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## **From the President**

Hello Beekeepers,

I hope you all had a lovely Christmas and are ready for a great new year. Our club is growing with new members joining every day. There are a few new ideas that our members have put forward and we hope to implement these this year.

Bruce Kemp has kindly agreed to host the NRABA meeting in January. I may have suggested that Bruce wanted the meeting, but that was not the case. We had organized another location but on review, we needed a larger venue. Bruce and his lovely wife Christine put their hands up.

We are expecting the meeting to be a large gathering, so please treat it as if it was your own home. I thank you all in advance along with our hosts.

We need venues to hold future meetings. If you're not sure about hosting a meeting and think it may be a little daunting, our members are happy to help you out.

I hope to see you all there and look forward to meeting our newest members.

Happy beekeeping,

Robert.

## **Christmas Party**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to and attended our last meeting for 2017 at Meldrum Park in Ballina.



*NRABA Christmas Party at Ballina*

Thank you to Stephen and Janet Fowler for their donation of a brood box and bees and to everyone who donated prizes for our Christmas raffle.

## **From The Hives - January**

Honey production from the hives at Bungawalbyn has been well down on normal, and many club members are reporting the same elsewhere. Some has been extracted from the hives, and there is more to come prior to moving them on to the broadleaf teatree for the autumn flowering.

The apiary was restored to the full 32 capacity in November, and all the new hives are doing well. However, there has been one other hive where they have failed to make a queen, and this will be replaced from the home apiary.

The underfloor beetle traps (made from Gyprock ceiling battens) have been cleaned and filled with diatomaceous earth. The diatomaceous earth is preferred to vegetable oil, as it does not form a

sticky mess. It is important to have the hive sloping forward, the slots towards the back, and a barrier to direct water around the slots. A lot of water flows around in a beehive!

The bees do block the slots, and wax moth larvae like them for their pupation. In general, the bees leave enough of the slots open to function quite well. The traps have caught many beetles, and probably do help in reducing the likelihood that maggots will overrun a weak hive before it can be sorted out.

A round of re-queening is the next task; this year queen cells will be used, rather than mated queens. It is a cheaper option, but more attention needs to be paid to make sure the queens survive the introduction and the mating flights.

Brian

### **January Flowering**

The apple has come and gone, providing some good pollen. At the time of writing, bloodwood is putting on a good show. Like the apple, it is rare for it to produce any quantity of honey, but again good pollen.

There is also some hill sheoak going with it. This species gives good pollen, unlike the one that grows on the creeks. As I have mentioned before, this is the source of the sawdust like detritus you may see on the bottom board or on the ground in front of the hive. The husk is stored with the pollen and is 'released' when they start to eat this pollen.

It has been a good time for flat weed, that is if it has escaped the slasher or ride-on mowers.

There is still the likelihood of the swamp mahogany flowering again. This is the one related to brush box, not the eucalypt. It flowers a number of times around Christmas/New Year. In my area, it has been producing a bit of a dribble.

I have not been very far afield of late so do not really have a handle on whether spotted gum or grey box are budded. Someone mentioned they saw flowers on some spotted gum. This would be somewhat early for our species to be flowering. Again, a shy

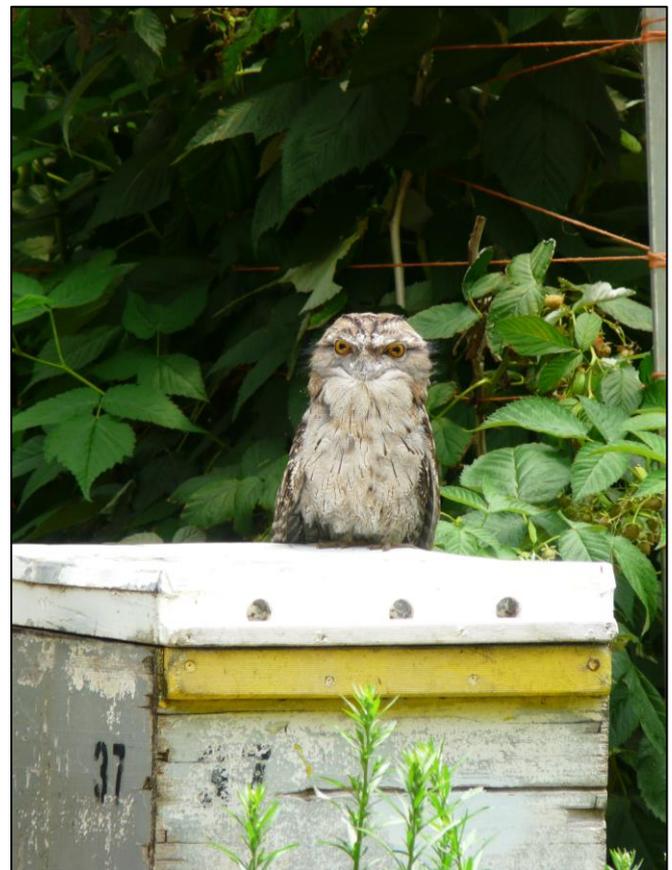
yielder of honey, but top-notch pollen, unlike grey box, which sometimes produces heavy crops of honey, but is pollen deficient. They do often grow in the same country, and if flowering together, can be a winning duo. The spotted gum on the south coast is a major honey producer and large numbers of commercial beekeepers head for it in an 'on year'.

Paperbark will be starting one of its bursts of flowering soon, with reasonable pollen and normally some honey. The only problem is that hereabouts it also tends to be a rain time. Hence, the indigenous name of Bellbowrie, rain tree.

It will soon be time to be looking for the grey ironbark and red gum to show bud if they are to perform in the coming season. To paraphrase a well-known politician, "it is all about the grey ironbark".

Geoff

Thanks to Geoff and Brian for the picture below of a Frogmouth on a beehive.



## **New Equipment**

Stephen and Janet Fowler carry stocks of most common beekeeping equipment, as well as pots and jars for honey sales.

Foundation and Beeco smokers are in stock. Weathertex sheets are now available, 9 mm thick for lids and 5 mm for bases.

New Zealand Hive Doctor base boards are now available, also.

Pre-ordered goods can be collected at NRABA meetings. Orders can also be collected from 5 Robb Street, Alstonville (in the Russellton Industrial Estate). Call Stephen on 0418 412 621 to arrange a convenient pick-up time.

## **Hives and Nuclei**

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

## **NRABA 2018 Memberships**

2018 membership fees are due.

To pay your membership/insurance or update your contact details, visit the Amateur Beekeepers Association NSW web site.

<https://www.beekeepers.asn.au/>

Members can click on the drop-down menu at the top right of the homepage to sign in.

New members should scroll down the homepage and click the 'Apply to Join' link. Select the Northern Rivers branch from the drop-down menu.

Fee payment is through the Pay Subs Online website, which is where you will be redirected on signing in or applying to join.

## **NRABA Flow Hive**

Stu Anderson will be attending the January NRABA meeting to present the Northern Rivers branch with a complete Flow Hive. The club is thrilled to receive such a generous donation and we anticipate that the hive will be of great benefit to our members who are interested in either obtaining a Flow Hive or

who have one already and are looking for a little tailored support.

Thanks to Rachel Deaker for painting our new hive so beautifully.

Sally

## **Peer Support**

With an increasing interest in beekeeping, it has been suggested that a "peer support system" could be an additional approach within the club to help teach novices, build participatory relationships within the club and passing on knowledge and experience. Particularly in an environment of changing biosecurity awareness, it is important that everyone is up to date with current practises to protect fellow beekeepers.

The purpose would be to encourage exchange, support and facilitate learning for both new as well as experienced beekeepers. This could be achieved by having a list of novice beekeepers who are willing to assist more experienced beekeepers in their apiaries, in exchange for on the job learning. In this way, both beekeepers can observe how others practise and compare and reason different approaches.

If you are interested in participating, by either offering or looking for support, please let me know and I will do my best to bring people together if needed.

Michael Koenen 0414 621 975

## **Next Meeting – Sunday 28 January**

The next meeting will be held at the home of Bruce and Christine Kemp.

**Location:** 150 Lindendale Road, Wollongbar, NSW 2477.

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

**Transport:** Personal transport.

**Directions:** Travel east along the Bruxner Highway from Lismore towards Ballina. After the speed

camera on Marom Creek Bridge, proceed up the climb (past the DPI entrance on the right), then turn right at the top of the hill onto Lindendale Road. The turn-off is beside the Shell service station. Bruce's property is on the right, about 1.5 kilometres down Lindendale Road.

If travelling inland from the coast, Lindendale Road is the first turn-off on the left from the Bruxner Highway after the Alstonville bypass. Again, look for the Shell service station.

Please do not try to enter Lindendale Road from Alphadale Road. The numbering is duplicated across the Shires and is quite confusing.

Most parking will be around the big shed.

Bee meeting signage will be in place.

**Activities:** Planned activities include:

- Hive inspections (subject to weather)
- Flow Hive presentation to the NRABA (Stu Anderson)

**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
- Shade/sun protection