

THE GRANITE NEWS



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



22nd March 2026 | Volume 20 Issue 30

Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

I never cease to be amazed at the incredible generosity, community spirit and commitment that seems to ensue after any natural disasters that occur - be they flood, fire or drought. People wanting to "help out" other people, unknown to them, who have just had their lives changed irrevocably.

And I'm not just referring to all the dedicated and committed locals who have done such a sterling job organising the hubs and offering assistance in so many different ways during the last few months, I'm actually thinking of an unexpected phone call I received a week after the firestorm in January.

It was from one of the ladies who has attended most of the UFO (UnFinished Objects) craft weekends that I have hosted at the Highlands Hall for 2 decades and the conversation went something like this...

"Hi it's Doreen, my quilting group (North of the Yarra - NOTY quilters) want to make some quilts for everyone up there. How many do you need?" No idea - but with such a definite, unsolicited offer one really couldn't say no.

So last Sunday I met Doreen in the Bunnings' car park in Mernda and approx. 50 quilts were transferred to my car and last Wed/Thurs I had the joy of, in some cases, home delivering these quilts to their new owners. It was a privilege to do so and I hope that they keep their new owners 'wrapped in love' for many years to come.



The goodwill towards those who have lost so much also came from a couple of other sources too - the Stitchin' Sisters from Hill End in Gippsland and my wonderful friend Alison from Poowong who, along with Lorelei and Julie also contributed some quilting gems. (See Bernie's early birthday present above)

If any readers feel as though they have missed out on these generous gifts, NOTY has already donated 86 quilts to the Strathbogie Shire, so you may already have one, however I also understand that more will be forthcoming.

If you know of someone who needs to be kept in the loop but isn't a TGN reader please tell them to sign up at pdphroberts@gmail.com
The editor@tgn.org.au email is still dysfunctional.

Kia kara,
Pauline



Feedback?

pdphroberts@gmail.com or to
subscribe on-line go to
www.hccclandcare.net.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

"Three out of four voices in my head want to sleep. The other one wants to know if penguins have knees."

Anon



Happily meeting Doreen in the Bunnings' car park in Mernda

		What's On - March & April 2026
Details? See p.5	Thursday 26 th March 5.30 >>	LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AND OTHERS @ Highlands Hall/Hub Guest speaker: Dr Rob Gordon, with nearly 40 years' experience helping communities recover after trauma. A relaxed and supportive session to learn, connect, and share with others. Light refreshments and opportunity to chat after the session.
	Thursday 26 th Mar. @ 5.30pm	SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS @ Michael K's 890 Caveat-Dropmore Rd All people in the district are welcome, pink note (\$5) donation towards BBQ, BYO & chat.
Details? See p.5	Sat.28 th & Sun. 29 th March	HELP NEEDED @ ANTCLIFF'S CHASE WINERY to harvest the crop.
NOTE changes	Saturday 28 th March @ 7pm	HIGHLANDS BOOK GROUP @ Robyn & Richard's, 3003 Highlands Rd Come along to share your favourite reads and to enjoy a little slice of normality.
	Saturday 28 th March @ 8.30pm	EARTH HOUR DAY - 20th Anniversary of this event, created by World Wildlife Fund Why not join in by switching off non-necessary lights for one hour - 8.30-9.30pm!
Details? See p.5	Sunday 29 th March 9-1	RECOVERY ON THE HILL @ Upton Hill Fire Station Community connection meeting - everyone is invited - where to from here?
	Sunday 29 th March @ 10	HIGHLANDS RAMBLERS meeting @ Highlands Community Hall Everyone is welcome to come and explore our still stunning local area. Supported by HCCC Enquiries? Andrew 0437 249038 or Robyn 0409 528235
Details? See p.9	Friday 3 rd April @ 12.30	RUFFY CFA & ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FUNDRAISER @ Ruffy CFA Shed It's on again - the famous Fish'n'chips Lunch. Easter egg hunt and more.
	Friday 10 th April @ 6pm	DRINKS on the DECK @ Highlands Hall/Hub YAY - it's back! Bring along finger food to share and enjoy the company of friends.
	Tues., Thurs. & Fridays	PRIMARY CARE CONNECT @ Tablelands Fire Recovery Hub
	Fridays 10am - 2pm	YEA & DISTRICT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES @ Highlands Consultations on the following dates - March 27 th
	Sundays @ 11am	CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY GATHERING @ 44 Yorston Rd, Highlands This is a non-denominational meeting, Everyone is welcome to this calm, compassionate and open environment. Tea, coffee & lunch provided. Enquires? John - 0425 840999
NB new dates!	Every Second Wednesday 10-30-12.30	MURRINDINDI MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE @ Highlands Community Hall The Mobile Library visits the TGN area, based at the Highlands Hall every fortnight. Why not pop in? Forthcoming dates 1st, 15th & 29th April and 13th & 27th May.

Welcoming another wee wonder into the world



So many Highlands' locals will either know of or have met Andrea at the Highlands Hall/Hub, over the last few months as she has spent just about every waking hour there ensuring that everything offered runs smoothly..... BUT last Wednesday she managed to escape as her newest grandchild arrived announcing

Beautiful **Adeline Leigh Whitaker**
6lb 10oz @ 10am on March 13th
her mummy's birthday.
Congratulations to all.



Boring as.... ?

Whoever termed the saying, "it's as boring as watching grass grow" hadn't experienced the aftermath of a bushfire and a crusty, sepia toned landscape. We've really welcomed the February rain that has prompted us to literally watch the grass grow in anticipation, competing with bingeing the latest series of Professor T.

Following several informative Ag. Vic sessions and visits around the fire impacted areas last month, 10 monitoring plots have been set up on one severely burnt farm around Highlands to gauge pasture change over time: different paddocks, different burn intensities across different locations on slopes and different times of impact.



Pasture species being monitored include Phalaris, Clover, Rye, Cocksfoot and Weeping Grass- alongside the proportion of bare ground/weed germination.

These photo points will be checked weekly over the next month, with images sent to Agriculture Victoria's Greg Bekker. Greg is looking to compare a range of pasture species, soil fertility and landclass areas to better understand the impacts of fire on pastures.



This will help to provide ongoing information and pasture management options post fires.

SAVE THE DATE

Threads Together is returning - Thursday 23rd April @ from 1-2.30pm @ the Highlands Hall/Hub - brand new clothing!

NB: The Hub isn't open on Thursdays but the truck will still be there.

Nature needs our help to survive

The Trust for Nature is providing habitat pods at covenanted sites for native fauna following the bushfires. These biodegradable 'tents' are installed in protected areas to help provide temporary shelter from prey, such as foxes and cats, and bad weather.

Three wetland covenants at "Dropmore" now host some of these lightweight but durable pods in the hope that any surviving or returning animals can find shelter as they move or feed in the burnt areas. All the covenants were moderately to severely impacted by the fires. Large, old trees were badly burnt, dramatically reducing the number of hollows and ground-storey shelter. The habitat pods will provide a little bit more protection provided by regrowing plants such as the Common reed, Common Tussock Grasses and Woolly Ti-Tree.

Trail cameras have been set up to monitor potential visitors. While the habitat pods are undoubtedly valuable short-term, a more widespread and accessible resource to use are scattered fallen logs and branches. By leaving some on the ground, we can provide support for native animals after such widespread habitat losses, because predators can easily kill in open ground.

If you listen carefully, small woodland birds can be heard using the network of fallen branches to move and feed safely on insects and seed pods. As more native animals emerge, they will also need the network of fallen timber, using the bark and hollows for shelter and safe passage across our landscape. Roadsides and creeks form part of this critical network for our non-human residents to safely move into less fire affected refuges and other areas regenerating after the fire.

Sam Strong





Looking after yourself and others after the fires

Thursday 26 March 2026

Highlands Hall, 1603 Ghin Ghin Road

Dinner at 5.30 pm, talk from 7.00 pm

The Highlands community and Murrindindi Shire Council are hosting a recovery session to support those affected by the recent bushfires.

Join us to hear from Dr Rob Gordon, who has nearly 40 years' experience helping communities recover after trauma. He'll talk about common emotional responses and share practical strategies to support your wellbeing and those around you.

This will be a relaxed, supportive session — a chance to learn, connect, and share with others.

Come along for dinner at 5.30 pm before the presentation, with light refreshments and a chat afterwards.



Call 5772 0333, scan the QR code or visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/lookingafteryourselfhighlands

Letter to the Editor

Hi Pauline, a word of warning....

I went to put some diesel fuel in the tractor and the big overhead tank was empty. I checked it after the fire and estimated there to be six or seven hundred litres in it. There was no diesel smell around the tank so a leak was unlikely.

Reported it to our local community and the police and learned that there had been reports of fuel theft a couple of weeks ago. There are scum and there are ultra scum.

My fuel nozzle was padlocked and had not been damaged. I figured they used the bulk fill nozzle which the tanker connects to.

Regards,
John

**** A timely message to remember to look out for each other and maybe do a spot of Neighbourhood Watch. Ed.**

Antcliff's Chase - Help please

We are asking for some help to pick our grapes this year.

We will be picking on Sat. 28th & Sun. 29th March

The grapes will be tainted with smoke, however Wine Australia requires a small amount to do trials with, and to experiment with different methods, to see if the taint can be extracted.

Any help will be welcome. Come for one hour or come for longer, it doesn't matter.

Please bring a 20 litre bucket, grape snips (secateurs if no snips) and gloves.

Food all weekend

Please give Chris a call if you would like to help, or if you have any questions **0487 037501**

Many thanks for considering.

Recovery on the Hill
Longwood East - Longwood - Locksley - Upton Hill - Avenel

Community connection morning

Let's talk about how to progress our communities recovery. Where to from here?

Sometimes the best thing we can do is come together-share a meal, catch up and check in on our neighbours

When: Sunday 29 March 2026
Where: Upton Hill Fire Station
1475 Upton Rd, Upton Hill
Time: 9am till 11am

Join us for breakfast and a coffee

RSVP by 25 March 2026
recoveryonthehill2026@gmail.com
or just drop in for a coffee

Everyone in the community is invited

**** HIGHLANDS ****

The Hub @ the Highlands Hall is open Mon, Wed & Fri 10am to 3pm & Sat 9-12

1603 Ghin Ghin Road, HIGHLANDS VIC 3660

Email: thehighlandshub2026@gmail.com

- **Thursday March 26th from 5:30pm** - Murrindindi Shire is providing a community dinner followed by Dr Rob Gordon presenting "Looking after yourself and others after the fires". Join us to hear from Dr Rob Gordon, who has nearly 40 years' experience helping communities recover after trauma. He'll talk about common emotional responses and share practical strategies to support your wellbeing and those around you. This will be a relaxed, supportive session — a chance to learn, connect, and share with others. A light supper and time for a chat will follow.
- **Items for loan:** The Highlands Hub has the below items to loan for our residents:
 - Mitre Saws
 - Chainsaws
 - Steel post puller
 - Steel post rammer
 - Wire wheel
 - Cordless angle grinder
 - Compressors
 - Ramset cordless drill
 - Metal detector



Items available at the Hub:

- We have a dozen or so wheely bins **FOR FREE**. First in best dressed.
- We now have a washer and dryer at the hall thanks to the lovely people from Rotary. See the volunteers at the hub and we'll give you a tour!
- Winter Clothing; work boots, runners
- Frozen Meals
- Groceries
- Drinking water in IBCs with containers
- Plants

Please note - the Mobile library is back to its original schedule at the Highlands Hall (fortnightly)

***** Printed copies of TGN are now available from the box beside the notice board outside the hub *****

Contact: Andrea Bauer 0417 369 225 - now heard every Monday on UGFM @ 11.30 Tune in for Hub news



With the fire recovery well under way the Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative (HCCC) is seeking feedback from landholders as to what they need from a Landcare perspective into the future.

If any readers have any ideas, suggestions or queries please email

janet@hccclandcare.net.au

or

neil@hccclandcare.net.au





**** RUFFY & TERIP ****



The Tablelands Hub has this week begun to reduce the amount of days that meals are available. Days where no formal meal is provided will have frozen meals or toasty sandwiches available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. On other days Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays we will have lunch and dinners available. This is only possible by the generous donations and hundreds of volunteer hours that have supported our local community.

Services from Primary Care Connect, Family Care, GV Health Mental Health clinicians, Mental Health Wellbeing Local and more are available several days a week at the Hub. All are welcome to drop in and connect on matters that they may be able to assist you with. The Tablelands Hub is for all, everyone is welcome.

A very successful International Women's Day gathering on March 9th was held, with over 70 women and girls enjoying an amazing afternoon of relaxation and friendship. The Mansfield ladies provided pampering in the MASH tent. Generous donations were from Quanta's, DHL, Burtons, Flowers by Holly, Big W, local wineries and many more. A really lovely day.



The Need for Feed hay run was successful also on Sunday 8th March with over 2000 rolls of hay delivered across the Tablelands and over 220 attending the dinner on the Sunday evening.



A very successful small field day was held on the property of Don and Flic of Ruffy with Ag Vic, Ag BIZ Assist, Valley Seeds, and GBCMA.

Finally, March 13th saw a community recovery session held at the Ruffy Hall. This meeting was the start for the process of community recovery considerations and will assist with the planning for any future community decisions. Almost 100 locals attended session 1 of this community recovery process that will guide the recovery over the coming weeks, months and years ahead. Anne Leadbeater OAM facilitated the session which was supported by Strathbogie Shire.



New oven at the Hall

Donated By Powells Kitchens of Shepparton installed by Tim Scholz Plumbing Jake Kyle from JMK Electrical Solutions it is a most generous donation and we look forward to using it as community.



Strathbogie Fire Recovery Meeting @ Ruffy

On Friday 13th March there was a community conversation session held with the Ruffy residents and there was a request to include a summary in the Granite news - see below.

What has stood out most to you in the past 9 weeks?

The following key themes emerged about what has stood out most for people since the fires:

1. Strong community kindness and support.

Many people spoke about the generosity, kindness and willingness of people to support each other. Community spaces, shared meals and informal conversations have helped people stay connected and supported.

"How the community has come together with each other in support and solidarity."

"Everyone supporting each other."

"Kindness of people who want to help."

"Community cohesion and spirit."

2. Locals stepping up and volunteering

People recognised the significant effort from locals and volunteers who have helped organise support and look after one another over an extended period.

"Locals stepping up & creating support systems."

"The volunteer effort over a long period of time."

"The 'hub crew' and the work they have done in setting up and running the depot and the hall resource centre."

3. The scale of impact and the hard work of recovery

Many people reflected on the scale of loss and the ongoing physical and emotional effort required to recover.

"The extent of the impact/losses."

"Hard work day after day."

"From the moment I get out of bed till I can't stand up any more."

"How to get back on track with all things that we lost."

4. Challenges navigating recovery and rebuilding

People raised concerns about the cost of rebuilding and the difficulty of navigating systems and asking for help.

"Costs of re-building."

"How you have to ask for help."

5. Environmental change and recovery of the landscape

People also noted the visible impact of the fire on the landscape and the gradual signs of recovery.

"Roadside tree damage – landscape changes."

"Moving around – environment change."

"The re-growth of plants."

6. Frustration with systems, support and communication

Some comments reflected frustration with government systems, questions about funding and perceptions of fairness in the distribution of support.

"Disparity in sharing resources."

"Where's \$90 million of government funds being spent?"

"How poorly prepared our local, state & federal governments are for helping in a disaster."

"Compared to Kinglake no army help to clean up."

Overall reflection

Overall, what stood out most for people was the extraordinary strength of the community, particularly the kindness, volunteering and people supporting each other. At the same time, many people are feeling the ongoing strain of recovery, navigating complex systems and rebuilding their lives after significant loss.

NB: If you are struggling with the overwhelming issues impacting a normal life since the fires don't forget that Dr Robert Gordon, who has nearly 40 years of helping communities recover after trauma, will be speaking at Highlands Hall/Hub this coming Thursday. See What's on calendar for more details. Ed.

Ruffy CFA and Royal Children's
Hospital Good Friday Appeal
supported by
Seymour Central Church

Fish n chips lunch



Good Friday, April 3rd 2026
at 12.30pm at Ruffy CFA,
1 Nolans Rd Ruffy



*Jumping castle, Easter Egg Hunt, raffles
and other fun activities.*



We would appreciate
your RSVP
via trybooking to assist
us with catering.



See you there!

PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

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power of
humanity



This interactive training covers the key principles of Psychological First Aid (PFA), using discussion and practical activities to build confidence in supporting others while also looking after your own wellbeing. Training follows internationally recognised WHO Psychological First Aid guidelines.

Book your spot
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Learn practical skills
to support people
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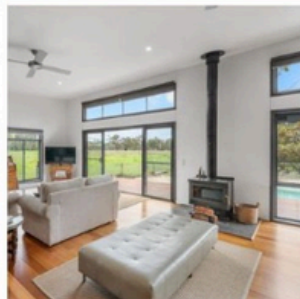
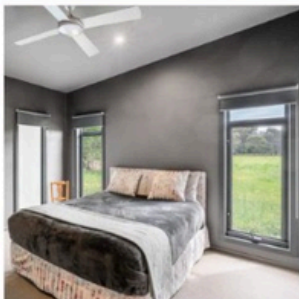


**Sunday
12th April 2026**

🕒 10:00 am – 3:30 pm (4.5 hours
including breaks)

- 📍 In person at Ruffy Hall garden
- Delivered by two experienced facilitators

Maximum of 25 places available



Enjoy the perfect blend of country charm and town convenience with this beautifully positioned home looking out to clear sky and green paddocks.

Within walking distance to: primary school (3 min), pre-school (1 min), and all local amenities. This property offers the peace and spaciousness of rural living while keeping everything you need within easy reach.

- **3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, double lock-up garage**

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\$765.000 to \$795.000

1A Jones Street, Avenel, or contact Merrill on 0438 678 323
to arrange your private inspection.



Foundation Murrindindi

For a community-led future

Foundation Murrindindi is an independent charitable community foundation.

Our purpose is to make a positive impact and create a strong and vibrant future for all communities across the Shire of Murrindindi.

For over ten years, we have supported community-led projects through grants, sponsorships and programs.

In response to the recent bushfires, Foundation Murrindindi has launched the **Murrindindi Disaster Fund**

to support affected communities within Murrindindi Shire. This fund will provide practical immediate assistance as well as supporting the medium to long-term recovery.

Every contribution, no matter what the size, helps ensure support can reach those who need it most in our local community.

100% of the funds donated to the **Murrindindi Disaster Fund** will be used for fire recovery purposes. Foundation Murrindindi will not be taking an administration fee.

For more information and to donate, please visit our website

www.foundationmurrindindi.org.au

EXECUTIVE OFFICER Robyn Hill

EMAIL Robyn@foundationmurrindindi.org.au

WEBSITE www.foundationmurrindindi.org.au



FREE to Good Home(s)

- Fold-away baby cot
- Baby potty
- Car baby seat
- TV Lowboy - long & solid (unfortunately very heavy)
- Samsung 40" TV with remote control (no stand)
- Large coconut palm timber table with 6 leather chairs on castors (table also very heavy)
- Timber liquor / crystal cabinet with double doors and mirror backing with glass shelves (also very heavy)



Interested? **Ring Dianne 0429 977 485** - situated on Highlands Rd

- Might pay to bring along a friend for any removal of the above as heavy loads need to be shared to avoid future back problems. **Ed**

Feast with the Fantails
Eat with the Egrets

Munch with the Magpies

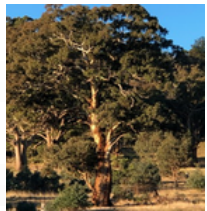
Breakfast with the Birds

Guided walk
Saturday, 28th March 2026
7:30 – 9:00 am (binoculars will be useful)
Yea Wetlands Discovery Centre

Light breakfast from 9:00am
Cost = \$25 family, \$15pp
Proceeds will go to the Yea Wetlands Nestbox Project

RSVP is essential on <https://www.trybooking.com/DKINP>
or at the Yea Wetlands Discovery Centre desk, 2 Hood Street, Yea



HABBIES HOWE BEEF Mature, Well Hung and Available from: Victory Meats, Seymour Victory Meats, Broadford Scotch and Fillet, St Helena Scotch and Fillet, Mentone	 Donated by supporters of the magnificent King Parrots.	DE MARIA & ASSOCIATES Barristers & Solicitors Family Law Conveyancing Power of Attorney & Wills Estate Disputes Deceased Estates ☎ 03 9717 5277 Level 1, Suite 111 95 Hazel Glen Drive, Doreen Vic 3754 Justice@demariaandassociates.com.au	 Donated by Friends of Yellow Box (Eucalyptus Meliodora)
RURAL FENCING SERVICES JARRAD ☎ 0409 082 257	"A new name but the same friendly staff at Seymour" Join our Loyalty card program & save IF YOU WANT IT - WE'VE GOT IT - Animal Nutrition, Health & Feed Supplies - Pasture, Seeds, Weed/Pest Control & Fertiliser - Feed Testing - Pet Food & Accessories - Equine Supplies - Water Troughs, Poly Pipe & Fittings - Fencing & Livestock Handling Glenn: 0439 990 480 Store: 03 5792 1088 Email: seymour@wbhunter.com.au HUNTERS TRADE • RURAL • HARDWARE	Brought to you by a little antechinus living in a hollow near you. 	BenCo PLUMBING SERVICES Ben Laycock 0438 512299 Licence no. 105134 ben@bencoplumbingservices.com.au bencoplumbingservices.com
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Murrindindi Shire Council Cr Paul Hildebrand Koriella Ward phildebrand@murrindindi.vic.gov.au 0428 758 617	Bushfire Casualty	KCK David & John (partners) KOSBYOVN CONTRACTING & KELPIES SINCE 2024 For all your livestock needs (sheep, cattle, spot spraying) No job to big or small. Competitive pricing. Please contact David on 0417 150113	Donated by supporters of our local koala population 
Donation from supporters of our local Platypus 	Bushfire Casualty	HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY HALL Meeting Room and/or Hall available for hire MEETINGS FUNCTIONS WORKSHOPS PARTIES WEDDINGS Reasonable Rates Contact Paula Lade 0419 551 882	Donated by friends of the Long Leafed Box Trees 
Echidnas take care of their habitat 	Granite Hills Community Nursery  www.granitehillsnursery.com.au	Need a website? bluetopbiz.com.au Affordable web design & maintenance. Presentations, marketing copy, grant applications, project management. Call Sue 0411 010 379 Neil 0417 503 472 Email: sue@bluetopbiz.com.au	ROGAINING • 50th Anniversary •  Tallarook 2026



The Granite News is widely distributed 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. May the current generations of Taungurung, HCCC residents & landowners continue this important custodianship into the future.