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Media Release:

Varroa Mites are being managed

Local beekeepers are buzzing with joy with their new chemical-free mite management equipment, thanks to a \$6,300 donation from Yancoal Australia's Mount Thorley Warkworth (MTW) operation.

The funding enabled The Hunter Valley Amateur Beekeepers Association to purchase Varroa Controller Biosecurity Protection Equipment to help manage Varroa mites in their hives.

The Varroa Controller uses heat treatment to gently eradicate Varroa mites within capped bee brood cells. It is a short and targeted treatment that is safe for the bees, does not compromise the honey or wax, is cost-effective and easily transportable for the benefit of all club members.

Geoff Wightman, Apiary Officer for The Hunter Valley Amateur Beekeepers Association was thrilled with the equipment.

"As a club, we believe that bees are important to our livelihood as they are one of our major pollinators of food producing plant life, crops, fruit, nuts and vegetables.

"Varroa mites are a parasite that feed on honey bees and reproduce in honey bee brood cells so it is imperative that we monitor and have methods in place to control the Varroa mite.

"Our beekeeping community will be excited to have access to this technology as it is a human safe method and low risk from an environmental perspective. This type of technology has been used successfully in Europe and we are excited that we can now access it in Australia.

"We were able to showcase the new Varroa Controller at the 2025 Maitland Show and will also host a display at the Singleton Show to raise awareness within the bee community and discuss the technology.

"The new controller is very welcomed by the club, it does not harm the bees or beekeepers, its environmentally friendly and does not disrupt honey production within the hive.

"We are thankful to Mount Thorley Warkworth for the donation to purchase the Varroa Controller," said Geoff.

The Hunter Valley Amateur Beekeeping Association was established in 1964 and has over 170 members across all ages. It is a not-for-profit community group with a passion for beekeeping and learning about ways to protect and prevent threats to bees.

Mount Thorley Warkworth General Manager Cris Shadbolt was pleased to fund this pest management project.

“Bees help maintain biodiversity and play a role in preserving ecosystem health. We are pleased our funding could purchase the equipment to treat against the Varroa mite.

“The beekeeping club all share a passion for bees, and we hope with this equipment, bees can thrive in the Hunter Valley,” said Cris.

The donation was part of the Yancoal Mount Thorley Warkworth (MTW) Community Support Program, which aims to make a positive difference in the local community and to the lives of the people who work and live in the areas it operates.

Applications for the 2026 MTW Community Support Program are now open, closing 26 September 2025. Application forms are available at <https://www.yancoal.com.au/our-sites/mount-thorley-documents/#comm-docs>

Since 2004, Yancoal has grown to be one of Australia’s largest coal exporters: owning or operating eight producing mines across the country, employing around 5,000 Australians, contributing to the national economy, and investing in regional communities.

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