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## From the President

Hello, everybody. Happy new year to you all and I'll take this opportunity to thank all the committee for their efforts over the past 12 months in running the club, and to those who walk the extra mile for the club's benefit. It's very much appreciated. I'll add to that the members who provided a venue to hold our meetings throughout the year – thank you!

So with the festive season out of the way, we can now get on with some serious beekeeping don't you reckon? The first meeting at Peter and Paula Slaney's should be a good way to kick that off.

The year ahead will be challenging, with more and more people enquiring about beekeeping and wanting to do beekeeping courses. Membership numbers are likely to climb, so that's something to think about.

See you at the next meeting.

Tony. 11 January, 2017.

## Last Meeting

Our last meeting was the association's Christmas party at Ballina. Suzie assumed the reporting role in the Editor's absence. Thanks, Suzie!

The NRABA Christmas party was a great success, thanks to club Secretary Shirley and hubby Merv, who organised a feast for all, set up the picnic and marquees, and hot water for beverages. There were even some red and white beverages to add to the very good cheer of the day. Everyone brought

along scrumptious sweets and it was a true feast in traditional Christmas style.



*A Lovely Location for the NRABA Christmas Party*

Stephen and Janet were there with emergency bee supplies. All relaxed and shared some fun stories. The weather was perfect and the park near the river was lovely. To those who could not make it, we hope you don't miss out next Christmas.

Suzie.

## From The Hives - January

Hot weather makes working beehives a challenge. The hives out at Bungawalbyn have been producing well (probably swamp mahogany), so full boxes have been taken off – using clearer boards – and extracted, and stickies put on. It is important to have available empty comb for the bees to put the nectar in, and to reduce congestion in the brood box. If time permitted, some brood frames were inspected for American Foul Brood

(AFB) and eggs, before the sticky was put on over the excluder.

Another three hives have succumbed to Small Hive Beetle (SHB) since the last report, making four out of 32. None of them showed any sign of AFB, and all occurred because of queen problems. One had been reduced to just two boxes and was well and truly overrun by the beetles; all the comb was cut out. The other two were caught at the start of the beetle build-up, and the honey frames were not seriously damaged, although looked wet. This wet appearance occurs because the beetles uncap the sealed honey, and it oozes everywhere. One can either extract and discard the honey, or put these supers on a strong hive to clean up and extract later, keeping the honey. The bees can remove quite a lot of honey in cleaning up the frames. Either way, the combs are saved. The brood frames are usually seriously damaged, as the SHB larvae eat the bee larvae and stored pollen, and defecate in the comb.

The last hive to be attacked was interesting. These hives are down a one-kilometre bush track, and about 50 metres from the site, there was a tree across the track. It was not appealing to carry possibly full honey supers 50 metres, but it was worthwhile to walk in and have a look. The hive in question had a pile of white bee pupae under the doorway; prodding with a hive tool showed small SHB maggots. There were lots of bees at the door and under the lid.

Four days later, the tree was removed and the hive inspected fully. The honey supers were wet looking and were removed for clean-up. The brood box had lots of beetles and a few maggots, and no brood except maybe 10 capped worker cells. AND it had a very healthy looking large queen with quite a lot of bees. She seemed to have run out of eggs completely. The neat pile of bee larvae out the front had disappeared.

The preferred diet of SHB larvae is bee brood. The bees sensed that the larvae had been killed in their cells and removed them from the hive. Later, the stored pollen would be attacked by beetle larvae.

The next planned activities are a large-scale re-queening, and a move to near Coraki, where there is an excellent stand of broad-leafed tea tree for the autumn.

Brian.

### January Flowering

Nothing reliable on the horizon, either because the species are inherently shy nectar producers or the weather for a month or two is likely to be unfavourable to beekeeping.

At the time of writing there are three species flowering that I see around the traps. Four if you count the grey gum flowering in Brian Window's place after carrying the bud for a year or more.

Bloodwood and rough barked apple are both showing some small patches of flower, rather than putting on the more normal spectacular show. I notice that they both have more undeveloped bud to follow, something that is unusual for them. These two will give good quality pollen, but rarely nectar. Also flowering is swamp turpentine (*Lophostemon suaveolens*), which is in much the same boat. It flowers in bursts, similar to *Melaleuca quinquenervia*. The first two are widespread in the club's catchment, whereas swamp turpentine grows on the low country south-west and west of Lismore.

I also notice another tree that flowers in bursts gracing us at the moment. Lilli pilli, however, only grows close to the edge of watercourses, so is of limited availability. It does give a nice shake at times and the pollen is useful. Interestingly, I have noticed that the pollen can/does change colour for different bursts.

You may also find some sawdust-like material in the bottom of the hive or out the front on the ground at the moment. This comes from the oak pollen. The bees collect this 'husk' and remove it later. The tree looks quite brown when it is in flower (see the picture overleaf). It is, of course, wind pollinated.



*A Male She Oak Tree*

Remember, a beekeeper only needs three tools: smoker; hive tool; and a good pair of binoculars to check out the flower and bud.

Geoff.

### **Online Membership/Renewal**

Registration and payment for new members and those who are renewing their membership is available online via the NSWABA website <http://www.beekeepers.asn.au>.

Existing members click the 'Sign In' link in the pulldown menu at the top right of the homepage. For new members, there is an 'Apply to Join' link on the homepage.

Members are encouraged to use this facility. Manual memberships are only being taken by the NRABA Treasurer for existing and new members who don't have access to a PC or the internet.

### **New Equipment**

Don't forget that Stephen and Janet Fowler carry most common beekeeping equipment, including a range of manual and electric extractors. They also carry a range of jars and pots for honey sales.

Why not pre-order? Save the disappointment of arriving at the next meeting to find something sold out. Contact Stephen or Janet a week or two before and they'll bring your gear along to the meeting. The Equipment Officer contact details are at the front of the newsletter.

Robert Stone has pre-assembled and wired frames for sale. Please contact Robert on 02 6683 2222 for further information.

### **Hives and Nuclei**

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

### **Update - Townsville Varroa Mite Incursion**

A tenth detection of Asian honey bees (*Apis cerana*) was found in the Townsville area in November. No Varroa mites were found.

It was reported in December that since the destruction of the tenth detection, no further foraging Asian honey bees have been identified in the Townsville area.

Checks are continuing, but the industry volunteer program has been suspended due to the upcoming wet season.

Genetic testing on the first nine detections showed them to be related i.e. they all originated from a single incursion.

Updates on the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council website can be found at the link below:

<http://honeybee.org.au/category/news/>

### **Bee Biosecurity Video Series**

A series of videos on bee biosecurity is available online at the link below. The video series is a joint initiative of Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcPUFI5bhJEfcxghX8fkWHM2fTrtXmI>

### **What Colours Do Bees See?**

We see red blue and green. Bees can't see red, but they can see ultraviolet light, in addition to blue and green. So colours look different to bees and they can see things that we can't.

Did you know that many flowers have ultraviolet guides that help bees find the nectar? They are, of course, invisible to us.

Bees can't focus on distant objects, only on things that are close up. So they can only see flowers when they are about half a metre away. So how do they find flowers from a distance? They use scent.

The information above was taken from an ABC News article that can be found at the link below. It also includes an image showing a flower, how we see it and how it would be seen by bees.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-16/birds-and-bees-prefer-have-flower-colours-preferences/7959382>

### **Upcoming Events**

29 January, 2017 – NRABA monthly meeting, Smiths Creek.

18-19 May, 2017 – NSW Apiarists' Association Inc. Conference, Ballina.

21 May, 2017 – Colonel Pulling Competition and AGM of the ABA, Ballina.

### **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](mailto:Newsletter.NRABA@bigpond.com) by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Photos are always appreciated.

### **Next Meeting – 29 January, 2017**

The next meeting will be held at the home of Peter and Paula Slaney, Smiths Creek (near Kyogle).

**Location:** 210 Smiths Creek Road, Smiths Creek, NSW 2484.

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

**Directions:** From Lismore or Casino, make your way to Kyogle. Travel north through the CBD, then turn left at the BP service station onto Anzac Drive. Follow this road through Geneva (Anzac Drive becomes Afterlee Road just after Geneva). Continue for approximately 17km from the BP, then turn right onto Smiths Creek Road, about 350m after the Smiths Creek bridge. The Slaneys'

place is on the right, about 2km along Smiths Creek Road.

Bee meeting signage will be in place.

**Transport:** Personal transport. There is plenty of parking space available.

**Activities:** Hives will be inspected on the day.

**What to bring:** Please bring the following items:

- 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.