

Yarra Valley Bee Group – President’s Report 2020

Fellow Bee Group Members,

No prizes for guessing the biggest issue for this report, and the group this year. As you all know, Government restrictions have had a big impact on the way the Bee Group operated in 2020. Of course that was true for everything, but for YVBG we seem to have made a reasonable way around the year’s difficulties. Our online meetings appear to have been pretty successful for those who have been able to connect, with about 40 or more at most of the Zoom meets, and our Guest Speakers have all been able to get their messages across in the electronic medium. We need to thank Jo McDonald for making the technical side of the meetings happen each month.

And of course, outside of the monthly meetings, our other activities have been able to sneak around the edges of Covid restrictions. But many of the annual events we are normally involved in, such as Ecotopia, the Kilsyth Festival, and Lilydale Show, were all cancelled. That means that the Community Education part of our work has not really been happening this year, or at least not in a structured way. That is something to pick up again after restrictions ease.

Another part of our operations at events is the sale of honey from our Honey Co-op. Earlier in the season Linda Hill allowed us to use her registered kitchen for an Extraction Day, so we again had honey to sell from our local area. This has the triple value of making honey available to people which comes from their own geographical area, gives a sale outlet for members to sell their great product, and raises revenue for YVBG.

The 2020 problem for the Co-op was that, since the Events we normally sell honey at were all cancelled, the Co-op had outlaid money which we could not recover by normal means. Jim Dawes to the rescue! ECOSS went ahead with their weekly market, taking pains to fit in to all the new regulations. Jim, of course with Kath’s assistance, took on the job of running a stall at the ECOSS market, requiring a presence each week for several months. Slowly that stock of Co-op honey has been reducing as it sold week by week, to the point where we are now buying more honey from members to keep stock up.

Our AGM is another thing, which Kath has been trying to ensure we dot the i’s and cross the t’s. We don’t just do AGM’s because we like pomp and ceremony! The Annual General Meeting is a legal requirement. So it has not been cancelled, just postponed. At some point soon (November maybe?) we will need to make it happen, and if we can’t meet physically by then it will need to be done by Zoom or other electronic means. Another new challenge to rise to. What was that word again? Ah yes, “Unprecedented”, can’t get enough of that word.

Looking ahead to the next season: we have had lots of rain, so perhaps we have cause to expect a good year for bees, and for honey production? Time will tell. Next we will also need a new committee. Jim & Kath, Andi, Jo and Linda have been a great Committee Executive to work with, and have served their time... now we need some other group members to step in to the committee roles. As for me, I will not be able to continue doing the President’s job, as I am moving to Tasmania (assuming they ever open the borders and allow Victorians to escape!). Not that the President does very much, it’s mostly just “Smile and Wave” while the rest of the committee does all the real work. Seriously, the President does not have to be a “Bee Expert” or “Bee Guru”, it just has to be someone keen to see the group prosper. And it’s been a few years since the last female President (Hineani), so maybe it’s time for one of you ladies to put her hand up for the next 12 months.

So I can’t say I know what YVBG’s future will look like. I will keep track on social media, and maybe by ongoing Zoom meetings too? Who knows? The new committee might run the Group in a slightly different way, which will be exciting to see. As long as the core values of assisting beekeepers and educating the community about bees are adhered to, that will be perfectly fine.

Roll on 2021!

Phil
Prez

Mr Phil Godman - YVBG President