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From the President

Hello fellow beekeepers.

I thought in my first President's Report that I would introduce myself. "I've been stung by the honey bee."

I joined this fantastic club four years ago, and was overwhelmed by the kindness and support from all the wonderful people that form it. I participated in the bee course the club holds at regular intervals and that was it - I had to have bees and couldn't wait to get my first hive.

I purchased three nucs from Brian and Merv - top blokes and very knowledgeable beekeepers. A couple of years followed, putting in a lot of work building and painting hives, putting together frames, splitting and dividing hives over and over again, replacing under-performing queens with better ones, as well as dealing with all of the challenges of pests and diseases. I now have around 100 hives and growing.

My passion is in raising and breeding queens. I think to be a good beekeeper means to be vigilant and of course to learn as much as you can.

This is the first club I have been involved with and I really enjoy being a part of it. I will strive to do my best to fulfil my commitments and obligations as President.

The next meeting is at my place. I would like to see you there. There are lots of hives to look at, so bring your smoker, hive tool, veil, long sleeves and pants - and bring a friend. You can check out the way I do things and I'm always open to advice or

pointers and, of course, I'm happy to answer any questions you have, so please ask away.

Robert

Last Meeting

The last meeting was held on 30 April at the home of Shirley Ashman and Merv McDonald, Dalwood.

The fine weather resulted in a large attendance and allowed for the inspection of Merv's nucs. The NRABA AGM followed lunch and the general business meeting.



NRABA Members Inspecting Merv's Nucs

Annual General Meeting

Congratulations to those members who were voted into positions on the NRABA committee at the recent AGM. Also, a big thank you to outgoing committee members for their hard work and commitment to the NRABA.

Members of the new NRABA committee are shown below:

- President: Robert Stone
- Immediate Past President: Tony Lamont
- Vice President: Michael Koenen
- Secretary: Sally McMahan
- Treasurer: Sandy Stewart
- Committee Members: Merv McDonald (Public Officer), Peter Dickson-Smith, Shirley Ashman, Brian Window (Library), Barbara Lukas, Paula Slaney, Steve Fowler (Equipment Officer), David Fairhall (Newsletter Editor), Bill Ferris, Frank McLeod

From The Hives – May

The hives have been moved in two batches of 14 from Bungawalbyn to a good site for tea tree (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) near Coraki. Moving both loads was uneventful, starting with a 4.30am rise to get out there at dawn to shut off the entrances with strips of foam rubber. The hives were loaded onto the ute using a trolley and a tailgate loader, and the stands and trolley were put on top before using ratchet tie-downs to anchor the load.

With the colder nights, all the hives had few bees at the entrances and were easy to close. In mid-summer, when there are usually a lot of bees out the front, smoke is needed to get most of them in. One observation is that a few bees arrive after the hives are shut; these are presumably bees that camped out all night when they were unable to get back to the hive by dark.

The hives were closed during the moves for about three hours, and experience has shown that this does not lead to excessive over-heating. The lids have vents (four), and there is a good airflow when moving. For longer moves, professional beekeepers previously replaced the lids with screens on the top of the honey supers. Now, professional beekeepers move their hives open, usually starting in the late afternoon. It is better to close them in situations where the hives have to be manhandled on and off the ute, and the morning move means that the work is being done in daylight (so it's less easy to trip over eg on sticks at night).

There is not much nectar and pollen other than fireweed around at the new site, but there should be another flowering of the tea tree soon. It is a good time to do a thorough American Foul Brood (AFB) inspection. Something to watch out for at this time of year (autumn), and on a tea tree flow, is robbing. Sometimes it can be so bad, with a multitude of excited bees, that work has to be stopped after about five hives have been inspected. It is a good idea to do as Ross Wood does: cover any exposed supers with a towel while inspecting the brood.

Brian

May Flowering

Nothing much to report this month, and not all that likely in the next month or two either. Time will tell.

Last time I said that there was some red gum and grey ironbark budded. True, but I notice neither is showing bud across the district. Since the last missive, white mahogany is budded hereabouts, but I am not sure if it is showing bud across the area either. Maybe I am living in a little pocket of bud.

Not as strange as it may sound. Sometimes a flowering can be restricted to a small area, occasionally to a very small location. One year I recall grey ironbark only flowered along the Mackellar Range. This is the range that separates Rock Valley from Back Creek/Boundary Creek. On another occasion, only a few square kilometres flowered on the northern part of Bentley. And, yet again, it and white mahogany missed in the Richmond Valley, but did well on the Tweed.

Paper bark is still showing bursts of flowering but the continued rain will likely reduce any benefit. Still, we live in hope.

Geoff

Hives and Nuclei

Please contact Stephen Fowler if you are able to supply hives and nuclei to other club members.

Learn Beekeeping Course

The first course for 2017 commences on 17 June. Contact Brian Window or Tony Lamont for expressions of interest or further details.

New Equipment

Stephen and Janet carry stocks of most common beekeeping equipment, as well as pots and jars for honey sales. They will be re-opening for sales on 22 May.

Serrated knives, emlocks, eyelets and pine supers are now available. Please place your order via the contact details at the start of the newsletter.

Steritech

Brian Window and Steven Fowler schedule trips to Steritech based on demand from NRABA members, so please let them know when you have equipment that requires irradiation. Their contact details are at the start of the newsletter.

News in Brief

Large African hive beetle now “high risk”

The threat posed by the large African hive beetle (LAHB) should be upgraded to “high risk”, according to a study by the Honey Bee and Pollination Program Advisory Panel (HBPPAP). Larger than the [small hive beetle](#), LAHB is 20-23mm long with a shiny black body, and beekeepers are advised to be on the look out.

For more information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-03-06/bee-industry-worried-about-large-african-hive-beetle/8327286>

Varroa under the microscope

Research scientist Dr Emily Remnant has received a science and innovation award in recognition of her work to find a way to immunise Australian honey bees against varroa mites. “Current research

has identified that [while] varroa mites are a parasite, it is actually the viruses that they spread which cause colony loss and death in the bees,” she told ABC News.

For more information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-03-10/researcher-immunising-honey-bees-to-guard-against-varroa-mite/8342172>

What’s on the menu for solitary bees?

The diets of native solitary bees are being studied by University of Sunshine Coast PhD student Rachele Wilson. “The hope is that with information generated from this research we can provide [farmers] with a list of plants that would be useful... in their areas to restore the habitat and bring back those bees.” The blue banded bee, for example, uses buzz pollination, which is important for tomatoes and eggplants.

For more information:

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/researcher-using-dna-to-understand-pollen-diets-of-native-bees-20170418-gvmuxw.html>

New research centre to open in Perth

A new Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), led by the University of Western Australia, has been established to address problems affecting the Australian honey bee industry. “If a major bee disease arrived in Australia, there would be a 26 per cent decline in national agricultural production, which equates to a consumer surplus loss of between \$12.4 billion and \$27.2 billion,” said Dr Liz Barbour from the university.

For more information:

<https://foodmag.com.au/new-honey-bee-research-centre-to-create-a-buzz>

Bees cause a buzz at Parliament House

Three beehives, including a locally designed Flow Hive, have been installed near Parliament House, in Canberra, as part of an initiative to tackle the decline of bee populations.

For more information:

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/parliament-house-abuzz-with-plan-for-new-beehives-20170317-gvoiov.html>

Bees in TVs

Bee hotels made from recycled televisions by Louise Cosgrove, from Jimboomba in the Gold Coast hinterland, are encouraging Australian native bees back to suburban areas. She uses wood and other natural materials.

For more information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-03-18/australian-native-bee-nests-made-with-recycled-tvs/8366420>

10 Years of Colony Collapse Disorder

Beekeepers have been dealing with Colony Collapse Disorder for the past 10 years, instances of which have been identified all over the world. Of further concern is that losses have been identified in wild bee populations, in addition to managed hives. Progress has been made in understanding the problem, albeit complex with many causes.

For more information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-08/colony-collapse-ten-years-after-crisis-what-is-happening-to-bees/8507408>

Upcoming Events

18-19 May – NSW Apiarists' Association Annual Conference, Ballina

20 May – NSW Apiarists' Association Field Day, Alstonville Showgrounds

21 May – Colonel Pulling Competition (CPC) and AGM of the ABA, Ballina

28 May – NRABA monthly meeting, Ruthven

17 June – NRABA Learn Beekeeping course

Newsletter Submissions

Thank you to all members who contributed to the newsletter. It really is appreciated.

Newsletter submissions can be emailed to Newsletter_NRABA@bigpond.com by the 10th of each month. Photos are always appreciated.

Next Meeting – Sunday 28 May

The next meeting will be held at the home of Robert Stone.

Location: 122 Flood Reserve Road, Ruthven, NSW 2480.

Time: 9.30am Flow Hive meeting; 10am for 10.30am group meeting.

Transport: Personal transport.

Directions: From Lismore, proceed south along Wyrallah Road to Wyrallah. About 10km from Lismore, turn right onto Wyrallah Ferry Road towards Coraki. Cross the Wilson River and continue for around 1km to the T-intersection. Turn left onto Coraki Road and proceed south for around 5km, then turn right onto Flood Reserve Road. Continue for 1.5km, then turn right onto Poole Road. The entrance to Robert's property is off Poole Road, first driveway on the right.

Alternatively, Coraki Road can be accessed from the north via the Bruxner Highway and from the south via the Casino-Coraki Road.

Bee meeting signage will be in place.

Activities: General meeting, lunch, hive inspections.

What to bring:

- Either a morning tea item or a salad to share;
- Raffle items are always appreciated;
- \$5 per head for morning tea/lunch;
- Beekeeping protective equipment;
- Chairs.