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NATIONAL INSTITUTE of ENTOMOLOGY NEWS



The National
Institute of
Entomology

The official newsletter of the National Institute of Entomology

Volume 2: Issue 3

March 2026

FROM THE DIRECTOR



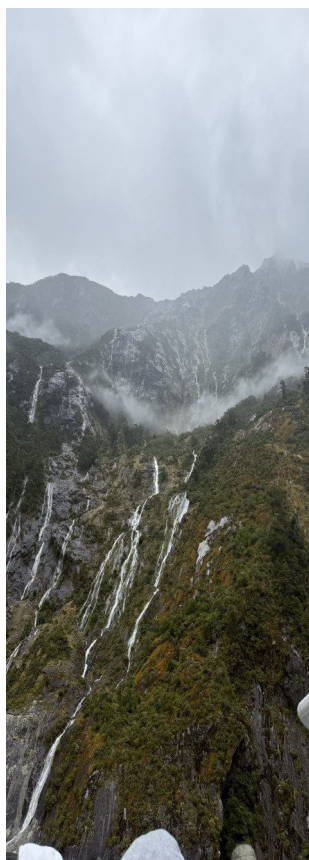
Dr Bert Candusio

Hello everyone.

Its nice to be back in Australia after a wonderful 3 week break in the South Island of New Zealand.

I firstly travelled to Christchurch to spend time with family, then my wife and I headed to Franz Joseph and we took the helicopter over both Franz Joseph and Fox Glaciers..An incredible experience.

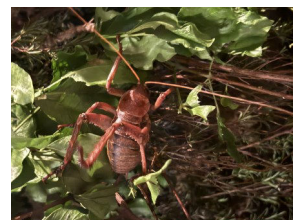
Then onto Te Arnu for a bus trip to Milford Sound and the scenic boat up the sound.



Next, Queenstown and onto the east coast back to Christchurch. Flew to Auckland Zoo to meet the curator of the Giant Weta Breeding program. (More News in April)

Then back home. We are all nicely refreshed after our break and look forward to kicking of 2026.

See you all in April.



Expression of Interest for Town Hall Submitted

In major news, the Institute has submitted its EOI (Expression of Interest) application to the Mitchell Shire Council.

The Kilmore Town Hall would be a perfect building for the establishment of the National Institute of Entomology and we should be notified towards the end of March or early April as to how our application went.

Fingers crossed.



The Search For An Institute Home - Part 2

SUNBURY MEDICAL AND CONSULTING

The next opportunity that presented itself to us was situated in Sunbury, about 20 minutes south of Woodend.

This Council owned building is part of the Western Water building situated in Macedon Street opposite the Police Station and just up from the Community Library and Hub Centre.

The site is large and would have been perfect as a permanent home for the institute.

In order to offer something that the council would find attractive from a tourism viewpoint, we offered to re-locate

the annual National Insect Expo to this venue and bring with it the 1.2 million dollars the event can generate yearly for local and regional economic activity.

We felt that this was to only option available due to the fact that the annual lease and outgoings for the site added up to \$145,000 per annum.

We put in a full submission via the councils real estate representatives and waited for an answer. No Thanks, We want the rent..... Another failure.



The Sunbury Medical and Consulting building proved too expensive and council were not interested in hosting the National Insect Expo to cover leasing costs.

Cont...

MALMSBURY YOUTH JUSTICE FACILITY

News then reached our organization that the Youth Justice Facility in Malmsbury, north of Woodend was ready for closure as it had become surplus to Corrections Victoria's needs.

This news also got the local community excited due to the possibilities such a facility could provide for businesses, arts, education and public recreation.

A local committee was formed and it began looking at what may be possible.

The institute managed to meet the caretaker at the front gate (access wasn't possible due to de commissioning works) and we were told that in all probability, the facility would re open in the future.

After some questioning by our institutes chairman, it came out that due to the harsher criminal penalties about to be adopted by State Government, more jail room would be required. Another dead end....



Malmsbury Youth Justice Facility was slated to be closed for good. In reality, the exact opposite was true

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Cont...

UNMANNED HIGHLANDS FM OFFICES

At this stage, the Institute was willing to look at anything and everything available and our hunt led us to the fully automated Highlands FM Radio Office in the Woodend Library.

There was an existing lease for the 2 roomed office and council informed us that this would continue even though the Radio Station was always unmanned and being relayed from Geelong! Lets forget this one too..



The Highlands FM Radio Station offices were under a lease agreement with the Macedon Ranges Council, but was always unmanned and fully automated. The lease would stay regardless.

Cont...

WOODENDS LANDLORDS AND DEVELOPERS

Perhaps the solution to this ongoing saga in the search for a home could be found within the community of Woodend itself we asked.

Maybe one of our generous supporters would offer space with a non commercial rate in order to help and support the institute?

After numerous approaches to landlords and developers in the community, no offers of support were put forward by anyone. This is quite understandable due to the extremely high

rental returns landlords and developers are achieving in Woodend. We needed another approach..

Perhaps it was time to start putting pressure on the council via Social Media and the Face

Book Groups? So we started a campaign and got a result or so we thought.



One of the many commercial sites we approached in the hope that a local supporting landlord or developer would offer space at a charitable rate for the Institute. Alas, it wasn't meant to be

Cont...

Onto the township of Kyneton, just north of our location.

Searching around the area, there was 1 possible avenue of enquiry..

The abandoned 430 Air Force Squadron Building in Market Street.

Needing repair? We could fix that.

Could it be adapted for Institutes use? Yes it could.

Is it available for lease or donation?

Not a hope in hell until the Department of Defense deem it surplus to their requirements and list it in the Government Gazette for purchase at auction.

Unfortunately, without assistance from our Local and Federal Ministers, We couldn't front up an estimated 1.2 Million dollars for purchasing the site even though our Charity Status would allow the Department to claim the ATO offset

In the form of a tax credit.

So as far as we know, this site will continue to deteriorate until the Department makes a surplus determination which could take years.



The unused Department of Defense Air Force 430 Squadron Building. Unless the Department lists it as Surplus, it will remain unused and will continue to deteriorate.

Cont...

KYNETON PRIMARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT

After spending 12 Million Dollars of taxpayer funds, Creative Victoria came up with this one.

We decided to attend an on site meeting with their representatives so that we could see what the site situation was like.

All internal walls of the original Bluestone building ripped out to make way for an art gallery.

Bendigo was meant to move in..It didn't happen. Then Ballarat gallery was approached. No thanks was the response.

Too big to fill and too costly to heat with Gas. The 15 ft ceilings would bring the monthly heating bill to \$4000!.

What about the 1980's Building that housed the original classrooms?

All boarded up with no access due to a leaking roof and black soot we were told.

Unfortunately, we cant make a decision unless we get an inspection so this one is still up in the air.



Top: The main Bluestone Primary School building.

Bottom: The 1980's Building that Creative Victoria wont allow access to.

Conclusion

The situation we find ourselves at the moment has not been through lack of trying as you can see.

At times, our Chariman Dr Bert Candusio has shown high levels of frustration and occasionally, anger as to why such an important and valuable entity like the National Institute of Entomology has not been able to secure a permanent site of operations for its students, collections, library and other important and irreplaceable assets.

There is one possible slight glimmer of hope.

Another shire and another more progressive council.

One that values what our institution can bring to their region.

A council that sees the economic benefit of having us permanently engage in our activities within their community. One that is keen to have an injection of well over 1 million dollars in economic activity land on their doorstep.

Lets see what the future will bring.

In the meantime, the National Institute will continue searching and hoping that a permanent home can be found.

Our past and future students deserve no less.



We are close to an outcome regarding the Kilmore Town Hall as a permanent home for the institute. Planning for the relocation is currently underway.



Institute Membership

Becoming a Member of the National Institute of Entomology offers several benefits such as:

1: Discounts to Members wishing to undertake our Courses and Training Programs.

2: Access to our facilities if you are wishing to work on your own Research or Study Project.

3: Members are offered the opportunity to serve on a variety of Organizing Committees and Sub Committees.

4: As a Member of the National Institute of Entomology, you receive our Monthly Newsletter

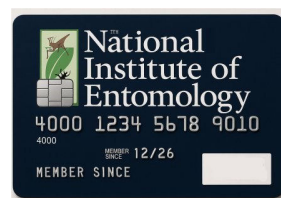
keeping you updated on Institute News.

5: You are granted access to the Institutes extensive Forums covering Taxonomy/News/Job Vacancies and Volunteer Opportunities.

6: Discounted tickets to the annual National Insect Expo.

To become a Member of the National Institute of Entomology, please visit our

[Membership Page](#) for further details and Membership Options.



C.V.R.I.C Specimen Spotlight

C.V.R.I.C Specimen:000471

The blue banded bee *Amegilla cingulata* (Fabricius, 1775) is perhaps Australia's favorite bee.

This specimen was collected by La-Trobe University student J.Wyatt in 1985 near Macedon, Victoria.

Blue Banded Bees are amongst our most beautiful Australian native bees. They are about 11 mm long and have bands of metallic blue fur across their black abdomens.

Blue Banded Bees are solitary bees. This means that each female bee mates and then builds a solitary nest by herself. She builds her nest in a shallow burrow in clay soil or sometimes in mudbricks. Many Blue Banded Bees may build their nest burrows in the same spot, close to one another, like neighbouring

houses in a village.

Blue Banded Bees can perform a special type of pollination called 'buzz pollination'. Some flowers hide their pollen inside tiny capsules. A Blue Banded Bee can grasp a flower of this type and shiver her flight muscles, causing the pollen to shoot out of the capsule. She can then collect the pollen for her nest and carry it from flower to flower, pollinating the flowers. Quite a few of our native Australian flowers require buzz pollination eg *Hibbertia*, *Sen-na*.



Researchers at the University of Adelaide made substantial progress in developing native Blue Banded Bees for greenhouse tomato pollination.

Volunteer of the Month - Ms Sarah Muir

Sarah has had a passion for insects and other related invertebrates throughout her life and has developed her skills in Taxonomy and Identifications by way of her extensive studies.

After gaining her Bachelor of Animal Science Degree from Charles Sturt University in 2023, Sarah went on to study further and also attained her Masters of Environmental Science and Management from the University of New England the following year. Sarah has a keen interest in the Ecology of Insects and other Invertebrates and is working towards further studies within the field. She

also undertook and gained her Certificate of Ecology and Identification of the Ants of Australia from the National Institute of Entomology in 2022. Sarah is the National Institute of Entomology Forums Manager and is responsible for the administration, upkeep and content of the extensive forums of the Institute. News Articles, National and International Job Vacancies and Research

Developments are also uploaded to the forums on a regular basis.



Sarah Muir is the National Institute of Entomology Forums manager and helps maintain the Institutes extensive forums pages and posts

From the Forum - The Punk Beetle

Sporting tufts of spiky white hair and resembling a geriatric punk rocker, a newly discovered species of longhorn beetle is an Australian first that was nearly disregarded as bird poo.

The insect, which measures less a centimetre in length, was stumbled upon by University of Queensland researcher James Tweed during a camping trip in Lamington National Park in the Gold Coast hinterland.

Its striking appearance caught Mr Tweed's attention as he made his way through the camp, but he didn't initially recognise it as an insect or stop to admire its mohawk.

"I saw this white thing on a leaf and walked past thinking it was nothing,

maybe some bird droppings, but something in my brain told me to turn around," Mr Tweed said. What Mr Tweed had actually discovered was not only an entirely new species of longhorn beetle, but a new genus or group of the insects. "Species within the same genus are very closely related to each other and, in this case, we don't think that any of the species that have been discovered before are very closely related to this one," he said.



EARLIEST TRUE CICADA FOSSIL DISCOVERED

Earliest 'true cicada' fossil discovered in Germany

Cicadas have been buzzing for at least 47 million years.

Cicada season is dawning across the eastern US, this time with Brood XIV resurfacing for the first time since 2008. But as noisy and numerous as they are, this year's swarms represent only a fraction of the roughly 3,500 species found all around the world.

While true cicadas (the larger of the two existing cicada families) are one of the most diverse insect groups today, not much is known about their earliest ancestors. But a recent fossil discovery near Frankfurt, Germany is helping expand our knowledge of the bug's evolution—and



EARLIEST 'TRUE CICADA' FOSSIL DISCOVERED IN GERMANY

Cont..

it appears to be the earliest example of the Cicadinae subfamily ever found. The details are explored in a study published April 29 in the journal Scientific Reports.

Microplastics Found in Antarctica's Only Insect

From the Forum:

An international team of scientists led by researchers at the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment has discovered that Antarctica's only native insect is already consuming microplastics, even in one of the most isolated environments on Earth.

Belgica antarctica, the species at the center of the study, is a tiny nonbiting midge roughly the size of a grain of rice.

It is the southernmost insect on the planet and the only insect species found exclusively in Antarctica.

Its larvae live in damp patches of moss and algae along the Antarctic Peninsula, where they can reach densities of nearly 40,000 individuals per square meter.

By feeding on decaying plant material, they play an important role in recycling nutrients back into the soil. researchers ran the midge larvae through a series of tests and were surprised by what they found. "Even at the highest plastic concentrations, survival didn't drop," Devlin said.

"Their basic metabolism didn't change either.



FOSSIL MOSQUITO BLOOD DISCOVERED

Deep in the fossil-rich deposits of Montana, scientists have uncovered a mosquito trapped in amber that preserves a staggering detail: 46 million-year-old blood still contained within its body. This tiny insect, frozen in time from the Eocene epoch, offers an extraordinary glimpse into prehistoric ecosystems and the creatures that once inhabited North America. The mosquito itself is remarkably intact, with delicate wings, slender legs, and

a proboscis preserved in exquisite detail by the sticky resin that captured it millions of years ago.

While the discovery of preserved blood is sensational, the identity of the creature the mosquito fed on remains unknown. Researchers speculate it could have belonged to

a bird, reptile, or mammal that roamed the warm forests covering Montana at the time. The blood offers a rare window into ancient diets and interactions between species, giving scientists the potential to study genetic material that has survived tens of millions of years. Even fragments of DNA could provide insights into evolutionary relationships, disease ecology, and the environment in which these animals lived

Cont...

ecology, and the environment in which these animals lived. Fossilized insects like this mosquito are incredibly valuable because they capture moments of behavior, not just anatomy. This specimen shows feeding in action, a moment preserved for tens of millions of years. It highlights the precision of amber as a natural preservative, maintaining soft tissues, microscopic

structures, and chemical traces that ordinary fossils cannot. The find also sparks curiosity about how ancient ecosystems functioned. Predators, prey, and parasites interacted in ways that shaped survival and evolution. Each piece of preserved blood is a clue to these ancient relationships, a microscopic fossil record within a larger landscape of forests, lakes, and early mam-

mals. Though the mosquito's meal remains a mystery, the specimen itself is a triumph of natural preservation and scientific investigation. It stands as a testament to the detailed stories that amber fossils can tell about life on Earth millions of years ago.

Cont...

the detailed stories that amber fossils can tell about life on Earth millions of years ago.

Strange fact: Fossilized blood from mosquitoes has even inspired ideas for genetic research and studies on ancient pathogens, echoing the popular imagination of prehistoric DNA.

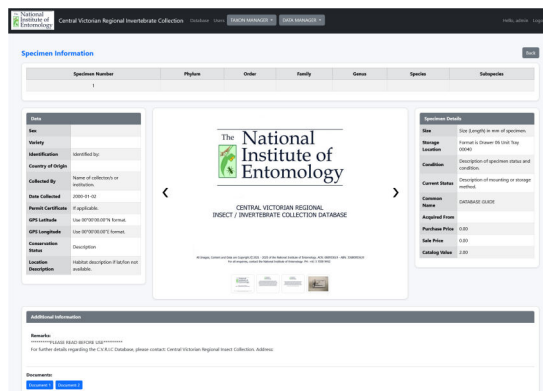


Bl*od Discovered Inside 46-Million-Year-Old Fossil Mosquito in Montana With Prey Identity Still a Mystery

National Institute of Entomology Invertebrate Database

After many years of planning, the National Institute of Entomology has finally completed work for an online database. This resource will be made available to researchers, conservationists, ecologists and members of the public and will be updated with new Specimen Records on a regular basis.

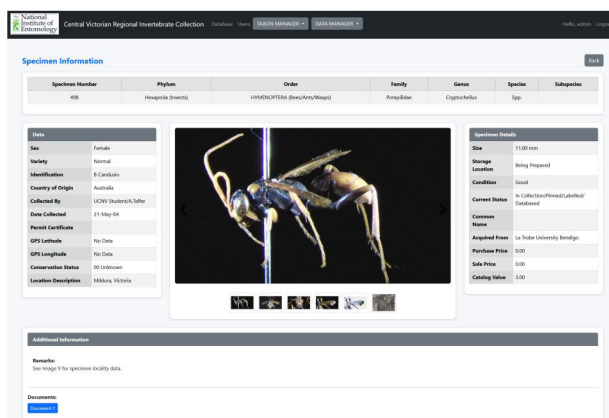
So far, all the Formicidae (Ants) have been added to the system and several other examples from other orders are being added as well.



Cont...

The database will not only store records of insect specimens held in the Central Victorian Regional Insect Collection but will incorporate all Phylums in order to cover all other invertebrates represented in the collections.

To subscribe to this valuable resource visit our [DataBase Subscription Page](#).



Cont...

Search options allow for specimen records to be called up according to Orders, Families, Genera or Location making for specific specimen data to be easily sorted.

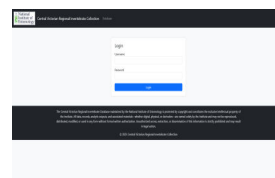
For example, one can do a search for all species of Beetles found in and around Bendigo or all species records of a particular Family found to occur in any location of which records have been

added.

This is a perfect tool for conservation or research applications or for biodiversity assessments.

Records of specimens contain images of various orientations as well as Location Maps pinpointing the exact location of where the specimen was collected from and when as well as by whom.

Other data included in each record include Sex of the Specimen, Size, Collection Storage Location and Conservation Status.



An Expo Exhibitor Story - BUGS and SLUGS

My name is Kristen Messenger, and I've been running my South Australian business 'Bugsnslugs' for more than 20 years because I believe the smallest creatures often tell the biggest stories.

I work with invertebrates not to shock people, but to invite curiosity, respect and connection. Bugs n Slugs exists to help people—especially children—see these animals not as pests or fears, but as essential, fascinating parts of our world.

What I do looks different every day. Sometimes I'm knee-deep in leaf litter looking for beetles, sometimes I'm visiting schools or community groups with live invertebrates, and sometimes

I'm talking excitedly about food webs, decomposition and pollination. I design workshops, talks and hands-on experiences that mix science, storytelling and play.

I'm also the 'go to' on air bug lady on ABC radio Adelaide. I believe that learning should feel alive, because life is. I started my first environmental education business when I was still at uni and initially I worked in mangrove and marine and estuarine ecology but began specialising in invertebrates 20 years ago when I took over Bugsnslugs from my friend Dr Frank Stadler who started it.

Like Frank I feel passionately that invertebrates are the back-

bone of ecosystems, yet they're often overlooked or dismissed.

When people learn to love bugs, they start caring more deeply about biodiversity, habitat protection and the environment as a whole. Fear turns into wonder, and wonder turns into responsibility.

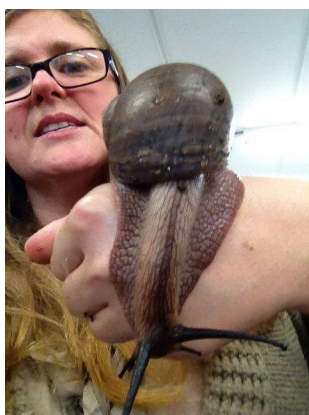


Kristen has a passion for insect and invertebrate education as is a regular exhibitor at the National Insect Expo each year.

Cont...

Bugs n Slugs is about more than education—it's about changing attitudes. If I can help even one person look at a slug, spider or beetle with curiosity instead of disgust, then I know I'm doing something worthwhile.

I've attended every National Invertebrate Expo thus far and in doing so have made friends with so many great people, some of whom I'd been friends with online for decades but never met.



Just some examples of specimens Kristen works with.

Institute Pioneers - Mr Andrew Drage

Mr Andrew Drage was one of our first volunteers at the Insectarium of Victoria in 1994 and assisted the center greatly.

Andrew's expertise lay in statistics and he was a tremendous help during the important Heathcote Red Hill Invertebrate Surveys conducted by the Insectarium and the La Trobe University in Bendigo.

Andrew did the analysis of the collected materials and helped prepare the final reports for submission to the Land Conservation Council in preparation for the creation of the new

Central Victorian Box Ironbark National Parks.

He also assisted in the day to day operations of the centre looking after visitors, attending to live displays and adding data entries into the rather primitive Apple 2E computer we were using at that time.

Thank you Andrew.



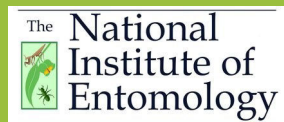
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Members Committee Opportunity

The National Institute of Entomology will shortly be calling for interested members to serve on the Institutes Funding and Grants Committee.

The role of the Committee will be to apply for grants and funding in order to assist the Institute towards equipment acquisitions, purchase of entomological storage cabinets and other equipment or institute training and courses programs.

Keep watching this section for further announcements and when to apply.

The Institute is supported by the kind generosity of members of the public by way of donations to the Institute. Such donations may be in the form of unwanted Scientific Equipment (microscopes, laboratory supplies etc), Entomological Reference Books, Audio Visual Equipment, Entomological Insect Collections or Monetary Donations.



These generous contributions assist the Institute in supporting our students and members of the public that are undergoing entomological studies and programs as well as supporting the Institutes Ongoing Research Work. If you are wanting to make a valued Donation towards our work, here is the link: [Donations](#)

If you would like to consider and discuss making another non monetary donation to the National Institute of Entomology, please feel free to contact us on [ad-min@entoinsitute.org](mailto:admin@entoinsitute.org)

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The National Institute of Entomology provides specific On-Line Courses, Training Presentations, National Entomology Club, Demonstrations and Entomological Lectures that can cater for both the individual or a larger group of up to 50 students interested in gaining knowledge on various entomology based subjects.

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specific presented to you or your group? This is the place for all your Courses, Lecture and Demonstration requirements. Details on all courses are available on our [COURSES PAGE](#).

The Institute uses Zoom, a popular conferencing application for both PC or Mobile devices. You can download Zoom here: [ZOOM DOWN-LOAD PAGE](#)

