



## Queensland Beekeepers' Association

### Varroa Mite Update – 2023 A Year in Review

The detection of *Varroa destructor* in Newcastle on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022 and the subsequent notice the eradication program will transition to management announced on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023 has created much anxiety within the Australian beekeeping industry. In an effort to streamline our communications to our members the QBA will now offer weekly updates (where possible) to our members and affiliate clubs giving insight into our current areas of focus.

### Yearly Overview

**Bee 123 data Spring Blitz Surveillance Program 1<sup>st</sup> September to current day:**

Total beekeepers reporting results	991
Total Hives checked	19747
Total hives reported	97503
Total No. of Recreational Beekeeper Surveys:	553
Total No. of Commercial Beekeeper Surveys:	438
<b>Mites found or suspected</b>	<b>0</b>

## Biosecurity Queensland 2023 Yearly Overview

**These are some of the highlights of the Varroa Mite Prevention and Preparedness Program for 2023**

- The VMPPP will be on compulsory shutdown from the 22/12/2023 to the 2/01/2024. For emergencies contact the call centre on 13 25 23.
- Queensland continues to support significant prevention and preparedness efforts in the response to the incursion of varroa mite in NSW to support the Queensland honey bee industry, hobbyist beekeepers and plant industries reliant on honey bee for pollination.
- Temporary Movement Control Orders relating to NSW emergency response were replaced by amendments to the Biosecurity Regulation 2016 which established the whole-of-Queensland as a varroa mite biosecurity zone.
- A permitting system and associated conditions were developed to allow the safe movement of bees and bee related material into Queensland from states where varroa has been detected.
- Following several mite detections within almond pollination areas close to the border with Victoria, a new Movement Control Order was established, and movement conditions created to safely repatriate **8,900** bee hives back to Queensland.
- Solar-powered artificial intelligence-based device (Purple Hive) programmed to detect varroa mite and send notifications back in real time was installed at the Port of Townsville.
- **992** submissions to the bee123 hive check reporting system resulting in **19,748** hives being checked and assessed negative by Queensland Beekeepers

- **171** Biosecurity instruments permits were issued for the entry of bee and bee related material into Queensland including 67 permits for live bees from NSW and returning beekeepers for almond pollination in Victoria. Total number of hives permitted to move into Qld is 35,173.
- Bee123 (hive check) dashboard expanded to incorporate information from the Biosecurity Instrument Permit system in BORIS to save time and effort in managing the risk of varroa mite potentially entering Queensland through commercial movement.
- Mapping ability added to BQ Maps showing the source, destination, and type of BIP's issued. Layer data obtained from NSW DPI to show VMD zones and heat mapping within NSW, displayed on BQ Maps
- Since the NMG decision on TFE, BQ staff conducted **977** surveillance activities on **909** hives throughout Queensland including **823** samples. All **negative** for varroa.
- A broad stakeholder engagement and communications program provided progressive updates on the NSW situation and information for beekeepers on how to check their hives for varroa mite and minimum record keeping requirements.
- Queensland beekeepers were kept informed of Queensland's response to the transition to management and three stage approach to long term management.
- Scheduled monthly reports from the Department's Call Centre have commenced and will be shared with QBA on a regular basis. The report will show any trends in customer enquiries and reports of suspect mites. An example is provided below.
- Fortnightly meetings with industry (QBA, honey packers etc) to exchange information on the unfolding situations.
- The VMPPP remains actively engaged in the national emergency response arrangements as the pest transitions to management and staff continue to work with NSW on trace forward (9 trace forward surveillance activities) and compliance activities (3 formal investigations) related to the response.
- **To date Queensland remains free of varroa mite.**

The VMPPP team would like to take the opportunity to wish all beekeepers a safe and prosperous Christmas and New Year.

## 2023 Bee 123 Survey Locations

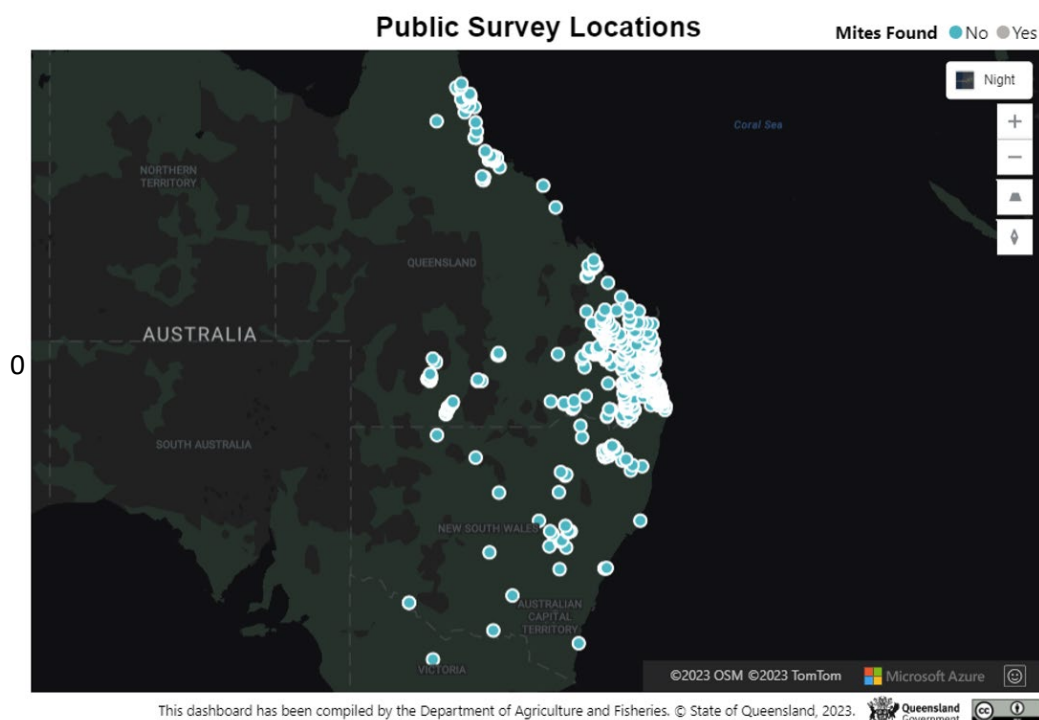
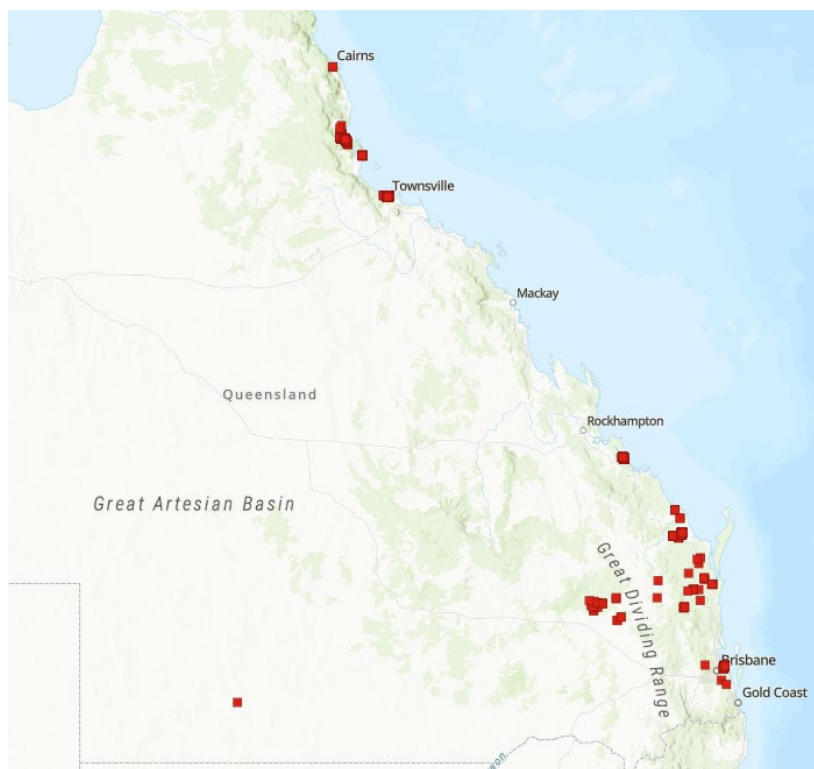


Figure 1 - Bee 123 Surveillance Reports – 2023 Surveillance Data

## 2023 Government Surveillance

There was a total of 2,921 hives involved in Government Led Surveillance activities in 2023. These include the NBPS program however there were 2,762 involved directly in VMD monitoring with 976 individual hives inspected and 800 samples submitted to the labs for identification.



## AHBIC Industry Briefing – 19 October 2023

As previously communicated, AHBIC held another Industry Briefing detailing the latest information with regards to the current varroa mite situation, providing some clarity for industry members on the transition to management phase.

If you missed watching the webinar, we strongly urge all beekeepers to watch the recording at their earliest convenience. Please click [here](#) to access the recording.

Below is a list of some of the websites referred to in the webinar.

[NSW Department of Primary Industries – Varroa Response](#)

[Agriculture Victoria – Varroa Situation](#)

For information related to the response in QLD, please visit:

[Biosecurity Queensland - Manage Varroa Mite](#)

## Video Resources:

The QBA now have a dedicated YouTube channels with multiple playlists offering a dynamic range of subject matter relevant to beekeeping in Queensland. We encourage all members to explore our online video library and recommend members regularly visit our YouTube channel to discover new content from time to time.

If you'd like to visit our YouTube channel, click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/@queenslandbeekeepersassoc>

### **QBA Membership:**

The Queensland Beekeepers' Association warmly welcome new members to our organisation. To complete an application for membership please visit <https://members.qbabees.org.au/join-us/>

When completing your application, please nominate your preferred branch of the QBA.

### **Useful Information Links:**

QBA Varroa mite portal - <https://members.qbabees.org.au/QBA-Varroa-Mite-Portal>

DAF Engagement Hub - <https://daf.engagementhub.com.au/varroa-mite>

NSW DPI - <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/emergencies/biosecurity/current-situation/varroa-mite-emergency-response>

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