all sorts of workshops, field days and courses. For someone that has embraced lifelong learning, this is nothing short of a dream. As a result, last year I went berserk and signed up to all the events that I could fit in the calendar! By December I was a bit tired, but I've thoroughly enjoyed the ride.

In 2023 I'm planning to sober up a bit and dedicate more time to writing regular articles and updates on TGN, so I can share with you all that I have learnt. Now I've said it publicly and this will help me to hold myself accountable!

This position also allowed me to meet and get to know many other like-minded people, starting from my work colleagues and HCCC committee members. Already a great thing on its own, this is even more appreciated given that I have moved to Australia about 7 years ago and I had to rebuild all my networks from scratch. Not an easy thing to do, I can tell you something about it.

Being a new Australian, I must say that I was a bit intimidated when I started this job, as I thought that a Landcare person should know all about Australian agriculture and environment. Clearly that would've been too much to ask from anyone, let alone a newcomer, but that's what I thought! Now I've accepted that I will always be on a very steep learning curve (my choice!), but also that I can contribute with other skills that I have.

Working for Landcare has helped me to connect to this country and its people, so I'm very grateful for this opportunity and very proud to be part of this organisation.

Thank you all for your patience, acceptance, support and friendliness over this first year.

Bird prediction tool takes flight in national science prizes

The Sustainable Farms' team from the Australian National University, are the creators of a powerful tool that helps farmers identify management actions that could support threatened birds on their properties. **This excellent tool has won the 2022 Eureka Prize – NSW Environment & Heritage for Applied Environmental Research.**

These prizes are Australia's most comprehensive and high-profile science awards.

[BirdCast](#), a free web tool developed by the ANU, allows farmers to predict the birds living in woodlands on their farms and helps farmers protect Australia's incredible wildlife and biodiversity.

It enables farmers to predict which birds might use, and live, in woodland areas on their farm, and to understand how the bird species present might change under a range of scenarios, such as planting a new shelterbelt or restoring a degraded patch of remnant woodland.

At a time when many species of plants and animals are threatened by extinction, woodland areas on farms are extremely valuable, providing food and homes for many of these species. Temperate woodlands in south-east Australia cover some 506,000 square kilometres. That's the size of Spain – and most of this area is managed by farmers.

It's important that management of these areas is supported by science to help protect biodiversity and our precious wildlife living that are in ecosystems that are under threat. The **BirdCast** web tool is based on decades of research on 62 different birds, providing farmers and land managers with a wealth of information at the click of a button.



With biodiversity in the woodlands of south-eastern Australia under threat, farmers and land managers can have access to real science to help them make the best decisions for their farm.

BirdCast supports decisions when it comes to managing woodland areas on farms that are better for our birds, better for our land and better for our environment.

Why not check out this invaluable environmental tool for your farm, bush-block or backyard?

From the Strathbogie Shire Council regarding Longwood-Ruffy Road

Road construction works will commence next week in the vicinity of County Creek. The 1.3km work follows on from Stage 1 and is a road reconstruction project that both improves the pavement depth and durability, as well as widening the carriageway by reconstruction of the pavement.

Traffic will still be able to pass through but there will be some delays and we apologise in advance for any inconvenience this may cause.

It is expected that the work will take around two months, weather permitting, but if you have any queries regarding the road work kindly call our **Customer Service team on 1800 065 993.**

The inaugural meeting of the

“Ruffy Vegetable Patch and Orchard Appreciation Society”

hereafter known as “Veggie Club” will be held

Monday 20th Feb 3pm - 4.30pm at Janet Hagen’s place -
214 Weibye Track Ruffy.

Format: Afternoon tea and a walk around the veggie garden. Rotating around to everyone’s places.

Aim: to share the challenges and successes of growing your own food in our area.

Contact Janet if you are interested 0458 904268



STOP PRESS - Bio-diversity Mapping @ Ruffy

Thanks to all those who attended our biodiversity mapping workshop at Ruffy TCC. It was great to see such an enthusiastic group of participants!

If you were unable to attend, you can catch up by downloading the **iNaturalist** app from your App Store (green bird on white background logo - see >>>)



Login and search for a group called Strathbogie Ranges Nature. Join this group. Explore the workings of iNaturalist. View already existing records of local sightings. Have a go at uploading some of your own data. Take photos or a sound recording of local flora and fauna and share your discoveries with the group.

A second workshop is proposed by Sam Strong and Janet Hagen, as a follow up activity, some time after Easter.

A highlight of the morning was finding a family of Tawny Frogmouths on the ash tree in front of the school window. The data collected for these birds was probably 30 entries for the same species in the same local patron!

Janet Hagen



SEYMOUR WIND FARM - Come and meet the Fera team

Fera Australia would like to invite you to an information and community consultation meeting on **Saturday the 25th February at the Ruffy Hall or the Upton Hill CFA**. We are in the initial investigation phase for a wind farm in the Strathbogie Ranges, a project that represents an opportunity for the area to be part of the transition to zero carbon sustainable energy production.

At Fera we place high importance on having an open and honest relationship with the local community and through direct conversations and local meetings we will provide a platform for all community and stakeholders to have input into the project.

This meeting is available to everyone, and we welcome your input. We look forward to seeing you on Saturday 25th February or if you can't make one of the sessions setting up a time to meet in person. Please come along and help us make this a community project with a lasting, positive legacy.

Date and Location:

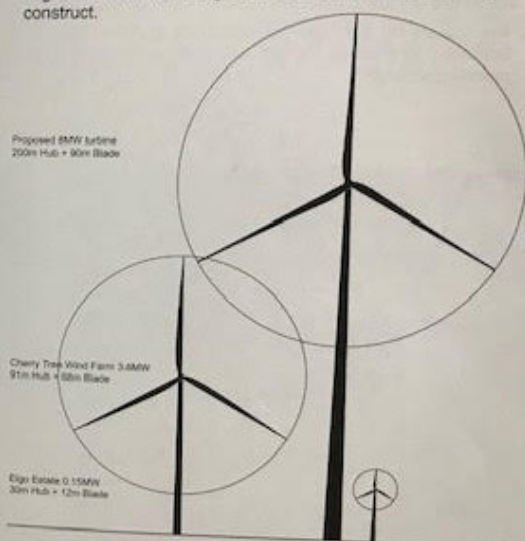
Saturday 25th February, Ruffy Hall (10am - 12pm) & Upton Hill CFA (2pm - 4pm)
Next Meeting: Saturday 20th May, 2023

CONTACT INFO Get involved Phone: 0481 234 229 Email: seymour@feraaustralia.com.au
feraaustralia.com.au



Strathbogies Responsible Renewables Community Group

www.srrcg.com

WHAT IS PROPOSED?	WE KNOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">As published in the Stock and Land (May 2022), a wind farm is proposed to extend between Seymour, Ruffy and Euroa. Referred to as the Seymour Windfarm it will in fact, impact districts across the unique and pristine Strathbogies including Highlands, Caveat, Terip and Tarcombe.It is understood to comprise:<ul style="list-style-type: none">The construction of up to 110 eight-MW turbines with towers potentially up to 150 metres in height and blades up to 80 meters long.The turbines proposed are some of the largest onshore turbines which would dwarf the existing Cherry Tree Wind Farm with tower heights of only 91m.Construction of up to 50km of new high voltage, overhead, Transmission Lines across private and crown land, to connect to the Sydney/Melbourne transmission line in the direction of Yarck or Molesworth.Development of infrastructure including substations, underground cabling, access tracks, concrete batching plants and an operations and maintenance facility.The proponent, FERA Australia, is a 100% foreign owned entity, with no known track record for delivering a project of this scale or scope.It could cost as much as \$100 million to connect the wind farm to the existing power infrastructure, so FERA Australia needs to achieve a minimum viable scale for the Project to be feasible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Project is not within a Renewable Energy Zone designated by Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning.That the Strathbogie Tablelands Region (Strathbogies) is not a high value wind resource.The Project is unlikely the highest and best use of land in this region. If approved, the project will require significant amounts of vegetation removal and ground disturbance across the region to construct.  <p>Proposed 8MW turbine 200m Hub + 90m Blade</p> <p>Cherry Tree Wind Farm 3.6MW 91m Hub + 50m Blade</p> <p>Ego Estate 0.15MW 30m Hub + 12m Blade</p>

<p>HABBIES HOWE BEEF</p> <p>MATURE, WELL HUNG & AVAILABLE</p> <p>IGA SEYMOUR GARY'S MEATS, PRAHRAN MARKET L&L MEATS, BENTLEIGH</p> <p>SCOTCH AND FILLET ST HELENA, MENTONE & MERNDA</p>	<p>Donated by supporters of the endangered Hairy Hop bush</p> 	<p>Chris Sharman Energy Efficiency & Solar Energy Specialist</p> <p>Acme – Air Conditioning Electrical Solar</p> <p>M: 0418 551 301 T: Office - 9785 7339 E: chris@acmeair.com.au</p>	 <p>Darren Gilbert open studio @ Yea Butter Factory</p> <p>Open every first weekend of the month Up to date Open Studio days & times on www.monkeytaildesign.com</p>
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 <p>Cr John Walsh Koriella Ward Murrindindi Shire Council jwalsh@murrindindi.vic.gov.au</p> <p>0437 835 586</p>	<p>Tablelands Community Centre Upgraded facilities & playground Ideal for Private or Community gatherings Meetings, Workshops Very reasonable rates Hosts 1st Friday BBQs Contact tccruffy@gmail.com Ph 0404 833 388</p>	 <p>For All your Aerial Spraying or Spreading Needs. Specialising in Blackberries, Broadleaf, Thistles, Spreading lime/fertilizer & More</p> <p>Call 0484108854 48 Magills Lane Maidample 3723</p> 	<p>Donated by supporters of our local koala population</p> 
<p>Donation from supporters of the Eastern Small-eyed Snake</p> 	<p>HIGHLANDS GROVE</p> <p>Australian, family owned local producers of premium cold pressed extra virgin olive oil, made for your goodness and enjoyment.</p> <p>0417 018 070 enquiries@highlandsgrove.com.au highlandsgrove.com.au</p>	<p>HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY HALL Meeting Room and/or Hall available for hire</p> <p>MEETINGS FUNCTIONS WORKSHOPS PARTIES WEDDINGS</p> <p>Reasonable rates Contact Paula Lade 0419 551 882</p>	<p>Donated by friends of the Long Leafed Box Trees</p> 
<p>Echidnas take care of their habitat</p> 	<p>I'm now RESERVED for 2023</p> <p>Email the Editor if you would like to be too</p> <p>editor@tgn.org.au</p>	<p>Need a website? bluetopbiz.com.au Affordable web design & maintenance. Presentations, marketing copy. Grant applications, project management. Call</p> <p>Sue 0411 010 379 Neil 0417 503 472</p> <p>Email: sue@bluetopbiz.com.au</p>	 <p>Strathbogrie Granite Project neil.phillips@bigpond.com</p>

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, residents and landowners continue this important custodianship into the future.