



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

April 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

AHBIC lodged a submission to the [National Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements](#)
which was due on 28th April 2020



The Commission is holding hearings to gather evidence about coordination, preparedness for, response to and recovery from disasters as well as improving resilience and adapting to changing climatic conditions and mitigating the impact of natural disasters. The Commission will also consider the legal framework for Commonwealth involvement in responding to national emergencies. Listen to live webcasts of proceedings [here](#)



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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 finance@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 or YES / NO
 - undisclosed** monetary category or YES / NO
 - do **not** publish my name 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 CANCELLED
New South Wales Apiarists Association	21-22 May, Tamworth CANCELLED
Tasmanian Beekeepers Association	29-30 May, CANCELLED
South Australian Apiarists Association	11-12 June, AMENDED to a 'Virtual Conversation Series' over a 12 month period commencing June 2020
Queensland Beekeepers Association	11-13 June, Oaks Oasis Resort, Caloundra CANCELLED
Victorian Apiarists Association	2-4 July, Bendigo, POSTPONED UNTIL NOVEMBER
Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association	
Honey Packers and Marketers Association	
National Council of Crop Pollination Associations	
Australian Honey Bee Industry Council	Likely to be a virtual AGM, further information to be advised when available

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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 (2)

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

GOLD PLUS (5)

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

GOLD (7)

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

SILVER (24)

Australian Quality Honey (Blue
Hills Honey)
Bees Neez Apiaries
Brenton, Daryl
Boyd Apiaries Pty Ltd
Cairns District Beekeeping Assoc
Cooper, Casey
Davies Apiaries
Desert Breeze Honey
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 Gerds)
Berry, Jessica
Bayside Beekeepers Assoc.
Clifford, David
Cooper, Barry
Frost, Liz
Gustare Honey Australia
Honey in the Garden
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 [Helen Goodall](mailto:Helen.Goodall@ahbic.org.au).

NOTE FROM CHAIR, PETER McDONALD

A lot has happened since the last newsletter, mainly thanks to COVID-19.

- Every conference run by AHBIC and its members has been cancelled for 2020.
- The Honey Bee Industry Bushfire Recovery Workshop has been re-jigged.
- We welcomed AHBIC's new CEO, Helen Goodall.
- Drought is still impacting in some areas whilst good rain in others suggests a reprieve, hopefully not temporary.
- Beekeepers everywhere are managing bees as well as they can, going into the winter months given all these issues
- Vale Linton Briggs. Sadly, we farewelled industry icon Linton Briggs. Obituary later in newsletter.

I would like to personally welcome Helen to the Honey Bee industry. I am sure everyone will make yourselves known to Helen in due course through our 'normal' operations. Please do so and when we are again able to gather and meet, make yourself known in person. Whilst Sarah is no longer our CEO she is still helping us out until Helen settles in, putting together this newsletter. Thank you, Sarah.

Some beekeeper groups are still planning for what to do about their AGM. AHBIC will be planning for a virtual AGM this year that will possibly be constrained to just the members delegates and AHBIC Executive. As I mentioned in last month's note, even though we are constrained by what we can do, there are still costs involved. We still meet, still put in submissions, still pay bills.

In last October's newsletter I touched on the financial supporters of AHBIC and how we need more to secure AHBIC's ongoing work for the good of us all. In it I spoke about some of the numbers we have in our industry:

- 30,132 total registered beekeepers throughout Australia (Mar 2020 AHBIC Newsletter)
- 1,868 beekeepers (>50 hives) throughout Australia (Mar 2020 AHBIC Newsletter)
- Many beekeeping equipment suppliers
- Numerous Honey Buyers/Packing businesses
- Countless clubs and associations.
- Significant numbers of pollination service brokers and companies

Right now, we have only 106 financial contributors out of all these participants in our industry. That's not many. I would like to thank each and every one of these for this vital support. It has been a really tough year. It is easy to decide that something cannot be afforded in order to keep costs down. I am telling you that being a Friend of AHBIC should not be one of these. We do have one Friend who has found a way to help the whole industry even though they are not flush with cash. A familiar story. A young, aspiring commercial beekeeper. They work for another commercial beekeeper (a long time industry contributor, both financially and their vital volunteer time), trying to work their own hives on the weekend and pay for all the material and equipment in order to build their own business. Those of us who have built up beekeeping operations certainly know how there is always something to spend money on. This is where the story differs. A regular, small amount is sent to AHBIC every week. So small that it is not missed, but regular, so that over a year it amounts to a good sum, a good Friend of AHBIC, thank you. This person has seen the importance of what AHBIC does and how it impacts his own, small, aspiring beekeeping operation. They have taken action to protect the future success of the industry they aspire to be in for a long time and in turn their own business. A great example to follow.

Please help, the work we do on behalf of the whole industry is vital and needs to continue. Look at the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 on our website and examine the 20+ Major Achievements. There is too much at stake to let it fade away. Take some action today and help to secure all our futures.

NOTE FROM CEO, HELEN GOODALL



I am thrilled to have commenced as CEO of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, if not a little overwhelmed with the sheer scope of the role, the issues facing the industry and not to mention the number of acronyms! I am very much looking forward to learning more about the industry and working with you all. While settling in, I have been aiming to give many of you a call to introduce myself and hear your views on the industry. If I have not managed to touch base with you yet, please also feel free to contact me anytime.

It has been a busy start to the role, the lodgement of an application to Agrifutures in response to their call out for applications for the Honey Bee and Pollination Small Grants program, the lodgement of a submission to the

[National Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements](#) as well as an AHBIC Executive meeting.

The Bushfires Royal Commission will examine coordination, preparedness for, response to and recovery from disasters as well as improving resilience and adapting to changing climatic conditions and mitigating the impact of natural disasters. The inquiry will also consider the legal framework for Commonwealth involvement in responding to national emergencies. You can find a copy of the AHBIC submission to the Royal Commission later in this news bulletin and thank you to all who provided input.

The AHBIC Executive met by teleconference on 30th April 2020. There were a range of issues discussed including the AHBIC AGM and its format given COVID-19 restrictions; it is likely the AHBIC AGM will be held as a virtual AGM and we will advise further details as soon as possible. The Executive also discussed Hive Aid, the AgriFutures/AHBIC Bushfire Recovery draft report completed by Michael Clarke of AgEconPlus, Congress scheduled for 2022, the business case for a pollination levy, the application to Agrifutures for an industry communication plan, the process for nominations for AgriFutures Advisory Group, the Producer Contingency Fund and the Australian Virtual Hobby Beekeepers Conference. That is only the start, we have plenty of work to do!

I wanted to say a big thank you to outgoing CEO Sarah Paradice, I appreciate your support and guidance in providing a thorough handover and I look forward to building on the work you have undertaken for AHBIC.

Please feel free to contact me anytime and thank you in advance for your patience while I get up to speed with the issues.

Recent meetings attended by CEO and/or AHBIC Executive

- 3 April – PCF teleconference meeting
- 6th April – new CEO Helen Goodall commenced, handover with Sarah Paradice, 6-8th April
- 17 April - National Varroa Mite Eradication Program - update for industry
- 28 April – PHA regular teleconference
- 28th April – meet with Sarah Paradice and Therese Kershaw for additional administrative handover
- 30th April - AHBIC Executive Meeting

Upcoming meetings for CEO and/or AHBIC Executive

- 12th May – AgriFutures-AHBIC Bushfire Recovery Draft Report by Michael Clarke for review

AHBIC EXECUTIVE POSITIONS AND AGM

The 2020 AHBIC AGM is scheduled to be held on Sunday 5th 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

Other Executive positions

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

COVID-19 INFORMATION

Information released throughout April in relation to COVID-19 that may be helpful to beekeepers:

Links to Government and other assistance and information is summarised well on the NFF website:

- [COVID-19: Key Information](#), National Farmers Federation have collated excellent information relevant to agriculture and the agrifood supply chain including [Key Information and FAQ](#), [border control information](#), [COVID-19: Assistance and support](#).

Media Releases

- The Federal Liberal and Nationals Government is making temporary changes to visa arrangements to help farmers access the workforce they need to secure Australia's food and produce supply during COVID-19. [Supporting the agriculture workforce during COVID-19](#) Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, Michael McCormack, Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, David Littleproud, Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, Alan Tudge, 4 April 2020
- [Federal Government makes changes to agricultural visa programs](#), FarmOnline National by Sharon O'Keeffe, 6 April 2020
- [Certainty for farm workforce continuity & safety](#), The National Farmers' Federation and its members have thanked the Government for providing foreign workers the opportunity to extend their visas and keep working on Australian farms. The decision to extend the visas of foreign workers already working in Australia pursuant to the Pacific Labour Scheme, Seasonal Worker Programmes, and Working Holiday Programmes, gives certainty to farmers when planning for upcoming plantings and harvest. NFF, 4 April 2020

HIVEAID

A report from Rural Aid as at 15 April 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, funds distributed to beekeepers is greater than donations collected. We also 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](#).

Current donations – as at 30 April 2020 - \$257,372.51

Monthly Bee Farmer Registrations

Total number of bee farmers registered as at 15/4/20

January 2020	52
February 2020	38
March 2020	22
April 2020	12 (to 15 April)
Total	124

Confirmed Bee farmers and processed	97
Hobby farmers	14
Bee registrations still being verified and processed	11

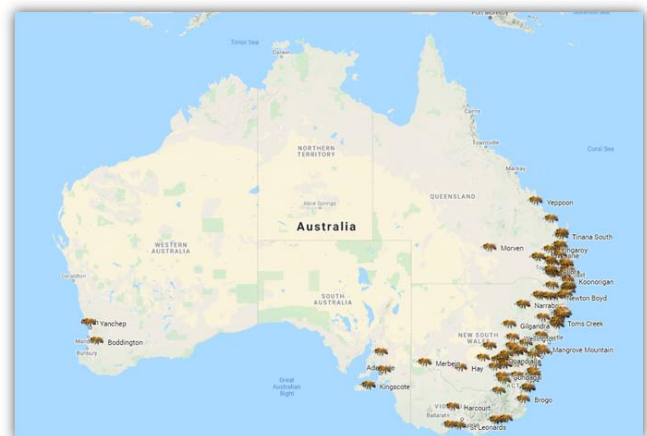
Aid provided

\$500 Country Card	122	= \$61,000
Water requests	2	= \$555
\$1,500 Financial Assistance	74	= \$111,000
\$1,500 Beekeeper Card	97	= \$145,500
Total spent		= \$318,055.00

New Bee Farmer Registrations March 2020 (23)



Total Bee Farmers and Locations (January – March 2020)



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](#)

Hive and Wellness issued the following media release about the Hive Aid Campaign on 22 April 2020

Hive+Wellness A U S T R A L I A

MEDIA RELEASE: 22 April 2020

Australian Public Rallies to Support Beekeepers, Hive Aid Campaign Hits \$250,000

Generous donations and everyday shoppers have helped to raise over a quarter of a million dollars to assist Australian beekeepers and their crucial honey bees.

Growing awareness of the plight of the beekeepers, who play a critical role in Australia's agriculture industry, has prompted a groundswell of support for Hive Aid and the nation's "forgotten farmers", with donations passing \$250,000.

This has all occurred at a time when many Australians are doing it tough as the COVID-19 pandemic affects health, incomes and way of life across the country.

Hive + Wellness Australia CEO Ryan d'Almeida said: "This is a fantastic milestone, and quite humbling in the current environment. These funds will make a huge difference to beekeepers, supporting them to sustain their bees amidst some of the most challenging conditions on record." He said that more than 120 beekeepers had registered since the campaign began, and the number continued to grow each month.

Over the last six months, bushfires have destroyed over 11 million hectares of forest, while drought and extreme heat have decimated bee populations. This has resulted in a domestic honey shortage and restricted the ability of bees to pollinate important farming crops.

Mr d'Almeida said: "Since the campaign was launched, Rural Aid has done an amazing job of directing the funds to professional beekeepers in urgent need. Hive Aid has seen particularly high requests for assistance from beekeepers in Queensland and New South Wales, where conditions have been harshest. But beekeepers from much further afield have also registered for help."

"The public's support for this campaign is providing both immediate assistance and also ensuring the longer-term survival of the nation's beekeeping industry."

Professional beekeepers can register for assistance here: <https://www.buyabale.com.au/can-we-help-you/>

Individual donations to Hive Aid can be made at <http://www.ruralaid.org.au/hiveaid>.

Major donors should contact Hive + Wellness, AHBIC or Rural Aid directly.

Contact: Carolyn Ryan, Associate Director, Daymark - 0468 924 777

About Hive Aid: The Hive Aid campaign provides financial and practical assistance to professional beekeepers impacted by drought and bushfire. Hive Aid was established in December 2019 by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), Hive + Wellness and Rural Aid. The campaign received a \$100,000 donation from agriculture company Olam Australia, while Hive + Wellness also donated \$50,000. The remaining funds have come via direct donation or through consumers buying Capilano Drought & Bushfire Relief Honey packs, which include a 20 cent donation to Hive Aid. The iconic Capilano brand is owned by Hive + Wellness.

STATE ASSOCIATION UPDATES

In the changeover of CEO's, State Association updates were not able to be coordinated in time for the April edition of the newsletter but please look to May's edition for updates from states. However, BICWA/WA Farmers recently sent through the following report, thank you Christine Spycher for being so organised!

BICWA & WA Farmers Beekeeping Section Update

This month has had quite a bit going on, in this very trying and challenging time of COVID-19.

With the border checkpoints in place, beekeepers need to carry their up to date DPIRD registration card and a travel letter, see the template on our webpage: <https://www.bicwa.com.au/covid-19-updates>
So far, we have heard of one rejection to moving between regions, this is being investigated by DPIRD staff.

Moving forward, we are re-looking at the structure of BICWA and assessing how to run our industry into the future. Your BICWA board has been discussing at length the best way forward. We look at an improved strategic plan, which will aid us with requests for funding opportunities into the future and to guide our industry. We also believe it is time to have a full/part-time CEO to help run our industry.

We have asked on behalf of AHBIC that all members of every association apply a small increase to their membership to then pass on to support the industry peak body. I believe this is a small but very significant amount to show your support for all the hard work AHBIC does for our industry. BICWA is currently in discussion with its WA member bodies on how this might look.

On a beekeeping note, the season finished well for most of us, and there doesn't seem to be much on now. So it is a great time to stay at home and look after your loved ones while this pandemic plays out.

Stay safe, everyone.

Regards

Brendon Fewster

SUBMISSION TO NATIONAL ROYAL COMMISSION INTO NATIONAL NATURAL DISASTER ARRANGEMENTS

On 28th April, AHBIC submitted a response to the National Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. Please see AHBIC's submission below.

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Response to the National Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

In your experience what areas of the bushfire emergency response worked well?

- Access - Ability to move livestock (hives)

During the bush fires, some beekeepers were provided access (if safe) to move hives in national parks/forests that were in the path of the fire. However, this was not consistent across all states. As the fires spread, beekeepers were required to move hives multiple times. Despite these efforts, due to the large geographic spread of the fires, even hives that had been moved multiple times still resulted in many of these hives being lost.

- *Call up of the Australian Defence Force (ADF)*

The response in deploying the ADF who are well organised and resourced was well received in supporting fire affected areas. This provides an opportunity for improvement in resource sharing particularly with the ADF in a timelier manner to prevent future natural disasters.

- *Honey bee and pollination bush fire recovery plan*

Supported by AgriFutures, the Australian honey bee industry had planned a workshop to formulate a mid to longer term beekeeping industry bushfire recovery plan. It was scheduled to be held on 23-24th March 2020 however did not occur due to COVID-19. The activities for the development of the plan were restructured. The honey bee and pollination bush fire recovery plan will provide a map for industry as well as a guide for Government assistance. The draft plan is currently out for consultation and expected to be completed in May 2020.

- *Bushfire relief campaign*

Hive Aid is a drought and bushfire relief campaign aimed specifically at struggling beekeepers. Hive Aid is overseen by peak industry body the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC). Hive Aid campaign is managed by Rural Aid which directs 100% of donations to causes it supports.

<http://www.ruralaid.org.au/hiveaid>

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response didn't work well?

Land management – Access

- Over the last 20 to 40 years track maintenance has declined in public land estates particularly in national parks. Due to the changes in land tenure and the cessation of timber harvesting in some areas, many state forests have been converted to national parks. Access roads/tracks are no longer maintained, or many have been closed all together. This has resulted in access to fight fires being greatly diminished due to lack of suitable roads or fire trails. Anecdotal evidence even suggests that the deliberate removal of bridges has occurred to limit access to these areas.
- Timely access to bee hives when it is safe to do so. An understanding that beekeepers have livestock that need tending as soon as possible.

Land management – Hazard reduction burns

This is a topic that is of great interest to the honey bee industry.

The resilience of our public land estate in many aspects has declined significantly. Management practices have failed to adapt to changing climatic conditions and in instances, management is heading in the opposite direction. Forest structure and fuel reduction burning that are too hot are two examples. There must be measurable targets and accountability about adapting forest structure to changing climatic conditions, these

targets must adequately address future resilience and ecosystem reproductive capacity of all species on public land regardless of the land classification.

At a recent industry workshop (<https://www.agrifutures.com.au/product/strategic-industry-workshop-improving-floral-resource-access-for-beekeepers/>) it was determined that the fuel reduction controlled burning programs around Australia were highly destructive to apiary values. The frequency of the burns is reducing the overall health of the forest and as a consequence adversely impacts the ability of the forest to provide adequate food sources to create healthy bees.

The forest systems as a whole need to be considered in any fuel reduction control measures. Forests provide a variety of plant species that the honey bee needs to create a healthy colony. There must be healthy colonies in order to provide the pollination services, valued at \$14.2 billion, to the multitude of food crops that Australia relies upon. The National Farmers Federation target of \$100 billion farm gate value by 2030 will require a source of strong, healthy and robust honey bee hives to contribute through pollination.

These forest food sources can be from ground cover, understory through to the trees themselves. Beekeepers require all of these in order to keep bee hives healthy as they all flower at different times and there is a need for healthy bees throughout the whole year.

Climate change has resulted in the weather being warmer for longer, reducing the days available to undertake prescribed burns. This in addition to reduced staffing, many hazard reduction burns are carried out in weather that is not suitable i.e. too hot and this results in either burns getting away or trees are scorched to the top due to the fuel load and higher temperatures.

As there has been a reduction in staff to carry out these burns, consideration should be given to employ extra staff during the burning season to allow these burns to be completed in desirable weather conditions.

Fuel reduction burns need to be cool burns so that they do not adversely affect the crown of the tree and the canopy of the forest. The crown should remain sacred. However, even if the fuel reduction burns are accomplished well, providing this cool burn, frequent burning of the forest floor removes the other plants such as ground cover and understory and the rich floral diversity of resource for honey bees.

It is important that prescribed burns are planned in consultation with beekeepers, working together to ensure the area to be burnt is not where beekeepers are working or intend to work due to available flora.

- *Forest structure*

To gain a greater knowledge of fire behaviour and suppression, we must have a clear understanding of how our forests evolved over thousands of years, their structure and type prior to European settlement, and the changes to their structure and type we have implemented over the last 100 years or more, positive and negative.

- *Forest historical structure*

It is well documented by early explorers/settlers that many of our forests were dominated by large, well-spaced trees with large canopies, with very little understory, "Park like" was a term often used to describe these forests.

- *Forest current structure*

The current structure of many of our forests today, are vastly different from the way they evolved or what was documented by our early explorers. Many forests today are dominated by small trees with small canopies with very little spacing between trees as a result of excessive timber harvesting practices. Specie mix change has also occurred due to timber harvesting practices creating more flammable bark than previously. There are too many young stems per hectare which dries out the forest floor allowing a larger percentage of lightning strikes to ignite and burn into the landscape at a greater rate. Many media comments from Incident Controllers refer to unprecedented rate of travel and intensity of these fires. If you overlay the impacts of a long-term rainfall decline, the outcome is what we are experiencing today.

The following photo is an example of the current structure, totally overgrown, many stems close together and an extremely dry forest floor. This low elevation mixed specie forest was Clear Fell/Seed Tree Harvested approx. 10 to 15 years ago.

Photo one – Current forest structure



Photo two - Forests on fire and their intensity



The third photo below is the outcome after these fires. The energy created from these forest fires to destroy the landscape to this degree must be enormous and therefore, the damage to anything in its path is devastating beyond belief. These degraded forests have a significantly diminished reproductive capacity to regenerate anywhere near their former status, these areas will require significant restoration assistance.

Photo three - outcome of fires, decades before this will be of value to the industry



Is fuel reduction burning beneficial?

Yes: If the forest structure is appropriate and the fuel reduction burn is cool with a low flame height.

No: If the forest structure is inappropriate or the fuel reduction burn is too hot! Too hot fuel reduction burning is counterproductive in a very short timeframe (2 to 5 years). The following photo is an example of a counterproductive fuel reduction burn.

Photo four – result of counterproductive fuel reduction burn



In your experience, what needs to change to improve arrangements for preparation, mitigation, response and recovery coordination for national disaster arrangements in Australia?

Beekeeping is a State and Territory Government responsibility however, beekeepers are frequently required to cross state borders. The honey bee industry requires the following from each and every State and Territory Government in addition to the awareness that visiting beekeepers from other states may be caught up in the local state's natural disaster. Consequently, the states/territories must communicate, interact and support all beekeepers regardless of their jurisdiction.

A nationally consistent accountability and reporting framework and national standards implemented throughout Australia, in relation to honey bees and access to the public land estate is required, taking into account the below:

- Preparedness:
 - Honey bees are critical to the food security of Australia through pollination services worth \$14.2billion
 - Honey bees are the pre-eminent pollinator in Australia
 - Honey bees require access to floral diversity for good health
 - Any negative impact on the amount of public land area available to beekeepers will have a flow on adverse effect on their ability to provide pollination services
 - Not all public land is equal, there are areas of greater value in terms of floral diversity and capacity for breeding healthy honey bees
 - Honey bees need to produce honey for their health as well as for the economic health of the beekeeper. Pollination service income is not enough to provide a strong, viable honey bee business that is ready for the time when the pollination service is required. Beekeepers need to produce honey to make the business viable
 - Opening up additional areas within the public land estate for the opportunity for apiary sites to be established in order to balance those lost to adverse impacts of bushfire, drought and other natural disasters
 - A national directive to achieve a more resilient and adaptive response to public land management for changing climatic conditions. A clear focus on forest structure and their ecosystems ability to adapt, survive and reproduce under these changing conditions
 - To be able to carry out suitable hazard reduction burns, in addition to providing access to fight fires, a reassessment of access roads to ensure they have not deteriorated to a level where they are not useable
 - If the forest structure is appropriate, undertake cool burns with low flame, in consultation with industry on flowering cycles for timing of prescribed burns.
- Response:
 - Timely access to bee hives when it is safe to do so. An understanding that beekeepers have livestock that need tending as soon as possible. The provision of an escort into areas as soon as possible to check the bee hives
 - Timely provision of emergency fodder (sugar and protein), water and temporary alternative apiary sites, equivalent to that provided to other livestock industries
 - With the event of changing climatic conditions, significant drought and early heatwave conditions always had the potential to lead to substantial fire in the landscape with the large proportion caused by dry lightning strikes. The ADF have large resources, those resources must be on standby under the environment conditions that prevailed at the time (September to February). The ADF should be deployed as an initial response to fire ignitions, with an objective to have all fire extinguished within 24hrs, remote or not. Implement changes to Commonwealth, States and Territories laws to reflect this key objective.
- Recovery:
 - Relief from apiary site fees for those sites that are burnt and unproductive. Some of these sites, depending on the intensity of the fire may not be productive again for 5-20 years and in some cases decades for the forest systems to recover

- The beekeeper either retain the licence for those sites burnt (with relief from fees) or the provision of an agreed healthy, alternative, equivalent site as a replacement for the surrender of the burnt site
- A significant commitment will be required to restore the public land estate to the pre-harvest or pre-bushfire impacted status. Some forests will not have the capacity to self-regenerate. We trust that adequate funds from the bushfire recovery fund is set aside for this purpose. It is critical to the long term honey bee industry stability and that of the pollination dependant industries that States and Territories develop a fair and equitable resource security models for all public land bee sites, these models must achieve equitable co-existence between any competing resource use. As a result of these fires, every beekeeping business will be under significant financial stress for the next 10 years or so, therefore, it is imperative these businesses have resource security going forward and certainly when the public land estates floral resources recover to a point they are of value to the honey bee and pollination dependent industries.

Is there anything else you would like to tell the Royal Commission?

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council is the peak industry body representing beekeeping and pollination services in Australia. The Australian honey bee and pollination industry is a vital component of our food production; the beekeeping industry provides pollination services for global food security. Food security needs bee security.

The beekeeping industry is very heavily dependent on the public land estate for honey production and, very importantly, for bee hive health prior to and after servicing many pollination dependent food crops. In 2007 there was a parliamentary inquiry and a subsequent report published, More Than Honey. That acknowledged at that time that the failure or partial failure of the honey bee industry would put at risk billions of dollars' worth of crops in Australia. One of the key recommendations was to secure floral resources into the future for the Australian honey bee industry.

Like many agricultural industries, beekeepers have been severely affected by drought and now the recent devastating bushfires which wiped out hives and extensive floral resources; these may take 5-20 years and in some cases decades to recover. Not only is honey production affected but importantly pollination and food security will be heavily impacted.

Impact of the fires for industry and Government

- Massive loss of resource for the bee industry for many years will negatively impact our ability to help the National Farmers Federation reach their target of \$100 billion farm gate value of agriculture by 2030
- Loss of hives – either completely destroyed or loss of field bees (bees out foraging get lost in heavy smoke and unable to return to hive = reduced hive strength)
- Loss of resources – may take 5-20 years and in some cases decades to recover
- Impact for pollination services for spring 2020 and further, for almond and avocado growers (even those that have not been burnt out)
- Potential reduction in production in pollination dependent crops and potentially resulting price hike
- Reduction in honey production which may result in price increase for consumers
- Reduction in levies paid by commercial beekeepers to fund important programs such as AgriFutures Research and Development (R&D), Plant Health Australia biosecurity programs and Department of Agriculture National Residue Survey (NRS).
- Levies are paid by commercial beekeepers when they produce >1,500kg honey per annum, levy is 4.6 cents per kg. Reduction in honey = reduction in levies = reduction in R&D, biosecurity, NRS. Levies paid by commercial beekeepers prop up the recreational/hobbyist beekeepers.

BEE BIOSECURITY OFFICER UPDATE – SA

Teagan Alexander – Bee Biosecurity Officer, South Australia. Thanks, Teagan, for your report!



Compliance Issues

Across the state various compliance issues have cropped up and as soon as they're dealt with others pop up. They range from holes in boxes to unregistered hives, exposed materials to unmanaged hives. The number of weak or dead hives on lucerne showed the stresses of the season with heatwaves and poor queens creating no end of trouble for those participating in pollination activities.

American Foulbrood Management

A number of inspections were conducted November through to March in the effort to identify and eradicate AFB infected hives in thirteen apiaries belonging to three different commercial beekeepers. Another inspection was conducted with a new commercial beekeeper to ensure that they started with a clean bill of health.

A number of other inspections were carried out with the beekeepers (hobby and commercial) being concerned that they had AFB present in their hives. Thankfully, they were free from AFB.

Extension and Liaising with Industry

Articles have been written for both the Buzz newsletter (South Australian Apiarists Association (SAAA) and the Buzzword newsletter (Beekeepers Society of South Australia (BSSA) with content relating to a wrap-up of almond pollination, managing weak hives, April sugar shake month and endemic pests and diseases.

BSSA meetings (hobby beekeepers) have been regularly attended with participation in an impromptu Q&A session during one meeting for beekeepers to seek clarity on any queries they may have had.

The meeting of the Central Branch of the SAAA (commercial beekeepers) was attended in January and a number of Executive meetings have also been attended. Where I was unable to attend Executive meetings, dot points of my activities were emailed through instead. I also attended the SAAA Strategic Planning meeting in late December.

In November, along with Bob Beer from the BSSA, I conducted a morning and an afternoon pest and disease workshop for hobby beekeepers covering AFB identification and management, other bee pests and diseases, a sugar shake demonstration and how to properly inspect brood. November also saw the SAAA hold their annual field day in Gawler where I presented a talk on registration requirements and what to do in the event of finding AFB in a hive.

Bushfires wreaked havoc on beekeepers throughout the Adelaide Hills, Lower South East and Kangaroo Island in December and January. In response, the SAAA organised a nuc replacement program for mainland beekeepers where members of the SAAA kindly donated nucs to those who lost hives due to the fires. This team effort saw a number of us come together to honey test the donated nucs so that they could be distributed with a clean bill of health to the recipients.

In February, I travelled to Naracoorte to run one-on-one BOLT sessions for four beekeepers with computer literacy issues in the area who have more than fifty hives. This trip also gave an opportunity to chase up an ongoing compliance issue.

Modelled on the workshops I run in conjunction with the BSSA, I travelled to Port Lincoln to run a pest, disease and compliance workshop for hobby beekeepers in early March with Norman Pope from the SAAA who focussed on seasonal hive management. During the trip to Port Lincoln, I was able to chase up a small compliance issue.



Web and telephone enquiries have regularly been responded to from beekeepers and the general public. Many year 11 and 12 students have also been choosing bees as their research subject so there's been no shortage of questions that they have been asking.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a new way of providing extension materials was required. In response I created a sketchy video on pests, diseases and compliance exclusively for BSSA members, provided via their Facebook group. This was in lieu of presenting a talk at one of their meetings and the two planned pest and disease workshops that were to be held in mid-April.

Other Activities

In early January, I was seconded for two days to work in the PIRSA Bushfire Response Call Centre to call livestock producers and apiarists impacted by the bushfires.

Due to the increased workload of our apiary administration team member as a result of legislation changes in registration renewal requirements, I have also been assisting with data entry.



Australian Honey Bee
INDUSTRY COUNCIL



Department of
Primary Industries

VALE LINTON BRIGGS



Image Source: Wheen Bee Foundation

We wish to advise that Linton Briggs AM passed away peacefully on Tuesday the 28th of April having just turned 90 years of age (b.22/04/1930).

Over recent months, Linton's battle with cancer slowly diminished his physical capacity to continue his service to industry but it will not be a surprise to those who knew him that he maintained an interest and a passion for industry affairs right to the very end.

Linton gave a great deal of his life to the apiary industry but was also rewarded handsomely through the enduring friendships with like-minded individuals he felt privileged to have made.

A private funeral service was held at St Pauls, Glenrowan on Tuesday the 5th of May. Linton's sustained commitment to his community and the apiary industry over many decades will be acknowledged and celebrated in due course. Providing an opportunity for people to come together to celebrate a long life, well lived.

A thorough account of Linton's contribution to the Australian apiary industry in the context of his wider life story will be published in forthcoming industry media.

Thank you all, for the kind words of support and prayers through what has been a difficult time.

Helen and family.

EXTENSIONAUS

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

- [Should growers pay for pollination services?](#)
- [Can Aussie bees tolerate Varroa?](#)
- [BOLT: biosecurity online training](#)
- [Nutrition for honey bees](#)

GENERAL NEWS AND LINKS – AUSTRALIA

- Fast-moving and destructive fall armyworm threatening crops across Australia A fast-moving, voracious exotic pest that has the potential to quickly decimate food crops is expected to continue to spread across Australia. Seven News by Cheryl Goodenough, 4 May 2020
- [Wildlife and Habitat Bushfire Recovery Program grant opportunity](#). The Wildlife and Habitat Bushfire Recovery Program open competitive grant opportunity is now open. Up to \$12 million is available under the program. The purpose of the grant program is to support immediate survival and long-term recovery and resilience for fire-affected Australian animals, plants, ecological communities and other natural assets and their cultural values for Indigenous Australians. The program will fund on-ground bushfire recovery actions for species, ecological communities or other natural assets. The minimum grant amount that can be applied for is \$100,000 and the maximum is \$1 million.

- Applications for Non-Executive Directors at AgriFutures Australia are now open. AgriFutures Australia is a Research and Development Corporation with the vision to grow the long term prosperity of Australian rural industries and includes our own honey bee and pollination industry. For more information see the [AgriFutures website](#) and download the [information pack](#). Applications close 17 May 2020.



- [Victoria strengthens bee biosecurity and Varroa mite preparedness](#). Agriculture Victoria demonstrates surveillance to SQRT training participants. Agriculture Victoria's apiary team increased the national award-winning State Quarantine Response Team (SQRT) in early March this year. Training was delivered to 25 new field team leaders (authorised Agriculture Victoria staff) and 35 industry members/beekeepers who wanted to help protect the industry from incursions of exotic bee pests. The SQRT program proved its worth when Varroa was detected in the Port of Melbourne in June 2018. [BeeAware](#), 30 April 2020
- [Eyes in the apiary: external mite surveillance](#). Current world events have highlighted the level of management required for preventative biosecurity and, even more so, the difficulty of tracing and eradication once an incursion breaches the border. They have also illustrated the importance of an individual's actions. When it comes to bee biosecurity, all beekeepers need to be vigilant to support the early detection of exotic bee pests and diseases. [BeeAware](#), 17 April 2020
- Also from [BeeAware](#): [New tool to strengthen bee surveillance](#). State and territory apiary and biosecurity officers recently came together to have their first look at a new tool to streamline the collection of bee pest surveillance data. The Bee Surveillance Portal is an online application which has been developed to manage the data collected by the [National Bee Pest Surveillance Program](#) (NBSPSP) field activities., 17 April 2020.
- [Fall armyworm advice and management](#) – see the link for up to date Information about fall armyworm detections in Queensland, crop and pasture impacts, current geographic spread, identification tips and management advice.
- A message to exporters from Stephanie Fahey, CEO of Austrade. As government, businesses and community align to step up the global fight against COVID-19, Austrade would like to provide you with some important updates. **Exporters are advised to keep abreast of the situation.** To help, we've developed a [COVID-19 information and insights page](#) which Austrade updates daily. Please bookmark this page in your browser and check regularly. Information about the recently announced International Air Freight Mechanism and extra funding for EMDG can be found [here](#)
- See QBA's very own Rob Dewar and Jo Martin in this Landline segment: [Bee Future: Precious honey bees in short supply](#). Well done Rob and Jo! Millions of bees and countless hectares of habitat have been destroyed as a result of bushfire and drought. Honey may soon be imported and the vital pollinators will be in short supply for agriculture. ABC Landline with Pip Courtney, 4 April 2020



Image: Agriculture Victoria

- [World Bee Day 2020](#) - celebrate with the incredible award-winning documentary: [Honeyland](#) and the Premiere of the Global Online Waggle Dance video. A compilation of waggle dancers celebrating World Bee Day around the world. Also, get on your waggle dance: [Wagging for World Bee Day](#)



- [How to sugar shake bees – abbreviated](#) YouTube Video by Mark Page, NSW DPI BBO. Unsure on how to perform your sugar shake test? By watching this shortened video you will be able to perform your own sugar shake test. A sugar shake test can determine if a honey bee colony is affected with mites. By collecting and submitting results we can determine Australia's' exotic mite status. For more information: [NSW DPI](#)

MEDIA RELEASES

- [Joint media release: New air freight network to boost agricultural and fisheries](#), A new network of 15 air freight service providers and freight forwarders has been established by the Morrison-McCormack Government to accelerate delivery of agricultural and fisheries exports into key overseas markets. In the first three weeks of its operation, over 560 Australian businesses have registered their interest in utilising the International Freight Assistance Mechanism and agreements for 55 freight flights have already been secured. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, Michael McCormack, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Senator Simon Birmingham, Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, David Littleproud, Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries, Senator Jonathon Duniam, 23 April 2020
- The State, Territory and Federal Agriculture Ministers discussed the issue of agricultural visa workers at a ministerial meeting today and reported how they will meet the principles set by the National Cabinet last week. Each jurisdiction set out on how they will implement the necessity for self-isolation, social distancing, hygiene and appropriate accommodation requirement. [The States and Territories to implement National Cabinet workforce principles](#), Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, David Littleproud, 14 April 2020

GENERAL NEWS AND LINKS – INTERNATIONAL

- [‘Murder hornets’ in Washington state threaten bees and whip up media swarm](#), The Asian giant hornet is the world’s largest and can kill humans. But it is most dangerous for the European honeybee, which is defenceless in the face of the hornet’s spiky mandibles, long stinger and potent venom. Researchers and citizens in Washington state are on a careful hunt for invasive “murder hornets”, after the insect made its first appearance in the US. The Guardian by Amanda Holpuch, 3 May 2020
- A viral disease that causes honey bees to suffer severe trembling, flightlessness and death within a week is spreading exponentially in Britain, [Alarm over deaths of bees from rapidly spreading viral disease](#), The Guardian by Patrick Barkham, 1 May 2020
- Social distancing is nothing new to honey bees. When a colony is infected with the deadly Israeli acute paralysis virus (IAPV), bees are less likely to touch or feed their sick nest mates, according to a new study. But the virus appears to have an alarming counterattack: When sick bees try to enter a new colony, they do a better job of getting past the guards than uninfected bees. That has led the scientists to speculate that the virus has evolved a way to spread to new hives. [Deadly virus turns honey bees into Trojan horses](#), AAAS Science by Erik Stokstad, 28 April 2020
- [Bees seeking bacteria: How bees find their microbiome](#), The Conversation, 14 April 2020

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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