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AUSTRALIAN BEE JOURNAL

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President's Report	5
Invitation: Varroa, Chemical Treatments You Must Know	7
Sugar Shake	8
Two Grams Good, Four Grams Better	10
Honey Levy	11
New Varroa Treatment Approved	12
Bendigo Branch	13
Bee Bits	13/14/19
NQI's Future In Instrumental Insemination	14
AgriFutures	15
European Beekeeping Association	16
Ultrasonic Pest Control To Protect Beehives	17
A Plant That Attracts Thirsty Bees	18
Fossil Bee Nests	20
Begging Gene Leads To Drone Food	22
Urban Wild Bees Act As Sensors Of City Health	23
WA Honey Venture Fails	24
Bee Bits From Canada	25
VAA Board Elections	26
Contacts	28/29
Classifieds / Members / Index of Advertisers	30

Cover photo: Tino Corsetti

**Deadline for copy for the February 2026 journal is
10pm on Sunday 1st of February 2026.**

The Australian Bee Journal seeks to publish contributions dealing with all aspects of beekeeping.
Statements expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the VAA Inc or the editor.
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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. Members of the 2025 - 2026 Board

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Contact by email is preferred

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Olivia Ducommun-Dit-Verron

Finance & Insurance

Tony Wilsmore & Lindsay Callaway

Education

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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
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- Voting rights at VAA regional group meetings and the annual VAA state conference
- Opportunity to participate in and contribute to VAA sub-committees
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- Opportunity to contribute to advocacy to government and development of policy on beekeeping

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President's Report

Dear Members,

As I write this, it's that time again when we reflect on the year just past while putting in place plans for the year ahead. And right in the centre of all this, we find ourselves in the middle of a dinki-di honey flow. Across Victoria, beekeepers have been doing what we do best, rolling up our sleeves, chasing the flow, managing weather, bees and time. All this while still finding space for our dear family and friends over Christmas and New Year.

Finally found top gear.

Talking with beekeepers right across the state, there's a quiet sense that we might have finally found top gear this summer. Like my good friend Leon's Kenworth with his 18-speed Road Ranger, it feels as though we've clicked up a notch. A magnificent red gum flow has delivered some much-needed momentum. Rainfall is down, but more consistent than last year. Post-red gum, there are some promising prospects in Central Victoria on ironbark *Eucalyptus tricarpa* and grey box *Eucalyptus microcarpa*, with potential for high-quality pollen and nectar flows in the north-east and south-east of the state.

Flows like this keep us going.

There's something special about passing another beekeeper on the road at this time of year... the nod, the wave, the shared beekeeping experience. We know what it takes to be here. It's flows like this that keep us going. Like that one great golf shot in a round that brings you back again, a real honey flow reminds us why we love doing what we do.

The Victorian Apiarists' Association is something special, too. We are the peak body for apiculture in Victoria, and that matters. As a collective, Victorian beekeepers pollinate roughly one-third of the food pro-

duced in the state. When you really stop and think about it, that's a relatively small group of beekeepers who underpin billions of dollars of agricultural production. It's extraordinary. It's a responsibility we carry with pride.

Last month I outlined several key projects the VAA is progressing to support members and strengthen our industry. I'd like to expand on a few of them here.

VAA Education and Communications Project.

In September, the VAA was successful in securing two grants from the DEECA Livestock Biosecurity Education Fund. One of these supports the development of enhanced, beekeeper-led biosecurity education across Victoria. Importantly, the project also reviews how beekeepers currently access education and information, and how they would prefer to receive it, particularly as the original industry-funded T2M program comes to an end.

This work is being delivered through our VAA Education and Communications (EdComm) Project. The committee includes commercial, sideliner and recreational beekeepers, a researcher and people with expertise in education, education technology, communications, social media and marketing.

Just before Christmas, the committee met in person

(Continued on page 6)



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President's Report, cont'd

(Continued from page 5)

to review plans for 2026 and to hear from two independent consultants, both with specialised experience in the apiculture sector. Their analysis was thorough and encouraging. They identified strong foundations to build on, as well as clear opportunities to improve how we educate, communicate and connect. This project is about shaping a consistent, beekeeper-led approach that supports the VAA's *one home, one voice, one guardian* purpose. We'll continue to share updates as this work progresses and invite members to contribute feedback as we do a proper "brood inspection" of how we deliver education and communications in Victoria.

2026 Conference and AGM.

Planning is well underway for the VAA 2026 Conference and AGM. As announced in December, to improve accessibility for all members from all regions, the conference will be held at the *Novotel Melbourne Airport*, across Friday and Saturday, with the welcoming evening on the Thursday. Dates are 4th, 5th, 6th June 2026.

We know how important it is to come together, to share knowledge, challenge ideas and reconnect as beekeepers. We're finalising speakers now and expect to release a detailed program in February. We've already secured several outstanding presenters from Australia and overseas, and we're confident this will be another strong, practical and engaging conference.

The conference committee will soon begin discussions with industry partners about sponsorship opportunities. Accommodation will be available at both the *Novotel* and the adjoining *Ibis*, with special rates to be communicated shortly. The venue sits adjacent to Terminal 4 at Melbourne Airport and offers ample parking, making travel straightforward.

Peer-to-Peer Support Program – Commercial Beekeepers.

In December, we also announced a new peer-to-peer support initiative for commercial beekeepers, a project we are approaching with genuine intent. There's no question that running a commercial beekeeping business is becoming more complex, more demanding, and more expensive. The spread of varroa destructor represents one of the greatest challenges our industry has ever faced.

In partnership with Agriculture Victoria, the VAA recognises that an effective response to varroa requires more than technical advice alone. It also means supporting the people doing the work. The VAA board was united in its support for this initiative, and we are now building the core team who will help deliver it.

This program is about practical, grassroots support - beekeepers supporting beekeepers. It will not only create space to talk about mite washes and treatment thresholds but also about trucks breaking down, flat

tyres, tough seasons and uncertainty. Many of us have kept bees a certain way for a long time, and now, in many respects, we are learning again. We love our bees, we care deeply about their welfare, and we are committed to doing the work required to get through this together.

Training will be provided to peer-support volunteers to help them understand stress, mental health first aid, and how to support others while managing their own wellbeing. Further information will be shared in the coming weeks. I sincerely thank Brett Harrison from Agriculture Victoria for initiating this work, along with Vicki Elliott and Matt Lorenz for first raising this issue and taking the lead in the initial planning phase.

Supporting our members, strengthening our industry.

As we head into 2026, I want to acknowledge the many people who make the VAA what it is. We value the strong relationships we have with government and regulatory agencies, and the collaboration and information-sharing that occurs throughout the year. We also benefit greatly from our involvement with AHBIC and our close working relationships with other state beekeeping associations.

To our *Australian Bee Journal* advertisers, conference sponsors and event partners, thank you! Your support in 2025 helped deliver record-breaking outcomes at our conference and at the Melbourne Royal Show, and we look forward to working with you again in 2026.

I also want to thank the VAA Board for their commitment and leadership. This is a board prepared to make decisions, continually improve and to place a clear stake in the ground for Victorian beekeepers thoughtfully, deliberately, and with purpose. Beyond the board, we are fortunate to have a large network of branches, sections and affiliate clubs across the state, and a strong mix of experienced beekeepers, mentors, elders and emerging leaders who want the best for apiculture in Victoria.

Thank you.

Finally, a thank you to *you*, our members. For 134 years, the VAA has represented Victorian beekeepers. It is an honour to do so, especially during this time of challenge and change.

We're beekeepers. We're a community. We've faced hard times before, and we've come through them by sticking together.

Looking forward to a fantastic 2026.

Kind regards

Lindsay Callaway
VAA President

Preparing Beekeepers for Varroa: Chemical Treatments You Must Know

All beekeepers across Victoria, new, experienced, hobbyist or commercial, are warmly invited and encouraged to attend this essential start of year meeting of the VAA Melbourne Section.

Join Senior Varroa Development Officer, Kris Fricke, for a practical session covering the key information you need to know about chemical treatments for varroa. Learn what to use, when to use it, how to apply treatments safely and how to avoid costly treatment failures.

This is the meeting you do not want to miss!

Date: Thursday, 29 January 2026 from 7:00pm
Location: Church Hall, The Avenue Church of Christ
1 The Avenue, Surrey Hills, Victoria 3127
Parking: Available at the rear of the church

All welcome. Bring your questions!

Proudly hosted by the VAA Melbourne Section and supported by the National Varroa Mite Management Program.



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Sugar Shake

Let's Stop Sugar Coating It: The Powdered Sugar Shake Is Not Harmless

By Mike Allerton

This article was first published in the *The Amateur Beekeeper* (TAB) and appears with the kind permission of the author

The powdered sugar shake has been widely promoted as the gentler option for monitoring Varroa destructor, especially among hobbyist beekeepers who feel uneasy about killing a small sample of bees in an alcohol or soapy water wash. For years, the assumption has been that bees walk away unharmed after being dusted with sugar and shaken in a jar. A newly published scientific paper by Selina Bruckner, Geoffrey R. Williams, Jennifer Tsuruda, and Robyn M. Underwood now provides clear evidence that this assumption is incorrect. Their study, *Let's Not Sugar Coat It, The Powdered Sugar Shake Is Not Harmless for Honey Bee Workers*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00218839.2025.2550855> demonstrates that the procedure causes measurable harm and premature mortality in worker bees. This work fills a decades long gap in bee science, because until now nobody had properly tested whether the bees subjected to this method actually survive and reintegrate into the colony.



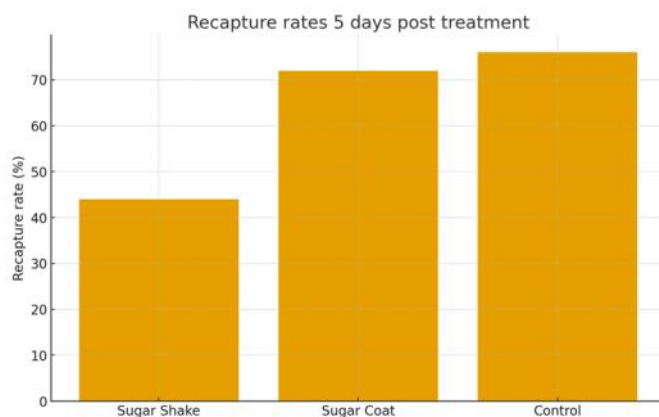
Sugar shake kills bees slowly
– image edited NSW DPIRD

I participated in the national Bee Biosecurity Technical Working Group in 2024, where we reviewed recommended monitoring practices, including the sugar shake. At the time, early research drafts and discussions suggested that sugar shaking might be harming bees, and I raised this concern with the group. However, because the paper was not yet published, the evidence was considered preliminary. The release of the peer reviewed study now confirms that those early concerns were justified.

The authors conducted a rigorous mark, release, and recapture experiment that spanned colonies in Alabama, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania. In each colony, 900 worker bees were collected from brood frames using standard Varroa monitoring techniques. These bees were immobilized on ice, individually marked with paint on the thorax, and assigned to one of three groups, the powdered sugar shake group, the powdered sugar coat group, and a control group. The powdered sugar

coat group served as an important additional control, because it allowed the authors to determine whether the sugar itself, without shaking, contributed to mortality. Each group contained 300 marked bees. The powdered sugar shake group received two tablespoons of powdered sugar through the screened lid of a jar, and the jar was rolled gently until bees were completely coated. After resting for two minutes, the jar was inverted and shaken vigorously for one full minute, a standard sugar shake procedure used by beekeepers worldwide. The powdered sugar coat group received the same sugar coating but was not shaken. The control bees were marked and released directly.

Five days after the bees were released back into their hives, the researchers photographed all comb frames and counted how many marked bees in each treatment group had survived and returned. These recapture rates provide a reliable estimate of short-term survival. The results were striking. Only 44 percent of sugar shaken bees were recaptured. In contrast, 72 percent of the sugar coated but not shaken bees were recaptured, and 76 percent of the control bees were found. The sugar coating alone did not reduce survival. The shaking did. This means the physical agitation involved in the procedure causes harm that shortens the life of the bees. The effect was consistent across all locations and colonies. Shaking bees inside a container, even for only one minute, resulted in injuries and stress strong enough to reduce the likelihood that those bees would be found alive in the hive five days later.



This published evidence supports observations made independently here in Australia. Sam Giggins, Bee Biosecurity Officer with NSW DPIRD, conducted his own monitoring trials and found that bees subjected to sugar shaking failed to reintegrate into the hive at rates similar to those reported by Bruckner and colleagues. These parallel results, produced independently and on different continents, reinforce the conclusion that sugar shaking is not harmless and should not be promoted as a welfare friendly option.

During my time as a contract trainer delivering the national Varroa Workshops, we explained that alcohol wash is, counterintuitively, the more humane method. The alcohol wash kills bees instantly. The sugar shake keeps them alive initially, but many die slowly after

(Continued on page 9)

Sugar Shake, cont'd

(Continued from page 8)

stress or injury caused by the shaking. Beekeepers often avoid alcohol wash because they feel uncomfortable intentionally killing bees, but the new research makes it clear that sugar shaking causes far more prolonged suffering. The welfare argument that once justified sugar shake no longer holds.

Beyond bee welfare, accuracy matters. The study also compared mite recovery using a powdered sugar shake followed immediately by an alcohol wash on the same sample. This allowed the authors to determine how many mites the sugar shake missed. They found that the sugar shake recovered an average of 89 percent of mites, but the range varied widely from 67 percent to 100 percent depending on colony conditions. This variability is well known by field trainers and is influenced by humidity, nectar flows, and sugar clumping. If a beekeeper is unlucky and the sugar shake recovers only two thirds of mites, they may dramatically underestimate infestation and delay treatment. Accurate monitoring is essential to prevent colony losses, and alcohol wash consistently provides the most reliable results.



Alcohol wash is the most accurate, consistent and humane method – image – Randy Oliver

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

A sample size of 300 bees may sound like a lot to new beekeepers, but it represents less than one percent of a healthy colony. Colonies lose far more than that every day through natural attrition, with older foragers dying away from the hive. When weighed against the risk of misinterpreting a low accuracy method or harming bees through physical stress, the alcohol wash becomes the clear ethical and practical choice. The new research reinforces this and should shift community expectations away from sugar shaking altogether.

As the evidence now stands, sugar shake is harmful, less accurate, and highly variable. Alcohol wash and soapy water wash are superior in both welfare and reliability.

Thanks to the careful and methodical work of Bruckner, Williams, Tsuruda, and Underwood, beekeepers finally have the scientific clarity needed to update best practice. The beekeeping community should move forward with confidence and adopt alcohol wash as the preferred monitoring method.

Read the paper here:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00218839.2025.2550855>

The deadline for the February 2026 Journal is 10pm on Sunday 1st of February

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Two Grams Good, Four Grams Better¹

By Andrew Wootton

We would all prefer to stick to the organic miticides. However, I'd like to discuss problems with the use of Api-Bioxal that limit its effectiveness. I'm not here to criticise the government (indeed, I've been proud to play my own small part in the varroa response and will continue doing everything I can to support it). I'm also not going to encourage anyone to go off-label and break the law (that would put me in a perilous legal position). The issues with the registered product are in both its dose and its administration.

First, the vaporisation dose. Initially in the USA, this was 1g. Cameron Jack² showed this amount was ineffective, but 2 or 4g (repeated weekly x 3) reduced mite infestation by 2-3 fold. Although the 4g dose did not increase mite reduction to the level of statistical significance, examining the numbers shows it to be substantially better. In June this year, the USA's Environmental Protection Agency authorised the higher (4g) dosage for the vaporisation method.

Next, let's consider the regime for administration. We know that oxalic acid does not kill mites that are in the reproductive phase under the brood cappings. As a result, a single application of oxalic acid will kill only the mites in the phoretic (dispersal) phase. Over the next 3 weeks, brood emerges and mites re-establish. To be effective, several (ie 3 or 4) repeat applications are required at 5-7 day intervals, to extend the treatment over a complete brood cycle.³

The Australian permit (PERMIT Api-Bioxal - P94609) states that:

Treatment using either method (ie vaporisation or dribbling) may be repeated up to twice annually, with a minimum interval of 5 days between applications.

The label attachments (which are over-ridden by the permit in case of conflict) state:

METHOD BY VAPORISATION: *Dosage and administration: Single 2.3g dose administered via vaporisation per beehive. One treatment per year. DO NOT overdose*

And the AHBIC Varroa Chemical Treatment Table interprets these regulations as 2.3g of Api-Bioxal (oxalic acid) may be applied by vaporisation twice a year.

Now, if the understanding were that a "treatment" consists of several applications at 5-7 day intervals, all would be well, extending the mite kill throughout a brood cycle (although 4g is more effective than 2.3g). However, I've checked with AHBIC and sadly, that is not the case. As a result, if you wish to conform to the law, you are largely wasting your time (and money) if you use Api-Bioxal as a single application in the presence of brood. Use a different miticide.

On the other hand, in a broodless colony, oxalic acid works well. Depending on how cold your local winter gets, you may have a broodless period. Swarms are, of course, brood free, and you can cage the queen to prevent her laying (I've a whole article on this in the November ABJ⁴). Alternatively, killing the queen and either introducing a queen cell or allowing emergency cells to be raised, creates a break.

What can we do to change the unsatisfactory mandating of something less than best practice?

AHBIC, the government agriculture departments and the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), are dependent on manufacturers label conditions, resulting in glacial pace for change. AgVic recently proposed a group to develop an Industry Action Plan. We should support this.

Thankfully, Aluen CAP has just been granted (Dec 16th) an emergency permit, so now you can use these slow-release oxalic acid strips when brood is present. And when it is, don't bother with a single flash treatment.

Andrew Wootton is Vice President of the VAA and a certified master beekeeper with the Eastern Apicultural Society of N America. He first started beekeeping in the 1960s.

References

1. Apologies to George Orwell for mangling the Animal Farm meme

2. Jack, C.J., van Santen, E. and Ellis, J.D., 2021. Determining the dose of oxalic acid applied via vaporization needed for the control of the honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) pest Varroa destructor. *Journal of Apicultural Research*, 60(3), pp.414-420.

3. Prouty, C., Abou-Shaara, H.F., Stanford, B., Ellis, J.D. and Jack, C., 2023. Oxalic acid application method and treatment intervals for reduction of Varroa destructor (*Mesostigmata: Varroidae*) populations in *Apis mellifera* (*Hymenoptera: Apidae*) colonies. *Journal of Insect Science*, 23(6), p.13.

4. Wootton, A., 2025. Breaking good. *Australian Bee Journal*, 106(11), pp.20-21.



Photo: Tino Corsetti

Compulsory Honey Levy

The honey levy is a federal compulsory charge collected on all honey produced and sold in Australia at the first point of sale. Producers who sell more than 1500 kg of honey (retail) are required to keep records and pay a honey levy of 5.6 cents per kilogram.

Records of sales are required to be kept from 1 January to 31 December, and the closing date for payment is the following February 28th.

Penalties are charged for late returns. There is also a requirement that the producer should make those records available to an Inspector at any time of request.

If honey is used in production of other goods, levy is payable by the person who uses the honey in the production of those goods. Honey export charge is payable by the exporter.

From 1 July 2025, the levy was increased by 1 cent per kilogram from 4.6 to 5.6 cents per kilogram.

This temporary increase will be in place for six years and is specifically designated to repay the debt incurred from the national response to the Varroa mite incursion. For further information: Tel. 1800 020 619

www.agriculture.gov.au

Please note this levy is compulsory and not to be confused with the AHBIC voluntary contribution.

You can now submit your honey levy and export charge returns using [Levies Online](#).



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Lindsay Callaway
Warral Maldon Honey

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Steve Grahame – Outback Trucker



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New Varroa Treatment Approved

An emergency permit has been issued for Aluen CAP, an oxalic acid treatment which is applied using cellulose strips. There are no temperature limitations listed for this treatment and it can be used when honey supers are present. The treatment period is 42 days. The treatment level is four strips per eight to ten frame hives and two strips for a five to six frame nuc.

You can get completed details at the AHIBC website where you can access an up-to-date [Varroa Chemical Treatment Table](#)

From the VAA Bi Monthly Bulletin 4.1.2026

Varroa Chemical Treatment Table

Current on 17 December 2025

Go to www.honeybee.org.au for the most up to date details

Product name Current 17/12/25	Bayvarol® PER95037	Apistan® PER95038	FormicPro® PER95344	Apivar PER95905	Apitraz PER95905	Apiguard®	Api-bioxal™ PER94609	Aluen CAP® PER95790
Registration Status	Emergency use permit & Registered 94029	Emergency use permit active	Emergency use permit active Full registration progressing	Emergency use permit & Registered Label P88615	Emergency use permit active Full Registration progressing	Registered 65570	Emergency Permit Active	Emergency Permit Active Registration Application Progressing
Active ingredient	Flumethrin	Tau-fluvalinate	Formic acid	Amitraz	Amitraz	Thymol	Oxalic acid	Oxalic acid
Chemical Type	Synthetic pyrethroid	Synthetic pyrethroid	Organic acid	Synthetic formamidine	Synthetic formamidine	Organic extract	Organic acid	Organic acid
Product Type and dose for full size hive	plastic strips 4 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	gel strips 2 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	plastic strips 2 strips per brood chamber	gel product 50g per hive	Solution&Powder – 5mL per frame full of bees, max dose 50mL per hive, using syringe Powder – Vaporization 2.3g dose per hive	Cellulose strips 4 strips per 8-10 frame hive 2 strips 5-6 frame nuc
Temperature/ hive type limitations for treatment	Not critical	Not critical	Only treat when ambient daytime temps are between 10 °C & 29.5°C	Not critical	Not critical	Only treat when ambient daytime temps are between 15°C & 40°C	None	None
Treat with supers on hives	Yes but Excludes Comb honey	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Treatment time	6-8 weeks	6-8 weeks	7 days	6-10 weeks *no more than once per year	6 weeks *no more than once per year	2 weeks then additional tray for 4 weeks (Total of 6 weeks)	Minimum of 5 days between applications *Either method repeat only twice per year	42 days
Can nuclei colonies be treated	Yes – (2 strips per nuc)	Yes – (1 strip per nuc)	Colonies need to be a minimum of 6 frames of bees	Yes - (1 strip per nuc)	Yes - (1 strip per nuc)	Yes (25g per nuc)	Yes 5mL per frame full of bees for solution trickling with caution	Yes - 2 strips per nuc (5-6 frames of bees)
Withholding period	Not required when used as directed.	Do not have supers or harvest honey when strips are in	Only harvest honey after 2 weeks from the end of treatment	0 days after removal of strips. Do not have supers on when strips are in	2 weeks from the end of treatment. Do not have supers on when strips are in	0 days	0 days , hive re-entry 48 hours after treatment	None after removal of strips

Bendigo Branch VAA

Happy New Year, wishing you a great year in your beekeeping.

The next Bendigo branch meeting is on Wednesday the 4th of February at the Lakeside Hotel 286 Napier Street Bendigo.

Meeting from 7pm and meals from 6pm, please email Peta bbvaasecretary@gmail.com if you are having a meal, by the first Monday of the month.

I am looking forward to catching up, hearing news and learning from fellow beekeepers experiences, anyone interested in bees, beekeeping is most welcome to attend.

The variable daily temperatures going from hot to cold has resulted in a greater number of swarms, and swarms continuing much deeper into summer around Bendigo than I have observed in previous seasons.

This could be a result of ongoing spring type conditions with the temperature fluctuations, or better resources available and the bees believing that this season

is providing greater opportunities for reproduction and survival. I feel that it is the former at this stage, due to weather patterns rather than greater nectar and pollen availability.

With the dry conditions in suburbia my apiaries have required more regular water top ups since Christmas, so please ensure that you have a secure and safe water source available for each apiary, and check regularly.

Central Victoria is extremely dry, and trending towards higher temperatures, please be mindful of Total Fire Bans and High Fire Danger days. Particularly be aware of smoker use, smoker placement, transporting your smoker, extinguishing smokers, driving in long grass, parking vehicles in grassland areas, and your own hydration.

Take care,
Jamie Trimby

AgriFutures Australia welcomes new Chairman

AgriFutures Australia welcomes the appointment of The Honourable Mick Veitch as its new Chairman. Mr Veitch has been appointed for a three-year term, commencing on 11 January 2026.

The appointment marks an exciting new chapter in leadership for AgriFutures Australia, with Brianna Casey AM commencing as AgriFutures Australia's new Managing Director on Monday, 19 January 2026. These appointments signal AgriFutures Australia's ongoing commitment to proactive leadership, strategic growth, and broad stakeholder engagement across Australia's agricultural sectors.

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NQI's Future In Instrumental Insemination

By John Kennedy

In the US the Northern Queen Initiative (NQI) is seeking additional funding or sponsorship from individual beekeepers as they point out that “strategic investment in queen breeding technology is vital for the future of sustainable beekeeping”.

NQI points out that in North America honey bee colonies face mounting threats including pesticide exposure, and above all the relentless parasitism of varroa destructor, and habitat loss.

They say “yet the majority of queens sold in the US are shipped from southern regions, bred under vastly different environmental pressures, and selected for commercial scale not long term survival”.

In consequence they arrive with limited genetic diversity, poor adaptation to cold winters and a reliance on miticide treatments to survive varroa mites.

NQI is taking a new course to train beekeepers to raise locally adapted, mite-resistant queens to maintain a selected criteria for mite resistance, gentleness and overwintering success.

They add that to take this work to the next step and pursue its full potential they must cross the next stage into controlled mating.

This will be achieved by instrumental inseminations so that it is an “amplifier of success” by precisely pairing queens with selected drones, to eliminate genetic drift and preserve rare survivor lines.

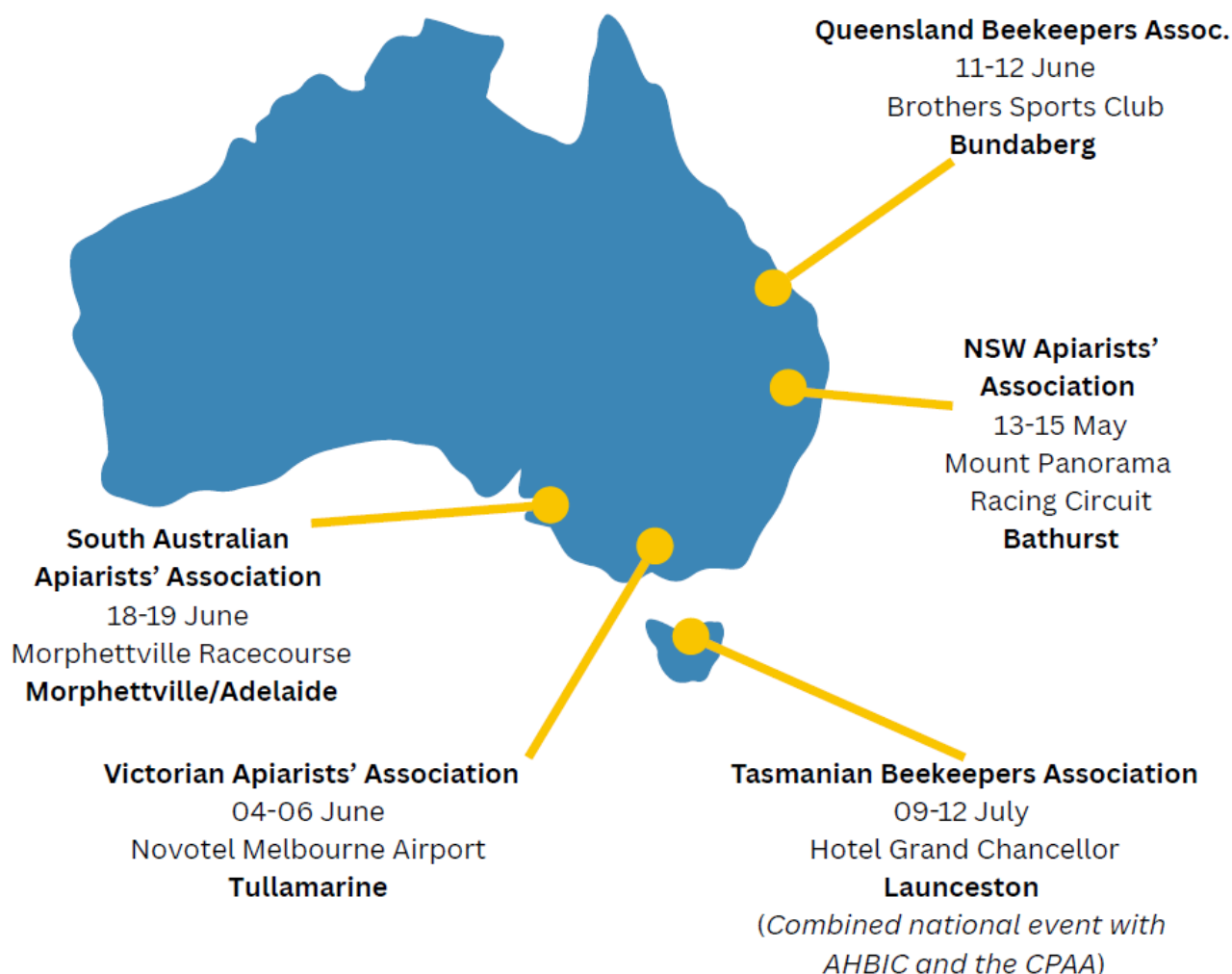
Instrumental insemination requires specialised microscopes, precision tools and controlled environments.

To achieve this NQI is offering dollar for dollar matching support for beekeeper's donations.

For further information on NQI see www.sbgmi.org

**Deadline for copy for the February journal is
10pm on Sunday 1st of February 2026**

National Beekeeping Conferences | 2026



AgriFutures

Protecting Australia's beekeeping future through smart traceability

Australia's honey industry is at a critical juncture. With biosecurity threats like varroa mite, increasing export market demands and growing consumer interest in provenance, the need for comprehensive hive and honey traceability has never been greater.

About the project

Funded through the National Agricultural Traceability Grants Program and managed by AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Program, this feasibility study is exploring how national beehive and honey traceability systems could enhance biosecurity, regulatory compliance, operational cost savings and industry resilience across the honey bee sector. Investment into the viability of such systems is key to addressing emerging threats from pests and diseases, while building confidence in Australian honey for domestic and international markets.

The project aims to assess the feasibility, costs and regulatory acceptance required for robust, fit-for-purpose traceability systems that could be rolled out nationally, benefiting commercial operators, supply chain partners and amateur/hobbyist beekeepers.

The study uses a triangulated approach; combining quantitative, qualitative and comparative international case study analysis to ensure insights are industry-

driven and actionable.

We're learning from international success stories – from New Zealand's rapid mobile-first adoption to Quebec's industry-led cooperative model while investigating the feasibility of a uniquely Australian solution. Through comprehensive stakeholder engagement, we will work to determine whether a national traceability system is practical, beneficial and supported by industry: from hobbyist beekeepers with a handful of hives to large commercial operations managing thousands.

Industry engagement is crucial

This project prioritises engagement across the industry, and will employ tailored interviews, national surveys and stakeholder workshops. Feedback from AgriFutures Honey Bee & Pollination Advisory Panel and oversight from a dedicated Steering Committee will ensure that findings are credible and widely supported.

Have Your Say

Your experience and insights are critical to getting this right. Whether you're a commercial beekeeper, amateur enthusiast, processor, or industry partner, we want to hear from you.

Head to the [Facebook page](#) to find out more, participate in surveys and interviews and follow our progress as we develop recommendations for Australia's beekeeping future.

Don't forget to pay your honey levy. See page 11 for more information

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The European Beekeeping Association

The position of the European Beekeeping Association (EBA) regarding the vote on the MRL of pesticides (acetamiprid) in the European Parliament

Dear President of the European Parliament,
Ms Roberta Metsola,

Regarding the proposed changes to the maximum residue limits (MRLs) of pesticides, which envisage, amongst others, raising the MRL of acetamiprid and its metabolites in honey to 1 mg/kg, the European Beekeeping Association and its Scientific Committees on Bee Health and Safety and Quality of Bee Products strongly express their opposition.

While the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has concluded that the proposed MRL is unlikely to pose a risk to human consumers, this assessment does not adequately address the chronic, sublethal, and colony-level effects of acetamiprid on honey bees (*Apis mellifera*). Scientific evidence demonstrates that acetamiprid, even at sublethal doses, poses a severe threat to honeybees. Exposure disrupts their energy metabolism and endocrine regulation, critically impairing the homing ability and return to the hive of foragers (You et al., 2026). These neurotoxic effects are exacerbated by the disruption of neurological redox equilibrium (Mackei et al., 2024) and alterations in the fatty acid composition of the central nervous system (Huber et al., 2025), which damages their basic functionality. Furthermore, the insecticide induces immunological and hormonal disorders, suppresses pathways linked to juvenile hormone synthesis in queens, and affects signaling in emerging bees (Erban et al., 2024), while also impairing behavior, survival, and larval development (Shi et al., 2025; Barroso et al., 2025). Its synergistic interaction with other pesticides, pathogens such as *Nosema ceranae* and the *Varroa destructor* mite (Wang et al., 2025; Kang et al., 2024), and the alteration of gut (Han et al., 2023) and cuticular microbiomes (Reiß et al., 2023), multiplies its negative impact, holistically weakening colonies. Given this accumulation of sublethal and chronic risks that compromise individual and colony health, it is imperative to prohibit the use of acetamiprid on pollinator-attractive crops. This measure is crucial to prevent bioaccumulation within the hive, protect the integrity of the trophic chain, and safeguard pollination ecosystem services, given evidence that there is no safe level of exposure for bees.

Therefore, we suggest NOT to increase the maximum residue limit of acetamiprid in honey. A "natural", found-in-plants acetamiprid does not exist, and MRLs reflect post-treatment residues of synthetic pesticides in bee products. Only in this way can we ensure the safety of bees, the preservation of their populations and the safety and quality of European honey and other bee products. The European Beekeeping Association strives for sustainable beekeeping practices that exclude the use of neonicotinoids, as these pose one of the greatest threats to bee colonies.

We respectfully request that your vote reflects the position of more than 420,000 European beekeepers represented by the European Beekeeping Association, who are actively working to protect bees and preserve Europe's biodiversity.

We remain at your disposal for scientific consultation and constructive dialogue.

Respectfully, President Boštjan Noc – President of European Beekeeping Association, Prof. Dr. Aslı Özkırım – President of EBA Bee Health Scientific Committee, Dr. Giovanni Formato – Vice-President of EBA Bee Health Scientific Committee, Dr. Nik Lupše – Head of EBA Scientific Committees, on behalf of the Scientific Committee for Safety and Quality of Bee Products
Contributing EBA committee members:

Prof. Dr. Xesús Feás, Dr. Violeta Santrač, Prof. Dr. Dražen Lušić, Dr. Juraj Majtan, Dr. Alviša Šalaševičienė, Dr. Soraia Falcão, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mojca Korošec

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Ultrasonic Pest Control To Protect Beehives

New technique uses ultrasonic signals that mimic bat calls to deter wax moths from beehives

ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Bees, and other pollinator species, are dying. Between pesticides, the climate crisis, and habitat loss, bee colonies are becoming weaker, leaving them more vulnerable to parasites like the greater and lesser wax moths. Vulnerable bees have cascading effects on beekeepers and food security in the apiculture industry.

A team of researchers from the University of Strathclyde and Japan's National Agriculture and Food Research Organization is exploiting the unusual hearing of wax moths to develop a sustainable and efficient pest control technique that does not harm bees.

Lara Díaz García, postdoctoral researcher at the University of Strathclyde, presented her findings as part of the Sixth Joint Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America and Acoustical Society of Japan in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Wax moths take advantage of weakened bee colonies, tunneling through the hive and feeding on the honeycomb and bee eggs. Removing infestations is labor-intensive — beekeepers must remove individual frames affected by the infestation and catch any remaining wax moths with sticky traps.

These moths can hear sounds four octaves higher than a human can, and this ultrasonic hearing helps

them avoid becoming tasty bat food and hear male moth calls. They tell these calls apart based on the timing of the signal and the loudness of the sound.

By analyzing which patterns of bat echolocation calls elicited a stronger neural response in the moths, the researchers determined the best ultrasonic deterrent. Because bees have no sense of hearing, this pest control mechanism does not harm them.

"The technique can be adapted to different moth species; it would require some work for tuning to the most sensitive range to their particular hearing, and then targeting that range, but once that initial part is done, the technique should be applicable to any other moth species capable of hearing — which is the majority of them," said Díaz García.

The team also developed a simplified model of the lesser wax moth eardrum, capturing its essential features to explain its directional hearing. They hope to generalize their method for other moth species and to develop a commercial pest control device or acoustic sensors inspired by moth ears.

"Nature is truly impressive and inspiring for technological development," said Díaz García. "It's also great to contribute to a very tangible outcome of very real problems that we're seeing due to the climate crisis."

Don't forget to pay your honey levy. See page 11 for more information



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A Plant That Attracts Thirsty Bees

First Published in the American Bee Journal

August 2025

By Randy Oliver

ScientificBeekeeping.com

What is it with us beekeepers? On one hand we love invasive non-native weeds (so long as they produce nectar), but we dread having a neighbor with a swimming pool.

How Can We Not Love Swimming Pools?

In California during the summer, water sources for our bees are often scarce (we're lucky to get even a "trace" of rainfall during the summer months), and hives send out hordes of water foragers (especially since summers are getting hotter every year). This is a huge problem for urban, suburban, and even rural beekeepers, since those water foragers may bother our neighbors when they flock to swimming pools, hot tubs, bird baths, backyard ponds, livestock water troughs, and dripping garden faucets.

Practical application: Once our nectar flow ends in mid-July, our bees get thirsty! If we can't lure our water foragers away from neighboring swimming areas, we are forced to move our hives out of those locations for the rest of the summer, resulting in having to overstock our other outyards.

Providing Bees with Alternative Water Sources

Many California streams and ponds dry up during the summer, and even in remote areas beekeepers may need to provide their colonies artificial water sources

As far as suburban or urban beekeeping, to avoid "nuisance" issues, most California counties (if they allow beekeeping at all) have ordinances that require placement of a water source adjacent to an apiary if a natural source of water (like a stream, pond, or canal) doesn't exist nearby. For many of us, dealing with complaints about bees at neighbors' water sources is a major problem — sometimes solvable, but unfortunately often requiring us to move the hives to another location.

And it's not just swimming pools, it's also dealing with bee-fearful gardeners

The public doesn't understand that honey bees defend their *hive* — not flowers or water sources. You often only need to explain this fact to an anxious neighbor.

A practical tip: When a neighbor expresses fear that they might get stung by bees gathering water, I pull out a \$100 bill, and offer them a challenge to win it: If they can get a bee to sting them within five minutes (without intentionally pressing one against their skin), they win. No one's won yet!

Fabricating Artificial Water Sources

In trying to solve this problem, we've spent decades trying to lure bees away from neighbors' water sources near our many outyards. I've tested every kind of method or additive to make our water sources attractive, including adding various types and concentrations of salt and trace minerals (none made much differ-

ence), chlorine, attractive scents, colors and reflective surfaces, and all kinds of floats or resting places (e.g., burlap, cotton, bark, gravel, or sand), as well as applying repellents at the neighbor's water (Bee-Go, DEET, benzaldehyde, bug sprays).

Results: It's not difficult to create a water source that *some* water collectors will go to, but it's *really hard* to lure them away from a neighbor's property. That said, I'll share some observations

Bees don't want to drown, so they like a dry, rough interface that they can stand on while they drink. The concrete wall of the neighbor's birdbath fit the bill.

A slow drip onto a cinder block works well.

Ditto for a pan of gravel, with the gravel projecting clear of the water to that the bees can keep their feet dry.

I tried wet sand at the edge of my fish pond — the bees created squiggles!

Floating bark (or wine corks) adds an organic scent, as well as wet crevices

In desperation, I've experimented with floating trays of sand, soil, manure, along with solar-powered drips or sprays. Aquatic plants with pond mud on their roots helped, but still couldn't lure the bees away from a nearby swimming pool.

Aquatic plants may help, but although bees like the flowers of water lilies (and sometimes spend the night in them), and stand on edges of the leaves to slurp, I wouldn't call them an "attractant" to a water source.

So What Have I Learned?

I can install what "should be" a highly-attractive water source in an apiary, only to frustratingly find that my hives' water collectors continue to instead go across the street.

At our urban outyards, we often excavate simple shallow ponds lined with 5-mil plastic, and add cinder blocks and aquatic plants. But although the bees used this one, many still flew to a concrete fishpond at an unappreciative neighbor's place across the street.

Water Collectors are Different than Nectar Foragers

Keep in mind that there are separate nectar foragers and "water collectors." Most of the honey bee forager force is motivated to collect sugar (generally in the form of nectar), of which the colony often has a surplus on hand (stored as honey). So during a nectar flow, the colony is often trying to "get rid of" excess water (by evaporative fanning). However, there are times when the colony instead has a *dire need* for water (for jelly production by the nurses, or for cooling the hive). In this case, a different group of foragers (based upon demand) seeks and collects sugar-free water, motivated by the desperate thirst of the colony [i].

As explained by Seeley [ii]:

Lindauer found that when a colony urgently needs water, its receiver bees do exert preferences among foragers; they speedily unload those with water or dilute nectar but tend to ignore foragers with concentrated nectar. This stimulates the water collectors to continue

(Continued on page 19)

A Plant That Attracts Thirsty Bees, cont'd

(Continued from page 18)

working **and to recruit others to their task** [boldface mine].

Perhaps we need to pay attention to this **recruitment**, and the differences between recruitment of nectar foragers and that of water collectors. Nectar foragers recruit to general **patches of scented flowers** (since they'd already emptied the flower that they just left), whereas water collectors seek **a specific location** where there is an inexhaustible source of (perhaps unscented) water. So the question is, has the honey bee evolved different recruitment methods?

Practical question: We know that when a honey bee finds a nectar source, in addition to bringing back the scent of the flower itself, it leaves behind a "scent mark" to attract recruits [iii]. Since water collectors are not recruited to a general patch of scented flowers, but rather to a specific water source location, how important are such scent marks to attract water collectors to that source?

Although (similar to other herbivores) bees may prefer the taste of water with a bit of salt or other trace minerals, what water foragers are most interested in is **water**. Allow me to share two observations that I've made about water collectors going to large sources of water having a single scent:

Observation 1: Many years ago I moved to a place with a large concrete pond. On the first day after I brought bees in, the water foragers all showed up **at the same spot** of the uniform concrete bank that surrounded the pond. And that remained the only spot on the bank that they went to for the rest of the year! There was nothing that I could see that was unique to that spot, other than that's **where the first water forager discovered a good place to load up**.

Observation 2: We have another outyard of bees above a lake. My wife and I enjoyed kayaking around the lake. On each trip I closely inspected the entire shore for honey bees gathering water. Year after year, there was only a single spot that I ever saw bees at,

Although the lake had over seven miles of shoreline, this little stump (near the apiary) was the only spot where I ever saw water foragers.

Conclusion: It appears to me that the water collectors are marking the specific site with a scent, which then attracts additional recruited water collectors. I wonder whether the marker scent placed by a successful water collector is more important than all the other variables?

What Have I Found to Work Best?

I've experimented in my home yard with setting up different mortar tubs as "ponds," each containing different potential "attractants" (gravel, bark, salt, different aquatic plants) and then moving them around the yard. There is always one clear winner.

The consistent winner is the presence of **water hyacinth**! Since water hyacinths can't survive the winter in my area without frost protection, there is little chance that my water collectors had been exposed to this plant elsewhere, so it may function as a unique attractant to this specific water source.

Water hyacinth, *Pontederia crassipes* (formerly *Eichhornia crassipes*) is an aquatic plant native to South America, naturalized throughout the world, and often invasive outside its native range. I don't suggest introducing it where it is not yet established, but it doesn't hurt to put some in a tub where it can't escape.

It Doesn't Appear to be the Flowers or the Scent

So what is it about water hyacinth that make it so attractive **to water collectors**? Although they can bloom what the water collectors are interested in is apparently their easy and safe access to water while walking on the floating leaves

I can't detect any odor or taste on the leaves that might attract water collectors, nor do the bees lick them much. Instead, they land on the leaves and then probe around with their proboscises until they find water-filled crevices to drink from.

Wrap-Up

For those of you who are having trouble with your neighbors due to your bees gathering water, I regret to say that I've yet to find a foolproof way to lure the bees to another water source. But water hyacinths are worth a try! Be sure to set up a bee pond proactively (before the bees get trained to your neighbors' water sources).

Disclaimer

The author declares that he has no relevant or material financial interests or relationships with the water hyacinth, and is not a paid promotor or influencer.

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Honey analysis is a non-invasive method of pathogen surveillance in honey bees (*Apis mellifera*), and provides insight into hive health, according to study of 679 honey samples across Italy

Read the article here <https://plos.io/4ppK6i9>

Article title: Molecular detection of bee pathogens in honey from various botanical origins

Fossil Bee Nests Made Inside Fossil Bones

Paleontologists find first fossil bee nests made inside fossil bones...in a cave that narrowly escaped becoming a latrine

FLORIDA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Key points

- Paleontologists working in a cave on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola have discovered the first-known instance of ancient bees nesting inside pre-existing fossil cavities.

- Burrowing bees generally prefer to make their nests out in the open. There is only one other documented case of burrowing bees making their nests inside caves. In this case, the likely cause for this aberrant behavior is a lack of topsoil outside the cave and an abundance of accumulated silt within.

- Many of the fossils were likely transported to the cave by giant barn owls. Evidence, including owl bones and eggshells, suggest these extinct owls lived in the cave through many successive generations, as did the bees.

GAINESVILLE, Fla. --- A giant barn owl, a type of rodent called a hutia, and a burrowing bee flew into a cave. Only two of them came back out. Which is the one that stayed inside? Hint: It's the one that can't fly.

This scene likely took place thousands of years ago on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola. The owl invited the hutia to dinner with its family and courteously gave it a lift to its cave. Unfortunately for the hutia, there was only one item on the menu, and the owl had just delivered it to its hungry chicks. The bee arrived much later, long after the meal was over and what was left of the hutia had been scattered across the cave and interred.

The bee was looking for a place to make its nest and began digging a tunnel through the fine clayey silt that had accumulated toward the dark recesses of the cave's interior. Before it dug down to its preferred depth, the bee ran into the ancient leftovers of the owl's meal.

This turned out to be a good thing for the bee, because the hutia's teeth just so happened to have similar dimensions to the nest it wanted to build. The teeth were gone, likely buried in other parts of the cave, but the indentations in the jaw — called alveoli — that once cradled them were still intact — and conveniently vacant.

The rest is history. A swarm of such bees made their nests in the cave's fossils for an unknown length of time. Later, that history was carefully excavated by paleontologists many thousands of years after the owl, hutia and potentially the bee had gone extinct.

The story might have ended there, had it not been for a keen eye and a friendly competition between colleagues.

"Usually, when collecting fossils, you get all the sediment out of the alveoli while cleaning the specimen," said Lazaro Viñola Lopez, who excavated the fossils while working as a doctoral student at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

But Viñola Lopez was particularly interested in this species of hutia, for which fossils were incredibly rare across the island, consisting of a few isolated teeth and

partial mandibles. In this single cave, called the Cueva de Mono, in the southern Dominican Republic, he found thousands of hutia fossils, most belonging to the same, previously rare, species. Apparently, the giant barn owls that lived in the cave had repeated the same dinner scene throughout multiple generations, slowly turning the cave into a charnel house. In other instances, the birds likely consumed their prey while hunting, in which cases the bones would have been condensed into a pellet that the owls later regurgitated in the cave.

Instead of mindlessly placing the fossil in a bag bound for the lab and a thorough cleaning, Viñola Lopez took his time to inspect it before putting it away. He noticed that one alveolus had a smooth inner lining, unlike the rest, which had the rough texture of bone.

"I'd seen something similar in Montana when I was collecting dinosaur fossils in 2014," he said. At the time, he and his colleagues kept finding isolated wasp cocoons interspersed with the bones in the rocky matrix. He assumed what he found in the cave was more of the same. He recalls thinking, "it would be nice to write a short paper reporting the occurrence of these wasp nests in the mandibles."

Viñola Lopez proposed the idea to his colleague Mitchell Riegler, also a doctoral student at the museum and present for the excavation. Riegler, who studied extinct lizards and had a dissertation to finish, was skeptical. "I was like, Lazaro, that's a niche project, and I have a lot of other things to do."

So, for a time, the idea was shelved along with the specimens. Until, that is, Riegler received a challenge from his former undergraduate advisor at the University of Texas at Austin.

"He and I played this game back and forth in which we tried to write a paper in a week."

Riegler had lost the first round and was itching for a rematch. The wasp nests, he thought, might just be the thing he needed to win.

"I told Lazaro we could do it only because I thought it'd be fast," he said. "We'd scan them, describe their shape and say that they were there. Boy, was I wrong."

Things initially went well. Selby Olsen, another doctoral student at the museum, also signed on to the project. "We locked ourselves in Lazaro's apartment for five straight days and didn't stop writing," Riegler said. "Each of us sat in a corner and wrote a section, then swapped."

They emerged feeling confident they'd win. Later, Viñola Lopez and Riegler independently came across the same study on ichnofossils, a term used to describe indirect fossil evidence of an organism, such as a footprint, preserved poop and — in this case — nests. The study contained a description of wasp nests, which they realized differed from theirs in one key regard.

Wasp nests are made from a mix of saliva and chewed plant fibers or dirt, which gives the interior and exterior walls a rough texture. But bees are more fastidious. After constructing the nest out of compacted soil, many will secrete a waxy substance from a specialized gland, which they use to generously coat the inside of the nest, making it waterproof. This also makes the in-

(Continued on page 21)

Fossil Bee Nests Made Inside Fossil Bones, cont'd

(Continued from page 20)

side of their nests look smooth, precisely like the ones they'd found in the hutia mandibles.

They'd written about the wrong insects.

This wasn't necessarily a fatal blow to their now tenuous victory. It wouldn't take much work to swap out the information they'd included on wasps with that of bees, and they still had a little time left. But now things were getting interesting.

There is only one other documented case of a burrowing bee nesting inside a cave, and there are no documented cases at all of bees making their nests in a pre-existing fossil structure. A study published in 2001 gives a macabre report of human bones from an ancient Roman necropolis that bees drilled into, but bees nesting inside fossils without altering them was something new.

They conceded the race and adopted a more measured approach. They consulted with scientists who study modern bees and consigned themselves to a year-long dive into literature on entomology. Viñola Lopez travelled back to the cave to study its stratigraphy. At some point along the way, someone decided they wanted to build a house nearby and turn the cave into a septic tank. Given that the person who wanted to build on the land didn't actually own it, their plans were ultimately thwarted, but the paleontologists didn't take any chances while the cave's fate was in limbo.

"We had to go on a rescue mission and get as many fossils out as possible, and we got a lot of them," Viñola Lopez said.

Now, with the final publication of the expanded paper, their hard work has arguably paid off. It features a rich account of the cave's natural history and stratigraphy and descriptions of two other fossil types in which the bees made their nests.

In one unique instance, a nest was found inside the pulp cavity of a sloth tooth. Tree sloths were once common in parts of the Caribbean, but they went extinct following the arrival of humans. Another nest was found in the cavity of a hutia vertebra, though which its spinal cord would have passed when it was alive.

CT scans of the specimens showed that — in some

cases — they'd actually gotten multiple nests for the price of one. Rather than having to make a new tunnel every time they need to lay eggs, some burrowing bees will crawl down into existing burrows to see if their tenants have hatched or not. If empty, the bee may decide to place a new nest in the same spot.

The unlucky hutia that dropped by for dinner had a total of six nests in one alveolus, cupped inside each other like Russian dolls.

The study also contains a plausible explanation for why the bees bucked tradition and made nests inside a cave rather than somewhere out in the open, which Riegler learned about firsthand. "The area we were collecting in is karst, so it's made of sharp, edgy limestone, and it's lost all of its natural soils," he said. "I actually fell on it at one point, so I can tell you all about it." The soils that do manage to build up over time are periodically washed into the thousands of caves that dot the island, where they accumulate and provide some of the only suitable habitat for burrowing bees in that region.

The authors are currently working on several other fossils retrieved from the cave that will be described in future studies published at a leisurely pace.

The authors published their findings in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B Biological Sciences

DOI

[10.1098/rsos.251748](https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.251748)



Photo: Tino Corsetti



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Begging Gene Leads To Drone Food

Bee research:
Publication in Nature Communications

HEINRICH-HEINE UNIVERSITY DUESSELDORF

Is complex social behaviour genetically determined? Yes, as a team of biologists from Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf (HHU) together with colleagues from Bochum and Paris discovered while studying bees. They identified a genetic factor that determines the begging behaviour of drones, which they use to obtain food socially. They are now publishing their findings in the scientific journal *Nature Communications*.

Male bees, or “drones”, do not have an easy time obtaining essential proteins. This is because they cannot digest pollen, the most important source of protein for bees. To avoid starvation, they depend on worker bees feeding them a pre-processed food that the workers make themselves from pollen. However, to obtain this paste, the drones must convince workers to provide the food by performing a series of behaviours.

“Such cooperative behaviour is a complex matter in the animal kingdom, as it requires close coordination between social partners. In our research, we ask ourselves what is required to orchestrate this interaction,” explains Professor Dr Martin Beye from the Institute of Evolutionary Genetics at HHU.

A research team led by Professor Beye investigated the genetic and neural basis for the cooperative behaviour of bees. The biologists searched for regulators that wire the male honeybee’s brain during development in such a way that the animals display their innate social behaviour for this food exchange. Researchers from Université Paris-Saclay and Ruhr University Bochum participated in the study, which has now been published in *Nature Communications*.

The researchers determined that the behavioural interactions necessary for food transfer can be traced back to a transcription factor called the “fruitless” or “Fru” protein. A transcription factor is a protein that can switch many other genes in the genome on and off. This factor is only active in male bees.

Using genetic technologies (CRISPR-Cas9), the researchers introduced a green fluorescent protein encoding gene into the Fru gene. This enabled them to label the cells in which the transcription factor is active.

Dr Sven Köhnen, lead author of the study: “We detected it in neurons in the nervous system, which process sensory information and are used for decision-making. From this, we concluded that Fru can determine the innate behaviour of males.” Overall, Fru influences a neural network of around 1,800 neurons that is closely related to cooperative behaviour.

The team then created so-called knockout mutants in which they switched off the transcription factor Fru. The researchers attached QR codes to the bodies of the mutant drones and observed their behaviour using an automated camera system developed in Düsseldorf.

Köhnen: “The decision-making behaviour of these bees was disrupted. They were unable to approach their conspecifics properly, begged for food less frequently

and interacted in such a way that they received less food.” Co-author and doctoral student Pia Ulbricht adds: “However, other typical behaviours of the drones were not affected. Only in the context of food intake did the knockout mutants behave conspicuously.”

The mutants were also not distinct in their odour profile, as co-author Dr Thomas Eltz from Ruhr University Bochum noted. Individual odours are determined by the body’s own hydrocarbons, which are important for animal interaction. The olfactory centre, where odours are processed, was also unaffected, as research partners Professor Julie Carcaud and Professor Jean-Christophe Sandoz from Paris noted.

Professor Beye: “Our study shows that these cooperative behaviours are specified by a genetic programme that has been newly formed in the course of evolution. This programme defines the neural controls, which determine whether and for how long the behaviour sequence is executed based on perceived sensory information. Such mechanisms enable the necessary behavioural adaptations to social partners.”

Original publication

Sven Köhnen, Pia Ulbricht, Alina Sturm, Julie Carcaud, Jean-Christophe Sandoz, Thomas Eltz and Martin Beye; The *fru* gene specifies male cooperative behaviours in honeybee colonies; *Nature Communications* (2025)

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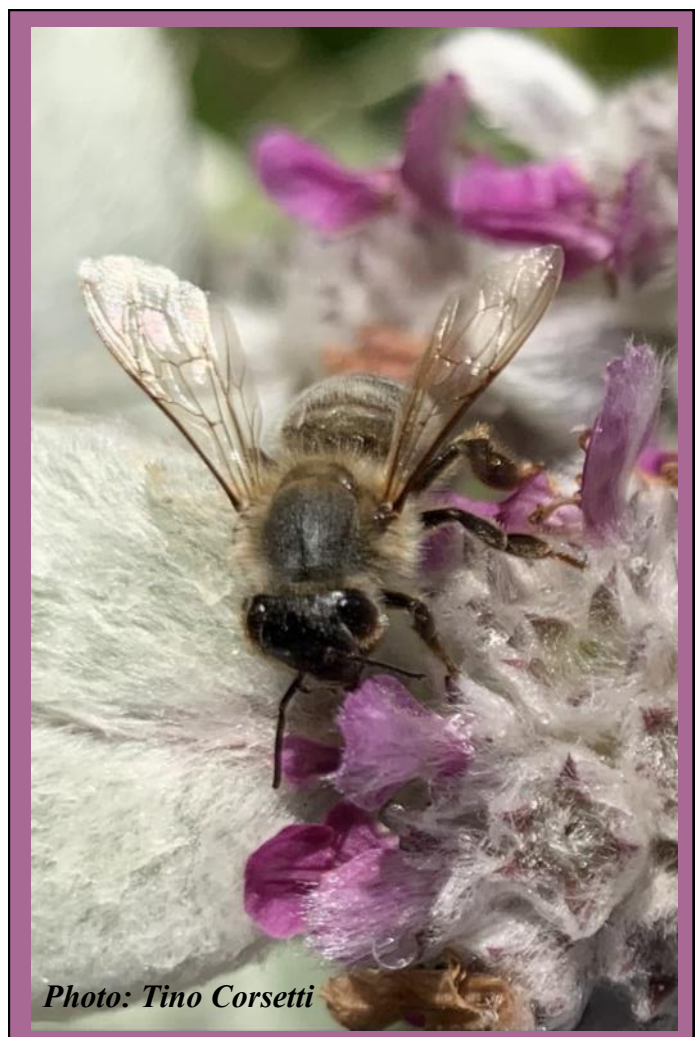


Photo: Tino Corsetti

Urban Wild Bees Act As Sensors Of City Health

As cities grow and natural habitats shrink, urban wildlife must adapt to rapidly changing environments. A new study published in *Insect Science* shows that the guts of urban-dwelling wild bees contain detailed microbial signatures that reflect both bee health and the quality of the surrounding environment, offering a powerful new tool for monitoring ecological well-being in cities.

Researchers at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) used metagenomic sequencing of the solitary mason bee *Osmia excavata* to analyze dietary pollen, gut bacteria and viruses, and antibiotic resistance genes across 10 urban agricultural sites in Suzhou, China. Their findings reveal how gut community data from a single tiny pollinator can expose hidden environmental pressures such as floral scarcity, pathogen spillover, and chemical contamination.

"Our study shows that the gut of a wild bee can act as a sensitive biological sensor of urban environmental quality," said corresponding author Dr. Min Tang of XJTLU. "By integrating diet, bacteria, viruses, and antibiotic resistance into a single metagenomic workflow, we capture ecological pressures that traditional field surveys often overlook."

Bee gut DNA reveals constrained diets shaped by urban vegetation

Metagenomic analysis of plant DNA showed that urban *Osmia* bees rely heavily on a small subset of floral resources, especially *Brassica* crops and the orna-

mental tree *Platanus*. Because *Platanus* is not typically preferred by bees, its frequent appearance suggests that city bees often forage opportunistically when options are limited.

Diet patterns varied across sites and closely matched local vegetation, demonstrating how the structure of urban landscapes strongly influences seasonal foraging opportunities.

A stable but environmentally sensitive microbiome

Across Suzhou's varied habitats, the bees maintained a relatively consistent "core" gut microbiome dominated by Gammaproteobacteria, particularly the bacterial genus *Sodalis*. This symbiont encoded the widest variety of enzymes needed to break down the pollen coat, underscoring its importance for bee nutrition. At two sites, however, *Sodalis* was nearly absent, replaced by opportunistic bacteria such as *Pseudomonas*, indicating potential environmental stress or microbiome disruption.

Antibiotic resistance profiles mirror human impacts

The bee microbiomes carried 173 antibiotic resistance genes, including multidrug-resistant types that varied widely between sites. Although overall ARG levels were low, their distribution suggests exposure to different microbial communities or pollutants across the city.

Read the full article here: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1744-7917.70051>

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WA Honey Venture Fails With Substantial Losses

By John Kennedy

Australian Honey Ventures Pty Ltd., a Western Australian start up business which envisioned providing substantial returns to participating Western Australian beekeepers, has been placed, by its creditors, into Administration.

The business which was actively promoted by its founder, a Ms Amy Curtin about three years ago, is said to have raised about three million dollars in two rounds of share issues to "mum and dad investors".

It also claimed to have set up a packing and production centre for its purchases of high medicinal quality WA honey that it was aiming to purchase from local beekeepers.

In one publicity effort it claimed to have identified markets for high medicinal quality honey in the Middle East, including a likely maiden marketing effort in Kuwait.

The company also traded as Really Good Honey, with a website under this name still on line (but with its range of honeys all said to be sold out).

Another promotional video claims to have held two meetings with Woolworths and a likely listing of a table range of its honeys in hundreds of stores.

In another promotion video Australian Honey Ventures said WA beekeepers of high medicinal quality honey from jarrah, blackbutt, red gum or other local sources were getting only \$4 per kilo for their honey. It suggested it could pay \$24 per kilo and after branding, packaging and promotion could build export markets for all honey it sold to Middle Eastern buyers or distributors for \$80 a kilo.

After deducting its charge of about \$10 per kilo for its services it aimed to return 25% of the margin quarterly to its beekeeper suppliers, giving them a substantial return.

It is not disclosed if any honey was actually sold.

The company's efforts in large measure appeared to want to gain some of the substantial retail value that NZ manuka beekeepers and brands were initially acquiring at the time, until that initial boom collapsed.

It is unclear what is actually available for sale now other than the two domain names, a small quantity of

plant and equipment, packaging materials and a database.

Initial founder Ms Amy Curtin is reported to have moved on to a new start up business involved in cake production in which she is seeking public investment.

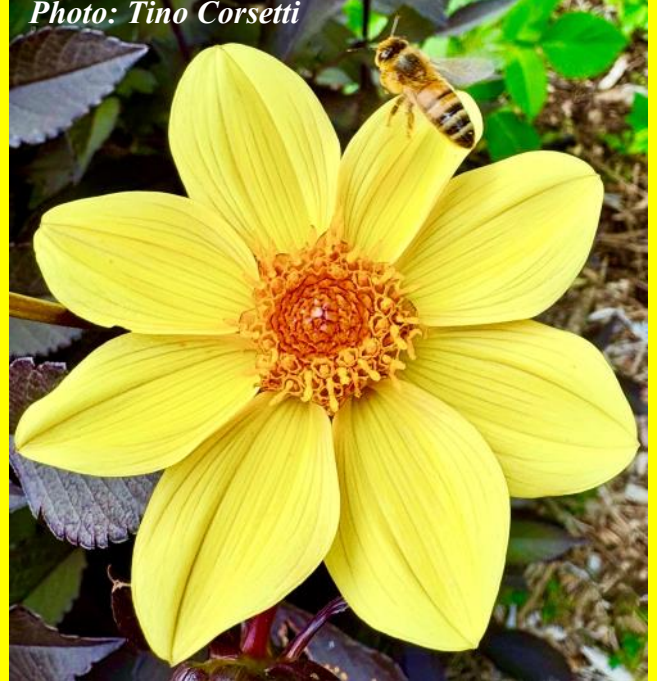
Although the company was founded in Perth it announced it was intending to also buy appropriate medicinal honeys from the east coast, especially Queensland,

There is also a report available on line where a Queensland Parliamentarian, Jon Krause, is said to have acquired shares in Australian Honey Ventures while promoting beekeeping and honey but failing to disclose his shareholding in the Queensland Parliament. He was accused of breaching his ethical responsibilities.

Australian Honey Ventures Pty Ltd was placed into administration by its creditors on 1 December,

An article in the WA business press is headlined "Investors Lose Millions in Real Good Honey Collapse".

Photo: Tino Corsetti



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Bee Bits From Canada

By John Kennedy

CANADIAN BEEKEEPERS ACTIVE ON TWO ISSUES

Canada's commercial beekeepers, estimated to run 800,000 hives, largely operating in four prairie provinces, have launched an active program based on two issues – the T Mite (*tropilaelaps*) and cheap imports of products which are called honey but are not.

The new campaign is led by local beekeepers, their industry associations and an Alberta politician based in what I called the “honey capital of the country” (the town of Falher in Alberta, which has held its annual honey festival since 1970).

A major petition is being prepared for presentation to the national Parliament in Ottawa.

Reports say, “that bees and beekeepers have an essential role in national food security and the agriculture economy with 21 food and feed crops dependent on honey bee pollination”.

The economic annual value of pollination in Canada is put at \$C7 billion.

The motion to go before the houses of Parliament seeks a ban on import of queens and bee packages into North America as this is judged as the main way that the spread of *Tropilaelaps* is likely to be bought in (it is also judged to be a major spread of this invasive and deadly insect into Europe).

The submission says, “that outdated policies, regulatory inaction and unfair trade practices are inflicting direct economic harm on Canadian beekeepers”.

They posit that immediate government intervention is needed to implement a collaborative framework that addresses critical failures in stock replacement, access to essential treatments, honey adulteration and to maintain existing beekeeper support programs.

The industry has also held meetings with beekeepers and embassies in the US and Mexico to discuss cross border issues.

Rising concerns about the T Mite around the world is a useful reminder that a just published and well-reviewed 90 page text book *Tropilaelaps – At The Gate of Your Apiary* by Gill, Uzonov, Janashia and Kovacic is available from Northern Bee Books (www.northernbeebooks.co.uk) for 9.99 pounds sterling providing science based information on this emerging new threat.

Although not currently in Australia the mite is recorded in Papua New Guinea!

CANADIAN BEEKEEPERS OFFERING SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT

If you are looking for overseas beekeeping experience, then honey and pollination contractors in Canada could supply you with the opportunity.

The latest November (Fall) edition of Hivelights - the official magazine of the Canadian Honey Council, carries four full pages of seasonal employment opportunities for experienced labourers, supervisors, apiary technicians and experienced bee workers.

The jobs are seasonal, often six months from April

2026 onwards.

One advertiser for instance lists 18 such vacancies.

Forty hour rates varying from \$C16 to \$C24 per hour are quoted, often with an end of season production bonus.

The positions advertised all stress the importance of working in a team, heavy lifting, English language, “and must not be allergic to bee stings”.

The Hivelights magazine of some 38 pages (it also contains a wealth of information and products available from Canadian bee suppliers as well as seasonal reports and other local bee and honey information) can be downloaded from www.honeycouncil.ca



Photo: Tino Corsetti



Prices include GST:

1-10	\$33.50 each
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VAA Board Elections

PART D. BOARD & BOARD ELECTIONS

Powers of the Board

D.1. Unless the Act or the Constitution states to the contrary, all powers of the Association may be exercised by the Board.

By-Laws

D.2. The Board may make By-Laws to deal with any matter not covered in this Constitution.

D.3. A By-Law comes into operation one month after notification to the members of its making, but if, within one month of notification to the members of the making of a By-Law, a special general meeting is requested to disallow the By-Law, the By-Law does not come into operation if the motion to disallow the By-Law is approved at the Special General Meeting.

Types of Board membership and size of Board

D.4. (a) The Board consists of nine members:

- (i) one member of the VAA appointed by each Regional Association.
- (ii) one member of the VAA appointed by each Branch.
- (iii) such number of generally elected Board members as will bring the total number of Board members for that year to nine.

(b) A regional association cannot exercise its right to appoint a Board member unless at the annual census date

- (i) It has a minimum of 25 members who are also members of the VAA; or
- (ii) 75 per cent of its total membership are members of the VAA.

Board member must be able to communicate electronically

D.5. A member cannot become a Board member if that person does not have access to electronic means of communication and the ability to attend meetings electronically.

Returning Officer appointment

D.6. (a) The Board must, by 31 October in each year, appoint a person to conduct the processes for appointment and election of Board Members.

(b) The Returning Officer cannot be a person who intends to be a Board member in the following year, and is not required to be a member of the Association.

Appointed Representative Board Member process

D.7. (a) The Returning Officer must, before the end of December, determine the date by which the Appointed Representative Board Members, who will take office at the next AGM, are to be notified to the Returning Officer.

(b) The Returning Officer must, before the end of December, notify each Regional Association and each Branch of the date determined in the previous subRule.

(c) When the notification date has passed, the Returning Officer must notify all members of the Appointed Representative Board Members who will take office at the next AGM.

Generally Elected Board Member process

D.8 (a) The Returning Officer must, not less than 8 weeks before the AGM, advise the members that nominations are called for generally elected Board member positions.

(b) Nominations must be received at the registered address of the Association-not less than 5 weeks before the AGM.

(c) If the number of nominations received is greater than the number of vacancies, the Returning Officer must, in accordance with By-Laws, conduct a ballot to be finalised before the AGM.

VAA Board Elections, cont'd

(Continued from page 26)

- (d) If the number of candidates nominated for election is not greater than the number of vacancies, all candidates shall be immediately declared elected
- (e) If the number of candidates is less than the number of vacancies, the Returning Officer must notify the members of the Association not less than 3 weeks before the AGM of the number of vacancies to be filled by an election conducted by the Returning Officer at the AGM from members nominated at that meeting.
- (f) It is not necessary for a candidate nominated for election at the AGM to be present at that meeting if the consent of that person is provided in writing to the meeting.

Nomination for election as Generally Elected Board Member

- D.9.(a) A nomination for an elected Board member position must be signed by the proposer, who must be an ordinary member of the Association. The candidate must also provide a signed consent to the nomination. This may be on a separate document to be received at the registered address by the same date as for the nomination.
- (b) All ordinary members of the association are eligible to stand for election for these positions and to vote in the election.

Election of President and Vice-Presidents

- D.10. (a) The President and two Vice-Presidents are elected from the members of the incoming Board by the members of the Association present at the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) A member cannot be elected as President unless that person has previously been a member of the Board for a minimum of two years, which may be separated.
- (c) The previous paragraph does not apply if there is no Board member who qualifies.

General duties of Board members

- D.11. (a) As soon as practicable after taking office, each Board member must become familiar with this Constitution and the Act.
- (b) The Board is collectively responsible for ensuring that the Association complies with the Act and that individual Board members comply with this Constitution.
- (c) Board members must exercise their powers and discharge their duties
- (i) with reasonable care and diligence;
 - (ii) in good faith in the best interests of the Association; and
 - (iii) for a proper purpose.
- (d) Board members and former Board members must not make improper use of
- (i) their position; or
 - (ii) information acquired by virtue of holding their position;
- so as to gain advantage for themselves or any other person or to cause a detriment to the Association.

Term of office of Board members

- D.12. All Board members hold office from the end of the AGM until the end of the following AGM and are eligible for re-appointment or re-election

**The deadline for the February 2026 Bee Journal is
10pm on Sunday 1st of February**

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Agriculture Victoria: Apiary team
Website: [Honey bees | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria](http://Honey%20bees%20|%20Livestock%20and%20animals%20|%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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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,
tralaralgon.propertytservices@deeca.vic.gov.au

Grampians

Ballarat – Jennifer Bromley,
Ph: 0448 389 270,
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

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, Gill Greenstein

Ph: 0422 058 180

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:

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

Northwestern Bee Club Inc.

President: Roger Mitchell

Mob. 0407 427 431

northwesternbeeclub@gmail.com

Web: <https://www.nwbee.club/>

Mornington Peninsula Beekeepers Association :

P.O. Box 186, Mornington, 3931

Ph: 0401 965 558

E: admin@mpba.org.au

Monthly MPBA Club Meeting -
4th Wednesday of every month
at 7pm Mornington Park Pavilion,
9 Flinders Drive, Mornington

Moonee Valley Beekeepers Club Inc. (MVBC Inc.)

Secretary: Paul Kucera

mvbeekeepersclub@gmail.com

Meets at 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**

CLASSIFIEDS

HONEY BUYERS

Archibald's Honey Co.
Spring Rd.
Dingley,
VIC, 3172
Ph: 03 9551 1860
Contact: Stuart Archibald
Email: rosalie@archibaldhoney.com.au

Beechworth Honey Ltd.
38-40 Hammersley Rd.
Corowa,
NSW 2646
Ph: 02 6033 2322
Contact: Steve or
Jodie Goldsworthy

Beeman Honey & Beekeeping Supplies
2/14-16 Tova Dr.
Carrum Downs
Vic 3201
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
Martin Drake,
Bendigo or
Melbourne
0409 808 332

Redpath's Beekeeping Supplies
193 Como Parade East,
Parkdale,
VIC 3195
Ph: 03 9587 5950
Alan Redpath
redpaths@redpaths.com.au
www.redpaths.com.au

FOR SALE

Business for sale
Jeeralang Apiary Supplies
Koala Drive, Jeeralang Junction
Ph: 03 5122 2641
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Eastern Victoria

NEW MEMBERS

Ivan Burch
Dale Kennedy

**Deadline for copy for
the February 2026
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Sunday 1st of
February 2026.**

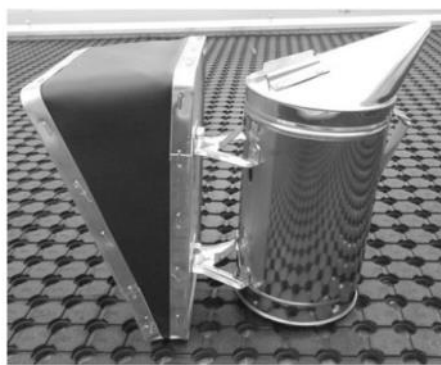
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Index of Advertisers

AIR CTI	11
Aust. Queen Bee Exporters	25
Becs Beehive	5
Beeplas Australia	9
Dalrymple View	11
Denmar Apiaries	15
JBee Equipment	21
Kelvin Trading	Inside front
Prestige Stainless	23
Stafford Engineering - EzyLoader	Back
Steritech	17
Whirrakee Honey	30
Whirrakee Woodware	13

Do you have photos of bee or honey related subjects?
The Australian Bee Journal would love your photos for use in the journal and/or on the VAA website.
Please send to
abjeditors@yahoo.com



Photo: Tino Corsetti



Photo: Tino Corsetti



SAVE THE DATE
VAA 2026 Conference and AGM
Novotel Melbourne Airport
4 - 6 June 2026

We look forward to welcoming beekeepers from across Victoria and beyond to our 2026 Annual Conference and AGM. Our program will focus on biosecurity, varroa management, honeybee health and nutrition and apiculture industry updates. The conference venue will also include trade stalls, opportunities to socialize, connecting with old friends and making new friends along the way. We are also organising a special stream on Saturday focused on recreational beekeeping!

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