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AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

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Vice President's Report	5
Leaving Beekeeping: What To Consider	6
New Beekeeping Tools	7
VAA Recreational Conference	8
Bee Tourism: A Value Adding Opportunity	9
NEAA Autumn Pack Down Day	10
Bendigo Branch VAA Report	11
Autumn Hive Preparation	12
A Taste Of Honey Explained	13
Can You Identify This Tree?	14
AHBIC CEO Report Extracts	15
Sensing Sickness	16
VAA Melbourne Section Report	20
Upcoming Industry Events	20/24/30/35
New Book Releases	25
Bee Pest Blitz In April	27
AHBIC Industry Update	28
The Long Wait For Bees To Return To Grasslands	31
Contacts	32/33
Classifieds / Members / Index of Advertisers	34

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Wax comb in olive tree

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Statements expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the VAA Inc or the editor.
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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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Recreational beekeeping

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 www.vicbeekeepers.com.au
- Discounts for beekeeping services and products, including insurance
- Borrowing rights to the extensive VAA library
- Voting rights at VAA regional group meetings and the annual VAA state conference
- Opportunity to participate in and contribute to VAA sub-committees
- Opportunity to meet and share ideas with other beekeepers at local group meetings, field days, shows and conferences
- Opportunity to contribute to advocacy to government and development of policy on beekeeping

Membership Rates

Up to 100 hives (1 vote): \$93

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Partner membership is \$20 less in each category and includes all rights except receipt of journal

How to join

Join online at

www.vicbeekeepers.com.au

or email

vaa@vicbeekeepers.com.au

to request a membership form.



www.vicbeekeepers.com.au

Vice President's Report

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the leadership of John van Weeghel, who has recently stepped down from all positions after serving as our President for the past three years. While John will humbly share credit for achievements as a team effort, I have seen him be the first to roll up his sleeves and tackle the most difficult tasks one by one.

Under his leadership, the VAA is in a much stronger position for his determination. As a commercial beekeeper, he represented our sector at the highest level with great dedication. Thank you, John, for your commitment and service.

As the days grow shorter and the crisp air signals the changing season, we, as beekeepers, turn our focus to winter preparations. This year, however, is unlike any other. The presence of Varroa destructor in Victoria has sent a tremor through our beekeeping community, but if there's one thing we know, it's that beekeepers are by nature resilient and don't back down from a challenge.

Our priority remains clear: support all those who step forward in the early detection of Varroa. Your courage sets the foundation for the beekeeping community's strength. The VAA is committed to standing by all beekeepers, ensuring they have the resources, guidance, and encouragement to continue their vital work. We are not just reacting to this challenge - we are actively shaping the future of beekeeping in Victoria.

To that end, our focus on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is more critical than ever. The development of our individual and collective Varroa management strategy will be key to ensuring our bees remain strong as more of us find Varroa in our hives into next season. We will continue to refine our approach with best practices, ensuring our industry remains at the forefront of sustainable and effective beekeeping.

Amidst these challenges, we also take time to celebrate our community's achievements. The VAA Recreational Beekeeper Conference, held on 29th March 2025, was a resounding success. Under the leadership of our Vice President, Andrew Wootton, and his outstanding team, the event set a new benchmark for excellence. The conference brought together world-class presenters and insightful content, reinforcing our commitment to education, innovation, and collaboration. The knowledge shared will empower our members to navigate the road ahead with confidence and expertise.

We now turn our heads to June 2025 with several key apiary sector events planned in Beechworth at the Grand Oaks Resort:

- **11, 12 & 13 June:** VAA Annual Conference & AGM (Wed evening, Thurs., Fri.)
- **10 - 11 June:** Crop Pollinators Association of Australia Annual Conference (Tues., Wed. day)
- **14 June:** Advanced Varroa Management Training Workshop. (Sat. 9:00am – 3:00pm)

The VAA's conference-organising committee is putting forth a strong effort behind the scenes to deliver a great conference with great speakers supported by fantastic sponsors, so stay tuned.

In the meantime, we continue to celebrate the Hive-

Meet initiative, a livestream on the first Thursday of each month from 8 PM to 9 PM.

Lindsay Callaway



e.Maculata. Late March morning, there is nectar (shiny) in the bottom half of the fruit cup

Photo: Jamie Trimby



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Leaving Beekeeping - What Do I Need To Consider?

Karyn Di Florio,
Bee Biosecurity Officer for Agriculture Victoria

The introduction to Australia of the exotic pest Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) will see the future of beekeeping change for all beekeepers. Whether you are a beekeeper of one hive or hundreds of hives the next few years will see the industry face new challenges as Varroa establishes across the state, and an increased workload for all.

The Transition to Management (T2M) project is working to increase the resilience and capacity of the industry to manage their hives with Varroa mites. For some beekeepers, this additional workload may mean beekeeping is no longer feasible for them and therefore decide to leave the industry.

The extra workload on managing hives with Varroa may not be the only reason beekeepers decide to exit the industry. Some alternative reasons for why you can no longer keep bees might be:

- Loss of interest or moving and cannot move your hives with you
- Health or aging and unable to physically work your bees
- Wanting to downsize
- Wanting to leave the industry or retire

If you do decide beekeeping is no longer for you, you must ensure you find a new home for your bees. This might mean selling or giving the bees away before they deteriorate and create a nuisance.

Gifting or Selling Hives

In preparation for gifting or selling your hives there are a few things to consider.

1. Hive Health

Ensure your colony is healthy. Having a healthy hive is essential to beekeeping and will be what the new beekeeper expects. Be prepared that the new owner may want to conduct an inspection of your hive/s prior to purchase to visually confirm any information you are providing them about the state of health of the hive.

2. Hive Records

Where did you obtain your hives and how long have you had them? Ensure you can provide a history of the hive by completing a [Vendors Declaration](https://honeybee.org.au/) from AHBIC (<https://honeybee.org.au/>).

Are all your hive inspections and mite checks up to date as per the Biosecurity Code of Practice Inspecting Hives?

If you have over 50 hives, have you conducted an inspection and Honey Culture Test for American Foulbrood (AFB) in this apiary or any of your other apiaries?

Do you have records of your inspections and mite checks, including dates and results of such inspections? Victorian beekeepers may be able to provide such records from their BeeMAX online diary at <https://bees.agriculture.vic.gov.au/>.



3. Hive Components and Equipment

What to do with unwanted hive components or equipment? It may be that if you are selling hives the new owner will take/purchase any hive components and equipment also. You may have to sell or dispose of these separately though. Any components or equipment should be in good working order and free of degradation and pests or disease.

Have the items been sterilised by gamma-irradiation to make them disease free? As there is no effective way to confirm if used hive components are carrying disease organisms you may need to provide a vendor declaration and history of the equipment and components, including any gamma-irradiation treatments.

Anything not suitable for sale or gifting should be disposed of appropriately. Do not leave items exposed to robber bees.

Honey Bee Code of Practice can be found on the Bee Aware website <https://beeaware.org.au/code-of-practice/>



Hive Disposal and Cancelling Registration

In Victoria, beekeepers must notify the Bees Registrar in writing within 7 days when a hive is:

- Disposed of
- Sold
- Given away.

This is a requirement under the [Livestock Disease Control Act 1994](#) and [Livestock Disease Control Regulations 2017](#). Victorian beekeepers can do this through their BeeMAX online diary.

Victorian Beekeepers can find information and appropriate forms to use on the Selling or Giving away a beehive at agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Neglected Hives



Neglected hives can become diseased and a source of infection for other colonies nearby. Neglected hives can also have a negative impact on the industry if they swarm or become a public nuisance. Follow the Honey Bee Code of Practice protecting hives and do not allow

(Continued on page 7)

Leaving Beekeeping, cont'd

(Continued from page 6)

your hives to become exposed or neglected.

If you sight any abandoned or neglected hives, please report these to your local Apiary Officer in your state.

In Victoria for further information or to report neglected hives contact Agriculture Victoria on 136 186 or email honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au.

NATIONAL BEE BIOSECURITY PROGRAM



The National Bee Biosecurity Program is funded by the honey bee industry through a component of the agricultural honey levy, with state governments contributing in-kind resources. Plant Health Australia manages the program on behalf of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council.

NEW BEEKEEPING TOOLS FROM THORNE

By John Kennedy

Thorne, the leading retail bee goods supplier in the UK, has released two new beekeeping tools.

Manufactured in Sweden by the KT Tools group they are a Hive Tool and Scraper for scraping down hive parts and frames to remove obstructions including wax or propolis etc., and a Frame Cleaner

The KT range is named in honour of their original designer, beekeeper Keith Tinsley

The Hive Tool & Scraper is 250mm long with a 50mm blade, perfect for scraping hive frames or crown boards. The similarly sized Frame Cleaner has a rotatable head in a triangular shape, enabling it to reach into nooks and grannies like frame grooves to clean them out.

Thorne's say they are functional tools for the beekeeper with ergonomic handles, and once you try them you won't go back.

Replacement blades are also available.

Each tool retails at about 30 pounds sterling each, or Thorne's are offering both at 45 pounds.

They also offer an instructive four minute video on their use, available from www.thorne.co.uk.

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Second Annual VAA Recreational Conference

A GREAT SUCCESS

By John Kennedy

Held on Saturday 29 March at the Hume Global Learning Centre in Sunbury, the second Annual VAA Recreational Beekeepers Conference was a great success.

First the venue was well chosen – it was commodious, easy to access with plenty of adjacent parking, and the audio and visual presentation resources were right up to date.

Even the catering, a lunch in a box, and morning and afternoon teas were right up to event expectations.

Entertaining presentations by the two hosts, former AgVic personnel Allie Driessen and Joe Reardon, provided just the right amount of fun and information.

The Conference was also well supported by about ten trade hardware and services vendors who had plenty of equipment on show and for sale to patrons – mostly with discounts.

The attendance I guess to be just shy of the maximum of 200 interested beekeepers, which must have pleased the organising committee headed by Dr Andrew Wootton, and would have satisfied the accountants.

There was also a gift bag for guests inclusive of some useful bits of beekeeping hardware – notably a green plastic drone comb from Nuplas.

The speakers – 13 in total, including two from interstate by zoom, were up to the mark and provided plenty of technical meat for attendees to digest.

Emily Remnant from the University of NSW, where she is senior lecturer in the Bee Lab, provided an excellent account of the Mite in NSW and what we might expect when it gets into Victoria in significant numbers.

While from Perth, Dr Md Khairul Islam who is working for Y-Trace Pty Ltd, is using a dedicated analysis lab on the authentication of honey, especially the unique WA varieties of Karri and Murri plus Manuka, to develop a novel analytic approach to identify nectar signatures, identify adulteration, and quantify the bioactivity of honey.

The post presentation questions to both remote speakers confirmed their relevance and value.

The remaining line up all had loads of local experi-



Heating your frames as a practical solution for killing off infected varroa mite frames may be an option.

Speaker Mike Allerton had his hardware for this technique on show in the trades area. For more information see www.varroacontrolaustralia.com.au.



Principal of Hivekeepers Simon had his Micro Honey Harvester, which employs eight plastic cassettes in a standard frame to harvest small volumes of honey. He says “harvest honey in small amounts from hive to jar in under five minutes”. The Hivekeeper’s project is seeking start-up funding by Kickstarter with sponsors receiving the unit on manufacture. Steve told me he had received 40 funding interests from seven countries in the first day the offer was open. It will remain open to start up funding for about another month see www.hivekeepers.com.

ence and knowledge of beekeeping including Olivia Ducommun-Dit-Verron, who is a PhD candidate working with Dr Travis Beddoe at Latrobe University to develop solutions for American and European Foul Brood with a commercial product a likely outcome.

Liz Frost from the NSW DPI provided a detailed account of the varroa mite in NSW and its seemingly inevitable arrival throughout Victoria,

Leading practitioners covered two separate afternoon themes which were highlighted by experienced beekeepers including Peter Adams and Angelique Drew on biosecurity.

The VAA’s own Tino Corsetti spoke on bee swarms and was followed by Andrew Wootton on queens and their introduction.

Steven Davey, another experienced beekeeper spoke about winter welfare of your bees, while Mike Love unveiled on his mastering of comb and section honey production.

Mike Allerton revealed a heat treatment method for hives as a response to the varroa mite, with his unique equipment also on show in the trades section.

Tony Wilsmore provided good guidance for anyone who sees making a business from their small scale beekeeping, with some good practical business tips.

But the star of the Conference was undoubtedly Honey Merchant’s and the Italian School of Honey Sensory Analysis qualified honey sommelier, Jessica Locarnini, who provided a number of interesting examples of how her honey producing clients had presented their honey products for maximum marketing benefit and price effect.

For those beekeepers unable to attend and for those seeking a refresher I understand that all speaker presentations will be available on the VAA Facebook page in due course.

The big question is will there be a third annual VAA Recreational Conference in 2026?

So, stay tuned to your VAA information sources for advance information.

Just remember that both prior events have delivered great value and information, including the opportunity to talk informally with other experienced practitioners.

Bee Tourism As A Value Adding Opportunity

By John Kennedy

Have you ever thought about using your bees and hives as a value added income opportunity?

Either on your own site or working in conjunction with a local tourist service provider?

Well, if you are looking for inspirations, the Saffire Freycinet Luxury Lodge on Tasmania's East Coast would be a good place to investigate and maybe inspire you to build your own ideas.

Saffire Freycinet is a multiple award winning premium visitor and accommodation business with stay rates quoted from \$450 to \$700 plus per night.

In recent weeks it has received great mainstream daily media coverage for what it calls the Beekeeping Experience.

Saffire Freycinet has always offered guest experiences that make up some of the signature natural attractions that are unique to the east coast of Tasmania.

Now beekeeping has been added as one of the small-group hands-on experiences it invites its guest to participate in.

The offer involves the resort's horticulturist Rob Barker, who also runs his own beekeeping and honey enterprise which trades as Wild Hives Honey locally.

The idea is that guests are offered a bee suit and the opportunity to join in and watch Rob Barker work on his hives.

A comment from Saffire resort reads – "Rob turned up at Saffire one day selling his locally produced honey.

"We tried it, realised it was exceptional, and began using it in our kitchen immediately - but it was Rob's passion for bees and the creation of honey that helped us realise there was a bigger opportunity here for our guests".

Their menu includes honey locally sourced from Tassie vegetation that they say is completely distinctive, with an unrepeatable flavour profile and also has the highly sought after medicinal qualities of manuka honey.

Saffire Freycinet say they also attract international guests who say that their local honey has a terroir which their visitors don't experience in Europe or the United States.

As an aside, Rob Barkers own website (www.wildhives.com.au) tells how he apparently began his bee experience by collecting one swarm – a community service he maintains. He says, 'I am always on the lookout for wild genetics as I find them in swarms and wild hives'.

Rob now runs 100 hives and, on his website, offers five varietal honey choices, all at \$15.95 per 250 gram jar.

Saffire Freycinet also offers honey from its own hives sourced from what it says, "is the abundant and medicinal *leptospermum* (manuka), fragrant *kunzea ambigua* and *bursaria spinosa* (prickly box), the flavour of resulting honey is ever changing with the strong seasonal variation, and unlike monofloral varieties often found elsewhere".

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NEAA Autumn Pack Down Day A Great Success

By John Kennedy

The value to beekeepers of all levels in attending an event where expert beekeepers demonstrate their skills and employ best practices was demonstrated on Sunday 23 March.

This was the staging of the Autumn Packdown Day organised by the North Eastern Apiarists' Association, and held at Mudgegonga (between Myrtleford and Yackandandah).

Here the NEAA President, Don Whitehead, provided 20 of his hives on an ideal site for the demonstration.

Amongst the leading beekeeping exponents Don, Moss McCallum and David Briggs provided guidance on assessing the current condition of your hives, knowing the threshold number of bees you will need in your hive, together with the assessed resources of honey, nectar and pollen to enable your hives to safely negotiate the approaching winter period and emerge strong enough for the next spring.

The day was supported with over 80 registrations, with quite a strong participation by well-established beekeepers, as well as recreational beekeepers keen to learn.

The hives were in conditions ranging from strong two box hives with likely adequate food stores, to single box hives only recently established (presumably from earlier in the season splits) who had limited resources of both bees and food stocks – and thus were likely to need further assistance to get through winter.

There were also assessments of queen condition and the current brood levels, given that for many beekeepers Anzac Day is judged as the effective date for autumn/winter shut down,

Those attending broke up into small group to watch one of the experienced beekeepers and hosts for the day open each hive and assess the hive condition.

The day was also joined by Varroa Development Officers Ashton Edgley and Tony Wilsmore who demonstrated effective practical alcohol or dish-washing liquid varroa wash tests, as well as discussing wider varroa mite topics as at present in Victoria we have two assessed entries to date.

There was also an adequate description provided on the type of feeding devices and sugar syrup recipes that

individual beekeepers could choose to aid their bees, plus plenty of discussion generally about what has been a poor to only average beekeeping season in many districts of Victoria.

For instance, Don Whitehead commented to me that his own (approximately 1400 hive) beekeeping business had had an average season.

But he had only needed to travel his hives within a 150 kilometres radius of his home base to find flowering resources.

In previous seasons he might have migrated his hive travelling widely across Victoria and even into the Riverina for adequate results,

The NEAA is widely recognised (and now about to celebrate its official 70th year since foundation) and always stages well supported events with practical solutions for beekeepers.

I am delighted to advise that for its next official Conference and AGM, celebrating 70 years of the NEAA on Friday 2 May, they will be bringing Frank Lindsay from his Wellington, NZ home to Australia as the keynote speaker.

Frank, who was recently acknowledged with an official ONZM (Order of New Zealand Merit) Award for services to beekeeping, has an outstanding knowledge of varroa from its first arrival to major infestation and industry disruption, to management and practical solutions to the mite as experienced in New Zealand,

Frank was a commercial beekeeper for almost 50 years, but I understand he still maintains about 70 hives in his retirement.

His presentation will be of interest and relevant to all beekeepers seeking knowledge, as we are yet to know about and experience the full gravity of a varroa mite infestation here.

His presence, talk and advice at this coming NEAA event will make it a must-attend event for all beekeepers at all scales who are concerned about the future of varroa and to managing or finding potential solutions in Victoria.

The NEAA event will be held at Remel 185 at 399 Whorouly Road, Whorouly on

Friday 2 May from 1 to 5 pm, with the dinner at 6pm at a cost of \$80 per person.

For more information, or to join, or to register for this next NEAA function contact info@neaa.com.au



As a fully suited event the NEAA Autumn Pack Down day at Mudgegonga between Myrtleford and Yackandandah presented leading commercial beekeepers assessing the condition of both two and single box hives and their likely condition or needs ahead of their shutdown for the winter on or about Anzac Day. NEAA President Don Whitehead provided 20 of his hives for assessment as to bee numbers, current condition, likely needs and feeding solutions in readiness for winter. The day was solidly attended by about 80 beekeeping enthusiasts both recreational and commercial with leading beekeepers on hand for the practical demonstrations and assessments.

VAA Conference and AGM Wed 11th to Fri 13th June 2025

Bendigo Branch VAA Report

The month of March has been quite challenging for our beekeepers in and around Greater Bendigo. With a total of 18mm of rain for the month we are hoping April will provide more rain. Our local commercial guys are enjoying the grey box honey flow at present and it may be the last before pack down.

Some of our members have been out and about in the community providing all the good oil on bees.

Stafford and I were guest speakers at the monthly get together for the Roundabout Garden Club. The ladies were very interested in what they could do to look after the bees in their gardens. They also enjoyed tasting the different types of honey.

A group from the branch attended the Recreational Beekeepers Conference in Sunbury. The comments from the group were that they all thought it was well facilitated and they all got something from the conference.

Some highlights were the presentations from Emily Remnant, Olivia Ducommun-Dit-Verron and Elizabeth Frost. Also, there is nothing like interacting with other beekeepers.

The following day Jessica, Jamie, Graeme, Stafford and I attended the Sustainability Festival in Bendigo where we had a small display of everything bees. This included our live display hive which is a constant winner with children. They are just so fascinated in watching the bees at work. There was a constant flow of people coming to our tent wanting to find out about bees, plants and beekeeping. Overall, it was a good day for the branch.

Next month we will have our annual general meeting and the last Sunday of the month will be our pack down day.

Peta Dawe



The happy group from Bendigo at the Recreational Conference.



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Autumn Hive Preparation

In a fixed apiary location, observing and being aware of nectar and pollen resources that your bees are bringing in, it is very important during a dearth predominantly in summer (January/February in my location) drier periods to guide the beekeeper if and when their hives may need supplemental feeding to help get them through.

It is just as important to have a good appreciation of the stored resources leading up to Autumn pack-down for stationary hives in colder climates. Ensuring hives have the appropriate number of frames of honey going into winter is critical to the bees survival through wintering and not starving. Like most aspects of beekeeping the variables are numerous, usually there is no definitive quantity of frames of honey to ensure a hives survival. Different races of European bees maintain different winter populations in entering winter and the Spring build up. I am fairly confident all my hives would be best described as a mixture of races of *Apis Mellifera* a.k.a. bitsas or mongrels. I know one hive in particular retains a larger population than all the others and requires more stores (honey) going into winter.

The general rule when needing to feed bees prior to Autumn pack-down is to feed a ratio of two parts sugar to one-part water to encourage the bees to store the syrup rather than laying extra brood, increasing the population. In determining the stored assets in your hives it is advantageous to consider the fresh nectar the bees are bringing in, and how to manage the timing and ability of

the bees to dehydrate nectar in cooler weather to reduce the moisture content to become capped honey. Wet frames or uncapped nectar can be problematic to bee health, too much moisture creates additional stress on the bees if they are unable to manage moisture in the hive. Attaining an understanding of the available nectar and pollen being collected is also beneficial, allowing sufficient space in mid to late autumn for the bees to gather nectar from Ironbark, Grey Box or Yellow Gum. Combined with poor or minimal pollen the bees can maintain population with a reasonable nectar flow. Any combination of malnutrition, eating unripe honey going into or during winter can cause dysentery, being the catalyst for disease and hive death.

The majority of hives around north-central Victoria are boxed down to a single full depth hive in late April, early May depending on seasonal variations.

On Sunday the 27th of April Bendigo Branch are hosting an educational day consisting of theory and practical demonstration on Autumn pack-down.

Max and Chris will guide us through a hive inspection, checking population, stores, removal of excess frames, supers, removal of queen excluder, mite check and answering all hive and bee related questions.

Free for Bendigo members, \$10 non-members, BYO suit, more details at the AGM on Wednesday 2nd of April, Facebook or email the Bendigo Branch secretary.

All the best in Beekeeping,

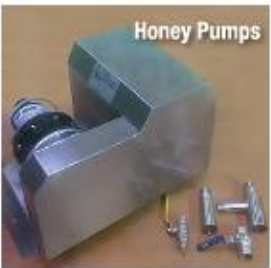
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A Taste Of Honey Explained

By John Kennedy

The UK's BIBBA (Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association) has just run an excellent Webinar presentation entitled *A Taste of Honey*.

The talk focuses on the science of Sensory Analysis to profile honey as a diverse variety and foodstuff. Focusing on what was learned by attending an international honey tasting course (the Italian one held in Bologna) - broadening the presenters taste palate experience in a careful structured way (also called 'organoleptic or gustatory appreciation'); and fortunately, it is already accessible on the web by Facebook.

It runs for over an hour and is recommended for consultation by all levels of beekeepers and especially for anyone who may be interested in judging honey, or even gaining a better understanding of what honey should really taste like,

The Webinar presentation is delivered by Peter Lewis, a UK artisan beekeeper with 20 years of beekeeping experience.

He is also a highly credentialed Chief Judge and Steward at a number of UK honey shows, most notably the Great Yorkshire Show which has been staged for 140 years.

He is also accredited by the American Honey Tasting Society and is a certificated Welsh Honey Judge.

He was funded by a number of regional UK bee groups to attend the noted Bologna, Italy course on the Sensory Analysis of Honey in 2018.

In just over an hour Lewis provides a highly valuable discussion on honey types and sources in the UK and wider Europe, including the use of the Tasting Wheel developed by the International Honey Commission.

His broad ranging presentation covers honey adulteration and its specific qualities.

Lewis notes that the Bologna course was introduced by Italy's 35,000 to 40,000 beekeepers who found their production was poorly rewarded as they were facing low and unprofitable honey prices. They realised if they could identify the specific features and flavour profiles of their local honey it would lead to a better outcome and they would receive higher prices for their production, and a marketing advantage.

The unique features of closer to home products like NZ Manuka and Tasmanian Leatherwood are also discussed,

The hour or so you invest in viewing the BIBBA Peter Lewis webinar will enhance your understanding of honey as a product.

Importantly it will guide you on how your honey production can be better presented to the public, and probably at a higher or premium price.

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Photos top left & above: David Mangan
Unknown street planting, an Autumn flowering
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AHBIC Newsletter CEO Report Extracts

The big dry continues across southern parts of Australia affecting honey production across SA and Vic. What looked like promising honey flows in Victoria have now been revised down due to the onset of cooler nights. Fires have also impacted many beekeeping sites across Vic and SA causing damage which will have flow on effects into next season. Conversely floods and endless rain in QLD and northern NSW has created its own set of issues for beekeepers in those areas.

At AHBIC over the last month we have continued our work in the Varroa Transition to Management Program, met with DAFF in Canberra to discuss imported honey, liaised with the APVMA and varroa treatment manufacturers, and attended BerryQuest, National Pollination Strategy workshop and a Manuka Honey Association strategic planning day.

Varroa Treatments

Apivar product carrying Australian labels will hit our shores in the coming weeks. This will trigger the existing amitraz APVMA permit to be replaced, affecting the existing minor use permit conditions. For both the amitraz products, the new permit allows only existing stock in-country to be sold over the next 2 years, and no new stock will be allowed to be imported from 31 March onwards. In the short term there should be good availability of both products, but no further Apitraz product being able to be imported we may see product shortage in the longer term.

It is my understanding that a registration application

for Apitraz has been submitted but will take some time until approval will be granted through APVMA. Hopefully there will be enough stock of Apitraz (with overseas labels) in the country to not see any supply issues to beekeepers, but time will tell.

National Varroa Transition to Management

During the prolonged negotiations for the T2M program AHBIC was successful in arguing “exceptional circumstances” and had the program extended from 12 months to 24 months. However, this extension didn’t include an extension in budget.

As a result, we are seeing the first of some of the Varroa Development Officer (VDO’s) roles ending specifically in NSW first. However, due to T2M budget savings NSW has been able extend 3 VDO (down from 9) roles through to the end of December, just short of the T2M Program end. As part of transition away from the transition project NSW DPIRD have been able to secure NSW Treasury funding for additional 3 Bee Biosecurity Officers to help continue the beekeeper engagement within NSW. This is great for the NSW industry and hopefully other jurisdictions follow with similar investments.

Red Dwarf Honey Bee Incursion in WA

A further 2 colonies and 1 abandoned nest have been found and destroyed, still within close proximity of the original detection. There are still 3 active sites. Further surveillance continues weather permitting.

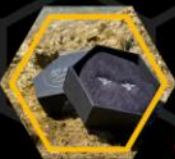
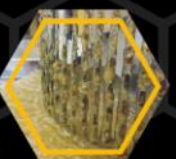
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Sensing Sickness

Study supports new method for boosting bee health

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Beekeepers in the United States lost more than 55 percent of managed colonies last year - the highest loss rate since the Apiary Inspectors of America began determining them in 2011. A new study from University of Vermont scientists and international collaborators supports a novel method for testing hygienic behavior in honey bees that could promote breeding more disease resistant colonies in the future.

"Beekeepers are losing bees at a rate that they say is unsustainable," says Samantha Alger, director of the Vermont Bee Lab at the UVM and lead author of the study. "In the '80s, beekeepers lost colonies 10-12 percent of the time ... but now it's like 30-50 percent. Imagine that happening to someone who's a cattle farmer or a pig farmer every year."

Honey bee populations remain relatively steady despite heavy losses because beekeepers are good at breeding new bees, she explains.

But that comes at the expense of time and resources for beekeepers, as well as risk for native pollinators. Pathogens in managed honey bees can spill over into wild bee populations. Alger's lab works with beekeepers to breed hardy, disease resistant honey bee colonies which they can sell to hobbyists and professional beekeepers. Helping beekeepers identify hygienic behavior - the ability to identify unhealthy brood - is part of this process.

"It's definitely more desirable for a beekeeper to have bees that are better adapted at taking care of their diseases themselves rather than using chemical treatments and interventions to try to reduce these pathogen loads, which of course may have negative impacts on the bees," she says. "Now the trick is how does a beekeeper identify a colony that is really hygienic? And there's various tests that you can perform for that and this UBeeO is sort of a novel way of testing for it."

Alger's team recently studied a screening tool developed by scientists at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro that tests colonies for hygienic behavior by mimicking the pheromones emitted by sick or dying bees. The researchers found the UBeeO test can identify colonies resistant to several pests and pathogens that can decimate bee populations such as *Vairimorpha* (known to many beekeepers as Nosema) and fungal infections including chalkbrood. They published their findings in *Frontiers in Bee Science* April 2.

"UBeeO has been known to identify colonies that are able to better resist Varroa mites, but it had not been used to look at other pest or pathogens," Alger says. "We found this new assay could be used to identify colonies that are resistant to these other stressors."

How it works

Picture a honey bee colony. Inside the boxed hive are frames with hexagonal holes where a queen bee lays one egg inside each cell. As the eggs hatch, nurse bees feed the developing larvae and eventually cap over the cells with wax to protect them as they mature into

adults. When nurse bees detect a developing bee is sick or dead, they will uncapped the cell and remove the pupa to protect the rest of the hive. This is called hygienic behavior and pheromones play an important role in this process.

"Other folks have identified death pheromones, these compounds that are associated with death," says Kaira Wagoner, a research scientist at UNC Greensboro and co-author of the study. "The famous biologist E.O. Wilson was one of the first to do this. He found oleic acid was emitted from dead ants. The same thing has been found with bees, and it's just likely a stronger signal - it's growing as the dead brood is basically decomposing in the cell. The signals that are coming out of unhealthy brood are different and very likely more subtle than those death pheromones."

Previous hygiene tests for beekeepers were based off the idea of testing the bees' ability to detect dead brood. One of the most common methods, the freeze brood assay, involves pouring liquid nitrogen over a section of capped cells and waiting 24 hours to see if the bees start removing the dead. The UBeeO test is different.

"Rather than using liquid nitrogen to kill the developing pupae or larvae, you are using a blend of synthetic pheromones that mimics the same chemicals that are emitted by dying or diseased brood," Alger explains. "So rather than testing the bees' ability to identify dead brood, you are testing the bees' ability to identify diseased brood, which means that this test is a little bit more selective and realistic to what bees experience."

Wagoner co-developed UBeeO during her doctoral studies after she identified chemical compounds associated with unhealthy brood odors. She co-founded Optera, (named for Hymenoptera, the order of the honey-bee), to bring UBeeO to beekeepers in the field. It became publicly available in 2024.

"It's a really young technology," Wagoner says. "We've now tested it in over 10 different countries, and there are breeding programs in at least 5 now so there's a lot more data to come."

Strength of the investigation

The study focuses on UBeeO tests performed in three geographic regions - Vermont, North Carolina, and Australia - to examine its effectiveness at recognizing colonies resistant to pathogens and disease. The UBeeO test involves spraying a section of capped cells with synthetic pheromones and then waiting two hours to see if nurse bees have started to inspect the developing bees for problems. The percentage of disturbed cells is the UBeeO score. The researchers found that higher UBeeO scores were associated with lower levels of disease load. The findings also showed various thresholds to disease resistance for common honey bee pathogens.

"What we found, at least with this Australian dataset, is they only needed to achieve a 13 percent response on the UBeeO test to be really pretty resistant to chalkbrood. In contrast, colonies need to achieve a response of 55 or 60% on the UBeeO test to be resistant to mites, Wagoner explains. "The honey bee respon-

(Continued on page 17)

Sensing Sickness, cont'd

(Continued from page 16)

siveness largely depends on how virulent or how harmful the specific disease is to the brood. Chalkbrood kills the brood, so the bees don't have to be as sensitive to detect it."

Varroa mite infection is trickier. These tiny parasitic mites were introduced about four decades ago in the United States and are vectors of disease to bee populations. They pose a significant threat to colonies and reproduce by laying eggs inside the capped over cells and feed off the developing pupa. If nurse bees don't detect a problem, Varroa mites will be released into the

hive when the young honey bee emerges. That is where hygienic behavior becomes critical since uncapping the cells disrupts the mites' life cycle.

The study also revealed the UBeeO test could identify colonies with resistance to *Vairimorpha* (previously Nosema), a disease that affects adult bees and not the developing brood. That finding has prompted new research into how hygienic behavior works to keep these *Vairimorpha* levels down.

"In the case of *Vairimorpha*, what they're doing is kind of the mystery," Alger says. "... There might be other behaviors that hygienic colonies are performing aside of what we know."



Photo: Dana Windle.
A bee on my sunflower

Photo: Jamie Trimby. Mid March, bottlebrush pollen





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VAA Melbourne Section Report

Recreational Conference 2025, Bee stings and reactions, Honey sharing, Bee virus baseline, Varroa training, harvest or hope,

A really good Rec Conference!

The 2025 Recreational Conference educated and entertained almost a hundred beekeepers at the Sunshine campus of the Hume Global Learning Centre. The organising committee are to be commended on the quality of speaker, the range of topics and the choice of venue and catering. There was a good vibe all day. You have to make it to next year's Recreational Conference.

Been stung recently?

Our Monthly Meeting in March hosted Dr Kevin Nguyen who is part of the allergy unit at Monash Medical centre. Dr Kevin ranged through the position of the honey bee on the insect family tree, the way that bee venom causes reaction, the meaning of different types of reaction and the treatments to be used. This sort of talk joins a whole lot of random bee sting facts into one coherent picture and adds the last few pieces too. I think our biggest audience for some time appreciated Dr Kevin's time and effort.

Regular honey tasting

VAA MS beekeeper honey sharing is happening at each of our meetings. So far we have had pikelets and bread to support the honey on the way to the mouth. I'm looking forward to the next batch of tasting honey from our Melbourne Section beekeepers. We are cer-

tainly getting some very nice local honeys and some from less common floral sources.

Predicting our viruses

The advent of varroa raises questions about virus transmission. In other parts of the world, the impact of viruses has changed enormously with the new infection vector of mite bites. Deformed wing virus (DWV) was a minute problem before varroa, however, the efficiency of infection rose with transmission by the mites. Now, DWV is the number one fear of beekeepers.

As part of the baselining of local viruses, I recently collected bee samples from my three hive locations and sent them off to AgVic. The bees will be mashed up and then tested for even very low levels of different viruses. Viruses that we may not have noticed may happen to use the mite as a transmission agent, and we want to be prepared.

Another survey that has been going on is the Coloss survey that is trying to understand the rate of colony losses from beekeepers. All contributions to surveys help all beekeepers to be protected more or to be better prepared when things change.

Varroa training while it's here

Varroa training continues with the National Management team conducting more training days. This service is funded for a limited time, so make sure you get to one before they are no more. This also raises the question of how we get varroa support if the current funding runs out before we actually have to face the mite ourselves.

(Continued on page 21)

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**Sunday
12th October 2025**



*"We're
beekeepers."*

VAA Melbourne Section Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 20)

The training shows us what skills and knowledge and courage we need to combat the mites, but I think that only when we have the mite in our hives will we really need the support.

How's your honey?

More anecdotal honey yield stories are giving Melbourne a reasonable season while most areas outside of Melbourne are doing it tough. Most queen bee suppliers finished up very early. Country apiaries are relying on tonnes of sugar. The exact cause will be debated, but if it's dryness or heat, we can't do much about them. If it's part of a trend, then I'd like to know which way and how steep the lines will be.

2025 Honey Competition

The VAA MS will have its honey competition at the May Meeting on Thursday 29th May 2025. This is two weeks before the VAA Conference and the VAA Honey Competition. So get into the wax refining and honey straining or whatever your target entry requires from the bag of secret methods.

Honey competitions used to be a bigger deal. The Melbourne Show, I think, does not have many entries.



*Above: Langstroth frames providing the boundaries for the KTB frame development
Below: KTB frame from between two Langstroth frames*



I'm sure I saw a large number of jars pictured in an advertisement for the Sydney Royal Show. Were they just pulling our leg?

Collingwood Apiary.

The Kenyan Top Bar (KTB) hive is up and running. We used frames from a Langstroth hive to sandwich the top bars. Then, with feeding, the bees built new straight comb from the waxed underside of the top bars. Without the guides of the frame each side, the bees are likely to build their own special design! The KTB seems to be going well and we hope to have the bees with brood in their KTB comb before winter.

Replacing the old clear plastic corrugated roofing has stopped a few leaks and let in a whole lot more light.

The flora seems to have gone early, so the bees are getting into their stores

already.

End of Season

We're into pack down and then equipment cleaning and repairs. Start your plans for next year.

Enjoy your bees,

Rob Kerr

VAA Melbourne Section Secretary



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Selected Conference Topics

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Oxalic Acid: Optimising Effectiveness | • Nutrition for honey bees |
| • Selective breeding for mite resistance | • Managing finances in challenging times |
| • Evolutionary ecology of infectious diseases | • Data & business decision-making |
| • Diagnostics for Tropilaelaps | • Condensing hives and beehive insulation |
| • Refining your business plan | • Seasonal effectiveness of varroa treatments |

Registration opens mid-April

Industry events happening during the week of the conference (same venue) :
10-11 June: CPAA Conference
14 June: Varroa Management Workshop

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By John Kennedy

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO BEEKEEPING

A number of hobbyist beekeepers aspire to grow from their original one or two hives to many multiples in the expectation that such a sideline or small beekeeping business could potentially deliver a useful living income.

From time to time there is evidence of a number of such successful business transformations being achieved locally. But guidance to effect this change is not readily available.

However, a recently released book entitled *The Complete Guide to Beekeeping*, a second edition hardback of 192 pages (an updated edition of the original first published in 1989), presents effectively a step by step guide from hives and equipment to understanding honey bees and the when and where aspects of beekeeping.

Through ten chapters or sections it takes the beekeeper through a progression of effectively a three year cycle by building up hives and bee numbers.

The likely challenges along the way like swarming, seasonal variations, harvesting and forward planning are all described.

There are also sections devoted to the products of your hives, and honey bee problems including pests and diseases, followed by bees in history, an appendix and a useful reference list.

The writer is Jeremy Evans, in collaboration with Shelia Bennett.

The Complete Guide to Beekeeping (not to be confused with another, US title, written by Roger Morse which carries the same title) seems a useful reference for the small beekeeper who aspires to grow his or her interest to a semi-commercial role, and for bee groups or clubs in particular.

A copy costs 14 pounds 95 pence plus \$A conversion and postage.

HONEY BEE BIOLOGY and Beekeeping.

By Dewey Caron and Lawrence J O Connor

Originally published by Wicwas Press in the USA.

A Third Edition hardback of 480 pages

100 Pounds Sterling plus Postage and \$A Conversion

This is a weighty publication on the why, when and how of bees and beekeeping.

It comes with glowing endorsements from a number of sources, especially from the USA, where it is a standard text for bee and beekeeping courses.

There is also one from the late Kim Flottum who says, "this book should be on the dashboard of every beekeeper's truck".

As a text it is recommended for all levels of beekeeping for clubs and societies. I guess the decision is subject to the landed cost here, as the book is a weighty 1520 grams and is likely to incur substantial postage charges.

BRAGGOTS AND ALE MEADS – subtitled *Brewing with Honey* and addressing the challenge of making masterful ales using honey and malt extract in your own kitchen.

Originally published in 2020 by Bee Plan.

A paperback of 100 pages, cost seven pounds 95 pence plus postage and \$A Conversion.

Authored by Melwyn Fickling, a resident of Norwich, UK, a village surrounded by fine English breweries.

It addresses an important topic and a potential opportunity to value add for a lot of beekeepers with an enterprise opportunity that is not well served by newer or recent texts.

The author notes that the history of brewing alcoholic beverages probably began by accident when a bowl of leftover honey came in contact with rainwater that contained natural, airborne yeasts.

Thus, he notes that European production of fermented honey beverages has been part of society since 2000 BC or even earlier.

This seems a useful contribution to using honey malt extract and hops, fruits and spices to bring a new dimension to your home brewing repertoire.

So, a relatively useful text for any beekeeper interested in expanding his or her knowledge about honey, alcohol and ingredients. It comes, importantly, with a number of recipes for single or double meads and braggots.

Northern Bee Books in the UK, who offer the largest range of English language beekeeping books in the world, offer all the above books (see www.northernbeebooks.co.uk).

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GOT HIVES?

Check your bees

This April, Australian honey beekeepers are called to conduct alcohol washing on your hives to check for high priority exotic bee pests.

If any mites are suspected, keep the sample and report your findings immediately to your State or Territory agriculture agency through the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline**.

EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881

Fly into **beepestblitz.com.au** to find out more

Get Bee-sy And Check Your Hives In April

With over 45,000 registered beekeepers who own approximately 822,000 hives, keeping Australia's [honey bee](#) population healthy is no mean feat.

'Bee Pest Blitz' is an annual month-long national campaign to increase awareness of the importance of bee biosecurity and encourage beekeepers to inspect their hives for high priority pests.

Accurate bee surveillance is key to the timely detection of new pests and provides the best chance to respond and maintain healthy honey bee colonies for a healthy industry.

Autumn is an ideal time to conduct hive inspections and alcohol washing is the most effective method to check for varroa mites.

Alcohol washing is a quick and effective method to detect the presence of external mites within a colony.

This method can remove over 90% (with multiple rinses) of external varroa mites present on adult honey bees. Alcohol washing can also detect tropilaelaps mites.

Very little equipment is required to conduct alcohol washing and it can be easily performed during routine hive inspections. Varroa mite feed and reproduce on honey bee brood, which means the nurse bees that take care of the brood cluster, commonly have varroa on them. Alcohol washing targets the central brood cluster where you are most likely to find nurse bees. The key to the effectiveness of this method is the length of time shaking or swirling the solution and the number of

washes conducted, to achieve the highest volume of mite recovery.

Surveillance reporting will be handled at a jurisdictional level and the Bee Pest Blitz website hosts all the reporting links beekeepers will need to do this effectively.

Improving honey bee health and maintaining healthy bee populations into the future, is essential for the production of Australian honey and those agricultural sectors reliant on honey bee pollination services.

'Bee Pest Blitz' is a Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) funded initiative, led by Australian Honey Bee Industry Council and supported by all state and territory governments.

Visit beepestblitz.com.au for free bee surveillance resources on general safety and biosecurity considerations before you start; materials needed to conduct an alcohol wash; how to perform an alcohol wash, and how to submit your results.

Agriculture Victoria would encourage reporting of hive checks through BeeMAX

(<https://bees.agriculture.vic.gov.au/>)



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AHBIC Industry Update No 68

17th March 2025

Lockyer Valley Detection Update

As can be seen on the Queensland Varroa Heat map there are currently 11 infested premises in the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Regional Councils, as at 14th March. These are from both recreational and commercial apiaries, additional samples continue to be tested for Varroa mite and exotic viruses.

Over the coming months, it is expected additional detections across NSW & QLD border regions to also occur, due to natural spread but we remind beekeepers to conduct surveillance as finding varroa early is key to a successful integrated pest management approach to managing healthy honey bee colonies.

AHBIC reminds beekeepers who have received bees, hives or equipment from the Lockyer Valley since December 2024 to conduct surveillance of their hives and report to the Bee123 portal, or if interstate check your relevant authority: Reporting Varroa. Varroa mite remains a prohibited matter across all states and territories.

Queensland detection of Varroa impacting on Borders

Queensland

Queensland's varroa mite biosecurity zone remains in place. This prevents the movement of bees and live hives from jurisdictions with varroa mite (NSW, Victoria). There is also a movement control order in place for the ACT due to unlimited movement between NSW and ACT. These Queensland movement restrictions apply until 28 April 2025 unless removed earlier.

South Australia

The PIRSA – “South Australian Varroa Detection Response and Management Plan” is published and outlines South Australia's government response for detections, both outside and within SA and can be found at: South Australia Varroa Program – Detection Response and Transition to Management Plan.

Beekeepers must still apply for an entry permit from QLD into SA. We are told PIRSA is reviewing the current process in light of the recent QLD detection and the expansion of Varroa in Eastern States.

Delivery of Education Workshops

So far the Transition to Management has delivered 83 one day face-to-face workshops across the country with attendance by commercial beekeepers representing just 46% of the target set. In addition to the face-to-face workshop there are now options for online learning, a Varroa basics, and a 9 module online version of the content from the face-to-face workshops, which is estimated to take 3 hours to complete, beekeepers can find details through the BOLT training platform: Biosecurity Online Training - BOLT - PHA.

For details on upcoming face-to-face training near you, or to access the online resources visit Training — National Varroa Mite Management Program

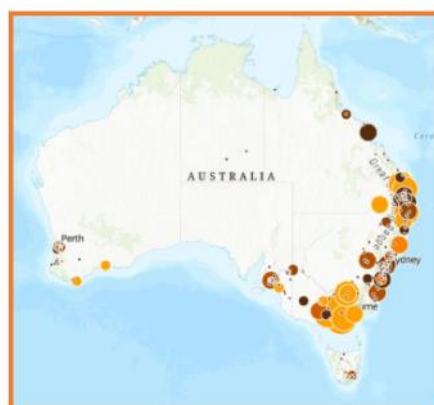
Honeybee Virus Baseline Survey

Sampling for the honeybee virus baseline survey has been steadily gaining momentum. Several collections

have already been completed with both the help of VDO teams and some keen citizen scientists. Collection numbers differ in each state based on size of industry and so far the activity is 30% completed with a project report due August.

VDO Extension and Engagement

Varroa Development Officers continue to improve practical skills and knowledge of beekeepers across the country with group, one-on-one, association and branch engagements reaching record levels in February. Across the national team there have been over 700 engagements in February alone, reaching over 2,000 participating beekeepers. 169 of those beekeepers are commercially registered with a further 497 recreationally registered (some participants status are not listed as either, this could be a club or association branch).



Some of the VDO work involves extension activities driven by demand and can be summarised by the following table for February:

Engagement type	February amount nationally	Commercial	Recreational
Email and phone support	99	25	74
Presentations	163	46	117
In field / apiary	446	98	348

The Varroa Development Officers are well informed, several across the country have international varroa management experience and have all been connected to uplift knowledge and skills of the team throughout their appointment so far. Reach out to a VDO in your area by visiting the website for information; <https://www.varroa.org.au/vdo>

Australian Colony Loss Survey (COLOSS)

Congratulations to the commitment of approximately 960 beekeepers who jumped in and completed Australia's first ever Coloss Survey during February and March. Due to a busy season and a short timeframe to have the survey open, the overall goal of 500 commercial beekeepers completing the survey fell short. A steering committee meeting will soon review the progress with the Coloss team from ANU to ascertain potential improvements for future survey growth. AHBIC has had lots of feedback about beekeepers' thoughts on the survey and encourage ongoing feedback to ensure the survey is well adopted and supported into the future, you can reach out to AHBIC anytime or email directly to the team via; coloss@anu.edu.au.

National Varroa Mite Coordinator Bianca Giggins
0402 467 780 bianca@honeybee.org.au



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Photos: David Mangan

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NEAA's 2025 Annual Conference. (Celebrating 70 years)

Where: Remel 185, 399 Whorouly Rd Whorouly 3735

When: Friday the 2nd of May 2025

Time: 1.00 to 5.00pm followed by a dinner at 6.00pm.

Cost: \$80.00, Dinner Inc. \$70.00 partner rate.

The NZ Varroa experience: the history of, what has failed and what is working by Frank Lindsay ONZM
Budgeting for Varroa Mite Treatments
AgVic Update: Victoria, the North East and Varroa
Varroa Treatments for Recreational beekeepers
History of the NEAA (Evening)

BOOK ONLINE: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/neaa-annual-conference-and-agm-2025-tickets-1262460757109?aff=oddtcreator>

The Long Wait For Bees To Return To Restored Grasslands

KOBE UNIVERSITY

Recovered grasslands need more than 75 years of continuous management to regain their biodiversity because specialized pollinators are slow to return. Kobe University's finding underscores the importance of preserving old grasslands as reservoirs of biodiversity, even if it is just as ski slopes.

Grasslands worldwide are rapidly disappearing due to land-use conversion and abandonment, leading to a well-documented loss of grassland biodiversity. Restoring abandoned grasslands by removing woody vegetation and resuming traditional land management practices has positive effects on biodiversity. However, it is also known that this diversity lags behind that of old grasslands that have been under continued management for up to several millennia. The Kobe University ecologist Ushimaru Atushi says, "The reasons for this are not really clear and satisfying solutions have not been proposed."

Tipped off by a recent study that showed that insect-pollinated plant species take longer to recover compared to wind-pollinated ones, Ushimaru and his doctoral student Hirayama Gaku decided to turn their attention towards the pollinators themselves. Looking at which insects pollinate plants and with what success on grasslands of different age, from very recently recovered to continuously managed for at least 300 years, they turned to ski slopes in Nagano Prefecture as their study site. "There is no place better suited to survey restored grasslands with very different management durations within a relatively small area than ski slopes," Hirayama explains the choice.

Their results published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology* paint a consistent picture. It takes 75 years of continuous management for the plant diversity in recovered grasslands to finally reach levels comparable to ancient grasslands. However, that's still not enough for

the pollinator community. Even after 75 years, pollinators are still less specialized and less successful at pollinating the plants, although the community continuously shifts towards higher specialization and successful pollination as grasslands get older. Hirayama sums up saying, "The finding shows that once valuable old grasslands are lost, their restoration cannot be achieved quickly."

What drives this lag is not a lower diversity of pollinators in itself, it is the identity of the pollinators. Recently restored grasslands are visited mostly by flies and hoverflies that are generalists and thus often carry pollen from one plant to flowers of a different species. On old grasslands, on the other hand, pollinators are to a larger extent bees and butterflies that specialize in one species at a time, thus guaranteeing that the pollen is transferred to the right plant species.

The study therefore shows the importance of considering pollinator communities for efforts targeting the conservation of threatened grassland plants. First of all, this means that maintaining ancient grasslands as reserves for specialized pollinators should be a top priority for conservationists. But Ushimaru points out something else, saying "It may also indicate that grassland restoration should not just be left to nature, but could require active human involvement such as by sowing seeds or by planting seedlings of native bee- and butterfly-pollinated grassland plants."

This research was funded by the Japan Science Society, the Fund of Nagano Prefecture to Promote Scientific Activity, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (grants 19H03303 and 22K06400), and the Environmental Restoration and Conservation Agency (grant JPMEERF20234005). It was conducted in collaboration with researchers from the University of Tsukuba and the University of Toyama.

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

abjeditors@yahoo.com

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honeybeenews@bigpond.com

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Gippsland region:

Ian Cane, Mob: 0428 516 325
iancane@bigpond.com.au

Western region:

Daryl Hobbs
0427 340 197

Agriculture Victoria:

Agriculture Victoria: Apiary team
Website: Honey bees | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria
Website:

www.agriculture.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

Current Apiary Officers

Nikki Jones

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1 Taylor Street, Epsom,
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Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Karyn Di Florio

Bee Biosecurity Officer
Email: honeybee.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au

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

DEECA Regional contacts for bee sites on Crown land

Barwon South West

Geelong, Otway District –
Linda Laurie, Ph: 0408 419 759, E: linda.laurie@deeca.vic.gov.au

Heywood, Far South West –
Troy Jenkin, Ph: 0459 807 401, E: troy.jenkin@deeca.vic.gov.au

Gippsland

Tracey West – Ph:0457 501 299,
tracey.west@deeca.vic.gov.au,
tralaral-gon.property@deeca.vic.gov.au

Grampians

Ballarat – Jennifer Bromley,
Ph: 0448 389 270,
E: pub-licland.grampians@deeca.vic.gov.au

Horsham – Jess Dickerson, Ph: 0437 913 538,
E: pub-licland.grampians@deeca.vic.gov.au

(Note: Jess is on maternity leave until March 2025, but emails will automatically be forwarded to the Manager)

Hume

E: landad-min.hume@deeca.vic.gov.au
Wodonga: Lloyd Beaty is contact

Loddon Mallee

Justin Hoy (primary contact) –
Ph:0459 336 836
Daniel Cadmore (secondary contact)
– Ph: 0418 715 831

Port Phillip (Note: enquiries dealt with by Gippsland Region)

Tracey West – Ph:0457 501 299 E: tracey.west@deeca.vic.gov.au,
tralaral-gon.property@deeca.vic.gov.au

Customer Contact Centre (Ballarat based)

Ph: 136 186
E: customer.service@deeca.vic.gov.au

Statewide Transaction Centre (Seymour based)

Ph: (03) 7019 2577
E: transactioncentre@deeca.vic.gov.au

Other contacts

Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC):

CEO: Danny Le Feuvre
Mob: 0402 467 780
ahbic@honeybee.org.au
5 John St.
Ardrossan, SA, 5571
www.honeybee.org.au

Crop Pollination Association Inc

President: Steve Fuller,
president.cpaa.us@gmail.com
Ph 0488 434 498
Secretary: Janet Clyde
jclyde.cpaa@gmail.com
Ph 0417 494 867

Honey Bee Research & Development committee (HBRDC)

Annie Stoddart
Program Coordinator Research
02 69236918
Annie.stoddart@agrifutures.com.au

VFF State Beekeeping Branch:

Secretary: Gail Rochelmeyer
Mob: 0408 592 091

Collingwood Childrens' Farm Apiary

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collingwoodbees@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/collingwoodbees

Contacts

VAA Inc Regional Groups

Bendigo Branch:

Secretary: Peta Dawe

bbvaasecretary@gmail.com

Chair: Jamie Trimby

bbvaachair@gmail.com

Treasurer: Michael St.Clair

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:

Chair: A/Prof James Doery

Deputy Chairperson: Mike Love

Secretary, Rob Kerr

Ph: 0421 078 387

Treasurer: Janet Conos

[vaamelbournesection](mailto:vaamelbournesection@hotmail.com)

@hotmail.com

[www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/](http://www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/Melbourne-Section)

[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:

Naomi Forbes-Wilson

Ph: 0407 243 313

billabonghoney@yahoo.com

VAA Inc. Library Trust

Secretary: Russell Goodman,

Ph 03 9735 3836

Affiliated Organisations

Central Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc (CVAA Inc.):

Millie Enbom-Goad

Ph: 0400 083 582

cvaa_inc@outlook.com

Gippsland Apiarists'

Association Inc. (GAA Inc.):

President: Stan Glowacki:

jeeralangapiary@bigpond.com

0413 136 878

Secretary: Neil Barraclough:

neilbarra2@outlook.com

0429 888 706

Treasurer: Sean Paul Smith:

kaleprime@gmail.com

0466 041 199

North Eastern Apiarists' Association Inc. (NEAA Inc.):

Secretary: Moss McCallum

secretary.neaa@gmail.com

"J" Beekeepers Club Inc.

Meets on the second Wednesday

of every month (Except January)

at the Goonawarra Community

Centre, 20 Dornoch Drive,

Sunbury, VIC 3429

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

President: Nathan Whitford

0403 807 224

Vice President: Stephen Fridey

info@geelongbeekeepersclub.org.au

Meetings third Friday of 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: wbfbs@mrsg.org.au

Meets on the third Sunday of

every month (except December)

at Woodend Neighbourhood

House, 47 Forest Street,

Woodend, VIC 3442

South Gippsland Beekeepers

Inc. Secretary: Anna Jones

Mob: 0411 770 062

secretary@sgbeekeepers.org.au

Web: [http://www.southgippsland](http://www.southgippslandbeekeepers.org.au/)

[beekeepers.org.au/](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@melbourne

beekeepersclub.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 7:30pm on the second

Tuesday of each month (except

January) in the hall at

195 Holmes Rd,

Moonee Ponds, VIC 3039

WerriBeeks Inc.

President: Carmel Gerdson

Secretary: Helen Morland

Treasurer: Debbie Conway

E: werribeeks@gmail.com

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Carrum Downs
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Ph: 0438 7465 01
Contact Moe Jarrad
majarrad@gmail.com
Beemanhoney.com.au

Capilano Honey Ltd
Capilano St.
Maryborough,
VIC 3465
Ph: 07 3712 8224
0419 431 652
Contact: Stephen Covey

Goode's Honey
Lot 1, 75 Bosworth Rd
Bairnsdale,
VIC 3875
Ph: 03 5152 2180
Contact: Terry Goode

Honey Buyers Group
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NEW MEMBERS

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Marita Gallomaine
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**Do you have
any spare copies
of the Australian Bee Journal
for April 2007?**

**We need them for the VAA
journal archives.**

**If you can help please
contact the Editor
abjeditors@yahoo.com**

**Classified ads
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Members Notices
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are always free.

Index of Advertisers

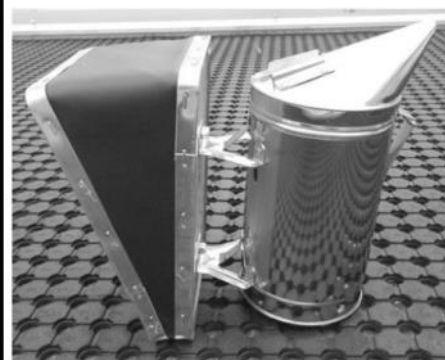
AIR CTI	27
Aust. Queen Bee Exporters	14
Becs Beehive	17
Beeplas Australia	25
BeeTech	5
Bee Wise	18/19
Clayton Plastics	22/23
Dalrymple View	12
Denmar Apiaries	9
Goldfield Honey	29
JBee Equipment	12
Lyson	15
Kelvin Trading	Inside front
Nalinga Steel	14
Prestige Stainless	13
Redpaths Beekeeping Supplies	21
Stafford Engineering - EzyLoader	Back
Steritech	11
Whirrakee Honey	34
Whirrakee Woodware	7

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"We're beekeepers."

VAA Commercial Subcommittee Social Gathering

Hive Lords of Victoria

A Galactic Gathering for Commercial Beekeepers

Celebrate the end of a tough beekeeping season. Join us for an evening of fun, relaxation and connection as we celebrate the resilience of Victoria's commercial beekeepers. This is a great chance to unwind, share experiences and enjoy good food and company.

Date: **Saturday 3rd May**

Venue: Newbridge Hotel, Newbridge Victoria 03 5438 7260

Theme: Star Wars Fancy Dress (or smart casual for those not in fancy dress.)

Attendees: Any Victorian commercial or semi-commercial beekeeper

Buzz Plan

6:00 pm Congregate, relax & mingle over drinks.

7:00 pm Eat, chat & share over delicious food from the Newbridge Hotel.

9:00 pm Strut & win in our Best-Dressed costume awards.

Catering: Drinks & dinner available for purchase from the hotel.

Accommodation: Nearby campsites available for \$15 per site.

*No RSVP necessary but avoid the dark side of the Force...and book ahead with the Newbridge Hotel.

Questions?

Lindsay Callaway 0429 857 835

Ben Moore 0400 728 796

vaa@vicbeekeepers.com.au

Other May 2025 Commercial Events

North East Apiarists' Association

71st Conference & AGM

Date: **Friday 2nd May**

Venue: REMEL 185 Whorouly

Time: 1:00pm - 5:00pm

Speaker: Frank Lindsay, ONZM
NZ beekeeper with 56 years
experience commercial
beekeeping.

Register via Eventbrite

Questions? Moss McCallum
secretary.neaa@gmail.com

CVAA Annual Len Ramm Memorial Picnic

Date: **Sunday 4th May**

Venue: Majorca Hall, Majorca

Start: 10:00 am

Great opportunity to connect
with beekeepers and honour
the legacy of Len Ramm.

Questions? Millie Enbom-Goad
0400 083 582
cvaa_inc@outlook.com

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