

combination of characters.

1. Palp formula 5, 3.

2. Mandible short-triangular, the masticatory margin with 5 teeth, uniquely arranged. The large apical tooth is followed by two smaller teeth (third smaller than second), then a long diastema and two small basal teeth. Length of diastema is at least equal to length of margin occupied by the apical group of three teeth (Figs 2, 11).

3. Anterior clypeal margin lacking an isolated median seta; instead with a pair of setae that straddle the midpoint.

4. Median portion of clypeus broad posteriorly, broadly inserted between the frontal lobes.

5. Frontal lobes narrow, each lobe distinctly narrower than the portion of the clypeus which is inserted between them.

6. Torulus concealed by frontal lobes in full-face view, not freely projecting.

7. Frontal carinae and antennal scrobes absent.

8. Eyes of moderate size, at or slightly in front of the midlength of the sides of the head.

9. Antennae 12-segmented, with a strongly defined 3-segmented apical club.

10. Sides of head usually with a strong sinuate subocular groove (Figs 1, 3–6, 8–10); groove incomplete in two species (Fig. 7) (see second lug of key couplet 1).

11. Alitrunk elongate and low in profile; promesonotum not domed-convex; propodeum bispinose.

12. Propodeal spiracle high on side, at about midlength of sclerite, distinctly separated from the small metapleural gland bulla.

13. Metapleural lobes present, small and rounded.

14. Metasternal process absent.

15. Tibial spurs absent from middle and hind legs.

16. Petiole pedunculate, the spiracle located from very close to the alitrunk articulation to just behind the midlength of the peduncle.

17. Postpetiolar sternite reduced, small in profile.

18. First gastral tergite strongly overlapping the sternite; sternite with a laterobasal angular junction with the tergite or strongly overlapped throughout.

19. Sting functional, strong and simple.

20. Cuticle thick and armoured, sculpture

variable. Pilosity present, moderately dense, the individual hairs usually short and often blunted. Scapes with long outstanding (erect to suberect) hairs at least on the leading edge.

Female. As worker but with ocelli and full complement of flight sclerites; winged when virgin. Females known only in *bilongrudi*, *renateae*, and *australis*, see Taylor (1989).

Male. Unknown.

Type-species: *Vombisidris philax* sp.n.

Notes

Character 2, the form of dentition, is autapomorphic and unique in the Myrmicinae. This character alone will instantly diagnose *Vombisidris* and separate it from all other genera in the subfamily. The genus belongs in tribe Leptothoracini, as that taxon is currently understood. Leptothoracini is, however, a very nebulous tribe whose constituents and real limits are not clearly known, and is in need of analysis on a world-wide basis.

Key to workers

- 1 Subocular groove incomplete or absent; at most the groove running from the mandibular insertion to the anteroventral margin of the eye, never continued beyond the eye to the lateroccipital margin (Fig. 7) 2
 - Subocular groove complete; the groove running from the mandibular insertion to the anteroventral margin of the eye, then passing through a shallow angle and continuing along the side to the lateroccipital margin (Figs 1, 3–6, 8–10) 3
- 2 Subocular groove present from mandibular insertion to eye. Mesonotum without teeth. Dorsum of head without a rugoreticulum. Propodeal dorsum strongly sloping downward posteriorly so that the spines appear attached very low (Fig. 7). Petiolar spiracle closer to base of peduncle than to node. $SI < 90$. Legs short; length of hind tibia less than length of petiole and $< SL$; hind femur length $< HL$. (Papua New Guinea) ... *acherdos*
 - Subocular groove entirely absent. Mesonotum with a pair of short acute dorsolaterally directed teeth. Dorsum of head with a rugoreticulum. Propodeal dorsum almost straight, the spines attached high. Petiolar spiracle closer to node than to base of peduncle. $SI \geq 100$ or more. Legs long; length of hind tibia greater than length of