

AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

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AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

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Cover photo: Jamie Trimby.

Grevillea banksia x Grevillea bipinnatifida (Grevillea-peaches-and-cream). Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra

**Deadline for copy for the August 2025 journal is
10pm on Friday 1st of August 2025.**

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.
Editor: Annette Engstrom

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.

Management

The VAA Board meets a minimum of six times a year.

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Contact by email is preferred

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Ken Gell

Finance & Insurance

Ken Gell

Education

Dr. Andrew Wootton

Melbourne Show/fund raising

Judy Leggett

Constitution & Legal

Lindsay Callaway

Conference

Lindsay Callaway

Clubs & Affiliates

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Resources

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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
101- 500 hives (2 votes): \$249
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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

President's Report

Last month's Conference and AGM in Beechworth marked another high point in our Association's recent history. Feedback from members, sponsors, and speakers has been overwhelmingly positive, with strong endorsement for both the content and professionalism of the event. The continual improvements we've seen over the last three conferences are a credit to all involved and testament to what's possible when the VAA works together, with purpose.

As the VAA enters a new governance year, following our June 2025 AGM, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest board members Richard Collins, Olivia Ducommun-Dit-Verron, Lachlan Goode, Millie Enbom-Goad and Matt Petersen who have joined the leadership team alongside returning board members Andrew Wootton, Tony Wilshire, Ben Moore and myself. Together, we are focused on ensuring the Board functions well as a collective, guided by the Constitution, with clear role descriptions, and a well-supported committee structure. It's a privilege to contribute to a member-based organisation that plays such a vital role in advocating for and supporting beekeepers across Victoria.

I want to provide members with a high-level summary of the major works currently in progress. This ensures that members can see how decisions are made, who is responsible, and how their association is evolving.

Strategic and Structural Focus Areas

- **Subcommittee Assignments 2025–2026** We are

finalising appointments and clarifying the scope and responsibilities of each subcommittee to ensure effective operation and reporting to the Board. We have some exceptionally qualified board members that we want to ensure get to work in areas they are strong in and passionate about.

- **Victorian Apiary Industry Needs, working with DEECA, collaboration on Public Land Apiculture.** We are excited to update that in collaboration across multiple departments at DEECA we are looking to hold 4 targeted workshops this year. 1. Planned Burns, 2. Public Land Access, 3. Communication and engagement, 4. Strategic Industry Needs Assessment. At our 2026 Conference, I propose to convene a dedicated Resources Summit bringing together stakeholders from across the sector to present outcomes from the four state workshops and to lead a reset and review of Victoria's current beekeeping resources framework. This will be a pivotal moment to align, clarify and build a future-ready resources system for all Victorian beekeepers
- **Board Induction & Governance** Orientation is underway for new board members, with updated governance documents, refined role descriptions, and clear communication protocols (including file management and correspondence expectations).

(Continued on page 6)



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President's Report

(Continued from page 5)

- **Shows and Events** Planning has begun for the 2025 Melbourne Show. Past reports and data are being reviewed to reset and refresh these important events. We are looking forward to the new VAA branding being on show this year.
- **Grants and External Projects**
 - ◇ Completion and acquittal of the 2024 biosecurity education grant
 - ◇ EDCOMM grant application and BOX IRON-BARK restorative grant
 - ◇ Strategic engagement with Farm Business Resilience, Young Farmer programs and the Apiary Sector Bee Biosecurity Working Group

Operational Improvements and Member Services

- Finance & Administration
 - ◇ Treasurer and Administration Officer contract reviews scheduled
 - ◇ Term deposit review
 - ◇ Annual conference actuals versus budget being reviewed

Communications and Digital Presence

- ◇ Social media and Facebook strategy being refined
- ◇ Website improvements underway, including a dedicated Resources Committee area
- ◇ Standardised email signatures being developed for consistency

Membership and Recognition

- ◇ Role adjustments to the Membership Secretary and Consumer Affairs contact
- ◇ Life Membership nominations received, and process initiated for consideration

Mental Health and Member Wellbeing

- ◇ Member correspondence on mental health has been received and acknowledged, this is an area we take seriously and will respond to thoughtfully.

The VAA exists to serve and represent its members. As such, your board is committed to working openly and collaboratively, ensuring that all projects, decisions, and responsibilities are shared, documented, and delivered in a way that reflects the collective strength of our organisation. If any of our members ever have questions about the VAA's projects and activities, you can email us at vaa@vicbeekeepers.com.au.

Thank you to all who continue to support the VAA's work through participation, ideas, and feedback. The important progress we're making is visible and measurable and I'm confident that this year will continue that trajectory.

We are stronger when we work together.
We're Beekeepers.

Kind regards,
Lindsay Callaway
President
Victorian Apiarists Association Inc.

SCOTCH HOT HONEY DRIZZLE.

By John Kennedy

The Scottish Bee Company (www.scottishbeecompany.co.uk), based in Edinburgh, has re-introduced what it calls a product keenly sought by its local customers.

It is a Scotch Honey Drizzle which is crafted from its Scottish blossom honey with the "fiery kick" of Scotch bonnet chillies added.

They say "our honey delivers a rich and natural sweetness perfectly complimented by the spicy intensity of the chillies".

It is recommended for drizzling on hot chips or pizzas, glazing meats, or adding it to marmalade.

Another suggestion is to combine a teaspoon with hot water to get rid of congestion

Judging by the customer comments on their website buyers have found a number of interesting uses for this hot honey.

It is created from 92% honey, 4% chillies and organic cider vinegar. The Scotch hot honey is listed on their website for 7.95 pounds Sterling plus delivery, for what looks like a 250 mm jar.

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124th Conference & AGM Sets High Benchmark

By John Kennedy

The 2025 (also the 124th) Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Apiarists' Association, held 11-13 June in Beechworth, has set a very high benchmark for future editions.

VAA President Lindsay Callaway declared at the conclusion that the combined event, held at The Grand Oaks Resort in Beechworth, had been "an outstanding success".

Lindsay noted that registrations had hit a new record number of almost 200 delegates.

Attendees included a strong representation from all aspects of beekeeping in Victoria, with a very strong participation from commercial beekeepers, all keen to learn and be updated about the looming incidence of the varroa mite in the state.

In addition, there was a three person delegation from the New Zealand beekeeping sector along with a good representation from northern New South Wales beekeepers – now with the added experience of mite control in their hives.

There was also an exceptionally strong trade representation of over 20, including leading resellers and service providers, of the diversity of beekeeping equipment and services.

They all appeared satisfied with the contacts they had established, the brand, product or personal devel-

opment they had created and even the orders or sales they had made over the duration.

The two day presentations by speakers were exceptionally relevant, topical and well delivered, thus helping to equip local beekeepers with increased knowledge of how to meet the looming incursion of the mite into our state.

The prevailing theme of the Conference can be summed up as Monitor (with plenty of recurring alcohol washes) and Treat (with the range of chemical or organic products now becoming available to local beekeepers).

Two of the highlight presentations of the Conference were provided by guest presenter Dr Cameron Jack, a guest presenter from the University of Florida, on optimising the frequency of chemical treatments and practical applications.

There was also the important on line zoom presentation from Randy Oliver, with his personal, independent and continuing approach to developing his own ideas on breeding queens that are productive and varroa mite resistant.

It also confirmed the importance of keeping a regular watch on his own scientific beekeeping [website](#).

At the concluding dinner, presentations of an engraved brass smoker were made to immediate Past President John Van Weeghel for the term just completed.

(Continued on page 8)

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124th Conference & AGM Sets High Benchmark, cont'd

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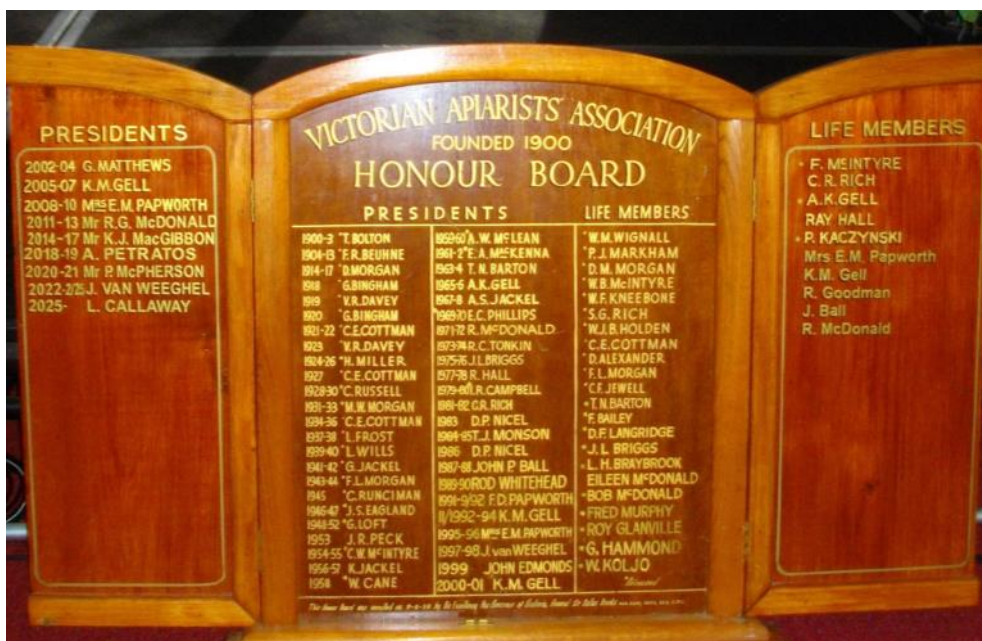
ed and an earlier one dating back to the late 1990s, and to long-term outgoing Board member Ken Gell, and also Phil McPherson (who was away on holiday), which were received with acclamation from all attending.

The ensuing auction of beekeeping goods was as usual entertaining, and delivered successful bidders with some memorable purchases.

All the Conference presentations will be available for registered attendees, and VAA members who were not present, to watch and to learn from by accessing the Members section of the VAA website.

In concluding the technical presentations Lindsay paid a tribute to members of the Organising Committee including Andrew Wootton, Tino Corsetti, Rob Kerr, Don Whitehead and many others who all

volunteered with their support and energy in bringing forward the planning and execution of such a successful event.



As confirmation of the VAA's origins from the year 1900 the Honour Board of all past officials and life members has been fully updated and was on display for the duration.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST.

Warral Maldon is seeking hives with bee sites.

Dear Beekeeper,

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Or call me direct on 0429857835.

Lindsay Callaway

Lindsay Callaway – Owner/Managing Director

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Bendigo Branch At The Conference

Jacob Nixon, Jamie Trimby, Stafford Kelly and Peta Dawe from the Bendigo Branch of the VAA attended the VAA Conference held in the wonderful and cool town of Beechworth.

Stafford and Peta arrived early on the Wednesday to assist in packing the show bags and assist in setting up of the trader's area. Wednesday evening most attendees were present at the welcome evening where we met up with new and old beekeepers. There was warm conversation from all, and it looked like we were in for a good conference.

Thursday morning, we all needed a warm coffee to get going and we were straight into probably the two most interesting presenters. Cameron Jack gave a very informative presentation on Oxalic Acid. No holds barred and exactly what we all needed to know. This was followed by Randy Oliver (via zoom) who gave many insights into queen breeding for mite resistance. The following presentations included the research Ag Vic is doing with their AgriFutures, feeding bees - what is the preferred method, some of the important things to think about if you are wanting to set up a business. During our breaks it was a good time to catch up with the traders and see what new items they had. Thursday

evening was the AGM with the election of the new board including President and 2 x Vice Presidents. Congratulations to Lindsay, Andrew and Ben. Following the AGM there was a panel discussion on surviving the first phase of varroa. The panel included AG NSW and Cameron Jack. This was another highlight to listen to some of the stories from NSW and how they have managed through the first phase and then to compare with what has happened in America. I feel we can learn a lot from what not to do and what are very good practices. I am sure the conversations went long into the night.

Friday morning, another warm coffee to start us off. Three presenters via zoom in regard to varroa. William Meikle comparing three strains of bees (Russian, Italian and Paoli) and their reaction to varroa was interesting. The winners of the competitions were announced by Australia's only honey sommelier, Jessica Locarnini. Congratulations to all especially Richard Collins. The rest of the day was filled in with info from B-Qual and updates from Ag Vic and AHBIC. Friday evening was the annual dinner and a very lively auction. Thank you to all the organisers for a fantastic event.

Jake, Stafford and Peta

AgVic Young Farmers Scholarship Program - Are you a young beekeeper looking to boost your skills and grow your career? The 2025 Upskill and Invest Young Farmers Scholarship Program is offering up to \$10,000 for training and on-farm investment. Use it to study in areas like business, agronomy or irrigation, or invest in tech, planning or infrastructure - the choice is yours. If you're aged 18 to 40 and passionate about the future of ag, this one's for you. Closes 23rd July. Check it out [here](#)

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VAA Melbourne Section Report

June 2025

Yay for Winter and winter jobs. Honey Competition that was. Apiary update. July AGM notice. June speaker. HiveMeet, Youtube. Winter workshops and Spring courses. And back to Winter jobs.

The bees should be well settled for the winter now. How about you? The bees were still getting out until the end of May because the weather was so mild and many hives were still bringing in honey. Enjoy the times. The little mite is catching up with each of us and we encourage those of you with the mites to get your mates involved in the monitoring and treatment process to get some moral support as well as bringing our overall beekeeping capability up as much as possible. We will adapt! We will learn!

May meeting: 2025 VAA MS Honey Competition

Congratulations to the honey competition entrants and winners. Peter Adams and Mike Love shared the judging so as to not judge their own entries. While not judging, Mike discussed the job of producing those honey frames for comb cutting and Peter updated the meeting with the new VAA honey competition structure.

The VAA Honey Competition now has categories, entry conditions and criteria that correlate with major competitions. The Sydney Royal Show has honey competitions, so perhaps we can get the Melbourne Royal Show honey competition back from the uncappings heap!

Apiary update

The bees at the Collingwood Children's Farm Apiary have been packed down. In front of the shed, the shade sail has been repaired, cleaned and reinstalled. It has been used since first donated about 25 years ago. We look forward to seeing the Kenyan Top Bar hive coming into Spring: some interesting swarm management issues to face. It now complements the Long Lang, two flow hives, a chimney hive, plastic boxes, wooden boxes, polystyrene boxes, 8, 9 and 10 frame boxes, a display hive, one Caucasian queen and nine Italian queens. The range of experiences is broad.

Notice of AGM - July 31, 2025.

The VAA MS AGM will be held at the Surrey Hills venue (1 The Avenue, Surrey Hills) during the July meeting on Thursday 31 July. The meeting will commence at 7:15pm, the AGM will commence some time around 8:00pm. The 2025-26 Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and committee members will be elected at this meeting.

For June: "A beekeeping journey ..."

The June meeting on Thursday, 26th June at 7:15pm will host Tony Wilshire with his tale "A beekeeping journey and lessons learnt". Tony has been keeping bees since a very young age, so this should be fun and stimulating. The regular Beeginners' Corner, apiculture

(Continued on page 11)

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VAA Melbourne Section Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 10)

updates, the library, the raffle and supper will be there too!

HiveMeet, Youtube, and more

HiveMeet is an online community run by the VAA to ensure that we have a support network in place if the funding for the National Varroa Management program ceases, as planned, by the end of this year. Invitations for HiveMeet are sent out to all VAA members, and the previous sessions have been very well received. Register on the VAA Events webpage. The VAA Youtube Channel holds old HiveMeets as well as other presentations recorded on the VAA's video equipment.

Courses and workshops

The following events are (or will be) available on the VAA Events page.

July 27th - Make your own wax embedder

August 24th - Make your own frames

October - Beekeeping Basics course

November - Queen Raising Course

Winter jobs

And we all know that these jobs should have been well started by this time. Are the boxes in good nick or do the ants get in, or the moisture gets in, or the wood is warping? Clean boxes will have less disease and pest potential. The frames in storage need to be checked and also ready for use with the burr comb cleaned off and the propolis scraped of the vertical frame pieces. Get that wax ready for the new season but perhaps don't add the foundation to the frames yet: it's a bit cold. Practice and rehearse the process of mite monitoring, finding mites, reporting your tests and the first treatment. Take your varroa treatment plan to the local bee group and walk through it at their Beeginners' Corner.

Resting

Enjoy the rest of the conference season and probably a break from hive work and come back with knowledge for better beekeeping.

Enjoy your bees.

Rob Kerr, Secretary.

On behalf of the VAA MS Committee

What Scientists Found in a 10,000-Year-Old Beehive

A remarkable find occurred in 2018 at the Tel Rehov archaeological site in Israel's Jordan Valley, when researchers unearthed what appeared to be cylindrical clay structures embedded in the remains of an ancient settlement.

Through careful analysis and carbon dating techniques, scientists confirmed these structures were indeed beehives dating back to approximately 8000 BCE, making them the oldest direct evidence of beekeeping yet discovered.

Check it out [here](#)

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Highlights From The Conference

By John Kennedy

The official opening was performed by Cathy McGowan, the former Member for the Federal seat of Indi, which takes in the greater part of north east Victoria.

Cathy was joined by Helen Haines, the recently re-elected Federal member for the seat, who gained an increased majority.

Both Cathy and Helen incidentally hold strong local community interests, in agriculture and farming in particular.

Significantly, on her departure from the Australian Parliament, Cathy now heads AgriFutures as their Chair.

Both noted that "the squeaky wheel" always gains attention and often a remedy to the issue raised. Cathy and Helen advised that the beekeeping industry should put its case front forward to all levels of government and to relevant Ministers in particular.

Queen Breeders Assoc. Website

Peter Czetl, a technology expert and an established queen bee breeder based near Cooma in NSW, was an interesting and informative presenter to Conference.

Peter is also the newly appointed President of the AQBBA. He drew attention to the fact that there are 90 queen breeders who are members of the industry association.

Moreover they have an interesting and informative website and importantly an up to date Facebook presence, both of which can be accessed at www.aqbba.org.au and are well worth investigation by all beekeepers.

VAA Branded Merchandise

As part of the establishment of a strong brand presence for the VAA, especially the line

"I am a beekeeper", the new range of branded clothing items was on show and for sale for the first time at the Beechworth Conference.

The informal clothing range currently includes affordable tee shirts, jackets and hoodies,

(Continued on page 13)



Mated Queen Bees

Available to collect
BBVAA Field Day
Oct 12th

Contact Max Maunder
Ph 03 54467911
maunderjmcv@bigpond.com

"We're beekeepers."



Highlights From The Conference, cont'd

(Continued from page 12)

plus a peaked cap range, with more products in the pipeline.

All sell for an attractive and affordable price and help to further distinguish participants and proud members of the beekeeping profession.

Well worth more investigation.

Honey Potentials in Clover

Pasture, and especially Clover resources, tend to be overlooked by many commercial beekeepers, but CSIRO researcher Richard Hayes (along with Madlen Kratz who also delivered a strong paper on Nutrition for Honey Bees and the Varroa Mite).

The Clover4Bees study found that pasture legumes, including some species with spectacular flowers are vastly under-utilised by beekeepers.

The two reasons being that none of them were developed in conjunction with beekeepers, and that methods of comparing their value were not available.

The Clover4Bees study undertook quite laborious studies to extract and measure the nectar potentials from

about a dozen clover types.

There is a paper report available via a web search which lays a strong foundation for future work in developing pasture legumes for the local honey industry.

Cameron Jack

A number of relevant technical papers on the varroa mite and Integrated Pest Management responses published by Cameron Jack, from the University of Florida, are available on the web.

In the main they have been published as peer reviewed technical papers in the *Journal of Insect Research* and are available to beekeepers seeking further information on this omnipresent pest to bees and beekeeping.

Bonus for Pollinators

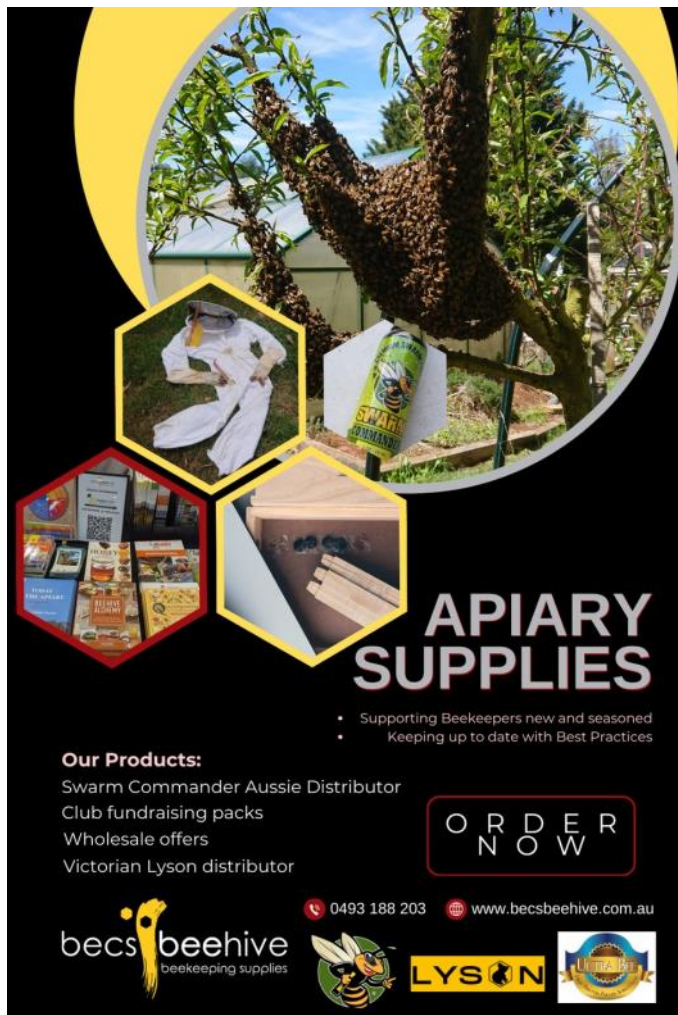
There will be a bit of a bonus for pollinating beekeepers transporting hives to the coming almond season.

AgVic, from the mornings of August 4-7 will be offering an egg and bacon barbecued roll and a coffee at Boundary Bend and Euston venues with a yarn and a break. And it's a free offer. Bookings required. See page 30 of this journal.

Droughts can reduce the caloric value of flower nectar by up to 95%, study finds

An experiment carried out by researchers from São Paulo State University on zucchini crops indicated that a 30% drop in rainfall would reduce the availability of calories in the sweet liquid that serves as food for pollinators. This would harm pollinators, such as bees.

Read the full article [here](#)



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Bendigo Branch Report

Central Victoria finally had some wet stuff fall from the sky through June, ranging from 45mm to 65mm across the region, hopefully regular rainfall through July will boost the later than usual Winter crop germination. A few chilly days with zero bee activity, who could blame them.

Kudos to everyone involved in organising and running the 2025 VAA Annual Conference. I was pleasantly surprised by the positive atmosphere, with fantastic educational and entertaining speakers - congratulations.

At the BBVAA June meeting commercial beekeeper James, from Gareth Maunder's crew, provided an overview of beekeeping in the Philippines. Highlighting how fortunate we are to have access to abundant nectar flows - relative to densely populated countries where the majority of available flora is located in extremely challenging terrain, restricting most beekeepers to a couple of hives. Interesting to hear the perspective of someone who, growing up, only experienced bees with Varroa and dealing with Varroa and virus effects. The access to community beekeeper training was impressive with courses running annually. Thank you to Pops for persuading James to present to the club.

At the July meeting Stafford Kelly is presenting Build an Apiary Action Plan, I'm looking forward to Stafford's insight especially with Varroa detections in the area, and planning to compensate for colony losses before they occur, coupled with the latest commercial planning on living with Varroa.

Late July the branch will be hosting a make and mend day on Sunday 27th July, where members can bring along equipment to repair, put together and seek solutions to equipment and all manner of bee related discussions. Times to be advised by email and on the BBVAA Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/601947271075914/>.

Planning for the Beekeepers Field Day on Sunday the 12th of October is in motion with an array of new endeavours in progress, it's exciting what the Field Day committee and members have proposed and set in motion. A number of Traders have already contacted the secretary to book prime positions, and there's plenty to cater for commercial, recreational, kids and non-beekeepers this year

<https://www.vicbeekeepers.com.au/page-18235>.

All the best in Beekeeping,

Jamie Trimby

A reminder that the VAA has acquired general and product liability insurance for individual beekeepers. You can purchase the insurance on the VAA website. This program is only available to VAA members. Complete details about the program are available at the [VAA Online Store](#).



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Competition Winners Rewarded

By John Kennedy

The Apiculture Competitions at the recent VAA Conference were well rewarded. The Competition attracted strong sponsor support, and the judging was under the direction of acclaimed honey sommelier and accredited honey judge, Jessica Locarnini, who headed the judging panel.

While there was a good representation of quality entries, this function category offers a great opportunity for bee clubs, their members and individual recreational beekeepers to support in future years.

A Certificate showing your honey product has been well recognised by an independent judging panel of industry experts has the ability to add quite significant value to your honey, if of course you want to offer small quantities to the market.

And of course, it also signifies your ability as a beekeeper.

Here are the Gold winning entries.

Liquid Honey – Light

Ivan Burch - VAA Melbourne Section

Liquid Honey Medium

Ervin Kos - North Western Bee Club

Liquid Honey – Dark

Charlie Nancarrow - Moonee Valley Beekeeping Club

Creamed Honey

Richard Collins – VAA Bendigo Branch

Infused Honey

Felix Portelli - VAA Melbourne Section



The winning Gold Award and Highly Commended entries were on display in the Conference Hall

Comb Honey

Mike Love – VAA Melbourne Section

I Am A Beekeeper

Simon Le Boulh – North East Apiarists Association

We're Beekeepers

Peter Gatehouse – VAA Melbourne Section

The Home Of Victorian Beekeepers

Simon Le Boulh – North East Apiarists Association

In addition, Highly Commended Certificates went to:

Non Alcoholic Honey Beverage

Charlie Nancarrow – Moonee Valley Beekeeping Club

Mead

Jill Greenstein – VAA Melbourne Section

Australian Beeswax Decoration

Jannette Burch – VAA Melbourne Section

Australian Beeswax Value Added

Ivan Burch - VAA Melbourne Section

Most Successful Regional Association Trophy
VAA Melbourne Section



Lilly Pilly pollen gathering. Photo: Jamie Trimby

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Bee Boxes From The Men's Shed

Apart from having a fascination for bees from childhood, one of the attractions to get into beekeeping was the woodwork that was required to support my beekeeping. Another was having something meaningful to do in retirement.

With both these forces driving me nearing retirement, it was natural for me to check out my local Men's Shed.

While the Men's Shed is meant to be about support and camaraderie for good health outcomes for men, it is all these things and more, for me it was the equipment. Access to woodworking equipment I could neither afford, let alone house.

At the Men's Shed we often get offered donations of timber from individuals and companies. So much so, we need to be a little discerning as to what finds its way into the timber rack and onto work benches.

So when recently offered some flat pack bee box material from a beekeeping supply moving towards closure, this timber went through the same consideration of usability and application.

Members were immediately attracted to the finish of this raw NZ pine, the fine recessed hand holds and finger joints of some of the pieces - things that most estab-

lished beekeepers take for granted.

While it was obvious this material could be turned into carry boxes, drawers, shelving compartments and the like: the decision was made to use the material for what it is intended - bee boxes.

So a few of us at Men's Shed have set about assembling some of this material and have managed to sell some boxes already to local beekeepers.

Interestingly some of these beekeepers, with the inevitable spread of varroa, are looking to move from 8 frame to 10 frame hives.

More recently we have been attempting to meet some specialty orders of ideal boxes and nucleus hives - modifying the cut timber to meet demand.

While we are nearing the end of our supply of bee box timber, with some of us looking to move onto personal and community projects, there are still a few

bee boxes to sell!

Mike Love

FOR SALE: 15 newly assembled FD 10fr boxes.

Raw NZ pine rebate boxes. \$25ea.

Melb. Metro area

Contact Mike Love 0427 369 152



Mark, one of the men's shedders who has helped assemble these stored bee boxes



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- ✓ Good for driver health & keeping schedules

MONEY

- ✓ Save bee stock during transport & also equipment damage
- ✓ Savings money as an asset for taxation. Use free air!
- ✓ Extend vehicle life & maintenance cost are reduced
- ✓ Save on field breakdowns, expensive down time & tyre wear



Lindsay Callaway
Warral Maldon Honey

TESTIMONIAL



"The biggest time saver! It got me out of trouble so many times, I could be going up a hill and I start to lose traction and my truck starts bogging down. I dump my air through the controller on the dash, the tyres bite in, it gets me over the hill and I just pump them back up on the bitumen. They are right with what they say - better braking, better tyre wear and it is a much easier ride on my poor old aching back" Steve Grahame – Outback Trucker

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VAA Conference Presentation

Nutrition, what are the possibilities?

Dr Madlen Kratz's conference presentation on her research project *Nutrition for honey bees and Varroa mites*, demonstrated the effects of supplementary feeding of protein and carbohydrates compared with a control group.

Whilst the data throughout the seasons during times of plentiful foraging resources showed negligible bee health difference, during dearth periods health metrics demonstrated significant weight or conditioning difference in the graphical representation (I associated with Doug Somerville's 2005 *Fat Bees, Skinny Bees* sketch) and the colony's ability to cope with prolonged stressors.

The consequences to individual bees, and the colony as bee conditioning declines, and the cost to the hive in reduced lifespans, physically inferior bees with reduced foraging capability are obvious, compared to healthier bees.

Commercial beekeepers in particular have employed supplementary feeding bees to have their colonies in peak condition for pollination and honey flows.

Looking to maximise practical benefit from Dr Kratz's presentation I began considering the options available now which were fine before Varroa, and forecasting into what will transpire with Varroa, my new timeline BV and AV. The information available thanks to America and the United Kingdom on effects of Varroa and the viruses that they spread, highlight the stresses and challenges bees face living with Varroa, virus effects, and Varroa treatments.

The benefits of propolis has been studied for some time identifying beneficial antimicrobial defences, and improved immune system functioning against bacterial pathogens ([*Seasonal benefits of a natural propolis envelope to honey bee immunity and colony health*](#). 2015. Renata S. Borba, Karen K. Klyczek, Kim L. Mogen, Marla Spivak)

Apis mellifera have a less complex immune system than mammals, requiring social immunity or social behaviours to complement the individuals' immune system, which is why bees go to great efforts collecting propolis.

Multiple research studies have identified bees with

viral infections spread by Varroa exposed to non-lethal levels of fungicides, herbicides, insecticides and acaricides, collectively create a negative compounding effect on the bee immune system. It's death by a thousand cuts, reduction in bee lifespan, physical, cognitive impairment (affecting the bees ability to fly distances and navigate) resulting in colony deaths, often called Colony Collapse in the United States.

Elements individually tested to be non-lethal with negligible impact on bee health, become lethal for bee colonies when combined with Varroa borne viruses.

American beekeepers are conducting on-farm trials with livestock probiotics searching to enhance bee health through nutrition on the immune system, or aiding a compromised immune system for bees with virus loads.

Researchers at the USDA looked at the effects of feeding different diets from either a cultivated form of microalgae spirulina, chlorella, or a pollen substitute dry feed to identify additives to improve bee immune system. ([*Microalgae functional feed additives strengthen immunity and increase longevity in honey bees*](#) May 2025. Allyson Martin Ewert, Alexander McMenamin, Daniela Adjaye, Victor Rainey, Vincent Ricigliano) (published in the Journal of Invertebrate Pathology 211(4):108352).

Ongoing research to attain data on combinations of supplements and field trials would provide greater confidence for beekeepers such as Dr Kratz's apiary research.

Bees with Varroa transmitted viruses face significant health impacts, understanding the effects on the bee immune system is improving, the importance of supporting bee immune system is evident, identifying sources to improve bee health and longevity is under way.

A beekeeper or scientist has probably already observed bees collecting a substance that is helping that colony deal with a particular pathogen, beekeepers are best placed to observe and find solutions.

I apologise for any unintended misrepresentation of Dr Madlen Kratz's research presentation.

Jamie Trimby

Golden Bee baton goes to Poland

In celebration of World Bee Day on Tuesday, May 20, the fifth Golden Bee Award was presented to this year's winner, Osmia Future.

The winner was announced by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Mateja Čalušić and the golden award was presented by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Nataša Pirc Musar.

This year's winner, Polish company Osmia Future, was recognised by the Golden Bee Award Committee for its innovation in agriculture, specifically fruit cultivation.

Osmia Future is a family-run company that has developed a hive for breeding solitary bees, a mobile application for managing pollination and a device for servicing hives. This pollinator-friendly solution supports the population management of the Red Mason Bee, a solitary bee native to Central and Southern Europe. The nesting boxes can be reused for several years, encouraging fruit growing with reduced reliance on phytosanitary products. The company cooperates with nearby schools to educate children about the importance of pollinators in fruit cultivation, thereby raising awareness among younger generations about the value of local habitats.

The family-run company has its own orchard farms and has been breeding mason bees since 2008. To find out more visit osmiafuture.com.

From the *Wheen Bee Foundation June Newsletter*



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Report On The CVAA Survey

Millie Enbom-Goad
Secretary and Executive Member
Central Victorian Apiarists' Association 4 May 2025

“Site Access Management and Bushfire Impact – Industry Analysis For Commercial Beekeepers”

I. BEEKEEPING ON PUBLIC LAND: CONTEXT

Significant work has been undertaken in this area previously. Rather than re-write that work now, extracted below are paragraphs that effectively summarise the context in which this survey has been undertaken.

For more than a century bee sites were established on public land wherever there were suitable floral resources and access and the prescribed spatial separation of apiary sites could be achieved. Apart from apiary site and bee range size prescriptions, the only real limitations on the establishment of bee sites related to the extent and standard of the public land road network and capabilities of beekeepers vehicles.

Given that public land, particularly state forests, is approaching capacity in terms of bee sites on prime honey flora, there is competition for existing sites and consistent demand for new opportunities.

As at February 2012, there were 3,637 bee sites on the 7.6 million ha of forests, parks and conservation reserves in Victoria. One thousand, nine hundred and forty three sites are located in the 3.16 million ha of state forest, 1,235 bee sites are located within the 3.4 million ha of national, state and other parks and the remaining 459 sites are located on other public land, including conservation reserves. In recent decades, drought, fires and, according to beekeepers, management practices/activities (e.g. fire management and forestry operations) have impacted significantly on the productivity of the Victorian honeybee industry. For

example, since 2002/03, bushfires have impacted on the productivity of more than 500 public land bee sites.

These impacts together with the array of often competing uses of public land and the fact that there are limitations on availability of ‘unutilised’ floral resources generate challenges and complexities for public land managers in terms of achieving coexistence between beekeeping and other public land uses and deriving the maximum value from public land for the wider community.¹

Following the significant effects of bushfires in the Grampians National Park and the Little Desert National Park in 2024, the Central Victorian Apiarists' Association determined that more needed to be done to understand the current and ongoing issues with respect to site access and management.

II. THE SURVEY

The CVAA drew up and circulated the “Site Access Management and Bushfire Impact” survey through CVAA membership emails, as well as in the VAA Bulletin, and directly to other regional groups we understood to have high commercial beekeeper attendance. The survey has been open for one month (as at 4 May 2025). To date there has been 37 responses.

The majority of responses received were from commercial beekeepers in Central Victoria (21/37), with 15 of those respondents running more than 500 hives. Responses were otherwise received from beekeepers who operated out of the North East and the North West, South West, South Gippsland and Gippsland, Mallee, and the Wimmera.

¹ Apiculture (beekeeping) on public land policy, Working Group – DEPI Putting the Buzz back in Agriculture Project

(Continued on page 21)



Melbourne Royal Show 2025

We need your help!

We're excited to begin planning for the VAA's participation at the 2025 Melbourne Royal Show. The Show gives us the opportunity to educate the general public about the importance of beekeeping and the wonderful range of Victorian honey. There are four ways our members can get involved. We would appreciate it if you could let us know how you'd like to participate by **Friday 18th July**. Email: vaa@vicbeekeepers.com.au



Queen Bee Donor Program

- Donations of bulk honey. Mono-floral honey: 100kg minimum. Multi-floral blends: 20kg minimum. Donated bulk honey will be packed under the VAA label for sale at the show.
- Donations of bottled/pre-packed honey.
- Donations of high quality hive products: Honey beverages, cosmetics, wax, candles, polish etc.
- Donations of new and unused jars and/or plastic storage containers.



Worker Bee Honey-Packing Program

- Can you provide a certified honey packing facility to the VAA to pack donated bulk honey?
- We anticipate having between 1,000 and 3,000 bottles/containers to pack.



Drone Bee Wholesale Program

Any of the following, sold to the VAA at wholesale/bulk prices:

- Bulk honey. Mono-floral honey: 100kg minimum. Multi-floral blends: 20kg minimum.
- Bottled/pre-packed honey.
- High quality hive products: Honey beverages, cosmetics, wax, candles, polish etc.
- New and unused jars and/or plastic storage containers.



Booth Volunteer Program

- Volunteer to attend the VAA booth at the show. We have three convenient shifts throughout the day: 9:00 - 3:30, 11:30 - 6:00, 1:00 - 7:30.
- You receive a free ticket to the Royal Melbourne Show and you can visit the show either before or after your shift!

Report On The CVAA Survey, cont'd

(Continued from page 20)

As at 17 February 2025 there were 47 beekeepers in Victoria with more than 500 hives registered. This would suggest that the responses received to this survey constitute approximately 30% of beekeepers in Victoria with more than 500 hives.

All images, tables or graphs in this report, as well as any figures and comments quoted, are directly taken from the responses to the survey and analysis prepared via SurveyMonkey.

A. Floral Resources

15 responses from Central Vic indicated some level of decline in experience in honey yields due to changes in floral resources over the last 5 years. This was in line with responses from the Mallee, North East, South West, North East and Gippsland. This comment was from one response:

... "our family beekeeping business has been operating for over 40 years. Declining yields have occurred due to intense fire damage in alpine regions. Red gum budding/ flowering cycles are impacted by excessive water flows into river systems during late spring summer."

Key themes in the comments on this topic were the impacts of drought or dryer weather, the impact of fuel reduction burns on understory species, and excessive fire in the landscape on a broader level, as well as the management of water impacting River red gums.

B. Impact Of Fire Events

Many of the respondents had private and public sites impacted by fire in the past two years (15/37), with 27 respondents holding public sites effected by fire – **a total of 199 sites affected.**

15 of the respondents had more than 5 public sites affected with two beekeepers losing significant numbers of hives in the recent fires in the Grampians in early 2025 (one lost 500 hives and the other between 201 and 500). Respondents indicated that some sites were affected by controlled burns, smoke damage, back burning as well as wildfires.

22 respondents considered that, based on their experience with their sites, that it would take 5-10 years for bush to recover from burns, depending on the severity of the fire and the vegetation type involved, and the rainfall events that occur in the following years. This comment comes from one respondent:

Every time the Grampians has burned approx 9 years it has changed the mix of species. Resulting in more wattles, cypress trees and spring flowering Tea-tree which does not yield honey. The Leptospermum Scoparium and Yellow Box and Red Gum trees are disappearing.

Another respondent comments that it would take "50 years for the trees in the rock formation in the Grampians" to recover.

In addition to the time required for floral resources to recover after a fire event, respondents identified that bushfire-related events affected their ability to access or use sites, or relocate hives as follows:

(Continued on page 22)

The Farm Business Resilience Program supports primary producers to build stronger, more drought resilient businesses.

We want to understand the needs and program delivery preferences of Victorian beekeepers. Tell us what you think. Scan the QR code and fill in the online survey.



The Farm Business Resilience Program is jointly funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the Victorian Government's Sustainability Fund.



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry



Future
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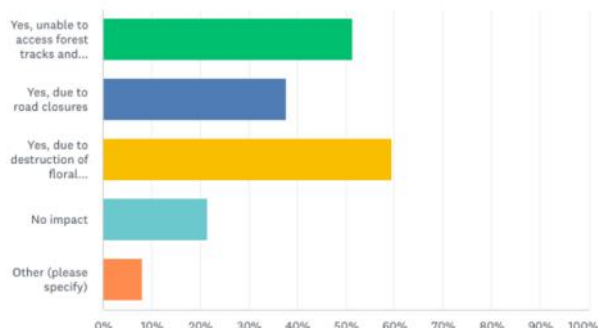
AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

Report On The CVAA Survey, cont'd

(Continued from page 21)

Have bushfire-related events affected your ability to access or use sites, or relocate hives? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 37 Skipped: 0



It is important to note that respondents who identified "Other" commented that road closure and move on orders affected their use of sites when planned burns were occurring, not just in relation to bushfire events.

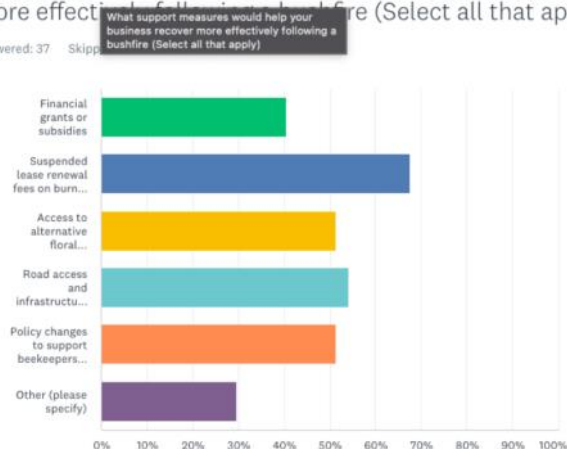
C. Other Issues Affecting Site Use & Accessibility

The next most indicated issue affecting use and access of sites following a fire event, after the destruction of floral resources, was the inability to access forest tracks due to road deterioration or lack of maintenance (51% of respondents).

In line with responses to identified in previous paragraphs in this report, respondents then provided the following responses:

What support measures would help your business recover more effectively following a bushfire? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 37 Skipped: 0



The above table shows that approximately 67% of respondents indicated that suspending lease renewal fees on burnt sites would help their businesses recover more effectively following a bushfire. This was followed by road access and infrastructure repair (54%). Additional

(Continued on page 23)

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Report On The CVAA Survey, cont'd

(Continued from page 22)

comments noted the following:

"A change to the Apiary Licence permit system that allows any site that has been suspended for bushfire impacts still be included in all communications regarding the licencing of Apiary sites to the beekeeper. Also, clear communication between land managers and beekeepers about when a site is to be un-suspended."

"Collaborative approach to planned burns, focusing on cool burns and minimising burns during a honey flow"

The majority of respondents also marked that track or road site inaccessibility was impacting their ability to access or use sites on public land (65%), outside of any bushfire related events.

The next greatest impact was from vandalism or rubbish dumping on sites by other forest users (51%).

A number of comments in response to this question also highlighted themes of negative impacts from planned burns (5 responses), not being able to access public sites as a new beekeeper (2 responses) and issues with individual land managers.

The majority of respondents also indicated that roads and tracks in Victoria's state forests had deteriorated significantly in the last three years (46% of responses) with 66% of respondents who identified this question as applicable to them indicating that roads and tracks had deteriorated to some extent.

To be continued in the August journal



Photo: Jamie Trimby



BEECHWORTH HONEY

Not all honey companies are created equal

For 140 years, our family beekeepers have been keeping bees in and around our hometown of Beechworth. We are passionate about pure and natural 100% Australian honey... always! But, honey is just one part of our story...

What's important to us!

To educate retailers, manufacturers, customers and children about:

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- The importance of bees to our food, biodiversity and the planet.

To treat people well we:

- Are a 5th generation beekeeping family that understands the challenges beekeepers face.
- Treat people as we like to be treated.
- Are here for the long haul.
- Are 100% Australian owned and operated, so we care what happens to Australian beekeepers.

To grow real honey consumption by:

- Producing high quality honey.
- Bringing innovative honey & honey products to customers each year.
- Showcasing new and interesting ways to use honey everyday.

To care for bees and the planet we:

- Ensure sustainable practices.
- Help protect honeybees and treat them well.
- Care for the future of our planet.

It's no wonder we have been awarded Canstar Blue's Most Satisfied Honey Customers 4 years in a row



Beechworth Honey starts and ends with bees and nature.
100% Australian Honey... Always!

RIP Kerrin Williams

A Tribute to Kerrin Williams

Secretary of the VAA from March 1989 to March 2024 (35 years).

Treasurer 1994 to March 2024 (30 years).

In July 1988 edition of the ABJ, there appeared a notice that the positions of then Editor/Treasurer Jewell Bould were to be vacated.

Later in the year Jewell's husband, Les Bould, at that time VAA Secretary (3 years) also resigned.

Following the required advertisement/interview process, Mr. Lloyd Trounce was appointed as Secretary; and Mrs. Judy Peterson (nee Graves) was appointed as Editor/Treasurer.

Mr. Trounce held the position for two months, he then resigned.

The Executive then revisited one of the failed applicants – Kerrin Williams, her experience having been Secretary/Bookkeeper for the local Taxi Service, and she accepted the position.

With her friendly and obliging nature, Kerrin fitted comfortably into the beekeeping family.

In May, 1992, the Editor/Treasurer Judy Peterson had resigned. Interim positions filled by Executive Councillor, Alan Wallace.

Three months following the 1992 Annual Conference, the newly re-elected President Frank Papworth resigned from the Presidency and the Executive Council.

This then created some challenges to be met by the remaining Councillors and Secretary.

Current Vice President of the day, Alan Wallace stepped up as Acting President. He too was soon to resign from all of the above.

Due to these vacancies the Executive then successfully revisited failed Executive election applicants, Elwyne Papworth and Laurie Braybrook to fill the new vacancies.

Due to the difficulty of no Journal Editor (a black-out of communication with members), decisions within the remaining Executive Council had to be made.



Kerrin was constantly in receipt of phone calls seeking to know “what was going on?” etc.

Ken Gell was elected as President, and Ian Fenselau was elected as Vice President.

Judy Graves (ex Peterson) returned to the position of Editor, finally bringing the Journal back ‘online’ by March 1993, and remaining as Editor until October 1994.

During my ten year tenure as Editor from November 1994, Kerrin & I worked closely together for the good of the Association.

Kerrin, as well as “holding the fort” took over the role of Treasurer and has been Secretary/Treasurer - both being part-time positions - since approximately March 1994 (30 years Treasurer) to today.

My apologies for seeming to concentrate on the historical, but I consider these details are necessary for those members who are not conversant with Kerrin's devotion to the tasks and members involved over the years.

When I speak of loyalty I ask you to consider the following – As some of us are aware, beekeepers are no respecters of time, e.g. over the years, phone calls at 10pm + (on the road with a load etc.) were not unusual (we had to call a halt to these).

Phone calls to the Secretary over the years have not always been pleasant – even to the point of being downright abusive.

Executive Councillors did not learn of this until Kerrin confided in some of us outside of the Council, then Councillors were informed.

Due to time and health concerns Kerrin's tenure in these positions has come to a close.

I consider we would be remiss as an Association not to recognise her service and friendship.

After all, Kerrin is the first to have served the Association in these capacities for such a long period of time.

As always,
Eileen McDonald
February 2024

Kerrin's funeral. VAA members and friends. Left: Helen, David and Eileen McDonald, Centre top: Frank Papworth, Edlea Collaco and Rei Collaco. Right: Eric Smith and Bill O'Shea. Centre Bottom: Bernie Heinze, Sandra Smith, Mike Love and Max Hunter. Photos: Barry Cooper



Crop Pollination and VAA Conferences 2025

Beechworth, Vic

By Kris Fricke,
The Australasian Beekeeper

In Beechworth in the forested hills of northeast Victoria the weather is cold and crisp, the oaks that line the streets flutter their yellow autumnal leaves, which also colorfully cover the ground. I am here for the Crop Pollination and Victorian Apiarist Association conferences both in the Grand Oaks resort, on a hill just outside the historic downtown area. I stayed in the art deco former asylum the Linaker Hotel, which looked like it should be haunted but a very convenient 50 meters or so from the venue, an easy walk on the crunching frost-encrusted grass through the thick fog to the venue in the morning.

"Two years ago this association had about 18 members left," CPAA President Steve Fuller addressed the room of 96 attendees "last year at the AGM we had 100," highlighting the ups and downs the association has had. Every year the CPAA has their AGM in association with a different state convention, in this case the Victorian Apiarists Association will meet in the same



The picturesque setting just outside the Grand Oaks, Beechworth

venue later in the week. Also highlighting the current momentum of the association, while many beekeeping groups at all levels struggle to find enough willing volunteers to hold offices, they had nine very qualified candidates vying for election to the seven executive seats.

The CPAA differs from the various state and national beekeeping associations in that, of course, it represents the pollination industry very specifically. Pollination very often brings beekeepers across interstate borders, necessitating

such an interstate group as the CPAA.

One interesting speaker was a representative of the cotton industry, Doug McCollum. Cotton does not require pollination, but it is often located near crops that do. Cotton had gotten a very bad reputation for insecticide use as the industry battled against cotton bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*), although as Mr McCollum explained, with the advent of genetically modified cotton in 1996 they've been able to drastically reduce the amount of pesticides used. However there was still con-

(Continued on page 26)

SELECT HARVESTS

ALMOND POLLINATION

OUR POLICY FOR OPTIMUM BEE HEALTH & POLLINATION OUTCOMES:

- To supply alternative forage sources for bee arrivals where possible
- To supply water for bees at hive sites
- No weedicides to be sprayed when hives present
- Predetermined preference not to spray fungicides during bloom unless disease pressure is severe and crop is at risk
- If a crop protectant spray is required, the choice of product would be discussed with the beekeeper/broker and it will only be applied from late afternoon to early morning outside of bee foraging periods
- Audited spray diaries for the period of bloom available for viewing
- Hive inspections to ensure endemic diseases and hive strength are monitored.

Region	Area (Ha)	Hives
Southern Region	3,074	18,400
Central Region	1,948	11,600
Northern Region	2,670	15,500
Swan Hill Region	1,570	9,500
Total	9,262	55,000

WHAT TO KNOW

- We have had a relationship with the bee and pollination industry that spans over 30 years
- Bloom period = month of August
- Mature hive stocking rates = 5-6 hives/ha
- Minimum pollination standard = 8 frames of bees per hive

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Crop Pollination and VAA Conferences 2025, cont'd

(Continued from page 25)

cern about the use of Fipronil, which is very deadly to bees, and is still used. The speaker explained that in current usage it breaks down very quickly in the field from UV light. Members of the CPAA were still concerned about this, there was some valuable and substantive back and forth discussion with the speaker and as a result a member made a motion which was carried with no opposition that the CPAA Executive Council meet with the APVMA as soon as possible to discuss labeling of Fipronil.

A major highlight of the conference was the presence of American varroa experts Drs Cameron Jack and Lewis Bartlett, who both presented and then after the dinner had a panel session in which they answered questions. Both the questions and answers were very insightful. One of my key take-aways was that while many Australian beekeepers have observed they can keep hives alive well beyond the “nine mites per wash” threshold, Cameron Jack pointed out that the larger the mite population is, the more likely there is to be mites with genetics that have happened to mutate in a way to give them resistance. Keeping numbers down will preserve our synthetics longer. Additionally I was surprised to learn varroa don't just passively carry Deformed Wing Virus, they actually are sick with it themselves. I asked Dr Jack if that meant that we're not better off without it, if it might have significantly negative effect on the mites but he said no he thinks it's worse for the bees. Also, after the American mites developed Amitraz resistance, Amitraz treatment does still weaken the mites' immune system without killing them, thus making them more susceptible to viruses, leading to the really high viral loads they have been detected with.

After a day off, which some from out of town used to explore the beautiful area, though some others complained unnecessarily lengthened their trip to the area, the VAA conference began on Thursday. It began very strong out the gate with a talk titled “Optimizing the Effectiveness of Oxalic Acid” by Dr Cameron Jack followed by a presentation via zoom by Randy Oliver. My main takeaway from Dr Jack's presentation was that



Simon Mildren of HiveKeepers extracts some honey in the Grand Oaks bar with his new micro-harvesting device.

while OA has its positives, it really struggles to even prevent mite numbers from increasing during Spring and peak times. He highlighted that “fogging” and “vaporization” refer to different forms of application and noted that fogging is particularly not very effective. Randy emphasized constant mite monitoring and the ease of selecting for resistance merely by breeding off your best queens – in his case beginning with just a handful of queens from 1000 hives. He also mentioned the need to maintain genetic diversity and run a minimum of 30 breeding lines. These summations of course are only pulling out key points I recall without the context around them, I highly recommend attending annual conferences to get the complete explanations direct from the world experts such as these.

On the subject of queen breeding we also had a presentation from Peter Czeti of the Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association. It's good to know the queen breeders of Australia are already preparing to extensively collaborate.



A surreal walk through the evening fog back to Hotel Linaker

Habitual multi-conference-goer Mike Allerton of the Amateur Beekeepers Australia association for whom the VAA conference was his fourth of the year noted that VAA conferences are his favorite, and that “the VAA stands apart from most other apiarist's associations in that they actively embrace all beekeepers, not just the professionals.”

Writing for New Zealand's Apiarist's Advocate, NZ Beeswax General Manager Nick Taylor, who was in attendance, summarized¹

“What Kiwi beekeepers in New Zealand learned about dealing with varroa over several years – through trial, error, and experimentation, Australian beekeepers have picked up in around six months, Taylor believes. This rapid learning has been driven by Australia's unique environment and climate, particularly the high density of feral colonies and the long brood period. These conditions have accelerated the spread and visibility of challenges like varroa, forcing Australian beekeepers to adapt quickly, essentially compressing years of learning into a much shorter time.”

I regrettably missed the AGM portion and banquet so I cannot report on what bureaucratic dramas they

(Continued on page 27)

Crop Pollination and VAA Conferences 2025, cont'd

(Continued from page 26)

may or may not have had nor provide more insightful critiques of how the food compared to the other conferences, I do apologize (though the CPAA, which you'll recall was in the same venue, had some delicious butter chicken).

The next day, Saturday (by which point some of us had been in Beechworth five days, feeling like we were growing roots) was one of the Advanced Varroa Management Workshops, of which there seems to be one attached to every state conference. This differed substantially from the original varroa workshops, with a section on financial planning for varroa and several well produced videos about case studies of beekeepers who have already been dealing with varroa.

After this the last of us could finally disperse. No

visit to Beechworth is complete without a visit to the very nice Beechworth Honey shop where not surprisingly we ran into a number of other beekeepers doing the same thing.

Beechworth was and is a lovely little town, bundling up with coats and scarves and drinking mulled wine at the Hotel Nicholas is fun for a week but I'm looking forward to the Queensland conference, which I leave for only two days after arriving home from this (though it'll probably not make this magazine issue), for a week in the sun!

1 Martyn, Eloise "Hopping the Tasman – Roving Kiwis Report from Australia's Beekeeping Conferences" 2025 June 15th *Apiarist's Advocate* email "Addition" <https://www.apiaristsadvocate.com/post/hopping-the-tasman-roving-kiwis-report-from-australia-s-beekeeping-conferences>

AND NOW THERE IS AN ASIAN HORNET TRAP

By John Kennedy

Bees and beekeepers in the UK and many parts of Europe are finding greatly increased attacks (and ultimately loss of their bee hives), due to the spread of *Vespa Valentina* – the Yellow Legged or Asian Hornet. Significant increases in hornet numbers are attributed to the seasonal conditions, principally warmer climes, which have encouraged the increase in the hornet numbers due to better breeding conditions. Now a UK company Apitura Innovation Ltd has released the Trap-X™ designed to trap only the hornet while protecting beneficial insects. It has a unique fin and funnel design that only the relatively larger hornets are attracted to, and others can escape. Although not currently a threat to Australia's bees the enormous spread of the hornet means we should be aware of the experiences of our beekeeping colleagues overseas. There is a wealth of product information, including a couple of informative videos, on the problem available at the website www.apitura.com

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New Book Releases

By John Kennedy

BEE PROPOLIS - Natural Healing from the Hive.
A reprint by Souvenir Press available from a number of sources including Amazon – around \$30.
Written by James Fearnley

Propolis is one of those amazing products of our bees.

This is judged a trail blazing book, originally published in 2001 and updated when there was little available evidence that propolis had extra value.

Author Fearnley focuses on this product and human health, and he is an internationally recognised expert on propolis and how to use it.

In ten chapters he describes its use from folk history onwards to modern times.

It has a wide role as an antibiotic, antifungal, antacid, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and an antioxidant and preservative substance.

Written in the context of food regulations in the UK where it is sold as a food product not as a medicine, he describes how these regulations need to be met.

There is also a chapter on making your own medicines.

This book (paperback, 172 pages) is presented as important to manufacturers and retailers, beekeepers, health professionals and anyone curious to know more about a natural medicine product.

Worth seeking out if you see an opportunity in the many qualities and uses of a bee and hive product.

ALL ABOUT HEATHER HONEY

Every so often a new beekeeping book arises of no direct interest to local beekeepers, yet it may be of special interest to some on a general topic.

Northern Bee Books in the UK, www.northernbeebooks.co.uk has just added a paperback of 48 pages to its extensive lists, which carries the title of **A Practical Guide to Producing Heather Honey**.

Most practitioners with a rough knowledge of beekeeping in the UK will know that heather bell honey from *erina cinerea* or ling honey from *calluna vulgaris* is the most difficult to seasonally source (think remote moors in Yorkshire, the West Country or Scotland) and with limited production, it sells for a high figure.

It has a deep taste, is often thixotropic and hard to extract.

In short, it's the real McCoy.

This book is written by Tony Jefferson - a third generation member of his family "widely known for their famous Heather Honey (who) base their beekeeping on an annual cycle of activities leading up to the culmination of two weeks activity in hopefully decent August weather.

"Tony fully describes their methods and this small volume is an investment for those who wish to produce this premium quality honey" the publisher says.

For a cost of ten pounds 95 Sterling (to which \$A conversion and postage needs to be calculated) the Jefferson's approach may well be insightful for local honey producers who seek to collect special Australian varietal honeys.

(There is also an hour long video featuring Tony Jefferson, on heather honey, made by the BIBBA and available on YouTube)

BOTTOM-UP BEEKEEPING

A Paperback First Edition of 202 pages.

Authored by Ray Baxter with Specialist Contributions

Subtitled *Learning from the hive floor*, the contributors to this interesting new book are all competent UK beekeepers.

Their proposition is that if you are interested in understanding your bees more and disturbing them less, then the debris on the hive floor is an indicator of colony activity, and what is happening inside and outside the hive.

The book is founded on a research project in the UK which reviewed how a hive changes over a year.

The authors also went deep into scientific literature and related this to beekeeping practice.

Their efforts are supported by 200 high quality images.

The chapter headings are all related to debris and the tale it tells, and a number of conclusions are reached.

Beekeeping is all about investigation, and this book is public as a text to support a decision by the Scottish Natural Progression Award to put beekeeping on the school's timetable at a high secondary level, and to develop beekeeping qualifications.

Cost: 27 Pounds Sterling plus \$A conversion & postage
Published by and available from
www.northernbeebooks.co.uk.

THORNE HAS TIMBER SECTIONS

By John Kennedy

Thorne, the multi-branch bee goods retailer in the UK, is offering a range of timber sections for the production of comb honey. They say "sections are small wooden squares with thin foundation". "This was the most popular way to take honey off the hive before extraction became widespread practice". And "Section honey typically sells at a higher price as it is viewed as a more premium product". They note that the section wax is extra thin and unwired and made for cut comb. They also offer section cases of three to a frame, which take up the space of two standard frames. They say a hanging divider should be used to separate the frames to make sure that brace comb is not built in between them. Thorne's manufacture the timber box section components in their Lincolnshire factory.

More product information including a short guide to section production is available by clicking the Shop function at their website www.thorne.co.uk.

USA Beekeeping News

By John Kennedy

USA'S HIGH HIVE LOSSES

Beekeepers at all levels are reporting the highest hive losses on record with commercials sustaining up to a 62% hive loss rate.

In early June the USDA released findings which found that Deformed Wing Virus and Acute Bee Paralysis are the key drivers of the situation.

This situation is threatening the future of beekeeping and especially the stability of the pollination dependent food system. Growers are also facing rising pollination costs and reports are saying that without immediate intervention the crisis will reach every link in the agricultural chain from farm to table.

Diseases are spread by the varroa mite, and the study found that all mites sampled from collapsed colonies carry genes associated with resistance to Amitraz - the critical miticide widely used by local beekeepers. They note that there is an urgent need for new mite treatment strategies to combat an escalating threat to colonies.

Local US organisations Project Apis and the Bee Health Collective have launched the Emerging Threat Fund which aims to address this urgent challenge through improved science based research, and to develop effective, scalable solutions for 2026 and beyond.

Donations are being sought from US beekeepers as big or small cash donations or a percent of honey sales given to sponsor the work.

EPA SEEKS APPROVAL FOR VANDESCANA

The Environment Protection Agency in the USA has put out a call for public comment on the permitting of the new active ingredient Vandescana DSRNA.

It has drawn responses from the likes of the North Dakota Beekeepers Association which says "North American beekeepers desperately need a new material to practice Integrated Pest Management to control varroa destructor mite.

"Vandescana is an appropriate material to control varroa".

They note that the state is home to nearly one million hives annually which disperse across the USA to ensure food supply by pollination, and the product should be approved without further delay.

The California State Beekeepers Association has also weighed in with a comment in support of Vandescana, as beekeepers need more tools in their toolbox to help fight varroa - "and this is one more tool".

They add beekeepers need new modes of action against varroa mites to sustain their operations that already face so many hurdles they need to overcome daily.

"Varroa is extremely difficult to control, and we have very few options that work well and are easy to use.

"Vandescana is what we need - a brand new mode of action that has great efficacy - please help bring us this solution quickly".

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Beekeeper Breakfast - Almonds 2025

Sharing experiences and supporting each other is an important part of learning to live with Varroa.

Please join Agriculture Victoria's Varroa Development Officers (VDO's) and other beekeepers for a free breakfast of bacon and egg rolls, barista coffee and a chance to share Varroa mite information and experiences.

Get advice from our VDO's, or simply listen to what other beekeepers have to say while you have breakfast and a hot shower on us, after you drop your hives in the orchard.

Where: Boundary Bend Roadhouse

Date: Monday 4 August

Time: 9 – 11 am

Where: Euston Recreation Reserve

Date: Tuesday 5 August

Time: 9 – 11 am

Where: Boundary Bend Roadhouse

Date: Wednesday 6 August

Time: 9 – 11 am

Where: Euston Recreation Reserve

Date: Thursday 7 August

Time: 9 – 11 am



Registration for catering purposes

To register please scan the QR code or click here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/cduceqSvAH>

Numbers are required by **Friday 1 August** to assist with catering.



More information

For more information, please contact the Victorian Varroa Development Officer Team

Phone 1800 958 485 or email

Victorian.vdo@agriculture.vic.gov.au





Save the Date!

Bendigo Branch VAA Field Day

Harcourt Recreation Reserve

- Trade Stalls
- Open Hive Demos
- Demonstrations
- Presentations

Sunday
12th October 2025

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Agriculture Victoria:

Agriculture Victoria: Apiary team
Website: [Honey bees | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria](http://Honey%20bees%20Livestock%20and%20animals%20Agriculture%20Victoria)
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

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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,
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Grampians

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E: publicland.grampians@deeca.vic.gov.au

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

Hume

E: landadmin.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,
tralaralgon.propertytservices@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

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

Contacts

VAA Inc Regional Groups

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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](http://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:

Naomi Forbes-Wilson

Ph: 0407 243 313

billabonghoney@yahoo.com

VAA Inc. Library Trust

Secretary: Russell Goodman,

Ph 03 9735 3836

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Millie Enbom-Goad

Ph: 0400 083 582

cvaa_inc@outlook.com

Gippsland Apiarists' Association Inc. (GAA Inc.):

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jeeralangapiary@bigpond.com

0413 136 878

Secretary: Neil Barraclough:

neilbarra2@outlook.com

0429 888 706

Treasurer: Sean Paul Smith:

kaledprime@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

Phone: 0400 667 125 (Secretary)

Postal Address: PO Box 87., 84

Bulla Rd., Bulla, VIC 3428

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: wbfsm@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.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](mailto:secretary@melbournebeekeepersclub.org.au)

[beekeepersclub.org.au](http://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 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

**If any contact
details or
information on
these pages is
incorrect please
advise the editor at
abjeditors@yahoo.com**

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Corowa,
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Ph: 02 6033 2322
Contact: Steve or
Jodie Goldsworthy

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Carrum Downs
Vic 3201
Ph: 0438 7465 01
Contact Moe Jarrad
majarrad@gmail.com
Beemanhoney.com.au

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Maryborough,
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Contact: Stephen Covey

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Ph: 03 5152 2180
Contact: Terry Goode

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Alan Redpath
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Peter Gatehouse
David Sparks
Jonathan Monson

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of the Australian Bee Journal
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**We need them for the VAA
journal archives.**

**If you can help please
contact the Editor
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**Classified ads
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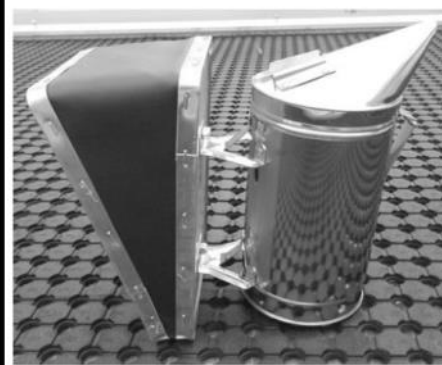
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HiveMeet

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Thursday 7th August, 8pm

Guest Speaker: Mark Goodwin

youtube.com@VictorianApiaristsAssociation

VAA HiveMeet is sponsored by B-Qual



2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Contact our Secretary
for more information
and get involved in
industry today

cvaa_inc@outlook.com

This year marks 60 years since the CVAA was established in 1965. Come celebrate our history, and all the people who have made the CVAA what it is over the years, as well as the future of our industry.

Friday 22 August 2025
Maryborough Highland Society

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