



## AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC.

ABN 63 939 614 424

PO Box 42, Jamison Centre, Macquarie ACT 2614

ahbic@honeybee.org.au

Ph: 0402 467 780

www.honeybee.org.au

# AHBIC Monthly News March 2020

*Enjoy reading this newsletter and learning about our work on behalf of your honey bee industry?  
If you haven't already become a Friend of AHBIC, we welcome you coming on board to help us!*

**CONTRIBUTE HERE**

*Or use the form at the end of this newsletter*



## HELP US HELP YOU!

**Please become a friend of AHBIC.  
In these unprecedented times, our  
resources are stretched. We need  
your help so we can help you and  
the honeybee industry....  
Complete the form below!**

A snippet of what we do for our industry...

- Policy and advocacy, representing our industry at Federal Government level
- Border closures due to COVID-19 response and impact for beekeepers
- Bushfire/drought recovery and liaising with Federal Government for assistance
- Assist with our levy programs – biosecurity and bee biosecurity officers, research and development and national residue survey
- Market access – domestic and international



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## Friends of AHBIC Voluntary Contribution Form

### Please, help us help you and our industry!

Supporting Australia's national beekeeping industry with a voluntary contribution

Please complete this form and return by email to [ahbic@honeybee.org.au](mailto:ahbic@honeybee.org.au) or PO Box 42 Jamison Centre, Macquarie ACT 2614

Friend Category	Investment	Friend Category	Investment
Platinum Plus	\$60,000 & above	Silver	\$1,000 - \$1,999
Platinum	\$20,000 - \$59,999	Bronze	\$500 - \$999
Gold Plus	\$5,000 - \$19,999	Copper	\$100 - \$499
Gold	\$2,000 - \$4,999	Other	\$0 - \$99

#### Contribution Details

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....State.....Postcode.....

Email: (Please PRINT clearly).....

Phone: ..... Date: .....

#### Payment Method

Amount: \$.....

**1. EFT Deposit (preferred payment method)**

Account Name: Australian Honey Bee Industry Council Inc

Bank: Bendigo Bank

BSB: 633 000

Account No: 150 976 405

Reference: Please include your NAME as the reference

**2. CHEQUE:** Please post cheque with this form to PO Box 42 Jamison Centre Macquarie ACT 2614

**3. CREDIT CARD:** Online at <https://honeybee.org.au/friends-of-ahbic-voluntary-contribution/>

#### Please circle YES/NO:

- AHBIC Newsletter list of contributors, please publish my name in:
  - disclosed monetary category YES / NO
  - undisclosed monetary category YES / NO
  - do **not** publish my name YES / NO
- I would like to be notified when the AHBIC Annual Report is available online YES / NO
- Please acknowledge this voluntary contribution with a Tax Receipt (email only) YES / NO

Your contribution is gratefully appreciated, thank you.



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## 2020 AGM DATES

Bee Industry Council of WA	15 May, Mandoon Estate <b>CANCELLED</b>
New South Wales Apiarists Association	21-22 May, Tamworth <b>CANCELLED</b>
Tasmanian Beekeepers Association	29-30 May, <b>CANCELLED</b>
South Australian Apiarists Association	11-12 June, Berri Hotel, Riverland <b>SAAA meeting on 3 April to decide, looking at options and possibly a virtual conference</b>
Queensland Beekeepers Association	11-13 June, Oaks Oasis Resort, Caloundra <b>CANCELLED</b>
Victorian Apiarists Association	2-4 July, Bendigo, <b>VAA meeting on 6 April to decide on conference</b>
Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association	
Honey Packers and Marketers Association	
National Council of Crop Pollination Associations	
Australian Honey Bee Industry Council	<b>TBA, dependent on host state in 2020, VAA</b>

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# AUSTRALIAN HONEYBEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC

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The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC)  
is the peak industry body for the Australian beekeeping industry  
working for all within our industry including  
honey producers, honey packers, pollinators, queen bee breeders, equipment manufacturers/suppliers

The following list recognises contributions received for the last 12 months.  
A number of generous contributors wish to remain anonymous. We encourage beekeepers to support those  
packers, queen bee breeders, equipment manufacturers/suppliers who contribute to AHBIC.

**Thank you to all our contributors & supporters. AHBIC appreciates your generous & ongoing support.**

## Friends of AHBIC – Voluntary Contributions

### PLATINUM PLUS (0)

### PLATINUM (3)

Hive & Wellness Australia Pty Ltd  
Beechworth Honey Enterprises P/L  
When Bee Foundation

### GOLD PLUS (4)

Australian Honey Products P/L  
Baker Beekeeping Pty Ltd  
Goldfield Honey Australia Pty Ltd  
Sterling Kershaw & Co

### GOLD (7)

Amateur Beekeepers Assoc. NSW  
Cotton, Allan & Michelle  
Hampel, SJ & SM  
NSW Apiarist Association  
Weerona Apiaries  
Woolfe, BD & CA  
Zadow, IM & MJ

### SILVER (23)

Australian Quality Honey (Blue Hills Honey)  
Bees Neez Apiaries  
Brenton, Daryl  
Boyd Apiaries Pty Ltd  
Cairns District Beekeeping Assoc  
Cooper, Casey  
Davies Apiaries  
Eastburn, Murray & Sandy  
Gells' Honey Maryborough  
Hampson, Terry (Daybreak Apiaries)  
Hooper Honey (Ben Hooper)  
Kuyan Apiaries  
Le Feuvre, Danny  
McDonald, Bob & Eileen  
McDonald, Peter & Michelle  
Mitchie, Robert & Raelene  
Pavy, Rod  
Porter, ML & DJ  
R. Stephens Apiaries  
Ruge Honey  
Victorian Recreational Beekeepers Association  
Warral Apiaries P/L  
Victorian Recreational Beekeepers Association

### BRONZE (11)

Barnes Apiaries Pty Ltd  
Clarke, RK & KM  
Cunial Beekeeping Pty Ltd  
Heritage Honey (P. Norris)  
Holscher, Luke  
Ipswich & West Moreton Beekeepers  
Lutze, B&L  
Masters, Neil  
Mumford, Dave & Wendy  
Targett, Stephen  
Walkabout Apiaries

### COPPER (24)

AB's Honey  
Ascot Veterinary Group  
Ballarat Regional Beekeepers  
Bee Scientifics (Jody Gerdt)  
Berry, Jessica  
Bayside Beekeepers Assoc.  
Clifford, David  
Cooper, Barry  
Frost, Liz  
Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society  
Gustare Honey Australia  
Hoskinson, HL & HM  
Jordan, Corinne  
Kennett Apiaries (SA) Pty Ltd  
MacGibbon, Kevin  
Nairn, Mal  
Northside Beekeepers Assoc.  
Petratos, Aris  
Redpath's Beekeeping Supplies  
Sedgwick, Peter (Honeyworks P/L)  
Stokes, Peter  
Trigg, Margaret  
Weatherhead, Trevor & Marion  
Westlands Honey Beverley WA

### OTHER (4)

Davey, Robin  
De Broun, Pauline  
Honeylife Australia  
Shaw, Robert

### NON-PUBLISHED Value (16)

Australian Women in Beekeeping  
Bec's BeeHive Beekeeping Supplies  
BeelInventive (Flow)  
Ecrotek  
Faithful, Mark  
Gilbert, Martin & Lorraine  
Geelong Beekeepers Club  
Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers  
Hibberd, GL & HK, HSH Apiary  
Leemon, Diana  
Lewis, Peter  
Matsen, Jeff  
Moggill Honey  
Naicol Pty Ltd  
WA Pure Honey  
Watson, Jim

### ANONYMOUS (13)

Did you expect your name to be listed here?

Please check your emails for a message from AHBIC inviting you to renew your contribution (AHBIC emails often end up in spam) or feel free to email [Sarah Paradice](mailto:Sarah.Paradice@ahbic.org.au).

## NOTE FROM CHAIR, PETER McDONALD

COVID-19

Floods

Bushfires

Drought

*Varroa jacobsoni*

What a year 2019-20 has been so far. And this follows on from the previous year where we had *Varroa Destructor*, *Varroa jacobsoni* & false claims of honey adulteration.

Every one of these issues have been outside issues that have needed to be responded to at the same time as trying to address the issues we need to progress and improve upon, such as communications, increasing floral resource access, funding and the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Honey Bee Congress in 2022.

All this falls into the laps of our largely volunteer based industry organisations around Australia. And they need help. Volunteer fatigue is a very real danger for our Honey Bee industry in normal times, let alone in these ever increasingly busy times that we are now right in the middle of.

We are about to start the conference and AGM season for our industry and the restrictions on our social interactions have certainly complicated these so much more. This demands even more time from our volunteers.

Even though the events will be thrown into turmoil with the COVID-19 restrictions, AGMs may still happen in some form, most likely virtually. This means elected, volunteer positions for our many industry groups will need to be filled. AHBIC is definitely one of those groups as are many of the members of AHBIC such as the state beekeeping associations. In AHBIC, 3 of our 6 person Executive are ending their elected terms and their positions will become vacant. More details about this are later in the newsletter.

So, if you have the skills, if you have the motivation to help, if you can organise some time to contribute, please, please put your hand up for a role in one of the industry organisations, be that at local, regional, state or national level.

Volunteers are essential & the lifeblood of our Honey Bee industry. They are the dedicated souls who give of their valuable time for the benefit of many.

There are some in our Honey Bee community who contribute over long periods of time. These people are exceptional individuals and we thank them so much and recognise their service with awards. Not everyone can manage this longer term, but shorter contributions are just as valuable, we just need more of them.

We are a small industry, but we need to be represented well to continue to have a BIG impact.

Please come on board and help represent us all and if you can't, please support those that do with vocal moral support and monetary contributions to keep the advocacy wheels turning.

## **NOTE FROM CEO, SARAH PARADICE**

It is with sadness that I write my last CEO report and I would like to thank those of you who have been so supportive and welcoming during my time in the role. It has been a wonderful opportunity and I've learnt an enormous amount about this critically important industry. I'd also like to sincerely thank Peter McDonald and the AHBIC Executive for their support while I worked to grasp industry issues and advocate on your behalf. Also, as we all know, behind a good AHBIC chair is a good support network! Thanks Michelle McDonald for being the awesome support in the background; it's been great working with you too!

You are very lucky as an industry to have such a great group of passionate people on your Executive; they work tirelessly on your behalf while also running their own businesses and busy personal lives. It is not easy to find time to volunteer these days, so I encourage you to get behind AHBIC and get behind your Executive. I also appeal to you all to unite as an industry, given the unprecedented times we are currently facing – drought, fires, floods and now COVID-19. Set aside your differences, ditch the baggage you hold (travel ban anyway!), let go of what has happened in the past and focus on what we can all do collectively in the future to recover and build a more resilient industry to better cope with future disasters. A united industry is a far stronger industry.

I am disappointed that circumstances have resulted in me having to resign and scale back on work commitments to care for a close family member, but I leave you in very trusty hands. Helen Goodall, as your new CEO, is highly experienced; no, she's not a beekeeper but she loves all things to do with bees and will grasp industry issues quickly and with ease. I will be assisting Helen with a handover and settle in and will be in the background to assist when she requires help. It's a busy time for Helen to be starting so please get behind her, you will be well rewarded if you do.

Thanks to all who have given me honey too! I can't thank you enough. I drink the stuff like it's going out of fashion and my appreciation of different honey's has improved out of sight.

So, this month of course has been busy for AHBIC as it has been for you all. COVID-19 came out of left field, just as we thought nothing else could be thrown at us after the drought, devastating bushfires and floods in some parts of Australia. We've been attending plenty of meetings and advocating on behalf of industry. We've tried to provide links to assistance should your business be affected by the COVID-19 response. Please investigate them and apply for assistance if you need help. We hosted a teleconference of AHBIC members on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March to discuss issues such as interstate/intrastate trade considering border closures, cancellation of conferences and alternative ways to host AGM's. AHBIC and its members will advise when decisions have been made. We are all thinking of those who are struggling in the beekeeping community.

You may have noticed on page 3 that many of the State Association conferences have been cancelled. Those that have been cancelled to date are NSWAA, QBA, BICWA, TBA. Both SAAA and VAA will be holding a meeting in early April to decide on their conferences with SAAA considering a virtual conference. There is obviously an impact for AHBIC and State Association AGM's due to the cancellations and we will advise on how they will be delivered when confirmed.

### **Recent meetings attended by CEO and/or AHBIC Executive**

- 6<sup>th</sup> March - Agrifutures/AHBIC Bushfire Recovery workshop meeting
- 10<sup>th</sup> March – Plant Health Australia-AHBIC teleconference
- 13<sup>th</sup> March – National Varroa Mite Program - Update for industry from Qld Biosecurity
- 13<sup>th</sup> March - National Agricultural Workforce Strategy roundtable
- 16<sup>th</sup> March – Agrifutures/AHBIC Bushfire Recovery workshop meeting
- 19<sup>th</sup> March – Teleconference re Hive Aid and distribution of pollen and queen bees instead of funding

- 23-24<sup>th</sup> March – Workshop for post bushfire industry recovery supported by Agrifutures – postponed due to COVID-19. Will be moved to later date and moved to online
- 23<sup>rd</sup> March – Plant Health Australia teleconference meeting re BBO contracts
- 24<sup>th</sup> March - Agrifutures/AHBIC Bushfire Recovery workshop meeting
- 26<sup>th</sup> March – AHBIC Executive teleconference meeting
- 26<sup>th</sup> March – B-QUAL Board meeting
- 27<sup>th</sup> March – AHBIC-State Association meeting to discuss interstate travel, AGM', cancelled conferences
- 31<sup>st</sup> March – Plant Health Australia-AHBIC teleconference

#### **Upcoming meetings for CEO and/or AHBIC Executive**

- 3 April – PCF teleconference meeting
- 6<sup>th</sup> April – new CEO Helen Goodall commences
- Dates TBC – Agrifutures-AHBIC online workshop for bushfire recovery plan
- Date TBC - Roundtable for bee industry with Minister Littleproud. Was scheduled for 14th Feb but was postponed due to the resignation of Bridget McKenzie as Minister for Agriculture. COVID-19 causing further delays
- Date TBC – meeting with Responsible Wood, PEFC re resource security and forest certification

#### **AHBIC EXECUTIVE CHANGES AND AGM**

On the resignation of Kevin MacGibbon from the AHBIC Executive, Trevor Weatherhead was elected as a member of the Executive during an Executive meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This position will be held until the 2020 AGM when the position will again become available. Thank you to Trevor for volunteering to help the Executive in the interim, particularly during these unprecedented busy times.

The 2020 AHBIC AGM is scheduled to be held on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2020, currently in Bendigo, Victoria. This will follow the Victorian Apiarist Association conference held on the three (3) previous days. The plans for this event are under review given the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions so there may be some changes.

This year there are three (3) elected positions which will become vacant. They are the Chairperson and two (2) Executive positions. The two (2) Executive members stepping down are Peter Barnes and Trevor Weatherhead. Both are eligible to stand again.

For full details, see Section 7 of the AHBIC constitution which is on the AHBIC website. Link to Constitution can be found [HERE](#).

#### Chairperson

For the position of Chairperson, nominations must be received 28 days prior to the AGM i.e. 8 June 2020. The nomination for Chair must be signed by one voting delegate and accompanied by the consent of the nominee. If no nomination is received by 9 June 2020, then nominations for Chairperson will be received from the floor at the AGM. Please email nominations to [ahbic@honeybee.org.au](mailto:ahbic@honeybee.org.au)

#### Other Executive positions

The candidates for other positions on the Executive are elected from the floor of the Annual General Meeting.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

Thoughts are with all beekeepers or family members working outside of beekeeping who may have been affected by the COVID-19 Response. As we are all aware, the Government response is a moving target as the situation is constantly unfolding with the Government reassessing its response. We have been liaising with the Federal Government to clarify issues such as border closures and impact on beekeepers. AHBIC is also in close contact with State Associations and sharing information in order to keep beekeepers informed.

A few links below to COVID-19 and bushfire assistance and information around interstate movement of bees and border closures. The National Farmers Federation has also been calling on the Government to guarantee nationally consistent provisions for farmers and transport operators.

- [Coronavirus information and support for business](#)
- [Help for Australian bushfire affected businesses](#)
- [Register for assistance with Rural Aid](#)
- [FarmHub](#) connects Australian farmers to a range of helpful services and support
  - [Agriculture 'essential' as COVID-19 escalates](#)
  - [More data on offer for rural and remote Australians](#)
  - [COVID-19: Border Control Information](#)
- [Coronavirus and beekeeping](#) information sheet by Trevor Weatherhead
- Agriculture Minister David Littleproud says Australia's food production and supply chain will not be affected by coronavirus shutdowns. [Agriculture jobs essential to Australia](#) 25 March 2020
- National Farmers Federation [Latest Media](#)
- Contact your beekeeping [State Associations](#) for State specific assistance packages

## HIVEAID

A report from Rural Aid as at 3 March 2020 on the Hive Aid program is outlined below. AHBIC will be receiving monthly reports from Rural Aid. We are pleased so many beekeepers have been assisted and that funds collected have been distributed to those in need. But as the report shows, we need further donations to fund those unprocessed claims so if you can, spread the word and encourage donations to Hive Aid [here](#). If you need help, register [here](#).

### Monthly Bee Farmer Registrations

January 2020	52
February 2020	38

Total number of bee farmers registered as at 3/3/20	92
Confirmed Bee farmers and processed	69
Hobby farmers*	11
Bee registrations still being verified/processed	12

\* If hobby farmers are eligible farmers, they can access an initial \$500 but are not eligible for more. Professional beekeepers are eligible for additional aid.

### Aid provided

\$500 Country Card	92	= \$46,000
Water requests	2	= \$555
\$1,500 Financial Assistance	41	= \$61,500
\$1,500 Beekeeper Card	69	= \$103,500
Total spent		= <b>\$211,555</b>

### Confirmed Bee Farmers by location

NSW	43
QLD	19
SA	1
VIC	5
WA	1
Total	69

#### Notes:

- If current outstanding 28 Confirmed Bee Farmers lodge a Financial Assistance Application, an additional \$42,000 in donations would be required
- If the 12 Registrations Rural Aid waiting on for proof were confirmed, this would equate to an additional \$18,000 for Bee Support Cards and again if FAP, another additional \$18,000.
- Approximately an additional \$90,000 would be required to cover current commitments without any new farmers registering.

These numbers are changing every day as Rural Aid have additional bee keepers registering.

As at the time of writing this newsletter, the total collected in donations was \$247,399.78 so we are still short of the funds **to the tune of \$90,000** to help those currently in the system being processed.

AHBIC Chair Peter McDonald has also been working with Rural Aid on the logistics of and how best to distribute pollen replacements and queen bee donations to those most in need.

#### HIVE AID



**Australia's professional beekeepers are our forgotten farmers. These important primary producers are often overlooked when it comes to the effects of drought, bushfire and other natural disasters.**

Yet professional beekeepers are the cornerstone of our agricultural industry. They play a vital role in helping to pollinate important food crops for both humans and livestock, in addition to producing delicious Aussie honey from our rugged bushland. Crops like almonds, avocados, blueberries, cucumbers, mangoes, apples and pumpkin rely heavily on pollination by bees.

We need to support our "littlest livestock", honey bees, and the beekeepers who care for them. Please help safeguard one of the most important industries in Australian agriculture – Australian apiculture.

[Register for Aid](#)

[Donate](#)

- Donate [HERE](#)
- Register for assistance [HERE](#)

## STATE ASSOCIATION UPDATES

### **NSWAA Update by Stephen Targett**

COVID-19 has created havoc with many plans. The 2020 Tamworth conference has been cancelled. At this stage we intend to hold the 2021 conference in Tamworth at the same venue and with hopefully most of the same speakers. The AGM has been postponed and when and if it will be held will depend on replies from Fair Trading. Everyone will get a paper copy of the audited financials. Other reports will be on our website by the 21st May 2020.

The Sydney Royal Easter Show has been cancelled along with Honeyland. Honeyland is a fund raiser for NSWAA and a public awareness event for the public about bees and beekeepers. A lot of work had gone in to planning for Honeyland and the Conference and it is practical but disappointing that they have been cancelled.

NSW Bushfires that have burnt over 9,809 hives and wiped out the field bees of over 88,094 hives and burnt just over 5 million ha of forests. With minimal autumn prospects a small percentage of these affected hives will be suitable for almond pollination.

This disaster is unprecedented in scale for our industry. 67% of National Parks on the eastern seaboard have been burnt. Even if beekeepers have not had sites burnt they will probably still be affected with forests and roads closed until dangerous trees have been cut down, burnt wooden bridges replaced etc.

DPI did a great job supplying sugar and sugar syrup to beekeepers affected by fire. A big thank you to Stephen Green and Elizabeth Frost. Bushfire sugar aid has now ceased. 440.06 tonnes of sugar and sugar syrup was distributed to 82 beekeepers.

NSWAA has requested that beekeepers be exempt from any transport shutdown due to COVID-19. So far that is the case - for beekeepers it is business as usual. The requirement for paperwork to enter Queensland (which is in lock down) has been circulated to all our members.

NSWAA is currently drafting a response for the NSW bushfire enquiry.

Practice social distancing and social isolation and most of all STAY HEALTHY

### **BICWA & WAFarmers Beekeepers Section Update by Brendon Fewster**

#### **February Report**

**BICWA** - with a good Blackbutt flowering and a follow up of Marri I would assume that all of the WA Beekeepers are very busy at the moment. Until current prices slow down everyone will be very happy with the season. But we must spare a thought for our eastern state counterparts and try and do our part to help. I will follow up with some officials after we discuss and put out to our members what way we can help.

We had a meeting with MCL Stephen Dawson, Minister for Environment, to discuss clearing permits, site access and prescribed burns which with the current situation in the east we didn't push that barrel to hard. With regards to site access the Minister said that he is very sympathetic towards bees and he would help where he could. But it looks like a case by case situation at the moment. With regards to clearing permits, the Department will organise a meeting between DBCA and DWER to discuss streamlining the application process. This is a positive

start and we keep lobbying for our industry to receive the clearing and site access permission by sending one application only.

Due to this very busy season, we needed to postpone two meetings, one with Mark Webb, DBCA Director General, regarding access and management of industry on crown land and one with Stefan de Haan, DBCA Manager Fire Management Service Branch, to discuss trial fire breaks in the northern sand plains. The meetings are postponed for April 2020.

### March Report

**BICWA** can report two main activities for March 2020.

First, it was a hectic beekeeping month, and therefore no industry meetings held during this period.

Second, the shadow of COVID-19 keeps us busy communicating with authorities and beekeepers. BICWA can confirm that the beekeeping service falls under Primary Producers, Specialist Skills and **allows for regional travels as follows:**

- Keep your DPIRD issued Beekeeper Registration card with you.
- Ensure all your hives are branded in accordance with current legislative requirements
- That you have appropriate signage to install all new location in accordance with current legislative requirements
- Maintain record in accordance with current legislative requirements
- Please advise current hive numbers directly to Brand Office (if different to what is recorded on system)

For the latest updates check our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/BICWA](https://www.facebook.com/BICWA)

**WA Farmers**, Beekeeping Section informs that at both a state and national level there is a lot of work going on within peak industry bodies to consolidate or restructure to ensure long term funding and political / policy relevance. Further investigation and communication are underway.

If you have any questions, queries or seek further information, please don't hesitate to contact us at any time, email: [info@bicwa.com.au](mailto:info@bicwa.com.au) We wish everyone to stay safe and well!

Thanks to everyone for all their efforts over the past couple of months.



## EXPORT/IMPORT STATISTICS

Please find below export and import statistics by quarter to 31 December 2019 from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. AHBIC pays for an annual subscription to source this information.

Top 5 import countries for 2019-20			Top 5 export countries for 2019-2020		
Financial year to date: China, NZ, Brazil, Argentina, India			Financial year to date: China, USA, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia		
	Import - tonnes	Customs Value \$A	Export - tonnes	FOB Value \$A	
September 2019	934	\$10,269,477	933	\$13,649,083	
December 2019	1,467	\$12,999,563	1,040	\$15,251,914	
March 2020					
June 2020					
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,401</b>	<b>\$23,269,039</b>	<b>1,973</b>	<b>\$28,900,997</b>	

## MARKET ACCESS ADVICE NOTICES

The Department of Agriculture releases market access advice notices periodically and these can be found on their website [here](#) Recently released advices:

- 24/3/2020 [European Union: Non-Prescribed Goods: Health Certificate Arrangements During COVID-19 \(2020-04\)](#)
- 6/3/2020 [United Arab Emirates: Prepackaged Food: Mandatory Nutritional Labelling requirements from 1 January 2022 \(2020-03\)](#)
- 3/3/2020 [United Arab Emirates - Honey: Requirement for an Emirates Quality Mark \(EQM\) for Honey \(2020-02\)](#)

Do you produce Manuka Honey or other high value ag products? This may be of interest to you...

The Australian Government is also introducing a \$110 million International Freight Assistance Mechanism to facilitate the export of high-value agricultural and fisheries products to target overseas markets by air freight during the coronavirus pandemic. Details of the Mechanism, including eligibility criteria and logistics can be found [here](#). Exporters can express their interest by visiting the dedicated website [here](#). For further information on the Mechanism, please contact the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's Freight Assistance Team by email [freight.assistance@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:freight.assistance@agriculture.gov.au) or phone 02 6272 2444.

## 2018/19 BEEKEEPER INFORMATION

Thanks to Plant Health Australia for collating these statistics for our industry.

State or Territory	Number of Beekeepers	Number of Hives	Number of beekeepers operating ≥50 hives
Australian Capital Territory <sup>1</sup>	442	Not Available	1
Northern Territory	118	1916	5
New South Wales	9347	297,362	848
Queensland	5069	105495	307
Western Australia	3,185	47,061	157
South Australia	2,459	69,810	175
Tasmania	276	23,751	38
Victoria	9236	123,277	337
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30132</b>	<b>668672</b>	<b>1868</b>

We've flagged this before in a previous newsletter but in case you missed it, the Bee Health Survey 2018 results are available on the BeeAware website. The survey was designed to provide a snapshot of bee health in the Australian honey bee industry, focusing on issues such as pests and diseases and pollination. Click [here](#) for results.

And while we're on [BeeAware](#), please don't forget to utilise the informative website. [BeeAware](#) is a hub of information for beekeepers and growers about honey bee biosecurity and pollination of agricultural and horticultural crops. The site contains an extensive range of information about exotic and established pests and diseases of honey bees, and helps beekeepers to identify and respond to these pest threats. It also contains information about the pollination of crops and how beekeepers and growers can work together to provide and receive best practice pollination services.



The 3rd meeting of the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBPSP) and the 10th meeting of the National Bee Biosecurity Program (NBBP) Steering Committees were held in November 2019 in Canberra. The Committees include representatives from the Australian, State and Territory governments agricultural agencies, Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, Plant Health Australia (PHA) and Hurt Innovation (NBPSP only). See link to a Communique with a brief description of the items discussed and the major outcomes of the meetings [HERE](#).

### **BEE BIOSECURITY OFFICER UPDATE**

Each month we are hoping to bring you an update from one of our BBO's. This edition Rod Bourke provides a report on recent BBO activities in NSW – read all about it below. Thank you for your report Rod!

In this update from NSW Bee Biosecurity Officer Rod Bourke he gives an overview of his main activities since mid-2019.

### **Exchanging mite experience with New Zealand**

In June-July 2019, I visited New Zealand to look at varroa in different beekeeping operations with Mark Page, the NSW DPI Bee Biosecurity Officer (Surveillance). We observed that you can continue to run productive and profitable beehives if you manage your hives properly and keep on top of your mite numbers.



The first two commercial beekeepers we visited maintained very good varroa management including the use of various brands of miticide strips when off honey flows, plus oxalic acid strips and frequent mineral oil fogging. We could find no live varroa using the three mite monitoring methods and only a few dead mites on sticky mats. The biggest issue for these beekeepers was reinvasion from poorly managed hives nearby.

Hayley Pragert of NZ Ministry for Primary Industries (and former NSW Bee Biosecurity Officer) intentionally neglected some of her own hives in preparation for our visit. We saw a noticeable varroa presence, as well as bees affected by deformed wing virus and acute paralysis virus. It was a very sad sight.

This experience in New Zealand reconfirmed the fact that we absolutely do not want exotic mites becoming established in Australia. In order to maintain that it is imperative that every beekeeper should do their duty and look and undertake regular mite surveillance on theirs. It is important to undertake specific mite surveillance in hives using the sugar shake, alcohol wash and drone uncapping methods. Live varroa are extremely hard to spot on bees in a colony as they normally hide and feed on the underside of the bee or under capped brood. If a beekeeper is relying on their eyesight to spot varroa then they are wasting their time and putting many hives at risk.



Varroa on drone pupa in NZ

In November 2019, I manned the NSW DPI booth at the Amateur Beekeepers Association (ABA) Bee Field Day with Mark. We also hosted Hayley Pragert and Richard Hall from NZ MPI on a small hive beetle tour in return for their hospitality earlier in the year. Just as we don't want varroa, New Zealand doesn't want small hive beetle!

### Other activities

Since mid-2019 I have also undertaken a range of other activities which have included:

- Observing two NSW DPI bee compliance operations this spring. While, I do not undertake compliance activities as part of my role observing them is a great way to meet beekeepers and assist some them to improve their biosecurity.
- Presenting three face-to-face bee biosecurity courses through the Tocal College. Other courses were scheduled for late March and early April but have been postponed due to the COVID-19 situation.
- Submitting articles to the NSW Apiarists' Association Honey Bee News, ABA and Bee Biosecurity Newsletter.
- Attending the Bee Industry Biosecurity Consultative Committee six monthly meeting in March 2020.
- Fielding phone calls and emails from concerned beekeepers when over 2000 American foulbrood alert emails went out recently.
- Sharing information about NSW's upcoming implementation of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice (Code) as a condition of registration from 1 July 2020. Between November 2019 and March 2020 I spoke about the changes at five NSW Apiarists' Association branches and the Tocal Bee Field Day.

### Managing the right number of hives

Over the past year, the main problem that I have observed is beekeepers running too many hives for their capabilities and therefore not being able to manage them properly. I ask everybody to re-evaluate their operational size. Having too much dead wood and diseased hives not only impacts your own profitability but also others within flying distance of you.

## EXTENSIONAUS

Ensure you make the most of these informative [ExtensionAUS](#) resources! More have recently been uploaded so please utilise these free resources:

- [Hive management for Nosema](#)
- [Plan Bee – Australian honey bee genetic improvement program](#)
- [To feed or not to feed? Part 2. The importance of nutrition to disease](#)
- [Your beekeeping community needs you](#)

## FALL ARMYWORM DISCOVERY IN QUEENSLAND

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in Queensland reported that the Fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) has been detected in several locations across North Queensland following recent detections on two Torres Strait islands and Bamaga at the tip of Cape York. The new detections were on a property in the north-west gulf country and in South Johnstone, Tolga and Lakeland in Far North Queensland. Further details of the latest detections are available in our [fall armyworm biosecurity alert](#).

Fall armyworm is an invasive pest and not a fussy eater. It is highly mobile and can fly long distances with suitable weather conditions. It feeds on over 350 plant species, and impacts economically important crops such as maize, rice, sorghum, sugarcane and wheat, as well as fruit, vegetable and cotton crops.

The most recent detection in Bowen brings to eight the number of confirmed samples of fall armyworm on the Australian mainland since the initial detection at Bamaga in February 2020. The department is working with industry to find ways to address the threat posed by the fall armyworm moth and its larvae to Queensland's agriculture industry.

Producers are urged to monitor crops for signs of unusual levels of caterpillar damage leading to defoliation of the crop and to report suspected sightings by calling 13 25 23.

## Ramifications for the Beekeeping Industry of the Fall Armyworm

by Trevor Weatherhead, Chair, Quarantine and Disease Subcommittee, 18 March 2020

With the discovery of fall armyworm (FAW) (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) on the Australian mainland in Queensland what are the ramifications for the beekeeping industry in Australia? The Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDAF) have a website where information is regularly updated. There are a range of fact sheets on this site. See link [here](#)

How far will it spread? Across the north of Australia which includes Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia the FAW will survive all year round. In the rest of Queensland, parts of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and south west Western Australia it will be seasonal. CSIRO are doing some modelling on the spread.

There are currently 12 permits for use of chemicals for control of armyworm with another 13 in the pipeline. To see the details of these permits see link [here](#). This is updated regularly.

I have raised an issue with some of the permits about spraying in the early morning. In discussions there will probably need to be more discussion re application of the chemicals. I have given the example of a beekeeper on the Atherton Tableland pollination blueberries. There is maize being grown nearby. So if the bees are inadvertently affected when spraying occurs on the maize then the blueberry crop is affected. Also some

labels say that bee hives should be removed when spraying occurs. I am sure the blueberry grower would not want the bees removed as they would not get a crop.

I have been in discussion with the Grains Research and Development Corporation re the labelling. It is expected that we will come up with some reasonable results and advice to growers.

In the meantime, beekeepers can help themselves by registering their sites on the BeeConnected app especially if you believe you will be in areas where spraying could take place. This is for any spraying of crops not just FAW.

This could also be the same scenario for say pollination of cucurbits in the Burdekin. Sugar cane is a possible affected crop although reports to date have not identified FAW on sugar cane as yet. I am sure the sugar cane growers hope this continues.

It may be the case that FAW may be no worse than other armyworms that are current in crops. IPM is being looked at.

As FAW cannot be eradicated it is now declared an agricultural pest so there is no need to report findings although people are encouraged to report so that any spread can be mapped. QDAF are still maintaining traps at around 18 sites. These sites are targeted towards the main production areas. These are being cleared weekly and diagnosis being carried out as soon as possible.

There is an industry workshop that is held on a monthly basis at the moment and I attended my first one on Tuesday. I have also been invited to be on the Communications Group so I should be able to be kept up to date on what is happening and can pass on to industry. That Group meets this coming Thursday.

Landline are expected to be showing a program on FAW in the next couple of weeks.

If anyone has any questions you can contact me at any time. Phone 0427 960 735 or email [queenbee50@bigpond.com](mailto:queenbee50@bigpond.com)

#### **GENERAL NEWS AND LINKS – AUSTRALIA**

- [NSW DPI](#) is promoting April as Sugar Shake Month, Sugar Shake Month is held every April. The annual campaign is a joint initiative between NSW DPI, the [Amateur Beekeepers Association NSW](#) and the [NSW Apiarists' Association](#). Read more [here](#)
- The NFF's Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program (DiALP) mentoring opportunity is designed for aspiring female leaders, 25 years and over, with a passion for agriculture. Applications for the 2020 Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program have been extended until 5pm EAST Monday 13 April, 2020. Click for more information: [Diversity in Agriculture Leadership Program](#), Australian Farmers 28 March 2020
- Australia may soon be declared free of citrus canker, as the Northern Territory gets closer to eradicating the deadly disease, nearly two years to the date of its initial detection. [Citrus canker restrictions lifted in Darwin](#), Australian Tree Crop, 27 March 2020
- After months of prolonged drought, followed by devastating bushfires, vital rain has rescued a New South Wales farmer's honey production after a barren 2019. [Rain provides lifeline for honey producer after drought and bushfires](#). ABC Illawarra by Justin Huntsdale, 24 March 2020
- Industry bodies from right across Australia's horticultural sector have called on the Federal government to extend the visas of foreign workers in the midst of the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak. [Australian industry calls for visa relief](#), Australian Tree Crop, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

- A map that identifies environmental risk analysis and determines that Australia's most affected regions are south-east New South Wales and central-west New South Wales continuing up to north-west Queensland. [Roundup contamination 'unpreventable', world-first glyphosate research shows](#), ABC Rural News by Jane McNaughton, 19 March 2020
- Farmers and fresh produce companies have called for an immediate extension to visas for backpackers and international seasonal workers, amid fears the coronavirus could force many of them to return home. The industry lobby group Australian Fresh Produce Alliance, whose members include the ASX-listed Costa Group, says there are now more than 2700 overseas seasonal workers in Australia, and at least 7000 backpackers working in the industry. [Call to extend backpacker visas to help farmers cope with virus jolt](#), SMH by Darren Gray, 19 March 2020.
- Make sure you push your honey! As humanity's most pressing health crisis plays out across the globe, Australian consumers appear to be rushing to boost their immunity with locally grown vegetables. [Coronavirus pandemic driving strong demand for local produce](#) Australian Tree Crop, 16 March 2020
- Beekeepers predict it could take at least a decade for heavily burnt bushland along Australia's east coast to bounce back with the pollen and nectar needed for honey production. [Bushfire 'devastation' for beekeepers as honey production plummets](#). SMH by Mike Foley, 13 March 2020
- Beekeepers will benefit from a mapping project being undertaken by the Cooperative Research Centre for Honey Bee Products in WA, which held a workshop at the Yanchep Institute earlier in March. [Beekeepers can benefit from flora mapping project](#), Yanchep News Online, 12 March 2020
- [WA Government puts a 12-month halt on logging of mature karri forests in the South West](#). The Western Australian Government has placed a 12-month freeze on the logging of "two-tier" karri forests in the state's wooded South West region. ABC News WA Country Hour by John Daly, 9 March 2020.
- [The bee buzz is growing nationally and commercially](#). Bees help pollinate around one in three food plants world-wide, but in recent months Australian colonies have copped a beating with drought, fire, flood and smoke. This poses a real risk to our food security, but also raises an interesting possibility that our urban habitat can potentially be a vital refuge for key species including our buzzy buddies, The Fifth Estate by Willow Aliento, 4 March 2020
- [Bee deaths from fires, drought and slow habitat recovery to hit ag productivity](#). While cropping season prospects have dramatically revived in many regions after recent rain, the impact of savage bushfires and drought may continue undermining yield prospects for years because so many of nature's pollinators have vanished. Farm Online National by Adam Marshall, 2 March 2020

## MEDIA RELEASES

- A telephone hook-up of agricultural ministers from around the country has discussed a range of issues facing the sector during this COVID-19 crisis. [Cooperation the way through COVID-19 Crisis](#), The Hon David Littleproud MP, 27 March 2020
- Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management David Littleproud announced a new measure to maintain agricultural production and supply chains through the COVID-19 response. [Strong industry & government ties through COVID-19](#), The Hon David Littleproud MP, 23 March 2020
- [Media statement: COVID-19 – Export Pathway - Arrangements and Response](#), Dept of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, 20 March 2020
- [Australia joins international plant health research network](#) The future of plant health in Australia is looking brighter with a new opportunity for international collaboration in research on pests and diseases that are common threats. Australia's Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative (PBRI), has just signed a memorandum of understanding with the European



Baldissera Giovani and Dr Jo Luck  
Source: PBRI

Phytosanitary Research and Coordination network (Euphresco). Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020

- Stock Journal, February 2020. The Agrifutures-AHBIC bushfire recovery workshop scheduled for 23-24<sup>th</sup> February has been postponed and redesigned to allow for COVID-19 response but it will go ahead.



**STRUGGLING:** The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council and Agrifutures Australia will host a roundtable to help honey-bees recover from a tough start to 2020.

## Roundtable to help recovery

THE devastating start to 2020 has hit many people and industries hard.

Agrifutures Australia said the Honey Bee industry in particular has felt the impact of the drought and bushfires and it is supporting the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) host a recovery roundtable in Canberra.

Agrifutures Australia and AHBIC will be inviting agriculture and environment departmental representa-

tives, forestry and pollination dependent industry representatives, researchers, affected beekeepers as well as state and national bee industry bodies.

The aim of the roundtable is to identify and coordinate the recovery response to ensure that government and industry support is well targeted and meets the needs of affected beekeepers.

The industry is concerned about loss of floral resources and gaining access to sur-

viving floral resources, in a timely manner.

They are also concerned that drought and fires will significantly disrupt their ability to provide important pollination services to broadacre and horticultural industries.

Peter McDonald, chair of AHBIC said that where honey-bees have escaped the blazes, they will starve before Spring unless urgent action by both industry and government is taken to save them.

- [Self-fertilising almond trees secure the future of industry](#). In a world-leading research project funded by Hort Innovation, Australian scientists have successfully bred self-fertile almond varieties for growers that are not entirely reliant on bees for pollination. The longitudinal project centered around the industry's breeding program first began in 1997 and has since successfully produced four (4) almond varieties that are self-fertile. Hort Innovation, 17 February.

## GENERAL NEWS AND LINKS – INTERNATIONAL

- [Coronavirus stings world's top honey makers with China beekeepers locked down](#). Beekeepers in China, the world's top honey producer, are bracing for a bleak start to the key spring pollinating season as travel curbs aimed at containing a coronavirus outbreak keep them at home while their bees go without food for weeks. Reuters by Hallie Gu and Shivani Singh, 26 February 2020

## SEASONAL NOTES – FEBRUARY 2020

by Bob McDonald, Victoria

My Seasonal Reports are usually written in the last two or three days of a particular month.

In December, because of Christmas holidays etc. the Editor needed to get the Journal together early and my report was written before Christmas and the outbreak of the large fires in East Gippsland and the North East of Victoria.

Since then 1.4 million hectares of Victoria has burned, mainly in the East and North East of our State – about 50% in public land.

The fires have been more extensive into NSW, but I will leave that for others to report.

**Rainfall** during January has varied throughout the State with extensive areas in the North Central and Gippsland receiving over their long-term average falls, with some places reaching over 200% more. Through the far West and up into Southern Riverina of NSW rainfall has been far below their long-term average falls.

It is dangerous for me to read the rainfall of only one month into any future forecasting.

According to the AHBIC Report, 650 bee hives have been burned in Victoria, however there is a question mark as to how accurate this may be due to inaccessibility in some areas.

## Victorian Honey Prospects

With the hot weather during January the Yellow Box (*Euc. melliodora*) has yielded heavily. Although budding on Red Gum (*Euc. camaldulensis*) was very patchy, it yielded copious pollen over an extended period and kept bees well supplied for brood rearing.

At the time of writing (28<sup>th</sup> Jan.), Yellow Box and Red Gum have practically finished flowering.

Narrow Leaf Peppermint (*Euc. radiata*) has also yielded quite well.

The fires of the Upper North East have kept beekeepers out of this resource in the higher elevations.

Messmate (*Euc. obliqua*) is just starting to flower and there is a general movement of bee hives onto this next resource.

Summer flowering Iron Bark (*Euc. tricarpa*) has only set a light budding but the bees are working the blossom.

Sugar Gum (*Euc. Cladocalyx*) is well budded across the Volcanic Plains and could be useful during the early autumn.

## Future

Despite the drier than average 2019 year, many Eucalypt trees are showing bountiful new growth.

This includes short-budding species e.g. Grey Box (*Euc. microcarpa*).

Some beekeepers are hoping for buds on the Grey Box, but the few trees that I have looked at are not yet showing any buds.

There is some report of a honey flow in a restricted area (unaffected by fire) of Gippsland, but I don't know any more than this. Good luck to the Gippslanders.

## NEW CHEMICAL REGISTRATIONS

Please see link to the [APVMA website](#) to view all information from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines (APVMA) Gazette which is published fortnightly and contains:

- details of the registration of agricultural and veterinary chemical products and other approvals granted by the APVMA
- notices as required by the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code (the Agvet Code) and related legislation
- a range of regulatory material issued by the APVMA.

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