

THE GRANITE NEWS



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



15th March 2026 | Volume 20 Issue 29

Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

Sometimes good news comes in multiples as the following 2 letters to the editor highlight -

Dear Pauline,
Guests at our place over last weekend were delighted to see the regrowth on the blackened trees.
The drawing called 'Regrowth' is by Piper Fitzroy-Kelly Age 12. Pencil & a keen eye.
Thanks
Robyn



And then the next letter arrived with a photo, that displays a similarly blackened trunk but with a different form of 'regrowth'.

Hi Pauline
We have a bush block on Moores Rd at Caveat and like many, unfortunately had the fire destroy everything on the land. We feel lucky it's not our home unlike many others.
Thank you for all the information you have been sharing in the Granite News, it's been really helpful.



We wanted to share this photo we took on Friday when we were at our block ... a little positive... we have only seen a koala once before in the 5 years we've had the block and it was way up the top of a manna gum so very hard to see ... this gorgeous one was only 10m from the ground so we were delighted to see him safe.

Regards
Elizabeth & Allen

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

"We can forget it is OK to have fun and it is OK to take time for yourself - you need to be able to look after yourself to be able to look after others."

Harley Windsor
Australian Winter Olympic pair skater



Koalas - Did you know?

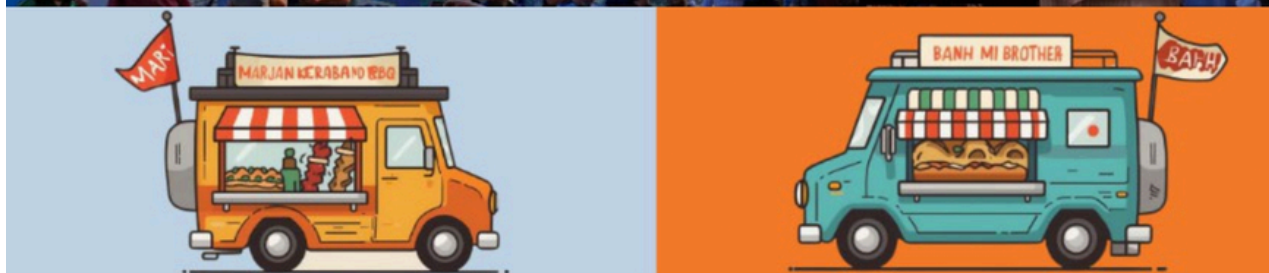
What do koalas eat?

Answer - a koala's primary food source - Eucalyptus leaves

Koalas are well known for their fussy eating habits, dining almost exclusively on the leaves of various eucalyptus species.

The koalas' reliance on eucalypts for food and shelter is a very good reason to protect Australia's forests

		What's On - March & April 2026
Details? See p.3	Wed. 18 th March 5.30-8	COMMUNITY DINNER - FREE FOOD TRUCKS, MUSIC, etc @ Highlands Hall/Hub Everyone is welcome - Special speaker - The Unbreakable Farmer - Warren Davise
	Wed. 18 th March @ 7.30	HUGHES CREEK CATCHMENT COLLABORATIVE MONTHLY MEETING Everyone is welcome to attend @ Whiteheads Creek Hall
Details? See p.4	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.
	Saturday 28 th March @ 7pm	HIGHLANDS BOOK GROUP @ Gayle & Bill's 157 Old 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
	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 20 th and 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? Possible forthcoming dates 18th March and 1st & 15th April



Community Dinner

Free Food Trucks, Music and Guest Speaker

Wednesday 18 March, 5.30 - 8pm

Highlands Community Hall

1603 Ghin Ghin Road, Highlands

Join our Mitchell and Murrindindi communities for a dinner at Highlands Community Hall. Come and enjoy Bahn Mi Brothers and Marjan Kebab food trucks and Matt Mogan Music.

The Unbreakable Farmer, Warren Davies, one of Australia's leading mental health speakers will chat about resilience, wellbeing and life under pressure after the recent fires.

Contact us

t. (03) 5734 6200 e. mitchell@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au
www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au





Murrindindi
Shire Council



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



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

- **Wednesday March 18th from 5:30pm** - Mitchell is providing a community dinner at the Hub
- **Thursday March 26th from 5:30pm** - Murrindindi 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.
- **Tip & Waste Update**
Yea Tip is operating under normal hours - **Tuesday 10-4, Saturday 9-4 and Sunday 9-3**
If you can't attend during these times, contact: Michael Hill – Team Leader, Resource Recovery
0408 185 196 (Appointments subject to staff availability)
Yea Resource Recovery Centre accepts: Metal loads (any size)
General waste up to 3m²
Loads over 3m² must be booked at Alexandra Landfill prior to arrival.
Contact: Kris Sawyer – Waste Management Supervisor 0408 286 838
Peter Elward – Waste Management Supervisor 0417 683 492

NB: Tip fees are waived until May 12th 2026

- **Are you registered for a Property Clean-up?**
vic.gov.au/register-for-clean-up or call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on **1800 560 760**.
- **Blaze Aid:** <https://blazeaid.com.au/registering-for-help>
- **HUBBINGS** - the Highlands Hub version of Bunnings!!
Many thanks to Deb and Kev for the donation of various building and hardware materials.
Make an appointment with **John Rogers on 0478 221 311** or thehighlandshub2026@gmail.com
and he will be happy to assist you with any items you may need or answer any questions.

Items available at the Hub:

- Wheelie Bins - 120 and 240 litres
- Winter Clothing; work boots, runners
- Frozen Meals
- Groceries
- Drinking water in IBCs with containers
- Tools
- Plants

***** 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



Signs of Life are promising

A recent walk downstream from the Boathole, Ruffy, showed welcome signs of recovery.

While it's hard to see our precious places that we love after a fire, being present, with a group of like-minded souls, allowed us the opportunity to observe, marvel and celebrate incremental change. Epicormic growth on trees, native grasses and sedges sprouting, pockets within the spring soaks that retain thickets of vegetation – burnt at the edges but not in their damp centre. A few dense shrubs remained unburnt in the creek bed, a haven for small birds to flit from and around. Sorrel, a fast responder, opportunistically making the most of bare soil in the paddock and bolting fast. Meek, unremarkable mosses on granite boulders, soaked overland water like a sponge, and with the sedges and Common Reed, sediment was trapped.

Little erosion was evident from recent rains, despite the downpour and exposed soils. Wattles and peas weren't observed in abundance, but I'm sure they are poised and not far away from germinating. Our creeks, rivers and spring soaks are the lifeblood of Country. Local creeks like Hughes Creek and Crystal Brook show signs of burning less intensely in parts, and plants are responding rapidly to recent rain and increased water flow.

What of the wildlife? Who is out and about?

Our first encounter in the paddock was an echidna, snuffling for ants. Birds of prey, while not observed, have been noticed by many to be busy since the fires. When conducting cool burns there is always a Wedge Tailed Eagle on patrol. The bird telegraph is quick to respond and eagles, kites and falcons zoom to the fire ground. It's easy picking through the dead, but there is also little cover to hide after a fire. Lizards, snakes, mice and small birds are all vulnerable with little habitat available on the ground or in the shrubs.

Larger birds, like magpies, kookaburras and coughts return quickly. They are robust and their sharp beaks mean they are hard to argue with. They are also meat and carrion eaters and are happy enough in open farmland.

Parrots will move around the landscape following food. They are seed eaters – larger parrots tackling She Oak and Eucalypt fruits with tough beaks designed for cracking. Smaller grass parrots will be waiting for spring and grass seed flowering again. It's unlikely we will see them for a while.

Following the Hughes Creek downstream, we were thrilled to hear bird song. Lots of busy action across the water, just enough trees and shrubs to zip into and hide should a predatory bird be about, and tricky to access for a fox. Janet's eagle eyes and sharp ears detected Rufous Whistlers and Grey Fantails.

Invertebrates hatching from the water or insects coming to lay eggs were being rapidly snatched from the air. These little birds, zippy and nimble, had found a ready food source. Given enough shrub cover and a return of insects, these little insectivorous birds will spread beyond their creek environment. They are wary creatures, moving across open country, with 20 – 40 metres being their limit. Creating wide corridors or 'nodes' of vegetation with deep protective plant cover and prickly dense shrubs provides perfect habitat. Keep watch for these birds, finches and wrens – they will let you know when their habitat is just right.

Continued on next page....





**** RUFFY & TERIP ****

Tablelands, Tucker and Timings at the Ruffy Hub



- **Primary Care Connect**

Primary Care Connect: attend the Tablelands Fire Recovery Hub on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Signs of Life are promising....continued from previous page

Absent at this stage are the little honeyeaters, finches and wrens. These little fellas are the most vulnerable and not much of their food resources remain in burnt country at the moment. A handful of grevilleas or shrubs in a garden aren't enough for them to thrive. Watch for the Blue Wrens, they are quick to move in when the shrubs begin to grow. Planting prickly, dense shrubs offer good cover and room to hide if you are a little bird. Be mindful of too many nectar producing shrubs. Often this attracts the bullying Wattle Birds or Noisy Miners. They can dominate and drive out smaller birds.

Find a friend, take a walk, be curious and prepare to be amazed at nature's resilience.

Cath Olive - Euroa Arboretum

Letter to the Editor

Hi Pauline,

I thought I had better let the Highlands/Ruffy/Caveat area know - through the Grantie News - what Yea Garden Club are doing for your fire affected communities. We had a big discussion at our first meeting after the fire on how we could help.

We decided that now was not the time people would be able to resurrect their gardens with heavy machinery clearing away burnt homes and dangerous trees plus at the time of our meeting, in February, it was too hot and dry to be planting.

We decided we would all pot up plants at home and look after them until late Winter/early Spring and then set up an afternoon tea in the Highlands Hall and have all the plants there for anyone to just come along, have a cuppa and take whatever they wanted.

In the meantime, we were offered all the plants from a garden in Yea, where the owner has decided she wants to completely change her back garden. Garden Club members had a huge working bee there and ended up with two ute loads of plants. We then spent the rest of the day, dividing and potting up all the lovely well-grown plants. I think we ended up with 200 pots just from that - plus what we are all potting up at our own gardens.

So, for all the keen gardeners in the fire affected area, we feel for you and are thinking of you and when the time is right to start thinking of planting up again, we will come with ute loads of plant just for the taking.

Gardeners take heart too - it was amazing what recovered in the Flowerdale gardens after the 2009 fires.

Regards

Elaine White

Secretary - Yea Garden Club



Erosion and sediment after bushfire

Waterways in fire-affected areas face increased erosion and sediment pressures as bare soil and ash are exposed to rain fall and run off. Even light showers can wash significant amounts of sediment into creeks and rivers, reducing water quality, filling habitat pools and affecting habitat for fish and other aquatic species.

Stream banks are more prone to slumping as soils lose their natural stability. The loss of native vegetation after fire removes root systems that normally bind soil together and anchor banks in place. Without this living structure, soils become loose and fragile, making them far more susceptible to collapse when exposed to rainfall, runoff, or unmanaged stock grazing pressure.

Sediment traps and erosion-control structures installed in priority locations can slow the movement of soil and sediment while native vegetation begins to recover. Excluding livestock from waterways with fencing is another important measure, protecting fragile banks from trampling and giving natural regeneration the chance to re-establish. As native plants re-establish, erosion risk steadily declines and waterways begin to regain their natural shape.

Financial subsidies are available for fencing to protect waterways and allow native vegetation to re-establish. **For more information, contact the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority on 5822 7700.**



STOP PRESS - UPCOMING MOBILE LIBRARY VISITS to HIGHLANDS HALL/HUB

**** Please note new dates ****

Wednesdays - 18th March and 1st and 15th April



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



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



Sharing projects, insights and opportunities to get involved

Feral deer continue to cause major problems across Victoria - from damaging natural and cultural heritage to affecting farms, community safety and Landcare revegetation efforts. As deer numbers grow and spread, many community groups are feeling the pressure.

Despite this, feral deer are still classified as protected wildlife in Victoria, leaving landholders and groups without the level of support needed to manage their impacts.

Formed in 2021, the Victorian Deer Control Community Network (VDCCN) provides a space for landowners and community groups to share knowledge, raise awareness and collaborate on solutions. We're proud to have an MOU with Landcare Victoria Inc.

VDCCN is gathering information about deer impacts and the many projects underway across Victoria. These will be showcased on our website to help strengthen community learning and connections. If your Landcare network or group is experiencing issues related to feral deer or has a deer-related project you'd like to share, we'd love to include your work.

Please send information to: Peter Jacobs, Executive Officer peterj@invasives.org.au.

Many Landcare groups and networks are already part of the VDCCN. Together, we've hosted several successful forums across the state. Our most recent forum in Halls Gap, run with Project Platypus, welcomed around 80 participants and generated fantastic discussion and collaboration.

[Join the VDCCN Community](#)

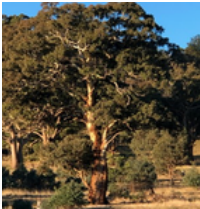
If your group is concerned about the growing impact of feral deer, we encourage you to join us. Membership is free, informative and a great way to build collective influence statewide.

Have questions? Call Peter Jacobs on 0487 295 198.

****** Given the recent fires deer should stand out quite distinctly at present having not as much vegetation to hide in as well as eating and/or damaging whatever early growth appears. If individual landholders want to stay informed or offer practical solutions to the deer problem, contact Peter. **Ed.**



Upper Ovens Valley Landcare use high tree guards to protect plantings from feral deer rubbing & browsing.

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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.