



# Beekeepers Association of the ACT

Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the Australian Capital Territory  
Incorporated

Meetings of our Association are conducted on the 3rd Thursday of every month (except December) at the Yarralumla Primary School Hall, 24 Loftus Street, YARRALUMLA, ACT 2600

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[www.actbeekeepers.asn.au](http://www.actbeekeepers.asn.au)

<https://www.facebook.com/BeekeepersAssociationoftheACT>

December 2015

## **Christmas Barbecue- Thursday 17 December 2015 at 6pm**

Our **Christmas barbecue** will be held on Thursday 17 December (in lieu of our regular monthly meeting at Yarralumla). This event will be held at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands site, commencing at 6 pm. Please BYO food and drink and a chair or two. Barbecues will be provided.

## **President's Report**

Dear members

I find it hard to believe that this calendar year is nearly over. I am most pleased with the progress that has been made in establishing our apiary at Jerrabomberra Wetlands (JW). In particular, I commend Jeff Matsen, the Association's Hive Manager, for his untiring efforts in developing and maintaining what I believe is a showpiece apiary comprised of a variety of hives, Langstroth (of different hive materials), Warre' and Kenyan Topbar. Jeff has also been very much supported by Steve O'Hearn who has spent many hours involved with construction and maintenance of the site. I would also like to recognise the Hive Buddies who assist Jeff in hive management. Such is the progress made, that the Association will host a Beekeeping Field day at Jerrabomberra Wetlands on

Saturday 20 February. The theme is "Good beekeeper - Good neighbour". Further details are provided in this Newsletter.

Since my November report, I can advise that the Animal Diseases (Beekeeping) Amendment Bill has been passed by the Legislative Assembly and consequently, hive registration will be introduced in the ACT. I wish to thank Rachael Taylor who is the Senior Manager, Legislation and Legal Services for attending our November meeting and informing those members present of the Government's intention to introduce registration. Discussions associated with the implementation of the legislation have yet to be held with government representatives. Hopefully, such discussions will be conducted early in the new year.

One major agenda item that has occupied much of your Committee's time and effort over the past couple of months has been to bring the Association's Constitution up to date. A 'General' Meeting will be



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conducted during our February monthly meeting (18 February 2016) the purpose of which will be to approve the proposed Constitutional updates. Major changes proposed involve:

- a. Introducing a 21 day cut-off prior to the AGM for members to nominate for Committee positions (no nominations will be accepted afterwards). A campaign encouraging members to nominate will start eight weeks before the AGM which will be held Thursday 21 April 2016; no nominations will be accepted after 1 April 2016 (no association with April fool's day!!).
- b. The assignment of roles to each of the 'Ordinary' member Committee positions. The intent here is to ensure that each of your elected representatives has a defined portfolio resulting in a better distribution of the administrative workload.
- c. Streamlining the election process conducted at the AGM.

At the General Meeting your Committee will make a single proposal to accept the amended rule changes. There will be opportunity for discussion and then a vote will be conducted. In line with constitutional rules, notification of the General Meeting will need to be promulgated by 27 January 2016; please consider the foregoing as advance notification.

On the training front our Tutor group successfully completed the second CIT backyard Beekeeping course. Supporting and administering these courses requires a substantial commitment and again I wish to acknowledge these efforts and thank all those tutors who participated in our second of three CIT beekeeping courses. In my November President's report I mentioned that the Association receives \$1200 for the conduct of each course. I am hearing informally, that the Association could substantially financially benefit if the courses were conducted independently at JW and that the Association is missing out on a good source of revenue. This is true, however, under the current arrangements with CIT Solutions, the Association, notably your Committee, is not involved with advertising or administering the three Backyard Beekeeping courses. Furthermore, the site at JW has a number of key stakeholders who also use this site and integration of a number of disparate activities needs to occur over an extended period of time (at least throughout 2016) to achieve a high level of confidence that the Association can operate such public orientated courses without disruption.

In addition, I am not confident that we currently have the administrative horse power to run such courses. While I am indebted to our team of volunteer tutors, we are still in the 'building phase' and notably, the administrative workload on certain Committee members has, over the past year increased exponentially. As a volunteer organisation, I would not like to see any of our members extended to such an extent where we literally interfere with their personal lives. Since we had access to JW, we have conducted some "Intro to Beekeeping", 'Refresher beekeeping' and 'Extracting' workshops, however, apart from the relative 'few', no one has volunteered to conduct such courses for our members which in itself is a good source of revenue, albeit that we give our members a reduced charge as a benefit of membership. I therefore have concerns regarding our ability (i.e. volunteers) to commit well ahead of time to conduct courses undertaken for the general public.

Another matter that has occupied discussion by your Committee is how, as an Association we dispose of hive products derived from the Association's apiaries at JW and Bruce CIT. While no solution has been arrived at, your Committee is still working this matter and in the meantime our Association's bees remain the custodians of their work.

On your behalf, I also welcome Jon Justin who has recently been elected to the Committee. Jon's election (through the Committee) as an Ordinary Committee member, occurred on the occasion of Scott Campbell's resignation. On your behalf I thank Scott for his time on the Committee and wish him the best in pursuing his business endeavours.

Lastly, I wish to remind everyone of our Christmas barbecue which will be held at JW on 17 December. I recently purchased two small barbecues for the Association and these will be set up for the occasion.

Please BYO food and drink and a chair or two. Location details are provided on our Website. I do hope to see many of you on this occasion. For those of you who cannot attend, I wish you and your family a special Christmas and a rewarding new year.

Regards,

**John Grubb, President**

### **Membership Renewals**

Important note from Treasurer

I remind members that, if you joined before 1 July 2015, your annual membership fees for 2016 are due on January 1. Our financial year is the calendar year. If you joined after 1 July 2015 you are financial until 31 December 2016. The cost is \$35 for an individual or family.

Individual renewal notices are not sent and all memberships are due on the same date.

Methods of payment:

1. Preferred method - electronic funds transfer to ACT Beekeepers Association, CBA, BSB 062 908, and Account 00905714. Identify yourself in the payment
2. Cheque posted to Treasurer, Beekeepers Association of the ACT, PO Box 1482 Woden ACT 2606
3. Cash or cheque at a Club meeting.

Many thanks

**Dick Johnston, Treasurer**

### **Wanted- feral bee hives for research**

Dr John Roberts, who has been a previous guest speaker of the Association, is seeking assistance in locating feral bee hives for research purposes. Can any members that know of accessible colonies please contact John on 02 6246 4019 or [john.roberts@csiro.au](mailto:john.roberts@csiro.au)

### **Association Synergies- Jon Justin**

As the new committee member, replacing Scott Campbell who resigned due to business commitments, I thought it would be useful to give my 'maiden speech' via the newsletter and to use the opportunity to present some of the ways that we, the members, can maximise the benefits of being a part of this wonderful Association of ours, so my topic is..... **Association Synergies**

Just like a Bee colony, an Association represents a single organism that works together for the common good. Members of an Association are able to contribute and to benefit in different ways depending upon their experience, needs and energy levels. Some people benefit from giving, others from receiving, but everyone benefits from sharing.

Our Association is no different; we have beginners who need to be chaperoned, semi-experienced beekeepers who further develop their skills through assisting and nurturing others and experienced beekeepers who continue to refresh their interest and skills through interaction with their peers. The Association has a number of outlets that enable the members to interact and as we approach the season of goodwill, I thought it timely to remind everyone about these, plus introduce our newest innovation .....**the Members Forum**

In order to provide a more interactive experience, the fairly static web site has been given a makeover that now allows Association members (and in a limited capacity, members of the public) to contribute to expanding the information database that can be shared by us all. Over the last 12 months, our webmaster Thomas has been slowly converting the many pages of the web site to the new format, and even though it is still 'a work in progress', a lot of the original data is now in that new format and soon the old web site as we know it will be de-commissioned.

The benefits of the new format are many, but primarily, it allows you, the members to contribute instead of simply reading what has been posted by the webmaster. You are able to create topics that are informative as well as ask questions and generate debate. The more you contribute, the more dynamic the Forum will become.

In order to access the Forum as a simple "voyeur", you can access it from the following link

<http://forums.actbeekeepers.asn.au/>

There is also a link to it on the Home page of our web site [www.actbeekeepers.asn.au](http://www.actbeekeepers.asn.au) When you first visit the Forum, you will only see the public areas. If you wish to access the Members' area, or contribute to the forum, i.e. post questions, classifieds, information, pictures, videos, generate a debate etc., then you MUST register to create a User Id and Password.

Doing this initially provides you with access to the Public area only, see below regarding the Members area.

Registering is a simple process, click on the Register button at the bottom of the page and enter you basic details. Here are a couple of tips to help:

1. When creating a User Id, don't use your real name, use a pseudonym or nickname to protect your public identity. E.g. James Smith might be Smithy or TeddyBear, but not SmithJ or JSmith
2. When creating a password, DO NOT use your regular banking or email password. If you have difficulty remembering passwords, a good technique is to break your passwords into two parts, a variable part that YOU can always predict and a fixed part that is common (and complex) across all your passwords. Try to include letters, numbers and symbols that make your password less intuitive for hackers to pick from dictionaries.

For example

Fixed part - #123-ABC789

Variable part - XX where XX is are initials could be derived from the membership name.

Beekeeper Forum could be #123-ABC789BF

Gmail password could be #123-ABC789GM

You only need to remember the first part and being able to work out the variable part provides you with a different password for different memberships etc.

Once you have registered, ensure that you record the same email address that we use to send you your newsletter. The webmaster will match the email you register with, to the one stored in our membership database, and will then automatically (a few days later) provide your User Id (created above) with access to the members area as well as the Public area.

Once registered, be creative, inquisitive, inclusive, but do NOT be malicious, inflammatory or derogatory. Share your experiences and/or your thirst for knowledge about these wonderful creatures. Above all, enjoy the new platform. There are currently 3 moderators, (Thomas, Dick & myself) who ensure that the Forum is not abused by spammers, trolls, hackers and pains in the '\*\*\*\*'. If, in their opinion, any post is deemed to be outside the bounds, that post will be removed, and repeat offenders can also be removed and banned.

Any suggestions or comments can be sent to the [webmaster@actbeekeepers.asn.au](mailto:webmaster@actbeekeepers.asn.au) The Forum is a semi-public arena, so be careful not to disclose any information that you wouldn't wish to be known publicly.

## Facebook

The Association Facebook page is a constant source of new and interesting facts, as well as another place to chat with fellow members and the public at large.

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Contrary to popular misconception, you do NOT have to join Facebook to access our Facebook page. Anyone can access it. If you are not logged in to Facebook, you are simply an anonymous visitor, but can read any of the entries and access any of the links.

You can access Facebook from the link on our web site or <https://www.facebook.com/BeekeepersAssociationoftheACT> will get you there or simply Google ACT Beekeepers Facebook.

Once on the Facebook page, there is a veritable smorgasbord of interesting links, comments, questions and answers, all relating to the fascinating topic of Bees going back a number of years.

If you wish to contribute, i.e. pose a question, supply an answer or post an interesting topic, then you do need to join Facebook - a subject for another newsletter, perhaps?

### **Members' Network**

I have often thought, that the best way to acquire knowledge and increase confidence is to pass on what you know to others. This process helps to reinforce what you know, but also highlights what you don't know. Realising your deficiencies, then encourages you to strive to learn more.

I say this, because a lot of people shy away from the Members Network because they believe that they aren't experienced enough. Well, experience comes with practice and practice comes from doing, so I encourage you to join in and do.

Everyone from 'Beeginner' to 'Bee Expert' should have their name on the list and should access the list to 'find a friend' for a chat about your problems, concerns, aspirations or just discuss interesting things. All the people on that list have volunteered to be contactable for bee related discussions. Don't be shy, if the person that you ask doesn't know the answer, then hopefully, they will endeavour to share the search for an answer and both parties will become wiser for the experience. The network list is located in the Members' area of the Forum. Names are listed in geographical areas to make finding someone close to you that much easier. If you would like to be on the list, just click Post Reply and enter your details (Name, Location, and Phone Number) and your wish will be the moderator's command.

### ***Jon Justin, Committee Member***

#### **Beekeeper profile - Jim Calokerinos**

**What got you started in beekeeping?** I thought beekeeping was a chance to make a little extra pocket money. When I realised I had to work in the hot summer sun, I changed my mind and kept bees for a hobby only.

**Did you have a mentor?** I didn't have a mentor until I met Dick in 2005. *(Dick says Jim is his mentor, not the other way around. Editor)* I subscribed to The Australasian Beekeeper and relied on The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture, an American publication, and other books.

**How did you get your first hive?** I purchased 5 beehives from a commercial beekeeper in Boorowa in 1984. In retrospect I think they were his worst hives.

**How many hives? What kind?** I have six 8 frame Langstroth hives.

**Do you have an empty super story?** I am the current holder of the 'Empty Super' award for the story published in the May 2014 newsletter about my smoker blowing up. I had picked up a cigarette lighter with a handful of pine needles to refill the smoker.

**Most memorable moment?** Early in my beekeeping career I was trying to open a strong hive but the boxes were stuck together. It took hard work to open them and in the process about 500 bees got stuck into me and I got more stings than ever before, or after. This was in spite of having full protective gear.



**What is a good tip for a novice beekeeper?**

Handle the bees very gently, and leave plenty of honey for winter.

**The most useful gadget you have?**

My favourite gadget was made for me by a fellow member, Con Sofatzis. It is a tool made out of an old screwdriver for removing wax from the groove in old frames so they can be fitted with new wax foundation.



**Your favourite aspect of beekeeping?**

I have enjoyed helping new beekeepers.

**Your least favourite aspect of beekeeping?** Turning the handle on the extractor. It's time to upgrade to a motorized model.

**A recommended plant for bees?** I visit Kythera for the European summer and often help local beekeepers. The sage and thyme produce much sought after honey.

**Favourite honey?** Notwithstanding the taste of sage and thyme honey, my own honey is still my favourite.

**An unusual beekeeping practice?** Because the honey season on Kythera is so short and predictable, Kytherian beekeepers talk of a practice of caging queens at critical times so brood cells are limited and the number of cells available to store honey is maximized.

*(Editor) Jim has also kindly donated his time by taking on the task of building 100 frames to support our hives at CIT and JWA. Jim is a real silent achiever and his efforts have been truly appreciated by the Hive Manager. Thanks to Dick Johnston who interviewed Jim.*

**Beekeeping field day at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands**

Our Association is hosting a beekeeping field day at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands on Saturday 20 Feb 2016. We encourage all our members to come along, and bring a friend as well. The theme is "Good beekeeper - Good neighbour". A brief summary is in the table below.

Beekeeping Association of the ACT 2016 Field Day @ Jerrabomberra Wetlands (Canberra City) 20 Feb 16					
Theme = Good beekeeper - Good neighbour					
		Demo Area 1	Demo Area 2	Demo Area 3	Display Area
8.30 am	Gates Open	Vineyard Nth	Vineyard Sth	Sheepyard	Main Building Lawns
9-9.50 am	Session 1	Doug Somerville	Sam Malfroy	Top Bar Hive Demo	ABK & Equipment sellers
10-10.50 am	Session 2				
11-11.50 am	Session 3		Des Cannon		
1-1.50 pm	Session 4				
2-3 pm	Session 5	Guided Tour of Club Demo Hives			

Dr Doug Somerville is one of the key NSW DPI beekeeping specialists and keeps 100 hives 'at home' as well in Goulburn. He will conduct an interactive question and answer session at some of our hives, covering his 'four pillars' of beekeeping and any question you might wish to ask him. This is a great opportunity for us to learn how to be a good beekeeper.

Sam Malfroy is a beekeeping project officer at Plant Health Australia in Canberra and comes from a beekeeping family. He will cover bee pests and diseases at some of our hives, including varroa testing techniques and answer any questions you might have. Not only can this information help us to be a good beekeeper, but also a good neighbour (to those living next to our hives, other beekeepers nearby and the wider community).

Des Cannon lives near Canberra and is the editor of the Australasian Beekeeper Magazine, a queen breeder and was previously a commercial beekeeper and has a long standing involvement in the beekeeping industry. He will cover beekeeper safety (bee stings, lifting, and other topics), which could be described as the 5th pillar of beekeeping. Again this will be a practical session at the hives. This is a great chance for us all to pick up some ideas to improve the safety of our beekeeping for ourselves and others.



*One of two sections in the "Vineyard" Apiary at Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Kenyan Top Bar hive at rear and four Langstroth hives (wood, Technoset plastic and Paradise foam). The yellow and green on the far right will be replaced with a flow hive when it arrives. On the far left rear a cream coloured Warré hive can be seen and another Kenyan Top Bar hive.*

We have invited a range of local and more distant bee gear sellers to come along and display some of their bee equipment. So far Pender's Beekeeping Supplies (Sydney), Hornsby Beekeeping Supplies (Sydney), Bees R Us (Braidwood) and Australasian Beekeeper Magazine have confirmed they will be attending. We are still waiting on responses from a number of other bee gear sellers. Our aim is to have as wide a range of sellers on the day so **you** can not only see their wares but ask the seller any questions. Finally, we will end the day with a guided tour of our Association hives. Entry is free, food and drinks will be available. Regardless of the weather the event will go ahead (worst case indoors).

We are also seeking volunteers to help out on the day, is that you? If so then e-mail Jeff Matsen our hive manager and the co-ordinator for the field day at [snow.gum@hotmail.com](mailto:snow.gum@hotmail.com) . So please come along on the day to support all the efforts your Association has put into staging this field day for your benefit.

**Jeff Matsen, Hive Manager**

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