

December & January

Free

# Village Eco News

A publication of Bangalow Land and Rivercare.



## This Pays.....For This

By Noelene Plummer

Every year from September to March wild dolphins are herded into a cove in the town of Taiji, Japan. The best looking are sold to marine parks around the world and the rest are brutally killed. The water turns red with blood.

There is no doubt about the cruelty of the capture process employed in Taiji. Dolphins, highly intelligent mammals, are forced to watch their families slaughtered in front of them. They are often injured and always traumatised by the methods of the hunt.

For those who are sold into captivity, many of them are starved until they are taught to perform tricks for dead fish, and none of them will ever live in their ocean homes again.

Every time you attend and pay to see Dolphins performing tricks in captivity think twice about how you are contributing to the continuation of this cruel inhumane treatment of highly intelligent social animals.

Dolphins would normally travel up to 100kms a day in the wild and instead they are forced to go around in endless circles in tiny chlorinated concrete pools.

No matter how it looks on the surface these animals are living a miserable existence just for our entertainment. Studies also indicate captive dolphins often suffer from anxiety, depression, increased mortality, and behavioural problems.

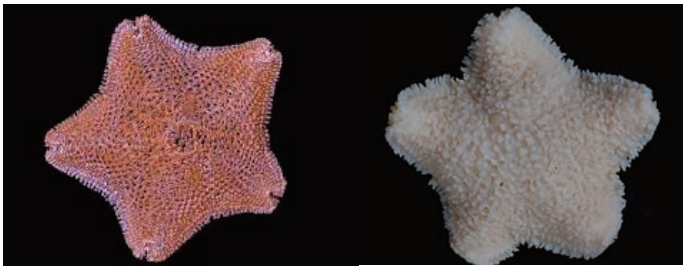
It will take a huge effort to end the slaughter and cruel captivity. Progress is slow, but it is happening. Growing awareness, a mounting body of scientific evidence, and an international treaty supporting the end of live capture, will all help in putting an end to the horrors that occur in Taiji. To help this cause go to [www.afd.org.au](http://www.afd.org.au)

Also if everyone stopped attending Dolphin shows and instead supported ocean sanctuaries for the rehabilitation and release where possible of injured marine animals.

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### Landcare Working Bee

Our team of friendly volunteers work every Saturday morning, weather permitting from 8.30am to 10.30am rotating through the various sites around Bangalow. All welcome.



## Eulogy for a Seastar

By Tim O'Hara, Museums Victoria

Australia's first recorded marine extinction the Derwent River Seastar (or starfish), that formerly inhabited the shores near the Tasman Bridge in Hobart Tasmania, is Australia's first documented marine animal extinction and one of the few recorded anywhere in the world.

Scientists only knew the Derwent River Seastar (pictured above) for about 25 years. First described in 1969 by Alan Dartnall, a former curator of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery it was found on and off until the early 1990s but scientists noted a decline in numbers. Targeted surveys in 1993 and 2010 failed to find a single individual.

It was listed as critically endangered by the Tasmanian and Australian governments. But now, like a long-lost missing person, it is time to call it, the Derwent River Seastar appears extinct.

Is this Seastar like a canary in a coal mine, a warning of a wave of marine extinctions? Sea levels are rising with global warming, and that is going to be a big problem for life adapted to living along the shoreline.

Mangroves, salt marsh, seagrass beds, mud flats, beaches, and rock platforms only form at specific water depths. Marine life like the Seastar will need to follow rising sea levels and reform higher up the shoreline. Coastal life can take hundreds to thousands of years to adjust to these sorts of changes. But in many places, we don't have a natural environment anymore.

Humans will increasingly protect coastal property by building seawalls and other infrastructure, especially around towns and bays. This will mean far less space for marine animals and plants. We need to start planning new places for our shore life to go, areas they can migrate to with rising sea levels. Otherwise, the Derwent River Seastar won't be the last human-induced extinction.



## Plant of the Month Grass trees

(*genus Xanthorrhoea*)

Grass trees, of all the wonderfully unique plants in Australia, rank among the most iconic. The common name 'grass tree' is a misnomer. *Xanthorrhoea* are not grasses, nor are they trees, actually, they are distantly related to lilies.

All 28 species of grass tree are native only to Australia. They started diversifying around 24-35 million years ago giving them ample time to adapt to Australian conditions particularly throughout the eastern and south-western regions of Australia.

Grass trees are easy to grow and provide a striking feature in any garden. All are perennial while some species are estimated to live for over 600 years.

Most grow slowly (0.8–6 cm in height per year), but increase their rate of growth in response to season and rainfall. The most 'tree-like' species grow 'trunks' up to 6 metres tall, while trunkless species grow from subterranean stems.

Grass trees provide food for birds, insects, and mammals, which feast on the nectar, pollen and seeds. Small native mammals become more abundant where grass trees are found, for the dense skirt of leaves around the trunk provides shelter and sites for nesting.

# New Tests Reveal 27% of Honey Brands are Adulterated

By Professor M. P. Taylor and X Zhou  
of Macquarie University

More than a quarter of commercial honey brands have potentially been watered down with sugar cane, corn syrup or other products, according to our new analysis of 95 products from local food markets and supermarket shelves.

Our discovery is set to deepen the concern over the authenticity of honey for sale in Australia, in the wake of last month's 'fake honey' scandal, which revealed the widespread adulteration of honey with cheaper substances.

Australia is the world's fourth-largest honey exporter, and the revelations pose a threat to its reputation as a leading producer and supplier of honey.

Our study, published in Nature's Scientific Reports, analysed 100 honeys from 19 countries, including Australia. The study included five raw honey samples (that is, honey direct from the hive) and 95 commercial samples, 38 of them from Australian-based producers.

Analysis of the 95 commercial honeys showed

that 27% of them were of "questionable authenticity", meaning they had potentially been adulterated with cane and/or corn syrups. This means they should not be classified as genuine pure honey.

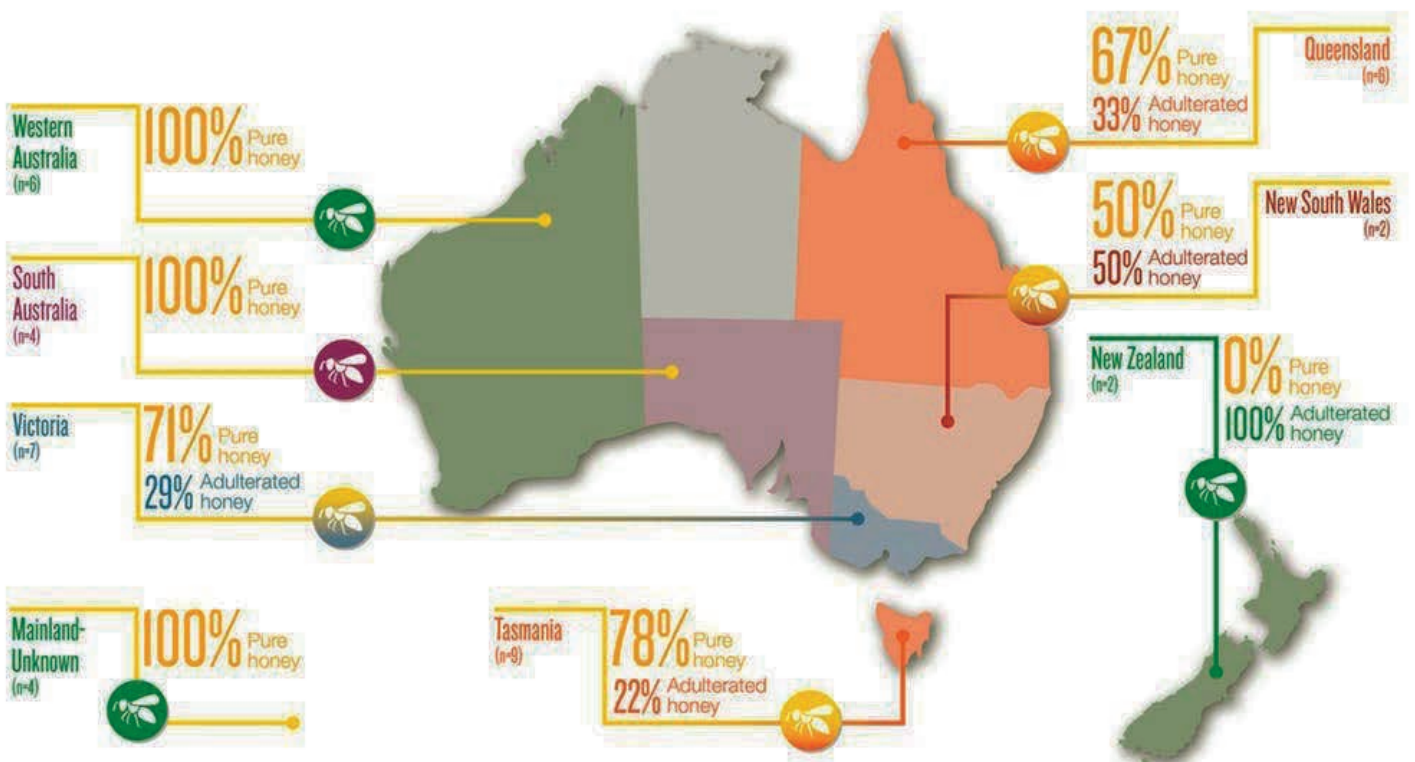
Of the Australian-sourced commercial honeys we analysed, 18% were identified as likely to have been adulterated in a similar way. Of course, our study also comes hot on the heels of recent revelations that 12 of 28 Australian honeys were adulterated with rice and other syrups.

That discovery was made using a new proprietary method that can reportedly detect adulteration with a wider range of compounds and also identify the geographic origins of the honey.

In our latest research, we therefore also investigated whether the commercial honey samples can indeed be tracked back to where they supposedly came from.

We found that honey from different continents and regions do indeed have different chemical signatures, which paves the way for detecting mislabelled or geographically fraudulent honey.

There is no evidence that adulterated honeys cause significant health risk beyond those posed by eating sugary foods. However, in many cases consumers are not getting the supposedly genuine pure honey they paid for.





Currently, CO<sub>2</sub> emission standards cover over 80% of the global light automotive market. The lack of standards here means that Australia's cars are less efficient than in many other countries, and this gap is set to widen.

Australia's cars account for about 10% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, which are set to grow by 2030 if the market is left to its own devices.

*Source: ClimateWorks Australia is an expert, independent advisor committed to helping the transition to net zero emissions by 2050*

## Emissions Standards on cars will save Billions of Dollars, and help meet Climate Targets

The cheapest way for Australia to cut greenhouse gas emissions is to put a cap on car emissions. It would be so cheap, in fact, that it will save drivers money.

According to analysis from *ClimateWorks Australia*, the toughest proposed standard would help Australia achieve about 6% of its 2030 emission reduction target, and save drivers up to A\$500 each year on fuel.

The federal government is looking at policy options to meet Australia's 2030 emissions target of 26-28% below 2005 levels. Last year it established a ministerial forum to look at vehicle emissions and released a draft *Regulation Impact Statement* for light vehicles (cars, SUVs, vans and utilities) in December 2017.

There is no reason for the government to delay putting the most stringent emissions standard on cars. Australia currently does not have carbon dioxide emission standards on light vehicles.

CO<sub>2</sub> standards work by improving the overall efficiency of the vehicle (the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted per kilometre). These are different from fuel quality standards, which regulate the quality of fuels used by vehicles, and noxious emissions standards, which monitor a car's emissions of noxious gases and particulates.



### *Village Eco News*

Our aim is to inform, interest, amuse and educate our readers on all things environmental.

We welcome you to submit your contributions or to subscribe to this free Newsletter send your name and email address to:

[bangalowlandcare@gmail.com](mailto:bangalowlandcare@gmail.com)

Please pass this publication on to your family and friends.

Receiving our Newsletter online will help to save the environment we work to preserve.

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