

AUGUST 2025



NEWSLETTER



Workshop 1 for our 2025-26 intake of Bee Queens was a cracker. So many new faces joined us, as we set sail on our 12 month beekeeping adventure together. During workshop 1, we had plenty of time meeting each other, morning tea-ing, cup of tea-ing and enjoying Olive's beautiful cacao that she brought along to share. We were also joined by participants from past programs, including Kristen Hynes who set up a small market stall, with delicious honey and stunning prints for sale. We spent the second part of the day completing a small introduction to bees, the colony, beekeeping hardware and other useful beekeeping terms - including terms and words we will be using for our next session in the shed. We have a full program ahead, and plenty of excellent people to share these experiences with us. So, welcome aboard to everyone who is joining us for the next 12 months - it is wonderful having you in our BQ community.



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INDUSTRY LIAISON OFFICER TRAINING



\$71 Billion

**Gross value of Australian
agriculture**

Source: ABARES (2020-2021)



\$9.2 Billion

**Forestry contribution to
Australia economy**

Source: ABARES (2018, 2019)



318,000

**Jobs impacted in the
horticulture industry**

Australians employed in the
agriculture, fisheries and forestry
sector on average over four quarters
to November 2021

On July 31 I attended Industry Liaison Officer (ILO) training held at Biosecurity Tasmania. You may well wonder why beekeepers? With the threat of varroa mite on our doorstep, beekeepers have a vested interest in any emergency response from Biosecurity if/when varroa arrives on Tasmanian shores. Or, any pest that may be a threat to honeybees.

The event was well attended with Tasmania's Chief Plant Protection Officer, Dr Susanna Driessen greeting us and staying for the whole day answering many questions and assisting all of us to understand how important the ILO role is. The training was well presented and facilitated by Plant Health Australia.

An ILO reports directly to the Incident Controller in a biosecurity response. They are the liaison point between the Incident Management Team and the affected industry. Danny Le Feuvre from the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council was an ILO when varroa first arrived in Australia and he shared his experiences with us, which was informative whilst also highlighting the importance of this role to everyone involved.

Other industries were also represented in the room, including Veg net, Wine Tasmania and the Tasmanian Fruit Growers Association making this a great opportunity to network with others. If you would like to find out more about this Training, please chat with me and I will put you in contact with the right people.

ROSS GORDON

THE GRUMPY BEE



One of the most important parts of Bee Queens is connection to each other and industry. We have so many presenters who make up our community that this year, I will be featuring them in our monthly newsletter. For workshop 2, we will be visiting Ross Gordon at his bee shed in Crabtree - hello Ross!

Jenni asked me to introduce myself before you join me in my workshop on the 16th August. I am originally from Zimbabwe, of farming stock and have spent most of my working life in agriculture. I have kept bees commercially in Tasmania since 2012 but had previous experience with African bees in my early teens. Having hand-made every component of my 300 or so hives, I am uniquely qualified to tutor you.

Since I became involved with the STBA around 10 years ago, I have advocated strongly for greater diversity, especially on the Committee. Jenni's arrival and her deep commitment to women in beekeeping have shone a light on the imbalances in our membership and I strongly support her in her endeavours as does she in mine. The STBA is doing quite well in this space, thanks mainly to Jen but we can't be complacent, and the industry is still dominated by older white males. As exhibit 'A' I give you a quote from our newsletter editor, Dawn, on receiving a group photo I sent of attendees at a queen trait selection course for queen breeders on the mainland - "Lots of beards in that group!!!"

I am the immediate past President and current Vice President of the STBA and the main driver of our BigT bee improvement programme which aims to breed both better performing bees as well as bees with better varroa tolerance, preferably before it reaches Tasmanian shores.

I look forward to meeting all of you.



MARKETPLACE

Running a side hustle or wanting to market test a new product? This is a reminder to all Bee Queens members that our monthly workshops are an opportunity for you to test products and for our Queens to be the first to try new products. You are all encouraged to set up a small stall at ANY of our workshops over the next 12 months. Women supporting women is a winning strategy, and our group has proven time and again, to support the economy we set up each month. Don't be shy, get that idea out of your head and into a workshop.



LBRK BOOK 2

The 2025-26 Bee Queens participants will not only be learning beekeeping, they will actively inform the development of 'The Little Book of Recordkeeping', Book 2 in a collaboration with artist/illustrator Kristen Hynes. Drafting the book from the ground up and testing with program participants will help us to develop the most useful, beautiful recordkeeping book, specifically for recreational beekeeping. With varroa mite now in Australia, accurate record keeping is now more important than ever and this book aims to make it is easy and enjoyable - all wrapped up in a a gorgeous little book.

NEW BEE VIRUS

Since the incursion of Varroa destructor in June 2022, 1000s of bees and 1000s of mites have been tested for honey bee viruses. Industry organisations during webinars have reported that no major viruses of concern have been detected, including Deformed Wing Virus (DWV). While deformed wings in honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) have been observed by beekeepers in areas with Varroa mite, these deformities can also result from other factors. This is not to say DWV is not in Australia, but it hasn't been detected yet. Two new viruses that have been detected that are new to Australia are two different species of Rhabdovirus, Apis Rhabdovirus-1 (ARV-1) and Apis Rhabdovirus-2 (ARV-2). These viruses are not well researched but are found where varroa is present. Read more [here](#)

