AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

"The Voice of the Beekeeper" www.nswaa.com.au Volume 14 Number 3 May - June 2021



Inside:

Austalia's Purple Hive Pg 29 Tocal College Beekeeper Training Pg 33 New Corona Virus Rapid-testing Method Pg 37

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# AUSTRALIA'S HONEYBEE NEWS

The official Journal of the NSW Apiarists' Association (NSWAA) www.nswaa.com.au

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### CONTENTS

Executive & Industry Contacts	Page 4	Tocal College Beekeeper Training	Page 33
President's Report	Page 5	Almond Pollination Hive Requirements	Page 33
BICC Update	Page 5	Trade Show Exhibitors	Page 34
NSWAA Executive Responsibilities	Page 6	NSWAA Partners	Page 35
NSWAA Honour Roll	Page 8	EPA Ordered to Ban Pesticide	Page 36
Newest Life Member	Page 11	Condolences	Page 36
Honey Bee Communication	Page 15	Position Vacant	Page 36
Burnt National Park Bee Sites	Page 17	New Corona Virus Rapid-Testing Method	Page 37
Australian Bee Congress Save the Date	Page 18	2021 Conference Photos	Page 38
Technical Specialist, Honey Bees Report	Page 27	Friends of AHBIC	Page 42
Australia's Purple Hive	Page 29	AHBIC Update	Page 43
Kangaroo Island Honey Bees	Page 30	Beekeeper Journals / Advertisers	Page 46
Bee Biosecurity Officer Report	Page 31		

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Past Presidents Report

Meetings in recent times include BIBCC (see the report in this HBN), AHBIC and COVID Border meetings. COVID Border meeting is to be prepared if borders are closed at short notice close to almond pollination time.

The 2021 Tamworth Conference/AGM was a great success. The general feeling was very positive and upbeat. It was great for beekeepers to catch up in person. We had attendees from Victoria and Queensland.

The Hon Adam Marshall opened the conference and spoke highly of the executive representing the industry very well. During morning tea he publicly announced the Bushfire Industry Recovery Grant to our industry. Close to \$2 million. Industry is very appreciative of the government's support for our industry.

Congratulations to Steve Cunial as the new President. I am very confident that Steve will continue to drive the NSWAA forward. Congratulations to Brian Woolfe (Hound) as the new Vice President. There was a ballot for three positions on the executive. Congratulations to Therese Kershaw, Stephen Fuller and Ray Hull on being elected. Thank you to all that nominated.

There were some very good presentations but the one that excited most beekeepers was the last one via zoom from Kevin Foster from UWA. The topic was 'Food for Honeybees, Annuals and Clovers.' Some species looked ideal for those that have their own land where they raise queens and would slot in perfectly with the Bee Friendly Farm movement.

Mr Joe Horner attended the conference and received the Goodacre award for services to the National beekeeping industry with his unique queen breeding methods. Joe does not attend many conferences and we were privileged to have him attend. Joe donated two breeder queens to the raffles. Thank you Joe.

Mr Neil Bingley was awarded life membership at the annual dinner. This was well deserved as Neil has spent 20 continuous years on the executive with four of them as President. Plus many other areas where he has contributed at the National and state level.

The dinner was a great success although the dinner speaker was not what I expected. For those that did not like the dinner speaker I apologise.

The tradeshow looked very professional and ran flawlessly under the guidance of Therese Kershaw.

Thank you Therese, a job very well done. For the first time we had a honey and apiary products competition. This was the brainchild of Sueellen Cooper who organised and ran the competition. The showroom looked amazing. Thank you Sueellen, you did a wonderful job. Thank you to those that supported the honey competition with entries.

For all that assisted with the success of the conference thank you. People like Sandy Eastern, Raelene Michie and Debbie Porter. Thank you to those that sold raffle tickets and lastly a BIG thank you to secretary Robyn Lewis.

I would also like to thank the past executive for their support and assistance while I was president.

Feedback from the free professional development training on the Wednesday afternoon was very good. The workshop was on business structures including tax, succession and insurance pros and cons.

Stephen Targett Past President

### BIBCC Update May Meeting 2021

The meeting ended up as a zoom meeting due to some COVID cases in Sydney.

Three main items that came out of the meeting were:

DPI will soon be commencing audits of beekeepers to ensure they are complying with the code wrt pooled honey tests (from 20% of colonies {which is any size that has a queen}) and mite detection tests.

DPI will soon commence full cost recovery for compliance officers that have to visit your apiary more than twice to ensure compliance with biosecurity directions. The cost recovery will be for the third, fourth etc visits to ensure that you have complied.

DPI have the flexibility to change the focus of the BBO. NSWAA has asked that BBO (education) focus on those commercial beekeepers who have not submitted honey samples and those that are not members of NSWAA. There are over 1,000 commercial registered beekeepers in NSW and NSWAA membership is just over a quarter of this. The BBO has had plenty of contact with most NSWAA members.

Stephen Targett



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# **NSW APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC.**

### ABN: 89 417 216 326 Citation For Mr Neil Bingley Life Membership

### Neil Bingley

Commercial Apiarist

### Executive Director Weerona Apiaries (Family business)

The family beekeeping business manages approximately 2,000 bee hives primarily for the production of honey, with recent involvement in providing a professional pollination service for the almond industry. Active members of the business include his brother David and his son Brett.

The business averages over 200 kg of honey per hive annually, which is more than twice the state average. Their operational area includes the South Eastern quarter of

NSW, occasionally extending into Victoria. The operational base is located at Sutton on the outskirts of the ACT.

The business also includes fine wool merino sheep and cattle.

Prior to entering the family business, he trained and qualified as a diesel mechanic, topping the class. Since 1980 he has been fully employed in the family beekeeping business.

### **Beekeeping Industry Involvement**

- financial member of the NSW Apiarists' Association from 28th July 1977 until present.
- Vice President of NSWAA Southern Tablelands branch 11 may 2002 6 May 2003.
- President of the NSWAA Southern Tableland's branch 17 May 2003 6 May 2006.
- executive member of NSWAA from 2001 until May 2021.
- Vice President of NSWAA 2006 2015 10 years
- President of NSWAA from 2016 until 2019 4 years.
- AHBIC executive member (4 yrs)
- AHBIC education committee (developing learning modules at Tocal Ag College)
- involved in setting up and managing Honey Land for NSWAA represented southern tablelands branch and was coordinator for 30 plus years.

### **Training and Development**

- Marcus Oldham College Rural Leadership Program 2002
- Certificate III in beekeeping Tocal Ag College

### **Research Involvement**

- assisting Dr John Roberts with a project on chalkbrood
- assisting Dr Jodie Gertz with projects on chalkbrood
- collaborator and assessment of breeding stock from the Eastern States Queen Bee Breeding Scheme

### Awards

### - Keith McIlvride Memorial Award 2014 (NSW Apiarists' Association)

As you can see Neil has been heavily involved with the NSWAA over many years. Neil is a very worthy recipient of life membership.

21st May 2021







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# Catch the Buzz – Honey Bee Communication...Odour Chemicals

Honey bees rally to their queen via 'game of telephone'

### By: Nikk Ogasa



"Buzz. Buzz. The queen is that way," said one honey bee to another. "Pass it on."

Honey bees can't speak, of course, but scientists have found that the insects combine teamwork and odor chemicals to relay the queen's location to the rest of the colony, revealing an extraordinary means of long distance, mass communication.

The research is "really nice, and really careful," says Gordon Berman, a biologist at Emory University who was not involved in the study. It shows once again, he says, that insects are capable of "exquisite and complex behaviors."

Honey bees communicate with chemicals called pheromones, which they sense through their antennae. Like a monarch pressing a button, the queen emits pheromones to summon worker bees to fulfill her needs. But her pheromones only travel so far. Busy worker bees, however, roam around, and they, too, can call to each other by releasing a pheromone called Nasanov, through a gesticulation known as "scenting; they raise their abdomens to expose their pheromone glands and fan their wings to direct the smelly chemicals backward.

Scientists have long known individual bees scented, but just how these individual signals work together to gather tens of thousands of bees around a queen, such as when the colony leaves the hive to swarm, has remained a mystery.

In the new study, Dieu My Nguyen, a computer scientist at the University of Colorado (CU), Boulder, and colleagues focused on a colony of western honey bees (*Apis mellifera* L.), the most common honey bee species in the world. The researchers set up a flat, pizza box– size arena with a transparent ceiling, in which the bees could walk around, but not fly. They tucked the queen bee into a cage on one side and released the worker honey bees on the other. The scientists then recorded the insects' movements from above with a camera; artificial intelligence software tracked bees that were releasing Nasanov pheromones.

Once the first worker honey bees located the queen, they began to assemble chains of evenly spaced bees that extended outward from the queen, with each bee wafting Nasanov to its neighbor down the line. The findings, reported this month in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, are **the first direct observations of this collective communication in honey bees**. Like smelly bread crumbs, the branching communication lines guided far-off honey bees back to the queen's location—a feat no single bee could achieve alone.

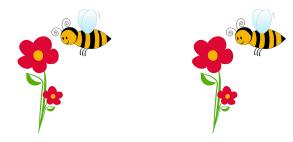
"A really great analogy is the game of telephone," says Orit Peleg, a computer scientist at CU and a senior author on the study. "You whisper a word in your neighbor's ear, and they pass it to their neighbor, and so on."

The researchers shed some light on how honey bees recruited one another into these scent relays. They noticed that bees in the relays spaced themselves about 6 centimeters apart. According to Peleg, this suggests the bees are detecting a certain amount of pheromones, dropping what they're doing, and joining in to pass on their own pheromones.

Mark Carroll, an entomologist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, cautions that the work was done in an enclosed, practically 2D space. In reality, he notes, honey bee colonies are 3D, and they often have to contend with elements like wind and rain, which make communicating more complicated.

But by simplifying the problem, he says, this research offers insights into how swarming honey bee colonies might self-organize in nature. "The next step will be to observe natural honey bee swarms and see if they're actually doing this."

https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2021/04/honey-beesrally-their-queen-game-telephone





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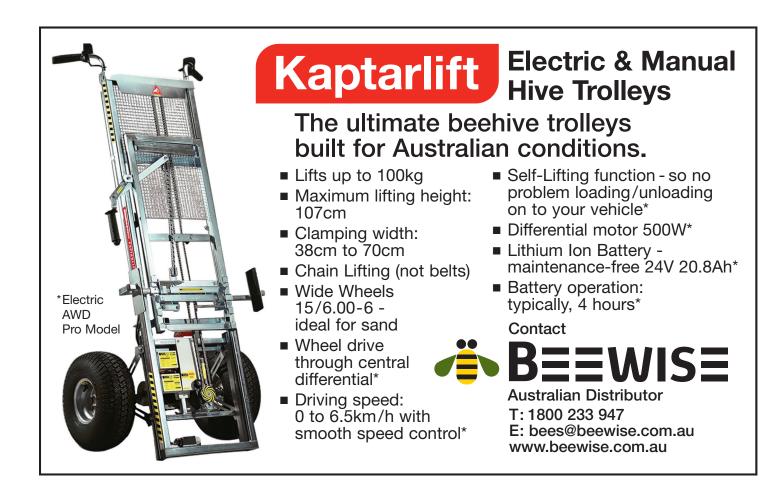
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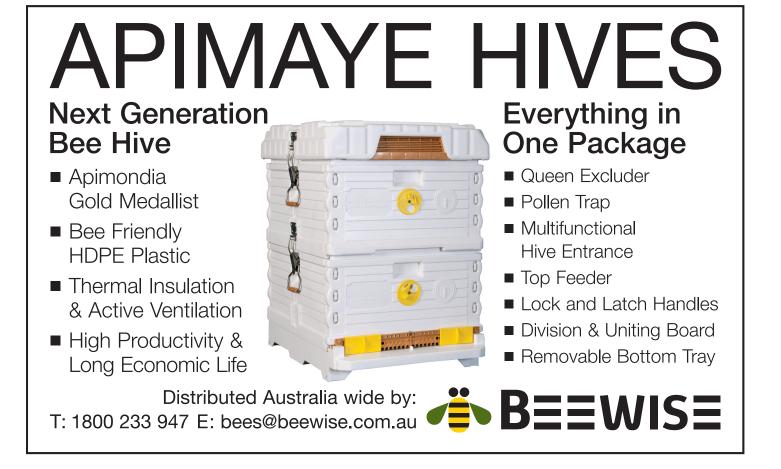
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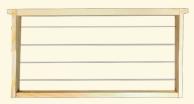
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# Technical Specialist, Honey Bees Report

Elizabeth Frost

Technical Specialist, Honey Bees Tocal Agricultural College, NSW Dept. of Primary Industries T: 02 4939 8821 M: 0437 731 273 E: elizabeth.frost@dpi.nsw.gov.au

### Goodacre Award 2021: Joe Horner

The Goodacre Memorial Award is the top national beekeeping award. This award is presented to individuals who have provided significant service to the Australian beekeeping industry. The recipient of this award was confirmed by Goodacre Award committee members AHBIC Chair Trevor Weatherhead, NSWAA President Stephen Targett and myself as the NSW Lead Apiary Officer.

# Speech awarding Joe Horner at NSWAA Conference in Tamworth NSW

"The individual whose meritorious service to industry we recognise today has contributed substantially to practical bee breeding and therefore the productivity of the Australian Beekeeping Industry.

This contribution has been made through decades of experimentation and detailed observation, driven by need, but more so by his passion and determination. In his keen observations he has acquired a detailed knowledge of honey bee mating biology. Pioneers of controlled mating by isolation in the 1980s, the family selected, shifted and managed drone mothers and virgin queens on the treeless Hay Plains, where they obtained good results. The tedious, and isolating work, however turned the creative minds of Joe and Sonya Horner to an alternate system.



Sonya and Joe Horner on their 2016 USA trip. Photo: Kate Lobley-Yates

The Horner "controlled flight time mating" system is highly innovative and a world first. The proportion of Australian commercial queens derived from Horner stock mated in this system is substantial. Joe's willingness to share information, openness toward new ideas, and generosity with his time has influenced everyone from visiting school children, to a 17 year-old Bill Winner,



then assistant Editor to the Australasian Beekeeper, researchers, public servants and sideline and commercial beekeepers Australia and world-wide.

As a student of the natural world, Joe's passion for scientific enquiry brought on collaborations of international significance with the University of Sydney and University of New England. In 2010, University of Sydney used DNA techniques to evaluate the success of the Horner system. They found that 85% of matings were to their selected males, leading to a 50% increase in the expected selection differential. Additionally, in 2012 Joe contributed to the first importation of stock into Western Australia since 1975, by way of drone semen, in collaboration with Ron Clarke and Dr. Rob Manning.

Known within industry as a quiet and unassuming gentleman, I hope he will forgive me for so publicly reciting his contributions. Please join me in congratulating Joe Horner on this deserved achievement."



Goodacre Memorial Award Honour Roll Part I & II



Joe Horner with the Goodacre Award and Elizabeth Frost. Photo: Rob Manning

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### **Catch the Buzz - Australia's Purple Hives**

### Purple Hives are here to keep alien mites out of Victoria's Food Bowl By Michael Fowler

Beekeeper Ian Cane normally uses the "sugar shake" to check if his bees have been infested by a tiny but incredibly dangerous alien pest.

Mr. Cane gathers 300 bees in a jar, fills it with icing sugar, rattles it and looks to see if a millimetre-long mite called *Varroa destructor* falls from the bees' abdomens.



Artificial intelligence experts from startups Vimana Tech and Xailient prepare the purple hives at the Port of Melbourne on Monday. Credit: Joe Armao

Fortunately, he has never found *Varroa destructor*, which sucks fat tissue out of individual bees, spreads viruses, and can eventually kill off entire hives.

Australia is the only continent in the world free of the exotic mite that would threaten 20,000 horticulture businesses if it entered the country. It would also profoundly disrupt Australia's food production – about two-thirds of Victoria's plant-based food requires pollination by bees.

Imagine Mr. Cane's excitement, then, at Australia's first artificially intelligent behives launching at the Port of Melbourne on Tuesday.

Bold purple in colour and shaped like a Ned Kelly mask, the hives feature 360-degree cameras that feed back a rolling video of bees entering and exiting. An algorithm has been trained to detect a healthy bee from one carrying *Varroa destructor*, saving beekeepers hours of manual labour every week.



Varroa mites on a drone bee larvae.

"If you look in a beehive, say, in the middle of summer, we're in full production, there's 45,000 to 60,000 bees in that hive. So to find two varroa [mites] is literally the needle in the haystack, and a big haystack. It's painstaking," Mr Cane, who is based in East Gippsland, said.

"With this I can have bees 600 or 700 kilometres away from my home, I can sit there on a laptop, see this happening and flag any problems in real time."

The Port of Melbourne was chosen for the first purple hives because the greatest threat of *Varroa destructor* entering Australia is via cargo ships, where infested bees from overseas could be lodged between shipping containers.

A savvy sea captain who noticed a swarm of bees and alerted the Victorian government in 2018 prevented an outbreak of the pest.



An Agriculture Victoria worker prepares to transfer bees into their new hive. Credit: Joe Armao

Earlier this month Woolworths released images of what their shelves would look like without bees. Apples, avocados, canola oil, nuts, coffee beans and strawberries were just some of the items off the menu. And, you guessed it, honey too.

Melbourne startup Vimana Tech and Sydney and Silicon Valley-based startup Xailient worked on what they called world-first technology for over a year.

Shivy Yohanandan, Xailient's chief technology officer, said the artificial intelligence acted like a human's eyes, completing the round-the-clock work that a beekeeper realistically cannot.

"Just like teaching a child, we trained the algorithm and over time, like all AI, it gets better and better" detection can prevent the pest spreading widely.

The harmony of artificial intelligence and agriculture is an area expected to grow exponentially – in recent years it's been used to forecast weather conditions, assess plant nutrition on farms and identify weeds.

Joel Kuperholz, co-founder of Vimana Tech, said even within beekeeping his team is eyeing further steps.

"We have the ability to upload new algorithms to detect any other anomaly or other pests or insects that might be trying to penetrate the hive and pose a risk," he said.

Mr. Cane, whose family has been breeding bees for more than 100 years in Victoria, said his "head is just spinning" at what other efficiencies the technology could bring to his industry.

"It will really change how we operate as beekeepers," he said.

"We're currently preparing hives to do almond pollination, that's a billion dollar farming industry in Australia. The world would be a very different place for humans without honey bees."

Victorian Agriculture Minister Mary-Anne Thomas called the hives the front line in supporting Australia's 12,800 beekeepers.

"We know that the varroa mite is in New Zealand already, and we're working very hard to ensure that it does not enter Victoria," she said.

"I would look forward to a project like the purple hive rolling out across the country."

### Catch the Buzz – Desperately Trying to keep Honey Bees Alive on Kangaroo Island By: <u>Claire Campbell</u>

Kangaroo Island beekeepers desperately try to keep Ligurian strain alive after last year's bushfires destroyed hives



Beekeepers on Kangaroo Island are planting flowers that they have not tried before which will lead to new flavours of honey.

### ABC News: Lincoln Rothall

The taste of Kangaroo Island honey could be set to change, as struggling local beekeepers try everything to keep the world's purest strain of bees alive and thriving after the deadly bushfires.

Key points:

- Kangaroo Island is home to the Ligurian bee and is considered a disease-free bee sanctuary

- Bushfires devastated the western half of the island last year

- Honey production on the island has dropped by up to 75 per cent

Kangaroo Island is home to the Ligurian bee and is considered a disease-free bee sanctuary.

But that has come under threat after thousands of bees were killed and more than a thousand hives destroyed when fire ripped through Kangaroo Island in January last year.

Beekeeper Mick Geursen is rebuilding his business of 10 years from scratch, after losing 500 hives and the bees

inside, along with his packing shed, stock, equipment and new hives he was planning to use, as well as his home.

But it is a mammoth job to rebuild given tough biosecurity rules mean all hives must be built on the island using local tools.

"It's just another challenge — we can't buy bulk things or second-hand things that are made on the mainland, we have to make it all ourselves," Mr Geursen said.

"We're the last pure strain of Ligurian bee left in the world, we're also disease free — we don't have AFB (American foulbrood) — so everything we can do to keep the industry going over here is really important."



Beekeeper Mick Geursen has had to rebuild his beekeeping business from scratch after losing everything in the bushfires.

To read the whole article go to;

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-07/kangarooisland-beekeepers-trying-to-keep-ligurian-strainalive/13221924



# BEE BIOSECURITY OFFICER



Rod Bourke - NSW Bee Biosecurity Officer NSW Department of Primary Industries - Biosecurity NSW Tocal Ag College, Tocal Rd Paterson NSW 2320 Ph: 02 4939 8946 Mob: 0438 677 195 Email: rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au



### The Role of the Bee Biosecurity Officer and Bee Biosecurity Code of Practice

Dear NSW Commercial or Semi-commercial beekeeper,

For those that don't know of me my name is Rod Bourke and I am the Bee Biosecurity Officer (BBO) with NSW Department of Primary Industries.

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice (the Code) became a condition of bee registration in NSW on the 1st July 2020. My role as BBO is to assist beekeepers to fully understand their requirements under the Code and to help them to easily implement these Code requirements within their operation.

I am available to assist all beekeepers with this and much of my work is done with commercial and semi commercial operators (those starting to increase their hive numbers towards and then past 50 colonies). If you need help or have questions then please feel comfortable to contact me.

The Bee Biosecurity Officer is not a compliance role, I do not issue direction notices or fines. If you know or suspect that you are doing the "wrong thing" but would like to get out of this rut and improve your operation then I can assist you (not fine you). I have information, handson experience, and training options available to enable you to resolve those issues and start running a cleaner operation.

Improved bee biosecurity increases the profitability of your operation so it makes financial sense. Some of the most common subjects I regularly assist beekeepers with are;

- How to properly clean up and manage American foulbrood (AFB) cheaply to protect your own bees and those of other beekeepers
- How to do a pooled honey culture test (HCT) for AFB and where to send it (further information below)
- How to undertake exotic mite surveillance in your hives
- How to report notifiable diseases to DPI.
- How to report poor beekeeping practices of others, biosecurity risks and neglected hives to the DPI Compliance team for action
- Where you can get bee biosecurity training (further information below)

- How to keep appropriate records
- How you can update your number of hives (because many beekeepers under-report their actual number of colonies)
- How to fill in your annual Appendix 1 form

### Hive numbers.

In NSW you need to accurately list your total hive numbers on your bee registration, not just production hives. To determine how many hives you really have you also need to count any other colony of bees which normally has a queen, so this includes all your weaker hives and queen rearing nucleus colonies. Many registered beekeepers listed as running less than 50 hives actually have far more hives when all their smaller colonies are also counted. Legally these beekeepers should be fulfilling all the same obligations as other 50+ hive beekeepers. If you need to update your hive numbers or other details then call the Bee Registrations team (02) 6552 3000 (option 1) or email bfs.admin@dpi.nsw.gov.au

### Your Appendix 1 form.

All beekeepers managing 50 or more bee colonies must fill out this form annually. Your current Appendix 1 form will cover the period from 1st July 2020 to 30th June, 2021, which is the first full year that the Code has been in place as a requirement in NSW. The Appendix 1 is in the Code which can be accessed online at https://beeaware. org.au/code-of-practice/

To fill in the form correctly you need;

- Date and certificate number of approved Bee Biosecurity course done within the last 3 years.
- Records of your spring and autumn brood checks done on each colony,
- Records for dates/results of exotic mite surveillance on one hive in each apiary in spring and autumn
- Results of your annual honey test for AFB



The Appendix 1 needs to be filled in annually for all beekeepers managing 50 or more colonies of bees. Many beekeepers registered for less colonies (but running 50+) need to update their numbers and start using this form.

### Bee Biosecurity training.

When running 50 or more colonies you are expected to regularly update your bee biosecurity knowledge through training. Beekeeping best practice, disease threats and industry regulations are regularly changing. Keeping on top of the latest developments reduces your biosecurity threat to other beekeepers.

There are a number of training options available. Tocal College holds a face-to-face Honey Bee Biosecurity course which is a great hands on practical way to update beekeepers about their bee pest and disease issues. Many that do this course are then able to modify and improve their beekeeping operations to better manage AFB and reduce their number of weaker hives (which are a major biosecurity threat). Their businesses are then more efficient and profitable. Information about Tocal's Honey Bee Biosecurity course can be found here; https://www. tocal.nsw.edu.au/courses/bees/Honey-Bee-Biosecurity

Another option is the Biosecurity for Beekeepers BOLT course. This course is available both online (https:// beeaware.org.au/training/) and as a paper version (contact me for further information on that and other courses).

### Record keeping.

A very important requirement of the Code (and the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015) is to keep good records. These records (on paper or computer) should be kept for 5 years and upon request be made available to DPI Compliance officers. Some of these records can be used by the beekeeper to fill in their Appendix 1 (dates of full brood inspections and exotic mite checks) and will be crosschecked by DPI Compliance officers if they audit you for compliance with the Code. Records should also be kept on all notifiable and non-notifiable bee pests and diseases encountered and how they were managed, as well as accurate records of hive movements and site locations (including hive numbers per site).

Have you done your annual **Honey Culture Test** yet? Whether you are a large commercial beekeeper or a smaller one running multiple hives and apiary sites, the honey culture test (HCT) is an invaluable tool to use in your AFB management. At least 75 ml (110 Grams) of honey is required to perform the test. Under the Code all beekeepers managing 50 or more colonies need to submit at least one pooled (and well mixed) honey sample covering at least 20% of their hive numbers) per year. You also need to record the result of the HCT on your annual Appendix 1 form.

For commercial operators the best approach is to test each load individually. You can then determine which loads will need extra work done to clean them up and which clean loads you will be doing most of your splitting from (you should only propagate new colonies from hives which are healthy themselves). When collecting honey for a HCT you should always identify and mark any hives in that load which were not able to supply honey. These substandard hives should be singled out for additional hive inspections and follow-ups, because even if that loads HCT was clear those ones that were not tested may have AFB.

If you do receive an AFB spore count in your HCT (check every load) then please contact me so that we can discuss ways in which you may start managing a potential brewing AFB issue.

For further information about the test at the EMAI lab - <u>https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/services/laboratory-</u><u>services/veterinary/bee-diseases</u>



At least 75 ml (110 grams) of clean honey is required for the HCT sample.

### **Reporting biosecurity threats.**

Poor beekeeping practices by others which enable bees to rob exposed honey or weak/dead hives directly affect many nearby managed and feral bee colonies. This enables AFB to be a much bigger problem than it needs to be. By reporting anything wrong that you see to DPI Compliance they can follow up on it. This can be done anonymously if wished. Please call the Biosecurity Hotline number 1800 680 244 or report online at https:// biosecurity.transactcentral.com/Biosecurity/servlet/ SmartForm.html?formCo de=report-a-biosecurity



If you see this lying around then let DPI Compliance know so they can get it cleaned up.

**DPI Compliance.** Many beekeepers are fulfilling all their Code requirements, but some are not. DPI Compliance will soon start auditing beekeepers to ensure they are following the Code. If you are not yet compliant then it is time for you to get all your records in order. If you need further assistance with anything I have discussed then please contact me.

MOB: 0438 677 195

Email: rod.bourke@dpi.nsw.gov.au

https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/bees

Yours sincerely,

Rod Bourke.



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

# **Tocal College Beekeeper training**

Tocal College trainers are passionate about helping beekeepers at all levels to grow in their knowledge of bees and improve their beekeeping practice for healthier bees and better quality honey and hive products.

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Summary of hive requirement using the latest planting data.

Publications BOOKS | EBOOKS

Based on:	
3rd leaf	2 hives/ hectare
4th Leaf	4 hives/ hectare
Mature	6 hives/ hectare

Estimated number of hives by Region					
Pollination Season	2020	2021	2022		
Sunraysia	136,288	142,104	153,976		
Riverina	47,954	69,568	88,981		
Riverland	48,296	55,174	61,680		
Swan	4,518	4,518	4,518		
Adelaide Plains	3,954	4,014	3,974		
Total	241,010	277,399	315,150		
Figures from the Almond Board					

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J21-057



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# **Court Orders EPA to Ban Pesticide Toxic to Kids**

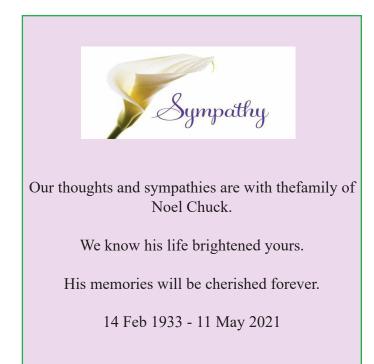
Curtesy: Pollinator Stewardsip Council

The Environmental Protection Agency must ban the use of chlorpyrifos—a pesticide linked to worker poisonings and learning disabilities in children—on produce sold in the U.S. within 60 days unless it can identify a safe level of use, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in late April. The judges found the agency broke the law by continuing to allow the toxic chemical to be used to grow fruits and vegetables despite solid evidence that it harms the developing brain.

The ruling comes after a lawsuit by NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) and a coalition of labor and health organizations, represented by Earthjustice. The decision can be found here.

From Jennifer Sass, senior scientist at NRDC: "The court ruled in favor of science, which has clearly shown that chlorpyrifos is too dangerous to be used to grow our food. The Trump EPA had allowed the continued use of this toxic pesticide, even though they knew it is damaging to human health – especially the developing brains of children. This will ensure that kids can eat fruits and vegetables free of this neurotoxin."

NRDC has been fighting for over a decade to get chlorpyrifos off our fields and out of our food supply, petitioning EPA to ban it in 2007 alongside the Pesticide Action Network. EPA was finally on track to ban it at the end of 2016 until the Trump administration quickly reversed course and allowed farmers to spray chlorpyrifos on all sorts of crops, including children's



favorites like apples, oranges, and berries. Farmworkers and their families, who are predominantly Hispanic, are most exposed, and consumers across the country are at risk, too.

Significant science—including a study by EPA itself shows that exposure to even low levels of the pesticide in early life can lead to increased risk of learning disabilities, including reduced IQ, developmental delay, and ADHD. Chlorpyrifos is also a bee toxicant.

In the absence of EPA action, states had begun to get the pesticide out of the fields. As a result of a landmark settlement, California ended sales of chlorpyrifos in February of 2020 and completely banned its use in January of 2021. Hawaii's ban goes into effect in 2022, New York has initiated a regulatory process, and Maryland has committed to a phase-out. Legislation is also pending in Congress to ban chlorpyrifos and similar pesticides nationwide.

Following action at the state level, Corteva Inc (formally part of Dow Chemical, which was the largest US producer of chlorpyrifos) announced it will cease production of the chemical by the end of 2020. Dow Chemical had close ties to President Trump. Among other things, the company reportedly donated \$1 million for Trump's inauguration and its CEO previously played a chief advisory role to the president, heading up his nowdefunct American Manufacturing Council.

# **Position** Vacant

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# Scientists may have found a new coronavirus rapid-testing method: Bees

By Marisa Iati May 8, 2021 at 7:40 a.m. GMT+10 Washington Post



The fight against the <u>coronavirus</u> pandemic has scientists tapping an unlikely resource: the finely tuned olfactory sense of bees.

Dutch researchers on Monday <u>said they have trained</u> <u>honeybees</u> to stick out their tongues when presented with the virus's unique scent, acting as a kind of rapid test.

Although it's a less conventional method than lab tests, the scientists said teaching bees to diagnose the coronavirus could help fill a gap in low-income countries with limited access to more sophisticated technology, like materials for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests.

"Not all laboratories have that, especially in smallerincome countries," said Wim van der Poel, a professor at Wageningen University, which led the research. "Bees are everywhere, and the apparatus is not very complicated."

The scientists trained roughly 150 bees with a Pavlovian conditioning method in which they gave the insects a sugar-water solution each time they were exposed to the smell of the coronavirus. When the bees were presented with a sample that was negative for the virus, they received no reward.

After repeatedly extending their tongues — technically called proboscises — for the sugar water, the scientists said the bees learned to stick out their tongues for a positive sample, even with no reward offered. Within hours, the insects were trained to identify the virus a few seconds after encountering it, the researchers said.

While the research continues, van der Poel said the scientists believe they can achieve about a 95 percent accuracy rate if they use multiple insects to sniff each sample. Their results have not yet been published or peerreviewed.

"Our first goal was to demonstrate that we could train bees to do this, and that's where we succeeded," van der Poel said. "And now we are calculating, and we are continuing the work to see how sensitive the method is." Dutch insect-technology start-up InsectSense, who had previously used bees to detect mineral-rich ore and land mines. When staff realized they could also train bees to find the coronavirus, they looped in the university researchers.

Each time the scientists wanted to train a new set of bees, they used a refrigerator or the natural external temperature to cool them down and make them less active, van der Poel said. Then they put the bees in harnesses so they would stay still while confronted with the samples, which consist of the respiratory material from a nasal swab mixed with chemicals.

The bees smelled samples from both minks and humans, and were similarly good at identifying the virus in both situations, van der Poel said.

InsectSense said it is working on a machine that could train multiple bees simultaneously to make the diagnoses, as well as a biochip that would use genes from the cells that bees smell with to detect the virus. That method would circumvent the need to use live insects, which van der Poel said might be impractical on a large scale.

"If this is going to work, it can be very fast and very cheap," van der Poel said. "And that would be very convenient."

While researchers are also examining whether dogs could be used to detect the coronavirus, van der Poel said he thought scientists could more easily test samples with several bees than several dogs, given the relative ease of handling bees. <u>A study</u> published by the University of Pennsylvania last month suggested that dogs can detect the coronavirus with 96 percent accuracy.

Dirk de Graaf, a professor who studies bees at Ghent University in Belgium, <u>told Reuters</u> he was skeptical that coronavirus-sniffing bees would replace lab tests.

"It is a good idea, but I would prefer to carry out tests using the classic diagnostic tools rather than using honeybees for this," he said. "I am a huge bee lover, but I would use the bees for other purposes than detecting covid-19."

In addition to identifying diseases, animals — including dogs, wasps and <u>grasshoppers</u> — have long been used to detect explosives. Researchers working for the U.S. Department of Defense <u>began to study the concept</u>, known as "insect sniffing," in the late 1990s.

The idea for the research sprang from the founders of







Life Member, Neil Bingley

### Cover Photos

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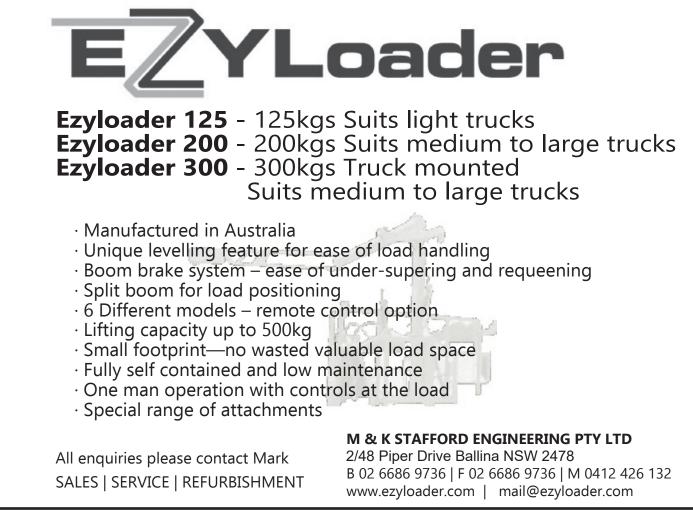
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### AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC (AHBIC) UPDATE

Full newsletter available from http://honeybee.org.au

#### NEWS FROM THE CHAIR, Trevor Weatherhead AM

1. It was good to be able to attend the New South Wales Apiarists Association conference at Tamworth and meet old friends. Happy that we could report to the members on what AHBIC has been doing.

2. Unfortunately due to the Covid lockdown in Victoria we could not attend the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association conference in person. This was because we were transiting through Melbourne and if we had gone we would have had to quarantine in a hotel back in our home State for 14 days. We were able to join by Zoom so we were able to give the members information about the AHBIC activities.

3. With next year being 200 years since the successful introduction of honey bees to Australia thought I should address an issue that has arisen in recent years. There are reports that the honey bees were introduced for pollination of crops. In all my research I cannot find any reference to pollination and having asked those who say this to give me a reference none have been forthcoming to date. If someone has those references then I am more than happy to change my narrative.

In the reports in the Sydney Gazette of the time there are no reports of the honey bees being brought out for pollination. There is a reference saying "in a few years, we shall be able to add honey and beeswax to our numerous productions". Also when you think of the crops grown at that time e.g. wheat, corn, oats, barley etc. They did not need honey bee pollination. The few crops that would have needed pollination would probably have been pollinated by native bees and insects.

#### NOTE FROM CEO, Helen Goodall

As Trevor mentioned we both attended the New South Wales Apiarists Association (NSWAA) Annual Conference from 20-21 May 2021 in Tamworth NSW. It was a great opportunity to meet so many beekeepers and I was pleased to meet Trevor for the first time face to face. Both Trevor and I will be in Southport for the QBA Conference this week. Our presentation at the state conferences provides an overview of the activities and operations of AHBIC.

AHBIC is now active on Social media. Stay connected with AHBIC We have officially launched an Instagram and LinkedIn account! Follow us to receive the latest industry news, beekeeping stories, fun facts and more. Instagram: @ australianhoneybees LinkedIn: Australian Honey Bee Industry Council You can also find us on: Facebook: Australian Honey Bee Industry Council Twitter: @AustBee

Do you have some content you would like us to share? Tag us or use #AHBIC for us to see!

I was fortunate to attend World Bee Day celebrations in Canberra on Saturday the 22 May 2021. Please visit our social media pages to see the event posts. A special thanks to Cormac Farrell, head beekeeper at Parliament House who attended all the events in Canberra and provided many insights for the general public into the world of beekeeping. Thank you Cormac for all the hours you volunteer for the industry.

As a reminder the AHBIC AGM will be held face to face (Covid allowing) on Sunday 11 July 2021 in Bendigo Victoria. There will be three positions up for election as follows: • The Deputy Chair. Stephen Fewster retires from this position and is eligible for re-election. • Two (2) positions on the Executive. Leilani Leyland and Therese Kershaw retire and are eligible for re-election

#### **UPCOMING MEMBERS CONFERENCES**

South Australian Apiarists Association (SAAA) Annual Conference and AGM 24 -25 June 2021 , Berri Hotel, Riverland, SA

Bee Industry Council of WA (BICWA) Australasian Honey Bee 2021 Research Conference 29 June – 1 July 2021, Perth WA

Victorian Apiarists Association (VAA) Annual Conference and AGM Sessions, 7 – 9 July 2021, Bendigo VIC

Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) AGM, 11 July 2021, Bendigo VIC

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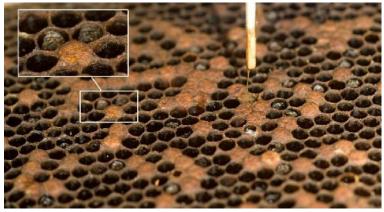
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Please contact us about any inspirational ideas you have

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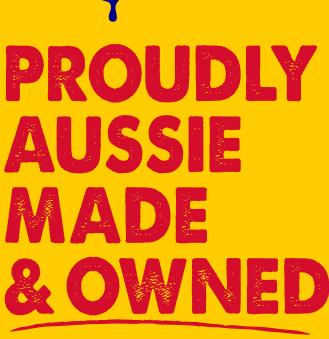
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