AUSTRALIAN
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Conference Competition Results … page 9

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AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

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Cover photo: Ross Perry.
VAA Conference Competition Honey Judges
Don Whitehead, Ken Gell, Jessica Locarnini and Ian Cane.

Deadline for copy for the August journal is
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The Australian Bee Journal seeks to publish contributions dealing with all aspects of beekeeping.
Statements expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the VAA Inc or the editor.
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Contact the Editor for ads, photos, classifieds and article information

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The Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc. (VAA)

The VAA was founded in 1892 and is the peak body for beekeeping in Victoria.
The Association advocates to federal, state, and local governments to protect and improve Victoria's honey resources and to ensure beekeepers' interests are safeguarded and promoted.
We work to secure effective legislation and encourage scientific investigation and research in all aspects of beekeeping.
Our achievements include:

- Introducing the Victorian Apiary Code of Practice allowing bees to be kept in urban areas
- Contributing to the new Apiculture on Public Lands Policy through our involvement with the Buzz Committee
- Working with Plant Health Australia which contributed to the development of the Australian Biosecurity Code of Practice.

The VAA advocates for the beekeeping industry on behalf of all beekeepers in Victoria.

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Phil McPherson
Recreational beekeeping
John van Weeghel

All beekeepers and interested groups are welcome to join the VAA.
Membership benefits include:

- The VAA's monthly magazine *Australian Bee Journal* (ABJ) including one free classified ad per year
- Access to the members' only section of the VAA website vicbeekeepers.com.au
- Discounts for beekeeping services and products, including insurance
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President's Report

It is almost one month since we were at the Annual Conference in Wonthaggi. Those members that did not attend missed out on lots of information, camaraderie and fun. It was great to see that everyone went home with a feeling that they had been part of a special few days. Thank you to all that were part of and contributed to the conference, the generous sponsors, speakers, visitors and members.

This is my first report since the Board election. Due to the large number of nominations, we had the unfortunate situation that six good candidates missed out on being elected. I thank them for making themselves available. After serving on the Executive/Board for 20 years Robert McDonald did not get reelected. During the 20 years, Robert served as Vice President for four years, President four years, was a member of the Resources Committee and was involved with FCAAA and many subcommittees. Thank you, Robert, for your dedication to the Association.

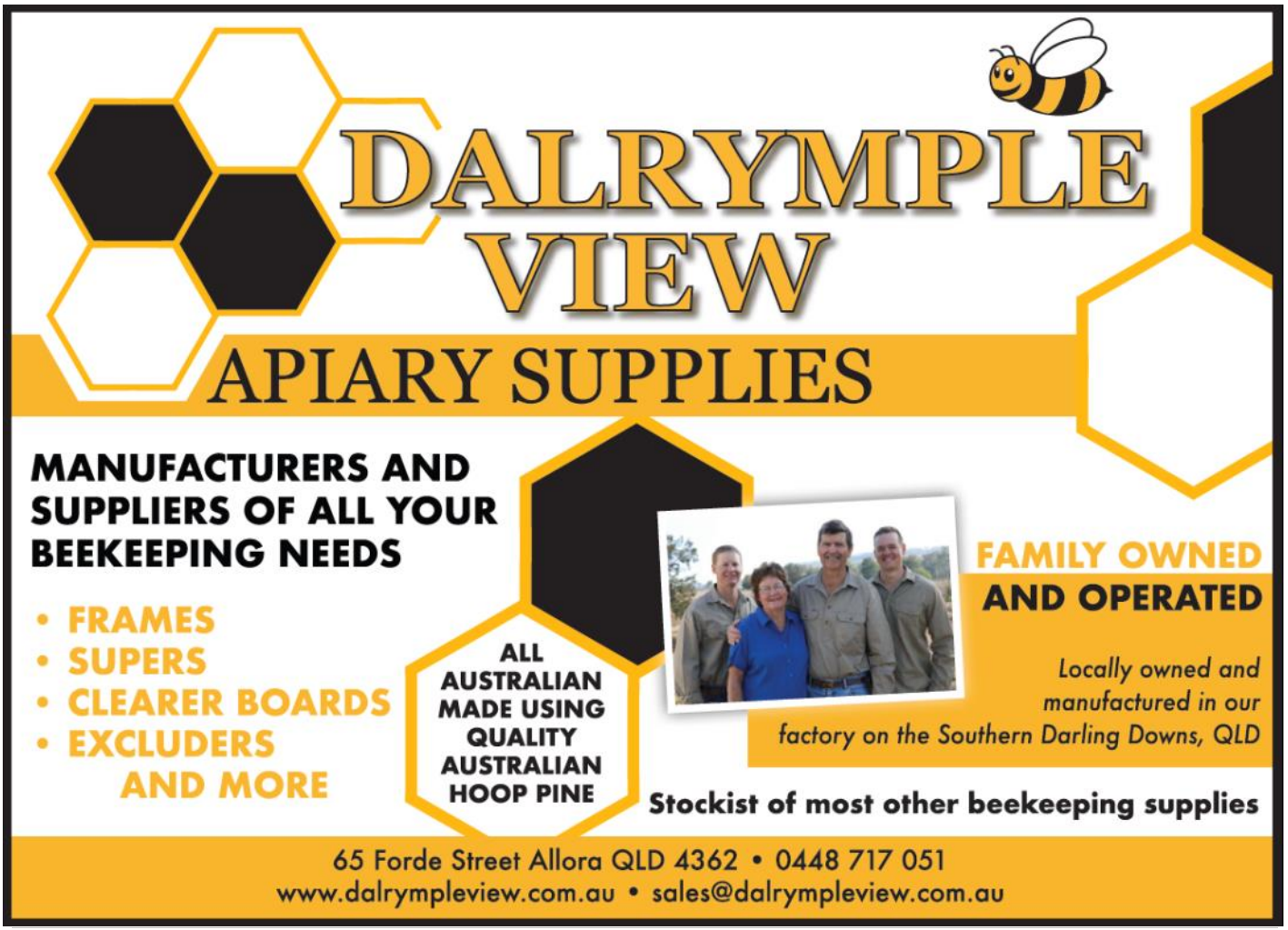
The re-election of the majority of Board members appears to indicate that members are supporting the direction of the Board. A considerable amount of time and effort has been put into discussing and planning the function of the Association. Simply put, it was decided that for the Association to grow we need to make improvements in the management of the Association as well as providing more support for all members. This has led to the commitment of the Board to rebrand the Association. Lindsay Callaway has worked with Barry Robinson to develop the rebranding on behalf of the Board with an excellent outcome. The response from members has been very supportive.

The Melbourne Royal Show will be on from 26 September to 6 October. Please consider supporting the Association's efforts at the show by assisting during the two weeks. For more details see the article from the Show Coordinator Judy Leggett on page 28.

A large proportion of the memberships are due on 1 July. Thank you to the members that have responded to the request for renewal in a timely manner. I encourage every beekeeper to be a member of the VAA as it assists us to continue the work to represent beekeepers at State and Federal level. With varroa knocking at our door, a united and strong membership is more important than ever.

Please remember to support our sponsors and advertisers when you can.

John van Weeghel
President



Rebranding the Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc.

"Beekeepers looking skywards. Not backwards."
Date: June 25, 2024
By Lindsay Callaway,
Vice President of the VAA Inc.

Executive summary.

The Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc. (VAA Inc) has a long-standing history of serving the beekeeping community in Victoria. As we look to the future, the board unanimously decided a rebrand is essential to reflect our evolving mission, attract new members, and enhance our visibility and relevance.

This report outlines:
Our journey so far.
Brand audit and exploration.
Brand recommendation.
New brand in action - 'One look. One feel. One voice.'
Where to from here? - it's about change.

Background and objectives.

VAA Inc is the peak body for Victorian apiarists, providing support, education, and advocacy for all beekeepers. However, feedback from members and key stakeholders indicated that our current 'brand' does not fully resonate with our target audience or reflect our long-term goals for change within VAA Inc. Since October 2023, VAA Inc board has engaged with highly credentialed Brand Creative, Barry Robinson from Activist, with the following objectives:

1. Modernise our image to appeal to a broader audience.
2. Enhance recognition and differentiation in the apiculture industry.
3. Reflect our expanded scope in engaging with recreational beekeepers and education.
4. Increase engagement and membership through a refreshed identity.
5. Ensure brand 'consistency' across all targets, all markets, all executions with a 16-page style guide.

The brand recommendation.

After an extensive one-on-one interview process with several key stakeholders, several brand/logo territories where explored. One brand/logo territory in particular stood out as having the greatest opportunity. This territory was distilled down further, with a final six variants created.

The final brand/logo approved.

Once we settled on the final brand/logo, Barry and his team then set to work to deliver an overall 'One look, one feel, one voice' for VAA Inc to ensure consistency across all targets, all markets, all executions.

A full VAA Inc. style guide to help deliver our express aim to unite all Victorian beekeepers, to expand our reach to recreational beekeepers, young enthusiasts, and educators. And to engage with key stake-

(Continued on page 7)

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Rebranding the Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc., cont'd

(Continued from page 6)

holders - particularly important with the likelihood of varroa becoming endemic soon. Looking to the future, the new brand will help us discover our mission and values.

Rebranding strategy.

- Present rebrand to key stakeholders prior to 2024 conference.
- Present rebrand to members at conference.
- Recommendation that the new brand continue to be executed.
- Record short video of rebrand journey for members post conference.
- Look to engage with VAA Inc branches and sub committees.
- First major public launch of the rebrand at the 2024 Melbourne Royal Show.

Visual and digital presence.

Website redesign: develop a modern, user-friendly website that offers resources, news, and a member portal. *Done.*

2. Social media strategy: explore best approach and launch a comprehensive social media campaign to engage with a wider audience - including educational content, event promotions, and community stories.

3. Marketing materials: update brochures, newsletters, merchandise, and promotional materials to reflect the new brand identity.

Implementation plan.

Approval and funding: secure board approval and allocate budget for rebranding activities such as stationary, new labels, new-look stand and merchandise for Melbourne Royal Show, brand extensions including assets for sub committees and branches.

Conclusion.

Rebranding the Victorian Apiarists' Association is a strategic move to align our identity to reflect the changes already made by VAA Inc and our future aspirations. By embracing a modern, strategic, distinctive and differentiating brand, we can enhance our influence, attract new members, and position ourselves as a leading voice as the peak body for beekeepers and beekeeping within Victoria.

Thinking about change in the VAA

By Rob Kerr

We have launched the new VAA brand, but the change process for the VAA is only just beginning.

I suggest that the change process is always happening. We can help ourselves direct the change and help ourselves weather the change by understanding some perspectives about change.

The pull of the future: the drag of the past.

Nothing about pulling or dragging says anything is good or bad. The future pulls and the past drags!

The VAA strategy will include changing the ways we work or relate to members and other related organisations. Understanding the current and future business environment should drive the choice of how we progress. The ways we have done things and the reasons that they may have been done should not limit our thinking for where we go, but it will impact the effort of how we get there.

Whatever initiatives we take, we will need to be respectful but pragmatic about the past. The actions in the past have their own stories and we do not need to judge the past to change it.

The drag of the past may come from personal involvement, longevity, success (real or perceived), the origins and myths, or social norms. If we recognise why we are attached to the past, then we can work more specifically to acknowledge this and accept the change or understand why we are not changing this yet.

The world around the VAA is always changing. We no longer live in the space that was the past. But anything that has been around for some time or was achieved through great effort will have a strong but potentially erroneous drag. Not everything needs to change or is worth changing, but properly questioning the past and soundly making today's decisions will always result in leaving some of the past behind.

To actually change, the VAA will need to release, jettison or even pry itself from some of the previous ways of doing things.

Let's respect the past but make sure that unassisted drag doesn't derail some good VAA futures.

Winners and Losers

Winners and losers are a fact for any situation. Never does everyone win.

There are always those who do not do as well (the "losers") as others (the "winners") in any structure or system.

Changes to the system produce a new set of winners and losers. The winners are not right, and the losers are not wrong: it just works out that there are winners and losers and most of the time, we did not know who would be which.

The future will have winners and losers as well. It does not matter what course we set or what we achieve, there will be some who are worse off than before and some who are better off than before. Some may feel like losers because they were big winners and now are not such big winners. Some may be told they are winners because they loose less, but, relatively, they are still losers.

Supporting losers may consist of ensuring the impact is moderated, that the impact is staged, that they win in a different way, but, at a minimum, we acknowledge their situation.

This is still not about who is better or worse or good or bad. It is a calculation that we can make, and we should make, so that we can bring about the change with the right support for the losers.

I think that a measure of the development of the VAA will be the degree to which we try to create and manage to create more winning and less losing.

Bee Bits

Industry Awards and Deserved Recognition

The Goodacre Memorial Award this year was awarded to Neil Bingley for his decades of commitment and service to the honey bee industry. Neil has served in many leadership roles across the industry including Chair of the NSWAA, NSW AHBIC delegate, PCF representative and AgriFutures Honey Bee and Pollination advisory panel member. Very well deserved and congratulations.

Another big congratulations goes to the Wheen Bee Foundation who have won the coveted global prize for outstanding achievements in the preservation, promotion and research of bees and other pollinators. Wheen Bee CEO Fiona Chambers travelled to Slovenia to accept the Golden Bee Award on behalf of the foundation. Congratulations Fiona!

Imported Honey

Jon Lockwood has been delivering an excellent presentation to many of the state conferences explaining the 'multi-pronged' approach to tackling imported honey and the honey markets in general. This has been recorded and posted on the VAA YouTube channel. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjKMn5LMyZo. I encourage every beekeeper who is not attending the conference to watch the recording.

Resilient Beekeeping Varroa Podcast series

AHBIC in partnership with AgriFutures Australia have released an interview & podcast series, led by our very own Bianca Giggins who interviews six global leaders in honey bees about various topics. These podcasts have been very well received and are another great resource for beekeepers to sharpen their knowledge of Varroa. The podcasts can be found here at the AHBIC website under the Varroa hub tab. Take a look at the Slowing the spread factsheet in the June newsletter compilation: https://honeybee.org.au/resilient-beekeeping-factsheet-series-slowing-the-spread/

From AHBIC June Newsletter

Conference Competition Results

By Angelique Perry

Beekeepers ramped up their competitive spirit at the recent VAA Conference, held in Wonthaggi in June. The hard fought and prestigious "Annual Competitions" attracted an excellent array of beekeeping related entries.

Competition Stewards, Angelique and Ross Perry, noted an increase in entries across most categories. They said, our experienced judging team went to a new level this year, under the guidance of respected honey sommelier, Jessica Locarnini, who was present to share her international experience in the finer tasting aspects of honey and honey based products.

Photo: Ross Perry

Jessica joined with Gippsland local Ian Cane, and Ken Gell from Central Victoria for the honey judging. Don Whitehead, from North East Victoria, was the fourth honey judge, seizing the moment to further learn the finer points of honey tasting from Jessica.

Don Whitehead utilized his expertise with Mead to lead the beverages judging section, assisted by Lindsay Callaway. Entries included mead, honey cider and honey beer.

The wax categories were well patronized, with many fantastic, high quality items entered.

The photography section attracted some brilliant works of art. Local beekeepers and photographers Gary Beresford & David Barton were discerning judges of this popular category. A bee portrait submitted by David Baskett won in its category, and also was the overall "Competition Champion". Congratulations to David for this great entry and gaining a place in the records. David's entry gained a perfect 100/100 score.

Melbourne Section took out the 'Aggregate Trophy', with the most successful entries, followed by Bendigo Branch and "J" Beekeeping Club. Conference organisers would really like to see this friendly club rivalry grow, as it demonstrates the excellence of Victorian Beekeepers, in a fun and cohesive manner.

A final tip from the Competition Stewards is, for the best chance of a winning entry: read the brief rules, such as correct packaging in size, shape and color, choosing your item category carefully, labelling needs and attention to small details. This will get you in the race to the top.

Section	Sponsor	Winner	Score/ 100	Branch
Honey - Native Flora	Edmonds Honey	Hilbertus Boelsen	96	JBK
Honey - Yellow Box	McDonald Honey			
Honey - Introduced Flora	Goode's Bushland Honey	Peter Adams	94	Melbourne
Honey - Dark	Archibald's Honey	Matt Petersen	92	
Honey - Candied	Monson's Honey	Liz Baker	86	
Honey - Creamed	Jon & Maxine Williams	Richard Collins	96	Bendigo
Honey - Garden	VAA Melbourne Section	Doug Heckathorn	94	Melbourne
Honey Beverage	Whitehead's Mead	John Winkels	79	Melbourne
Pollen	Volvwreck			
Honeycomb - Sealed Frame	The Barton Family			
Honeycomb - Section	Ian & Robyn Cane	Mike Love	100	Melbourne
Wax - 9kg	Phillip McPherson			
Wax - 1kg	North Eastern Apiarists Assoc	Fiona Marantelli	79	Melbourne
Wax - Decorative	Volvwreck	Ashton Hayden	98	JBK
Photography - History	Volvwreck	Lindsay Callaway	75	Bendigo
Photography - Native Flora	Volvwreck	Rob Tyers	91	Melbourne
Photography Apiary	Honeyshack	Dana Syed	100	Melbourne
Photography - Equipment	Honeyshack	Lindsay Callaway	100	Bendigo
Photography - Introduced Flora	Lakeside Honey	David Baskett	98	Melbourne
Photography - Honeybee Portrait	Lakeside Honey	David Baskett	100	Melbourne
Not Applicable - Cake Competition				
COMPETITION CHAMPION		David Baskett	100	Melbourne

VAA INC
HAS A NEW BRAND & IDENTIFICATION,
By John Kennedy

Members of VAA Inc have adopted an executive proposal to adopt a new brand/logo as part of bringing together Victoria's commercial and recreational beekeepers.

The new logo, shown here, will replace the previous, which has been in use for several decades.

The new brand/logo is the result of a project largely driven by our Vice President Lindsay Callaway who sought assistance from a recognised expert in corporate or organisational branding including working with a number of Top 200 corporates.

As Lindsay explained, the comprehensive rebranding is designed to revitalise the VAA Inc's brand image, enhance member engagement and to foster better representation with our key industry stakeholders.

Lindsay explained the new brand will deliver '*One Look, One Feel, One Voice'* of VAA Inc.

"Beginning from the launch phase and into execution, we can explore key elements of VAA Inc - vision, mission, and values, ensuring alignment with our core principles and future aspirations," said Lindsay.

The new brand/logo comes with a 16-page style guide, and had been enthusiastically approved and adopted at the AGM only a few hour prior. The rebrand was fully presented a few hours later at the annual dinner that concluded the conference - with the new look being revealed in banners, badges, place cards, and the award certificates presented on the night to well-deserved participants.

I think the reception to the new branding was excellent and that members gained a clear understanding of the rebranding objectives and the anticipated benefits, including positioning our brand for future success. It was simply great to see those present at the conference dinner sporting a badge with the new logo. You too should look for it at all forthcoming bee industry events.

2025 VAA CONFERENCE
LIKELY IN NORTH EAST.

Looking forward, the annual general meeting resolved that the 2025 conference will likely be held in the north east of Victoria. The North Eastern Apiarists' Association has been contacted and signified their support, especially in locating a desirable local venue.

John Van Weeghel, our president, noted that the sequence of recent conferences has been Mildura, Melbourne, and Wonthaggi - so it was logical to support the VAA's north-eastern membership which is quite substantial. It is likely that the venue will also appeal to cross-border and Riverina district as well as Upper Murray beekeepers by presenting another highly-relevant program.

So watch out for confirmation of the date, venue and likely program.

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VAA 2024 Annual Conference

VAA WONTHAGGI ANNUAL CONFERENCE - TOPS FOR INFORMATION & ALL ROUND VALUE

By John Kennedy

Where else could you have heard and learned from more than 30 local and overseas experts on all aspects of beekeeping with topical, relevant and outstanding presentations on industry topics over a total time investment of two and a half days?

You must have been attending the 123rd Annual Conference of the Victorian Apiarist's Association held at the Wonthaggi Workmen's Club over the period May 4 to 6.

The venue, also known as the Wonthaggi Community Centre, was excellent with large well-appointed function spaces and well provisioned meals and refreshments.

There were plenty of accommodation choices within easy or almost adjacent walking distance.

The event, including Zoom links to three beekeeping experts in North America and two over in New Zealand, went off without a hitch and was very relevant to the approaching varroa conditions in Victoria.

As VAA president John Van Weeghel noted we are really fortunate as Australians being the last country to receive a Varroa mite incursion thus we have all the wealth of information and management solutions that the rest of the world has gained that we can access.

I provide here a short summary on all the speaker presentations, but I note that by the time this edition appears in print all the speaker presentations will be available to VAA members via the Association website and Facebook.

It will be well worth the time invested to review, refresh your memory, or learn from these presentations.

The Conference opening session had the important topic of 'Honey – Confirming The Quality' with the objective of gaining recognition of the fine quality of local honey and hopefully a higher return for it.

Key presenters were Dr Liz Barbour CEO of Y Trace, Nick Jolley from Hive and Wellness Australia, Prof. Sharon Purchase from the University of WA's Business School and with Jon Lockwood AHBIC Vice Chair and Chair of their Honey Committee. The session concluded with a panel comprising Stuart Archibald, Angela Enbom and Professor Sharon Purchase, chaired by Lindsay Callaway.

Important conclusions were the relevance of participation in BQual and Beetrace, along with the expectation that imports of honey of doubtful components, currently of the order of 20,000 tonnes annually, will continue, along with the difficulties and expense of quality testing, so it's very important for local beekeepers to label their product correctly.

After holding the statutory Annual General Meeting of the VAA, the afternoon program was devoted to industry reports and the achievements recently of AHBIC

(Continued on page 12)

VAA 2024 Annual Conference, cont'd

(Continued from page 11)

(provided by chair Stephen Targett) and from AgVic (by Biosecurity manager Nikki Jones and Biosecurity Officer Karyn Di Florio).

It was important advice that varroa has not yet entered Victoria, with the 12 sentinel hives at six locations along the River Murray all with a nil interception result thus far.

The AgriFutures report was delivered by Steve Fuller, Chair of the Crop Pollination Association and Vice Chair of Honey Bee and Pollination at AgriFutures.

On the Wednesday evening there was 'Visions of Varroa' with the opening session from beekeeper Peter Burgess from Kempsey with his telling and emotional account of 'Finding the Mite First' in his hives at Kempsey on the 12th of August in 2022.

His decision to report his find was an emotional one and included having to put his own operations on hold.

The evening concluded with two panel sessions moderated by Ken Gell involving Jon Lockwood (Goldfields Honey), Matt Lorenz (McDonalds Honey) and Matt Petersen (Dividing Creek Farm Honey) and joined by Peter Burgess, with 'Tips from Abroad' (resulting from the multiple overseas beekeeping experiences of each) with 'Tips from Their Trips' on the treatment and country experiences of each person.

The Conference resumed on Day 2 with the 'Symposium Varroa – Sharing the Experience', chaired by Dr Andrew Wootton, newly appointed VAA Vice Chair.

There were very worthwhile Zoom presentations delivered by Dr Kaira Wagoner at the University of North Carolina on her 'UBeeO' tool for the selection of varroa resistant honey bees, followed by another Zoom presentation by Dr Cameron Jack at the University of Florida on 'Responsible Varroa Control'.

This session was rounded out by another Zoom 'Hidden in Plain Sight - Drones' from Dr Zac Lamas from the US Department of Agriculture's Beltsville Bee Research Laboratory.

From a personal view there was great value in the bulk of the last two program sessions and it will be worthwhile following them up on the VAA Facebook sessions via the website.

The afternoon Colloquium was chaired by Peter McDonald with contribution from AgVic on 'Varroa Transition to Management Report' provided by Brett Harrison.

There were two presentations by Zoom from New Zealand from Hayley Pragert and Dr Richard Hall from Honey Bee Health NZ.

We are fortunate that we have so much experience so close to home and accessible, to learn about how they have managed the mite since its arrival in 1990, while still sustaining a successful beekeeping industry.

The afternoon continued with a business focus with

(Continued on page 13)

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VAA 2024 Annual Conference, cont'd

presentations from AgVic officers Sam Henty (on 'Extracting the Numbers and Pressing the Pennies'), followed by James Rowe on the worthwhile 'Farm Business Resilience Course' availability.

Crop Pollination then took centre stage with 'Ins and Outs of Crop Pollination' from Stephen Targett.

It was interesting to hear from Steve Fuller his comment that he pollinates 17 different crops (mainly berries), over 11 months of the year in northern NSW districts.

The likely loss of feral hives to varroa indicates opportunity, as there are likely to be other industries needing pollination services with the loss of that 'free resource'.

The rounding out of industry experience was provided by Tim Jackson CEO of the Almond Board of Australia, and Jonathan Monson who heads up Monson's Honey & Pollination Services in the Sunraysia area.

The Conference then concluded with the Annual Dinner sponsored by Olam Orchards Australia. One hundred delegates stayed for the competition awards and a great dinner, and the silent and loud auctions where a selection of donated goods found new owners.

The VAA is greatly appreciative of the support from some 15 sponsors who tended their display stands for the duration of the Conference and presented a range of beekeeping product needs and services to all who attended.

AHBIC Varroa Update – 61
T2M
5th July 2024

Victorian Varroa Development Officers and their coordinator have been inducted into the T2M program and are now active. Details for Vic VDO's will be circulated through Agriculture Victoria's direct emails to registered beekeepers and feature in AHBIC's next industry update. The focus initially is to connect with clubs and association branches in Vic as well as network at training events as they are added to the calendar.

Another successful online Webinar was hosted by AHBIC and the National T2M Program team on 2 July, delivering an engaging presentation from Dr Madlen Kratz on Varroa Biology followed by a live Q&A. Click here to watch the webinar: https://youtu.be/t7_A-7TBvJM

Beekeeping Code of Practice

AHBIC has progressed contract consultation and work on both the CoP and Beekeeping Biosecurity Manual Updates, it is anticipated this will begin with wide consultation in the coming months.

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Conference Competition Photos

Photo Ross Perry: Above Left: Competition Champion, and Honey Bee Portrait Winner was David Bassett from the Melbourne Section

Photos by Angelique Perry. Above: Jessica Locarnini checking honey clarity

Below: Jess Locarnini and Ken Gell checking clarity of a honey entry

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How To Make Magical Mead

By John Kennedy

Sooner or later in beekeeping you come to realise that everything in a hive has a market value.

Obviously honey, either packaged or in bulk, wax (where I note recently small quantities are available for around $25 a kilo), and with some difficulty even propolis or bee venom, and of course bees themselves for nucleus hives.

A largely forgotten product seems to be mead. I am aware of several producers who sell modest bulk and bottled quantities, and even a few recreational beekeepers are moved to produce or attempt to produce their own batches but it seems there is only limited interest in mead making.

This is unfortunate as mead has a very long history.

US writer Jerome Zimmerman in his book '*Make Mead Like A Viking*' notes that it dates to the Viking Age – about the ninth to eleventh centuries.

Another useful reference is the UK book '*Making Mead*' by Acton & Duncan which has a bonus of some 30 odd recipes for mead and the like.

Even Brother Adam in his '*Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey*' book devotes a chapter to mead, noting that it is one of the oldest beverages in the world, adding the comment that it "was so highly esteemed that wine was regarded as less delicate and delicious".

It was with this background that I noted that Greg Huggins, a VAA member, recreational beekeeper and President of the Yarra Valley Bee Group was offering a Sunday afternoon mead making course.

It cost $106 if you supplied 1.6 kilos of your own honey, or $132 if Greg supplied everything, including the honey sourced from Beechworth Honey or the Yarra Valley, plus all the equipment.

The equipment means two x five litre glass demijohns (or carboys) – one for the fermentation, the second for future mead removal and bottling), all the fittings including a stopper and airlock, the yeasts etc, and an orange based mix of additives for flavouring, plus of course all his hands on experience and a set of course notes.

Greg employs a mead recipe know as "Joe's Ancient Orange", a recipe which he has used to some success.

Its production has performed well with bottles entered in the mead category at several natural fruit or grape winemaking competitions, which usually have a mead class) and it gave Greg the award over six other mead entries in the Mead Class at last year's Lilydale Show. So it has established quite a track record!.

Over two hours on a recent Sunday afternoon Greg led ten of us through all the steps to produce our own mead batch.

One of my five litre carboys is now bubbling away (fermenting and releasing carbon dioxide from the ferment of the sugar in the honey component) in a relatively warmish portion of my kitchen.

In a couple of months time Greg will supervise the group to siphon off into our second carboy the suitably fermented mead, then to bottle it into the 12 x 350 grams and quite attractive slimline bottles (also supplied as part of the course) for our own consumption. or gifting, or even letting it mature for another year or so of cellaring.

It should then rate at about 12 percent alcohol.

During the course Greg was adamant about the

(Continued on page 17

MORE ON MEAD

By John Kennedy

There are quite copious resources including several mead appreciation societies on Facebook, the web and via email,

I often see the Mead Geek Society, which is a USA based appreciation group, on line with emails and a Facebook page.

Another US group is 'themeadmovement' which also offers a Facebook page.

And Greg Huggins has alerted me to another useful source, the Canadian City of Steading, who are brewers with a strong mead influence, that offer a 25 minute video on How To Make Mead.

And of course the VAA Annual Conference Competitions, which offer a Honey Beverage Award category to include Mead.

The winner at Wonthaggi this year was John Winkels, who entered a Honey Cider, with Michael Johnson voted a close second by the judges for a Honey Mead

How To Make Magical Mead, cont'd

(Continued from page 16)

cleanliness of everything so all the products and mead making components used had been sanitised by him prior to the course.

I remembered that when I did a half day mead course offered at the National Honey Show in the UK a few years ago, the tutor, a brusque Yorkshireman, was equally as definite that cleanliness was a critical factor in successfully producing mead.

So, the mead making process is in train and we shall see later the outcome from "Joe's Ancient Orange Mead" recipe.

All good so far towards my own mead making exercise.

Greg Huggins has assumed the title of an experienced, if not expert mead maker.

He has indicated to me he is happy to talk mead to any beekeeper who is interested in advancing or reviving the cause of mead as a locally produced honey beverage.

And if your bee group or Club is interested in a mead experience Greg may be able to execute another course for you.

He can be contacted at
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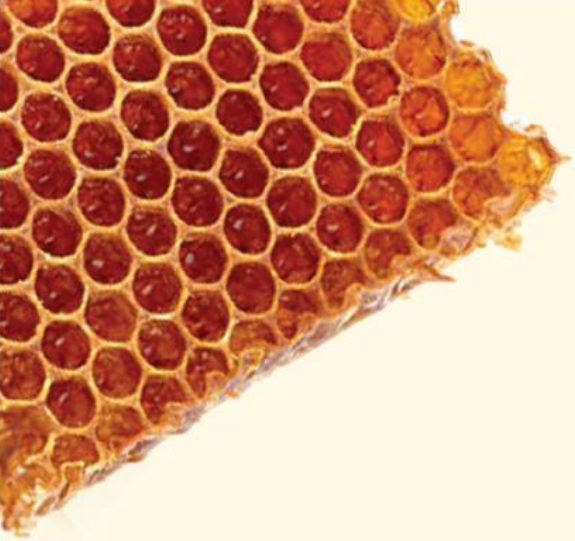

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Plastic Frame Full Depth

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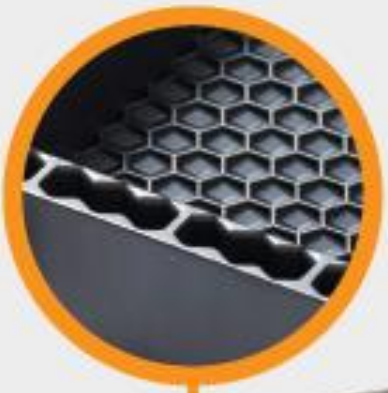

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- Assembled Timber Frame with Plastic Foundation
- Assembled Wired Frame

123rd Conference Final Report

By Lindsay Callaway
2024 Conference Convenor

Overview: *"An engaging and welcoming conference…"*

The VAA Inc. Annual Conference held in Wonthaggi this year has been a resounding success. The event marks a significant milestone for our organisation with the launch of the new VAA Inc. Brand. The event, which spanned three days, included a substantial program of guest speakers from all over the world. We saw enthusiastic participation, with positive feedback from both delegates and sponsors including comments such as "a perfect conference", "well organised and well run" and "an interesting conference program. Great job!".

Attendance: *Diversity and Inclusion*

This year's conference attracted over 140 attendees. The diverse mix of participants included industry professionals, academics, policymakers, recreational beekeepers and our most valued sponsors and trade stall holders. The strong showing reflects the significant effort of our conference organising committee and our strong conference program. Feedback from participants noted that the conference felt welcoming for "all types of beekeepers".

Program Highlights: *Relevance and Scope*

The conference featured a rich program of keynote speakers, panel discussions, and our AGM. While most of our presenters engage primarily with the commercial sector, many of the talks provided relevant and interesting content for recreational beekeepers as well. Notable highlights included:

- A keynote address by Dr. Liz Barbor on protecting Australian honey from adulteration was well received. She not only delivered an excellent presentation to kick off the conference, but she was also an active participant in many of the remaining sessions during the conference. Her insights added valuable perspectives on this important issue.

- Professor Sharon Purchase from Western Australia delivered an important message regarding quality assurance and traceability. The consumer demographic willing to pay superior prices for quality products expects transparency in matters such as production processes and quality assurance measures. She demonstrated the inextricable link between standardised quality assurance processes and an improved bottom line for honey producers.

- UBeeO, a novel tool for the selection of varroa resistant honey bees presented by Dr Kaira Wagoner and responsible Varroa control options through IPM by Dr. Cameron Jack where both highlights.

- A panel discussion on "Crop pollination – a session for lateral thinkers" that included Tim Jackson, Steve Fuller and Jonathan Monson that spurred vibrant debate and engagement from our delegates.

- The "Visions of varroa; an evening's entertainment" was lead off by Peter Burgess' moving story of finding varroa in his Kempsey hives. Our young industry leaders; Jon Lockwood, Matt Petersen and Matt Lorenz talking about their overseas discovery tours and learnings about varroa showing how proactive our industry is in the face of challenges.

Exhibitors and Sponsorship: *Innovation and Excellence*

We secured 20 exhibitors, showcasing the latest advancements in agriculture and sustainability. We saw a range from high-tech and AI-assisted hive-monitoring apps to varroa management products as well as an amazing array of wax processing products, high quality PPE and bee nutrition solutions. Representatives from government and education rounded out our trade stall holders which only emphasises how integral our sector is in Victoria's economy. Exhibitors reported significant interest and valuable networking opportunities. Sponsorship also saw an uptick, with major contributions from OFI, Ecrotek and Lysons, underscoring the event's industry relevance and appeal.

State Presence. Local Impact: *Gippsland welcomes the VAA*.

The conference had a positive impact with the local beekeeping community. Joe Borg and Matt Petersen both were major contributors to our conference planning committee and it would not have been the successful event that it was without their tireless efforts. Furthermore, we had generous sponsorship and attendance from South Gippsland Beekeepers, Latrobe Valley Beekeepers Association and Gippsland Apiarists' Association. This aligns with our commitment to supporting regional beekeeping communities and fostering community ties with the VAA Inc.

Feedback and Evaluation: Results to be proud of. Road map for the future.

As always, we circulated a participant survey to gauge the level of satisfaction from participants. We should be proud of the results and build on the positives for future events. Almost 90% of participants said that the conference met their expectations, and their experience would lead them to attend a future VAA Inc. conference.

The survey also provided us with constructive feedback that gives the next organising committee a road map for improvements. Most of these are achievable, practical and would not necessarily increase the cost or complexity of delivering the conference.

The attached infographic provides a comprehensive summary of the survey results.

Conclusion: VAA Inc. – Peak beekeeping body. Peak beekeeping events.

The VAA's annual conference is a highlight of the state's beekeeping calendar. The success of the VAA Inc. conference in Wonthaggi underscores our commitment to advancing the agricultural sector through knowledge sharing and innovation. The event has not only reinforced our leadership position but also set a new benchmark for future VAA Inc. events. We look forward to building on this momentum in the coming years.

2024 Conference Convenor: Summary & Recommendations:

- Continue to explore regional locations to support

(Continued on page 23)

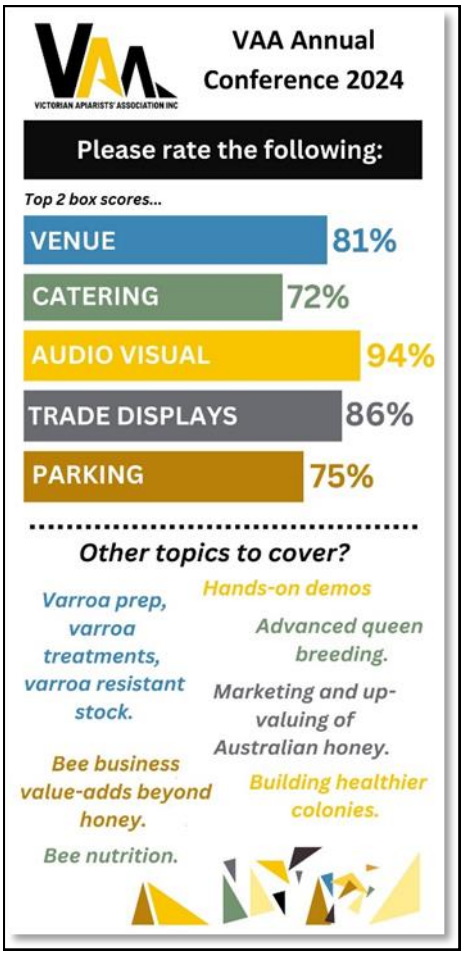
123rd Conference Final Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 22)

local communities and increase accessibility with next year's conference, to be held in northeast Victoria next year.

- Expand the program to include more interactive and hands-on sessions.
- Strengthen marketing efforts to maintain and grow attendance and sponsorship.
- Co-ordinate conference planning with VAA Inc. Recreational so our two events complement each other and deepen brand engagement.

Participant Survey Results



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ACT On Varroa Mite

By John Kennedy

The active ACT for Bees group in Canberra has weighed in with some views on varroa authored by their Vice President Mark Patterson with an article in their latest newsletter.

Patterson says there are only four control methods:

- hard chemicals
- soft chemicals
- heating the hive brood frames
- and hygienic queen bees.

He notes that the first hard chemicals or miticides used in the USA was check mite which killed 95% of the mites in the hive and could only be used when the temperature was in the right range and there was no honey flow. But the mites developed a resistance to it in three years.

He notes "the USA has created a long list of chemicals and will continue to try and find more.

"With this approach it will never end with a cocktail of poisons being used year after year."

The temperature needs to be in the right range, they are costly and time consuming to apply.

Also, they cannot be used during a honey flow and the beeswax will accumulate a cocktail of poison chemicals as well as exposing beekeepers.

He adds they will also develop resistance, so every three years a new chemical will emerge.

Soft chemicals are mainly essential oils. The mite dislikes them and it impacts their life cycle, but overall they are not that effective.

Heating the brood frames is an idea the Swiss have developed. The brood chamber is kept at 36 degrees to raise young bees.

"But heating the brood frames to 42 degrees kills all varroa but not the young bees.

"This is repeated every 16 days and is a great approach – but what about the cost?"

He sees hygienic queens as the best and only valid long term solution.

"With hygienic bees the nurse bees detect the varroa mites in the young bee cells.

"The nurse bee opens the cell and ejects that along with the varroa mites out of the cell, then cleans the cell and the queen returns and lays an egg.

"The genetic ability to detect varroa mites is a game changer.

"There are several countries around the world spending considerable time and money on this solution' Paterson concludes.

The Australian Bee Journal welcomes letters and contributions from readers and members. Please send any letters, articles or photos to abjeditors@yahoo.com

Honey Bee Vet

By John Kennedy

In a practical sense the paths of beekeepers and veterinarians don't often cross,

But a USA vet, Dr Tracy Farone, has documented her experiences from her journey into apiculture.

The new book, a first edition, carries the title of *Honey Bee Vet* with a subtitle of *The Adventures of a Veterinarian seeking to Doctor one of the World's Most Important Animals*.

It is published and just released by Northern Bee Books as a paperback of 180 pages, and retails at 19 pounds 95 shillings sterling.

Dr Farone notes that "honey bees are one of the most important agricultural animals on Earth "and that they fly around unnoticed doing work they have mastered to provide not only for themselves, but for the plants, animals and humans that make up our shared home".

Dr Farone says that given the complex and increasing health challenges that honey bees face, the importance of collaborating together to develop fresh perspectives to nurture our bees cannot be under rated.

"But do honey bees have doctors?" is the question.

The publishers note says that her nine chapters cover a wide range of topics in beekeeping, bee biology and bee medicine."

"Anyone who loves honey bees will find this book entertaining, educational, practical and even inspirational" the publisher says.

There are numerous references provided for more learning and education to suit the readers desires.

Dr Farone is an experienced veterinarian and amongst other credentials she writes the monthly column 'Bee Vet" for the journal *Bee Culture*.

She is based at the Grove City College in Pennsylvania with a background in private practice, academia and research, and holds the role of Professor of Biology.

Since 2016 she has been researching beekeeping and devoted time to pursue apicultural studies with a research apiary at the College and has worked with dozens of backyard, sideline and commercial beekeepers as well as liaising with other researchers in the USA and Europe.

www.northernbeebooks.co.uk.

Dr Richard Hayes and his team have evaluated 22 pasture legume species for their honey production potential. The team is close to identifying the most, and least promising species based on data analysis, and will release its shortlist later in 2024. Promising species to attract bees: Woolly pod vetch, Sulla, Arrowleaf clover, Balansa clover, Gland clover.
Read the full article from AgriFutures here

Melbourne Royal Show 2024

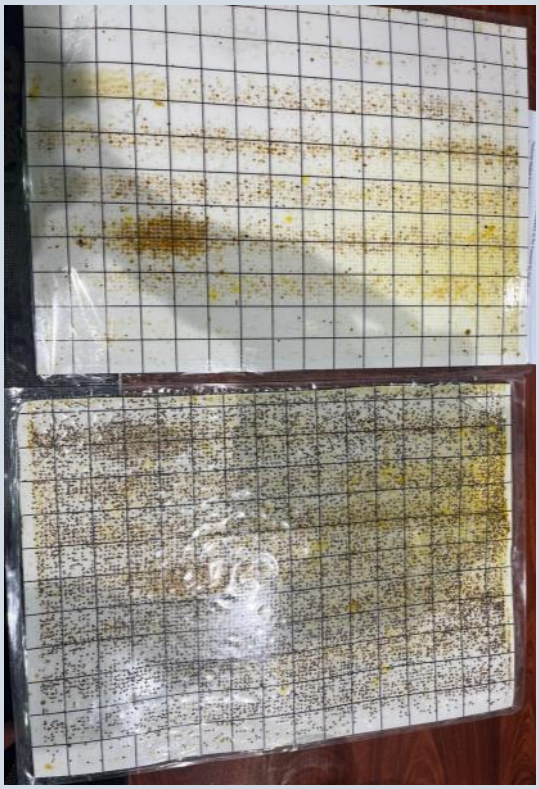
The VAA has committed to attending the Melbourne Royal Show again for 2024. We will be located at the same site as last year in the Pantry Pavilion. The show dates are 26th September to the 6th October – 11 days to educate the public on all things bees, and hopefully to fundraise for the Association.

What we need from you….

- Did you produce a great varietal line of honey that you would like to donate/supply to the VAA for packing to sell at the show?
- Do you have a wonderful product from the hive that you would like to sell at the VAA stand?
- Are you interested in joining the Show subcommittee to help organise the VAA stand?
- Are you interested in coordinating the roster for the 11 days of the show?
- Are you interested in volunteering on the stand during the show?
- Are you interested in helping to setup or pack up our display at the show?
- Can you supply observation frames/bee hives for use in the display?

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, please contact Judy Leggett (Show Co-ordinator) on 0423 464 800 or aandjleggett@bigpond.com to discuss or volunteer.

We look forward to welcoming our wonderful volunteers back to our stand and giving them the opportunity to meet other members and catch up with old friends at the show.



Photos Lindsay Callaway and Matt Petersen. Top: Scenes from conference.

Left "From bad to worse, signs of things to come - mite loads and mite drops from the acute phase in Kempsey

Right Photo: David Baskett. Bee on a dandelion won best introduced flora photo at the conference competitions.

Emails Sent By The VAA To Members

Monday 17th June Video recordings of the presentations at the recent Annual Conference are available and can be accessed via the VAA YouTube channel at youtube.com/@VictorianApiaristsAssociation or from the video library page on our website.

Included are the symposia on honey testing and varroa management with the latter providing much useful practical experience and information.

Tuesday 25th June A video interview with Lindsay Callaway highlighting the VAA's rebranding exercise is available on the VAA YouTube channel. The direct link is here.

27th June 2024 National T2M Varroa Mite Management Workshops are coming in Victoria. And to a venue near you.

The "Train the Trainer" event has just concluded in Melbourne and Victoria's National Program Trainers and the Varroa Development Officers have been thoroughly brought up to speed.

Venues throughout Victoria have been identified by the Victorian Bee Biosecurity Working Group, chosen based on beekeeper numbers (both commercial and recreational) and their locations, with the aim to minimise travel and provide convenient opportunities for all. Details will be announced soon, as dates are finalised.

In most cases, the nearest bee club has been approached to cohost the event, facilitating networking and local involvement. However in 3 locations we have been unable to identify a suitable club or industry body and so are seeking volunteers from amongst VAA members to assist in coordinating the events at SHEPPARTON, HAMILTON and COLAC. This should not be particularly time consuming, principally involving identifying a suitable venue such as a community centre or hall. Please get back to me if you can assist.

Having everyone attend one of these events will be critical for our preparedness for varroa. Their funding support is time-limited over the next 9-12 months, so be prepared to drop everything and catch the workshop when it comes near you.

B J SHERRIFF ADDS CLEARVIEW TO VEILS

By John Kennedy

Long term (founded in 1968) bee suit maker B J Sherriff is now offering the ClearView™ version veil technology which gives the beekeeper a clear sight. Hand made in the UK and shipped around the world the bee suits come with a five year warranty on the zips and have an average lifespan of 15 years. They also offer a suit repair and refurbishment service. Although considered the best bee suits, they are expensive compared to cheaper versions, often manufactured in third world countries. The basic Sherriff bee suit range costs. according to their website, from 260 pounds sterling, plus delivery.

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Bee Bits From Around The World

By John Kennedy

RANDY OLIVER IN NEW ZEALAND

Randy Oliver is flying in as the guest presenter at the three day NZ Beekeepers Conference being held at Wanganui Racecourse from 11-13 August. The event is organised by the Southern North Island Beekeeping Group with the varroa mite as the focus.

At the time of writing the full program was still being developed. Extensive trade displays are expected to be included

The conference begins on Sunday the 11th and is titled "All About Varroa – Skills/Tools/Systems".

The Monday event will focus on Oliver's advice on how to find that one mite resistant hive and to breed from it. Day Three is focused on research and issues on the horizon for beekeepers. Attendance for the three days costs $NZ400.

For more information beeconference2024@gmail.com

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW VIDEO UPDATE

The UK's National Honey Show held in late October every year at the Sandown Park Racecourse is regarded as a Gold Standard event of the beekeeping world.

It combines over three days - a lecture series, a trade show of significant size, and extensive competitions related to all aspects of beekeeping.

Small tutorials of about half a day on topical subjects are also available.

About a year after the event the Speakers lecture submissions from the previous year are released on Facebook and they always are of interest

A couple of presentations from 2023 are now available on Facebook, and a whole series from earlier events.

One of last year's is from Randy Oliver on "reading combs" and another is from another US beekeeping luminary Michael Palmer where he discusses running a "successful bee factory".

Both are available on Facebook by a search, and run for approximately one hour and are well worthwhile.

The next edition of the National Honey Show will be held on October 24-28 this year, the 93rd annual staging.

The Show is easy to get to by public transport (about 45 minutes by train from Waterloo Station) and then a short ramble across country via the racecourse environs.

So, if you are travelling to the UK later in the year make it a must.

USDA RECOGNISES POLLINATOR WEEK

The US Department of Agriculture recognised National Pollinator Week with a week long presentation in Washington DC, held June 21-23.

The Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, said that more than 100 crops grown in the USA are reliant on pollination provided by bees, other insects, birds and bats who all play a critical role.

"The nation's farmers depend on a vibrant ecosystem to feed and fuel communities and pollinators are an important part of that ecosystem" Vilsack said.

He added "this week and every week it is critically important that we protect pollinators and their habitat.

"Healthy pollinator populations are essential to the continued success and well-being of agricultural producers, rural America and the entire US economy because without them, many of the nations crops wouldn't be able to produce as many fruits, nuts or vegetables" he added.

The project for Pollinator Week in Washington DC included a Farmers Market and extensive display of beekeeping equipment.

The USDA has a specific website address on pollination work at www.usda.gov/pollinators and say they are keen to understand the collective set of stressors that impact pollinators, including pests and pathogens, pollinator habitat an climate change.

"This requires that we better understand pollinator needs around climate adaption and the entire agricultural ecosystem" the site says.

Treasurer's Annual Report To Conference

For the year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 the total income was $209,030.20 and the total expenses were $184,274.22. Producing net earnings of $25,788.43. This result was affected by a reduction of ABJ advertising income due to the delay in accounts being sent. Nevertheless, the result allowed the association to keep improving its financial position. This is of vital importance as varroa may well have a negative financial impact on our association due to a reduced membership.

It has been twelve months since we have seen the return of the printed Australian Bee Journal. It appears that the decision to offer a printed copy was well received by the members, approximately twenty-five percent of the membership have taken up the option. This has greatly reduced the total cost of providing a printed copy to an affordable and sustainable level. The electronic copies are available to members for free and back issues are listed in the members' section.

Costs are increasing continuously, leaving the association no other choice than to try to recover these were possible. Insurance made available to individuals and clubs have increased by a whopping $120.00. The incoming Board will review the cost and availability of these policies. In line with a decision made several year ago the Board is proposing and is seeking Members approval to increase the Membership fees by CPI. The proposed Membership fees are:

1 Vote $ 93.00 2 Vote $249.00 3 Vote $400.00 4 Vote $550.00

The total income of Membership fees is not sufficient to finance the annual operational cost of the association. It is thanks to the sponsorship and support we receive for the Annual Conference and the Melbourne Royal Show that we generate the necessary income. The combined net income of these two fundraisers was approximately $55,000.00. A big thank you to the many volunteers and sponsors that continue to generously support the association.

Ken Gell, Chair Finance committee

A New Honey Bee & Varroa Book

By John Kennedy

It is a sign of the times that there is a rush of new books on the varroa mite and the honey bee.

The latest new release is entitled *The Honey Bee Solution to Varroa* with the subtitle *A Practical Guide for Beekeepers*. It is published in the UK and is a paperback of 160 pages.

It is listed on Amazon with a very prompt delivery promise for $48 and change, but one independent bookseller (and there may be more) has it for around $10 less.

I haven't seen this publication so I can only report on the publishers notes, which say this book explains "the practical steps that beekeepers can take to identify and select for easily observable varroa-resistant bees".

Further that "in their colonies the science behind the bees' mechanisms for controlling their mite populations is explained in what is the biggest challenge facing the European honey bee".

This book is authored by Steve Riley, who is current Chair and Education Officer of the Westerham Beekeepers in the south-east of the England. Riley is also a member of the "Path to Varroa Resistance Team" that launched an education and science website in April 2023.

I recommend you do a web search for the Project Team adding the words varroa mite (otherwise there are dozens of "project teams"! on the web) and it will lead you to an hour long video presentation by five researchers to the Spring Convention last year of the BBKA (British Bee Keepers Association). Interestingly, one of the claims made is that eight percent or approximately 2,000 beekeepers in the UK have not treated for the mite for over six years! The presentation is important and includes Riley as one of the five speakers.

Sweet Treats Using Honey

Creamy Caramels
60 gram butter
2 tablespoons honey
1 cup brown sugar
1 can condensed milk
Method
Melt butter, add sugar and stir to dissolve.
Add honey and condensed milk stirring over low heat until it boils.
Boil 15-20 minutes (until a ball is formed when a teaspoonful is dropped into a cup of cold water), stirring all the time.
Pour into a greased tin and when almost set, mark into squares. When cold, cut into squares.

Honeycomb
3 tablespoons honey
5 tablespoons granulated sugar
4 tablespoons water
15 gram butter
1 teaspoon vinegar
1 teaspoon bicarb soda
Method
Put honey, sugar, water, butter and vinegar into saucepan.
Heat slowly, stirring, until sugar dissolves and butter melts.
Bring to boil.
Cover pan, boil gently for 2 minutes.
Uncover and continue to boil without stirring for 5 minutes (or until a teaspoon of the mixture, dropped into a cup of cold water, separates into hard, brittle threads).
Take pan off heat.
Stir in bicarb soda (be prepared for mixture to rise significantly in the pan).
Pour into buttered tin. When hard break into pieces.
It does not keep well so it should be eaten the same day it is made.

Honey & Treacle Toffee
4 tablespoons water
115 gram butter
3 cups soft brown sugar, lightly packed
2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon black treacle
Method
Put all ingredients in pan. Heat slowly, stirring until butter melts and sugar dissolves. Bring to boil.
Cover pan. Boil gently for 2 minutes. Uncover, continue to boil, stirring occasionally for 10-15 minutes (until a teaspoon of the mixture, dropped into a cup of cold water, separates into hard, brittle threads).
Pour into buttered tin. Leave until hard.
Turn out onto board and break up with a small hammer or meat mallet or similar.

Gary Trotman

Melbourne Section Report

In this edition: The Honey Competition is finalised. Melbourne Section won the VAA Honey Comp Aggregate prize (again :-)). Moe the Beeman and Matt Petersen at the monthly meetings. Join the VAA MS at the Woodend Insect Expo in October. Courses planned for the coming season. Winter workshops. Varroa Management Training Course location. VAA AGM on July 25th. … I'm excited already!

VAA MS Monthly Meetings

In May, we had our Honey Competition and Moe the Beeman was our guest while the judging was in progress. A common theme from Moe, a better beekeeper is always balancing what is before us: genetics - environment, knowledge from good sources - pressure from the uninformed, repeating successes - experimenting more, relying on others - staying away from some, and it's what you know rather than what you have. Thank you Moe.

The Competition results provided some new winners and some old hands with new prizes. I'll get the results in this edition or next.

In June, Matt Petersen showed us heaps of photos as he traced his path from a young kid with already 50 hives and the ups and some major downs and major recoveries as he planned and progressed with both beef farming and bee farming. The youngest of nine kids on a beef farm meant that there would be few handouts, and lots of work and good decision making to get his dream to reality. Thank you Matt "It's all about the bees" Petersen.

In July we will have the VAA MS AGM and a new committee will be elected at the July Meeting on the 25th July 2024 at the Surrey Hills Venue.

Around the AGM, we will have the usual Beeginners' Corner and then a Video night with interludes of elegant critique and questioning… well certainly the video night! Suggestions are welcome for any type of entertaining or useful video.

VAA Conference

The VAA Conference in Wonthaggi was attended by a number of Melbourne Section people (probably all carrying competition entries from friends) and we won the Honey Comp Aggregate Trophy for another year. The conference was a really good experience with a great mix of local, international, scientific, heartfelt, academic and business stories.

The new VAA brand was launched. See elsewhere in the journal for more details. From the Melbourne Section perspective, the new brand will be the umbrella for future local MS branding. This is both in presentation terms of logo and colours, but more importantly the message that we are all beekeepers no matter what we do or where we do it. Give the new brand a chance, look out for it's distinctive characteristics and feel good being a beekeeper in Victoria.

Looking Forward

Winter Workshops will be held on the fourth Sunday in July and August. July is "Make your own Wax Embedder" and August is "Make your own frames". Register for both or either and enjoy the surrounds of the Collingwood Children's Farm Apiary, and lunch is included. Send expressions of interest to vaamelbournesection@hotmail.com.

Courses hosted by the VAA MS include beginners beekeeping and the queen rearing. Look out for these in the Spring. As above, send in your expressions of interest.

National Insect Expo 2024 is on from 4 to 6 October 2024 in Woodend. I have booked a stall, and I am inviting beekeeping groups to join this event to educate the public about bees and we can sell honey to raise funds for the participating groups. And you get to see all the other amazing creepy crawlies. Tickets are on sale now at https://www.cvric.com.au/expo-2024.

Varroa Management Training Courses are being set up across Victoria. Make sure you get to one, and we hope to be assisting the process with a venue nearby. Remember to talk to everyone you know who has bees. If they have bees, then they need to get to one of these courses. Any course we help organise will be for any beekeeper in Victoria, or at least Melbourne.

Enjoy your bees,

Rob Kerr
vaamelbournesection@hotmail.com
Ph 0421 078 387.

Bee Bits

Brisbane A. *cerana* detections

In addition to the A. *cerana* detection in the port of Brisbane there has been a new detection at Townsville. This is separate from the Port of Brisbane detection and QDAFF are working to determine if it is from the existing Cairns population or a new incursion. Initial genomics suggest that there is a level of inbreeding suggesting that it is most likely a colony from the Cairns population. No mites or viruses have been detected in the Townsville detection.

Red Dwarf Honey Bee in WA

This response continues with over 30 colonies found and destroyed all within a 2 km radius. At this stage it appears the detection is isolated to the peninsula. Lack of water resources beyond the peninsula appears to the reason for it not spreading.

Varroa

Varroa continues to spread slowly across NSW with reports of infestations outside of the Newcastle area, but importantly no reports of mites in other states.

Varroa has been the hot topic for many conferences with speakers providing advice, opinions and experiences on Varroa management from a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives.

From AHBIC June newsletter

Requeening Reconsidered

By Phil Godman, Biosecurity Tasmania

Of all the factors affecting the productivity and behaviour of a beehive, none is more significant than the queen bee herself. A vigorous, well-bred queen can be the difference between a colony of nasty hot-tailed pests and a quiet group of honey-gatherers, increasing their (and the beekeeper's) wealth. It can also be the difference between a hive always on the verge of swarming and one with low swarming tendencies.

Ever since beekeepers have learned that queen replacement was possible, they have worked on improving stocks. The question remains of when to requeen, both in terms of the queen's age, and best practice biosecurity outcomes.

The advent of Varroa necessitates reconsidering all beekeeping operations and re-queening is no exception, especially here in Tasmania, where current varroa-related import restrictions do not permit the import of queen bees from interstate.

Historically, wing-clipping and marking were used to show a queen's age, but for many beekeepers it has become common practice to replace queens every year.

One significant factor regarding the timing of requeening is the swarming season. Queen rearing cannot succeed until mature drones are available, so the commencement of swarming (usually October in Tasmania) informs the beekeeper that drones are in the area and breeding can begin.

So, should a beekeeper always replace queens at this stage? Many have routinely replaced queens in spring, as a young queen is a major factor in stopping a colony from swarming, thereby reducing pest and disease spread. However, if Varroa is present, the timing of requeening becomes even more critical.

Consider a colony with Varroa that starts the spring with a moderate mite count. As the amount of brood naturally increases, the mite count too increases. Following the Summer Solstice, when bee breeding drops off, the mite count continues to rise exponentially. Without intervention, by late autumn the colony would be so badly infested they would be unlikely to survive.

What tools do we have in our Integrated Pest Management toolbox to prevent this? Chemicals, of course, but we cannot rely solely on them. Removing trap-drone comb can also help reduce numbers, but the effect of a break in brood rearing can be most effective. When the hive is queenless, it can take up to 4 weeks to raise a mated queen and during this time, mites have no opportunity to enter developing cells. When the brood rearing re-commences, if many mites enter the brood cell in competition, the pupa will likely not survive: as a result, all starve, and no mite breeding takes place.

Simply caging the queen for several weeks would have the same effect, but not provide a new young queen.

Limiting brood-rearing in the spring is not in a beekeeper's best interest, but after the Summer Solstice, egg-laying naturally reduces anyway. Tasmania's major honey flow is over about March, so a late summer/early autumn brood break would have negligible effect, with the added advantage of a young queen, which will come out of winter, ready to go.

Thus, to raise queens in the tail-end of the honey season can be a tool to break the exponential growth of mite numbers. This would provide a queen which would lay more brood in autumn, increasing hive strength going into winter, and still be a strong young established hive mother in spring. As Varroa forces beekeepers to reassess their business operations, this is a good opportunity to reconsider your requeening practice.

Biosecurity Tasmania delivers the Tasmanian component of the National Bee Biosecurity Program (NBBP) and provides significant co-investment and expertise. The NBBP is coordinated by Plant Health Australia and funded by the Australian Honey Bee Levy.

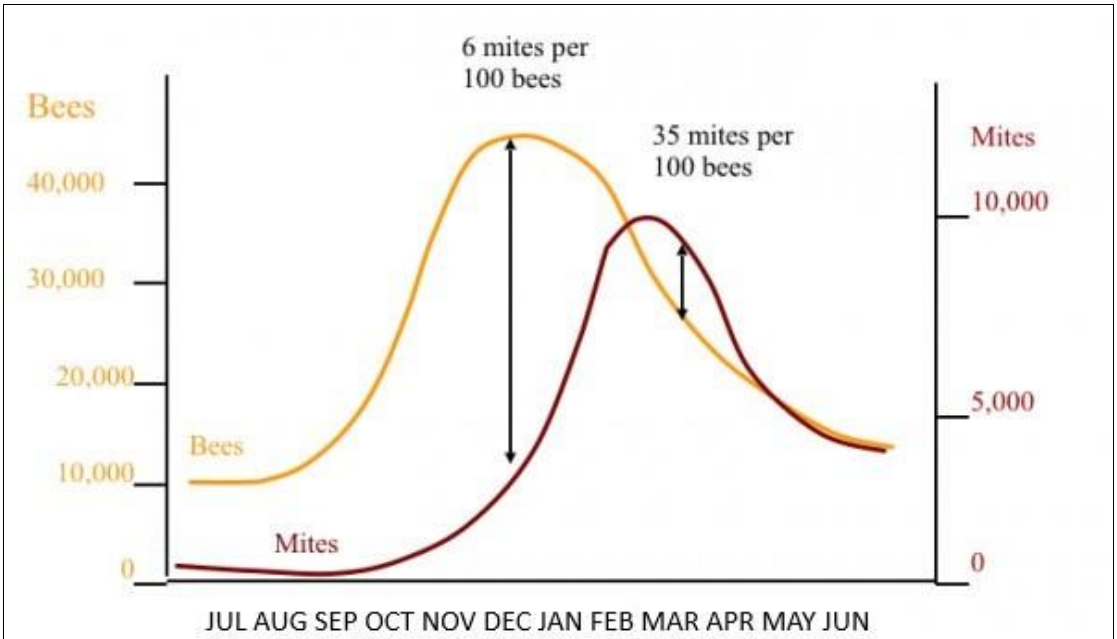

Figure 1. Simplified bee and mite population growth curves for a temperate climate. The mite growth curve lags behind the bee curve. Note how the number of mites per hundred bees greatly increases in Autumn. A colony is unlikely to survive an Autumn infestation rate this high.

From AHBIC June 2024 newsletter

Varroa Warriors Group With Organic Approach

By John Kennedy

Two beekeepers in Orange NSW have launched the Varroa Warriors group to discuss organic ways of treating their hives.

They are Julia Halbarat and Shelby Ashelford, both backyard beekeepers in the NSW central west.

Ms Ashelford is quoted as saying she doesn't wish to put chemicals in her hives and that we are not giving time for the bees to build up a natural resistance to the mite. or find other solutions, some in application overseas.

They met originally through the local Orange Bee Group, but according to a Facebook post say they are working with academics and citizen scientists everywhere in the expectation that the mite will continue to spread across the country.

ANU Professor Sasha Mikheyev said she is working with them as part of the research group The Australian Bee Observation Network.

According to an ABC regional radio report the two are "absolutely willing to work with any recreational or commercial beekeepers to see what kind of assistance they need with the aim of holding educational workshops and will work with special local beekeeper groups to make everyone feel included.

They say "there are options for beekeepers to treat their hives and we have two treatments currently available and another applied for – we are trying to increase organic options as well as teaching other non-chemical options available",

Apart from their Facebook where you can check out Bee Natural Beekeeping Varroa Warriors they have an email contact BnBvarroawarriors@gmail.com

Deadline for copy for the August journal is 10pm on Thursday 1st of August 2024

MATED QUEEN BEE ORDERS

Max, of Bendigo Branch V.A.A. is now accepting orders for queens to be paid for and collected at the Field Day.

To Order: Contact Max 03 5446 7911
or email– maunderjmcv@bigpond.com

Order soon to avoid disappointment.

Bees must be paid for by 1.00 p.m., or they will be sold. Once paid they can be marked to be picked up later before you leave the Field Day..

In the event of cancellation for any reason, arrangements may be made to pay and pick them up in Bendigo.

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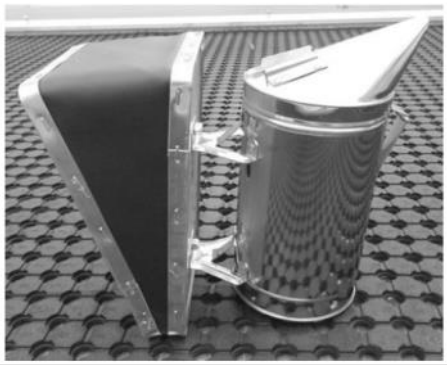

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Agriculture Victoria: Apiary team
Website: Honey bees | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria
Website:
www.agricultre.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/honey-bees
To report a suspect exotic please call: Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881
For enquiries and endemic disease notification please use:
Ph: 136 186
Email honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au.
The Varroa project team can also be contacted at the above email.

For enquiries related to permits and movement restrictions:
Email honeybee.permits@agriculture.vic.gov.au
For beekeeper registration please log onto BeeMAX
www.bees.agriculture.vic.gov.au
or call the Bee Registration Helpline 1800 356 761

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Karyn Di Florio
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If you can't reach an Officer and need to talk to someone urgently, please call the Customer Service Centre: Ph: 136 186

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www.honeybee.org.au

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Annie.stoddart@agrifutures.com.au

VFF State Beekeeping Branch:
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Mob: 0408 592 091

Collingwood Childrens' Farm Apiary Open 10.30-3.30
2nd & 4th Sunday of month.
collingwoodbees@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/collingwoodbees

The Australian Bee Journal welcomes contributions from beekeepers and others for inclusion in the journal. Please send your original bee and honey related photos, articles, handy hints, anecdotes, club activities etc to abjeditors@yahoo.com

Photo: Geoff Jackson

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VAA Inc Regional Groups

Bendigo Branch:
Secretary: Peta Dawe
bbvaasecretary@gnail.com
Chair: Jamie Trimby
bbvaachair@gmail.com
Treasurer: Carol Maunder
bbvaatreasurer@gmail.com
General Information Q&A
Meetings - *1st Wed. each month (except Jan & Dec)*
Dinner at 6.00pm *(optional)*
Meeting at 7.00 pm.
Lakeside Hotel, Bendigo.
Executive Committee Meeting:
3rd Wed month as required.
Venue: As notified.
Please register to attend all Meetings

Melbourne Section:
Secretary, Rob Kerr
Ph: 0421 078 387
Vaamelbournesection@hotmail.com
www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/Melbourne-Section
Information/ Education Meetings: from 7:30 pm the last Thursday of each month except December
Location: Church of Christ,
1 The Avenue, Surry Hills.

Sunraysia Branch:
Trevor Monson,
Ph: 03 5024 8674.
monsonshoney@bigpond.com

VAA Inc. Library Trust
Secretary: Russell Goodman,
Ph 03 9735 3836

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Ph: 0400 083 582
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North Eastern Apiarists' Association Inc. (NEAA Inc.):
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secretary.neaa@gmail.com

"J" Beekeeping Club Inc.
35 Duncan's Lane, Diggers Rest
Meet on the 2nd Wednesday each month at 7pm

Southside Beekeepers Club:
Secretary: Ted Cottle
Ph: 0428 429 547
ted@southsidebeekeepers.com.au
7.30pm on the 4th Wed each month at Monterey Secondary College,
21 Silvertop St, Frankston North

Geelong Beekeepers Club
Pres: Stephen Fridey
Ph: 0401 897 579
info@geelongbeekeepersclub.org.au
Meetings third Friday of the month at Belmont Masonic Centre,
25 Regent Street, Belmont

Latrobe Valley Beekeepers Assoc.
President: Sean-Paul Smith
LatrobeValleyBees@gmail.com
Meets 7-9pm first Tuesday each month, Old Moe Netball Courts,
99 Savages Rd. Moe
P.O. Box 323 Newborough 3825
Mob: 0466 041 199

Woodend Bee-Friendly Society
An action group of the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group
E: wbfs@mrsg.org.au

South Gippsland Beekeepers Inc. Secretary: Anna Jones
Mob: 0411 770 062
secretary@sgbeekeepers.org.au
Web:http://www.southgippslandbeekeepers.org.au/
Meetings: second Thursday of the month at St Peters Anglican Church Hall, Cnr McCartin St. & Bruce St., Leongatha

Melbourne Beekeepers Club Inc:
Web:melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au
E: secretary@melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au

Northwestern Bee Club Inc.
President: Roger Mitchell
Mob. 0407 427 431
northwesternbeeclub@gmail.com
Web: https://www.nwbee.club/

Mornington Peninsula Beekeepers Association :
P.O. Box 186, Mornington, 3931
Ph: 0401 965 558
E: admin@mpba.org.au
Monthly MPBA Club Meeting - 4th Wednesday of every month at 7pm Mornington Park Pavilion, 9 Flinders Drive, Mornington

Moonee Valley Beekeepers Club Inc. (MVBC Inc.)
Secretary: Paul Kucera
mvbeekeepersclub@gmail.com
Meets at 7pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month at Maribyrnong Park Bowls Club, 195 Holmes Rd, Moonee Ponds, VIC 3039

WerriBeeks Inc.
President: Carmel Gerdsen
Secretary: Helen Morland
Treasurer: Debbie Conway
E: werribeeks@gmail.com

John van Weeghel

Do you have photos of bee or honey related subjects?

The Australian Bee Journal would love some of your photos for use in the journal and on the VAA website.

Please send to abjeditors@yahoo.com

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Contact: Steve or Jodie Goldsworthy

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majarrad@gmail.com
Beemanhoney.com.au

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Ph: 07 3712 8224
0419 431 652
Contact: Stephen Covey

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Ph: 03 5152 2180
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Alan Redpath
redpaths@redpaths.com.au
www.redpaths.com.au

The deadline for the August 2024 Australian Bee Journal is 10pm on Thurs. 1st of August

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NEW MEMBERS

Amanda Collins
Peter McWhinney
Richard Raleigh

CONDOLENCES

We were saddened to learn of the passing of long-time VAA member **Brian Rich**
Brian was a commercial beekeeper in Maryborough and was also a past Board member of our Association. On behalf of the VAA we send his family and friends our condolences

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