

# FAQ's: The detection of varroa mite at the Port of Brisbane

A single varroa mite has been found in a sentinel beehive at the Port of Brisbane after a routine inspection by Biosecurity Queensland.

Diagnostic testing has confirmed the species is varroa mite (*Varroa jacobsoni*), not *Varroa destructor*. *Varroa jacobsoni* was previously detected on exotic Asian honey bees in Townsville in 2016, 2019 and 2020. The pest was eradicated under the nationally cost-shared National Varroa Mite Eradication Program. Proof of Freedom from *V. jacobsoni* was declared in 2021 and biosecurity measures were reviewed.

Varroa mite (*Varroa jacobsoni* and *Varroa destructor*) is classified as prohibited matter under the Queensland *Biosecurity Act 2014* (Act). If found, they must be reported immediately to Biosecurity Queensland.

Secondary testing is now being conducted to determine if the mite is carrying exotic viruses of honeybees, and if any other exotic bee pests are present.

Biosecurity Queensland is undertaking tracing activities to identify the potential source of the mite and likelihood of spread. Targeted surveillance is being conducted in conjunction with the Queensland bee industry and the Australian Government, to determine if there are any more varroa mites in the surrounding area.

As a precautionary measure to minimise risk of varroa mite spread, a movement control order (MCO) is now in place.

## Is this varroa mite the same species that has been found in New South Wales?

No. *Varroa destructor* is currently present in New South Wales but has not been detected in any other state or territory, including Queensland. All states and territories are aligning to the national approach to manage varroa mite *V. destructor* for the long term, as it has been deemed not technically feasible to eradicate.

## What is a movement control order and why has it been established?

A movement control order (MCO) is a piece of regulation applied to prevent, contain or mitigate the spread of a biosecurity risk.

For the detection of varroa mite *Varroa jacobsoni* at the Port of Brisbane, a MCO has been established to put a temporary stop to the movement of any varroa mite carrier into, out of, or within the restricted area.

This will allow Biosecurity Queensland time to conduct surveillance within the restricted area and determine if more varroa mite are present.



## What suburbs does the MCO apply to?

The MCO applies to the following suburbs:

Ascot, Balmoral, Banyo, Belmont, Birkdale, Boondall, Brisbane Airport, Bulimba, Cannon Hill, Carina, Carindale, Chandler, Clayfield, Eagle Farm, Geebung, Gumdale, Hamilton, Hemmant, Hendra, Kalinga, Lota, Lytton, Manly, Manly West, Moreton Bay, Morningside, Murarrie, Northgate, Nudgee, Nudgee Beach, Nundah, Pinkenba, Port of Brisbane, Ransome, Shorncliffe, Thorneside, Tingalpa, Virginia, Wakerley, Wavell Heights, Wynnum, Wynnum West. Please see the enclosed locality map.

## What does the MCO mean for me?

The movement control order puts a **restriction on the movement in to, out of, or within the designated area of varroa mite carriers. Varroa mite carriers include apiary equipment, unprocessed honey, beeswax and live bees.**

If your hives are **inside the designated area**, then you are **not permitted** to move the hives or any related beekeeping equipment outside the designated area.

If you live outside the area but have hives inside the designated area, you can enter the designated area to care for your hives. However, you **cannot move** them or any beekeeping equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), out of the area.

If your hives are inside the designated area, you can move:

- processed honey or processed beeswax
- new and unused apiary appliances
- quarantine secured diagnostic honey samples for testing at a recognised diagnostic facility
- a carrier item that originates from outside the MCO area and is transiting along major roads through the localities in a quarantine-secure manner and does not stop in the MCO area.


You can apply for a biosecurity instrument permit if you want to move any of these items within the designated area.

If you have had hives or beekeeping equipment inside this area, but have subsequently moved from the area since 22 November 2023, you are required to report this to Biosecurity Queensland.

## I'm in the Movement Control Order zone, can I work my bees?

Of course you can. It is very important at this time to monitor your hives for general hive health and to conduct an alcohol wash test. We recommend you report your results to Biosecurity Queensland using the quick and easy Bee 123 online form. The QR code below will take you directly to the form.

It is also really important that any beekeeping equipment is not moved into, out of, or within the restricted area. This includes any personal protective equipment that you may have used. Coming clean and leaving clean is the best approach to all bee and bee related movements, especially within the restricted area.



We encourage all beekeepers to also keep their eyes peeled for any swarms or feral hives within the restricted area and report them immediately to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23. Do not move them yourself.

### What is the Queensland Government doing?

Biosecurity Queensland is conducting broader surveillance around the Port of Brisbane using feeding station traps, bee lining, netting and ballooning. Targeted surveillance of beehives will also take place within the restricted area to ascertain if there is varroa mite present in the wider area.

Tracking, tracing and testing of hives that have potentially been in the restricted area but have subsequently been removed from 22 November 2023 will also be investigated.

Beekeepers within the restricted area may receive a phone call from Biosecurity Queensland requesting hives to be checked for signs of varroa mite. You can do this by reporting your hive health check to the Bee 123 form. Collaboration with beekeepers in the restricted zone is important to the Queensland government, with citizen science being crucial in helping safeguard our beekeeping industry from exotic pests and diseases.

### What can you do now?

Apart from adhering to the MCO if you are in the restricted area, Biosecurity Queensland is urging all beekeepers to:

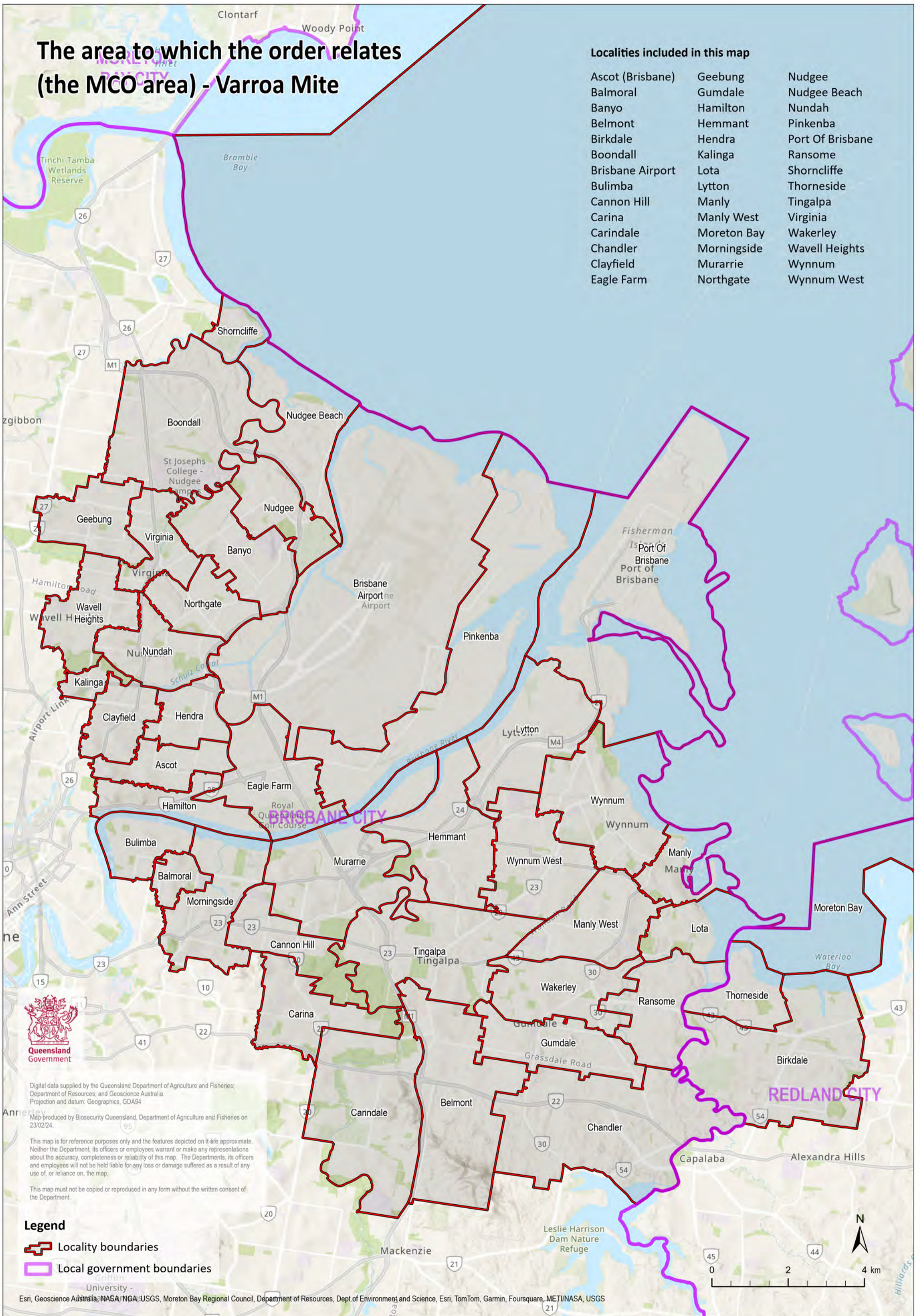
- continue monitoring hives for varroa mite using the alcohol wash method (at least every 16 weeks)
- report your hive check using the quick and easy Bee 123 form, even if you do not find any suspect mites. **The Bee 123 form can be found by scanning this QR code.**
- immediately report unexpected hive deaths, deformed bees, bees with parasites, poor brood patterns and dead brood to Biosecurity Queensland online or by calling 13 25 23
- keep your contact details and apiary sites up to date and renew your biosecurity entity registration when due
- keep accurate and up to date records of hive movements, hive checks, and any bees bought or sold
- report sightings of Asian honey bees, feral nests /swarms or hives showing symptoms of exotic pests to Biosecurity Queensland
- keep up to date with the relevant state authority for movement requirements before entering or leaving the state
- Stay up to date with the latest varroa mite situation by heading to [daf.qld.gov.au/varroa](http://daf.qld.gov.au/varroa) and subscribing to our e-alerts at [daf.qld.gov.au/news-media](http://daf.qld.gov.au/news-media).



# The area to which the order relates (the MCO area) - Varroa Mite

## Localities included in this map

- |                  |             |                  |
|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Ascot (Brisbane) | Geebung     | Nudgee           |
| Balmoral         | Gumdale     | Nudgee Beach     |
| Banyo            | Hamilton    | Nundah           |
| Belmont          | Hemmant     | Pinkenba         |
| Birkdale         | Hendra      | Port Of Brisbane |
| Boondall         | Kalinga     | Ransome          |
| Brisbane Airport | Lota        | Shorncliffe      |
| Bulimba          | Lytton      | Thorneside       |
| Cannon Hill      | Manly       | Tingalpa         |
| Carina           | Manly West  | Virginia         |
| Carindale        | Moreton Bay | Wakerley         |
| Chandler         | Morningside | Wavell Heights   |
| Clayfield        | Murarie     | Wynnum           |
| Eagle Farm       | Northgate   | Wynnum West      |





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Map produced by Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on 23/02/24.

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### Legend

-  Locality boundaries
-  Local government boundaries

