

YVBG Presidents Report

It's been a year of great contrasts for both our Yarra Valley Bee Group and our personal interests as recreational or hobby beekeepers.

We have been unable to hold public meetings which have always been one of our delights, where there is the opportunity to hear from high quality and practical guest speakers, as well as to share conversations with beekeepers that are often of similar scale and about the same position on the learning curve of beekeeping as ourselves.

And of course, the opportunity to borrow a book from our extensive Library of topical texts is presented.

Nevertheless, and despite the COVID challenges we have had regular meetings by Zoom and that is a new experience where we have all progressed along the learning curve recently.

Necessary but nowhere as good as a meeting at ECOS.

The Group has continued to increase in membership numbers and that reflects the strongly growing interest in beekeeping.

Victoria now has over thirty formal beekeeping clubs like ours and I stay connected personally with quite a few.

They all reflect the rising public interest and membership and the individual thirst for learning and information.

I believe there are several ways in which our Group can increase its effectiveness and value for our members.

For instance, I believe we need to make it more widely known that there are useful basic aids available to our members especially extraction equipment, even an infrared camera.

Our Library also needs to be regularly refreshed as new beekeeping and related texts are always becoming available.

I think there also will be opportunities, especially now that a route out of COVID lockdowns is becoming clearer.

For instance, I would have liked to offer a bus trip for members to the annual Harcourt Field Day on 10 October last.

I have attended this field day for some years, and I regard it as one of the most useful investments of time.

As it always offers good speakers and presentations, all the principal vendors of beekeeping gear are on sale, and there are some practical hive displays to witness.

Unfortunately, this year's event was abandoned due to the COVID lockdowns.

So hopefully next year may present an opportunity for a group chartered bus trip.

On the beekeeping front I think we have all enjoyed some production success and conditions for our principal honey making season next summer are positive.

I have experienced myself an aggressive spring swarming season and the ability to collect and house swarms I consider to be a skill that every small beekeeper needs to master as a factor in swarm prevention.

Principally because it adds to your hive numbers effectively and at a minimal cost.

I believe the Yarra Valley Bee Group has an important role in advancing the knowledge of practical beekeeping for our members regardless of the number of hives that you manage.

Remember Time is Precious – Use it Beekeeping.

John Kennedy

President Yarra Valley Bee Group