



Beekeepers Association of the ACT

**Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the
Australian Capital Territory Incorporated**

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

Contact: President – Cormac Farrell (0422) 441 358

Email: enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au

www.actbeekeepers.asn.au

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

June 2016

Monthly meeting: 16 June 2016, Yarralumla Primary School at 7:30pm

AGENDA

1930 Introduction & Welcome: President (Cormac Farrell).

1935 Beeginners Corner

1955 Presentation by Jack Simpson: *Tracking hundreds of bees at the same time with tags and cameras*

Jack Simpson is a PhD student at the ANU Research School of Biology.

2030 Networking (light supper)

2100 Meeting close

Steve O'Hearn Secretary (0408) 657 871

President's Report

Dear Members,

As promised at the last meeting, the Monday after our last meeting saw the re-introduction of beekeeper registration to the ACT, closing the final gap in the national notification scheme. Hosting the official launch at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Apiary was a fantastic experience - the apiary looked great and provided the perfect backdrop for photography. We had several committee members present well in advance, and it showcased the Association's work perfectly. Congratulations to everyone who has played a part in creating this space for us, it worked brilliantly!

Quite apart from the success of the launch, it was a great opportunity to connect personally with both Minister Gentleman and senior rangers from ACT Parks and Conservation. Our events manager, Stephanie Wong, was also quick off the mark, personally inviting the Minister to our open day, and then planning to quickly follow up with a formal letter of invitation. We will be keeping the lines of communication open and looking for ways to expand our engagement with government on your behalf.

The start of registration also highlights bee health and biosecurity issues more broadly. Both myself and other committee members have been in contact with the new Bee Biosecurity Officer covering our region, **Hayley Pragert**. She is introduced later in this newsletter, and we will also get to hear her speak at our July meeting.

We now have all the elements in place to make real inroads to pushing bee diseases out of the ACT. We know who our beekeepers are and how to contact them, we have extensive training offerings for new and old beekeepers, and now the support of specialist staff.

There is no reason that we cannot push American Foulbrood and Nosema out of the ACT entirely - both are preventable through good biosecurity practices and apiary hygiene. Overall health and strength of hives through winter and into early spring is also important - I have been feeding mine for a while now after a very tough Autumn, and I expect that many of you are in the same boat.

I look forward to seeing you all at our next meeting - remember to have a go at registering your hives, and let us know of any issues you have. We have been providing ongoing feedback to the ACT Government, and the meeting is a chance to discuss these more fully.

Regards,

Cormac Farrell, President



Introducing Hayley Pragert Bee Biosecurity Officer

Hayley Pragert recently commenced as the Bee Biosecurity Officer with the NSW Department of Primary Industry. This new role is part of the [National Bee Biosecurity Program](#), an initiative to improve the management of established honey bee pests and diseases, as well as to increase awareness, surveillance and preparedness for exotic pest threats.

Hayley is passionate about bees. She managed her own hives in New Zealand and produced and sold queen bees. Hayley's research Masters with the University of Auckland, in conjunction with Plant and Food Research New Zealand, looked at management options for Varroa mite including using an organic miticide within the hive. Hayley's areas of expertise are also in pest management, biosecurity and microbiology.

The Bee Biosecurity Officer will promote the importance of biosecurity in the bee keeping industry. The National Bee Biosecurity Program aims to maintain productivity, sustainable profitability, market access and ultimately beekeeper livelihoods.



Hayley's activities will include:

- promoting the Bee Biosecurity Code of Practice and highlighting ways beekeepers can minimise risks
- being available at industry and agricultural events to discuss biosecurity related issues
- providing biosecurity training and resources for both commercial and amateur beekeepers
- strengthening surveillance and reporting for high priority exotic pests
- working as part of our national network of Bee Biosecurity Officers to protect Australia's honeybee industry and pollinator reliant crops

Regular updates on the National Bee Biosecurity Program and related events can be found at the **BeeAware** website: <http://beeaware.org.au/> where you can also subscribe to a newsletter. BeeAware is funded by the Australian honey bee industry, pollinator-reliant plant industries, [Plant Health Australia](http://www.planthealthaustralia.gov.au/), governments and R&D agencies.

Association members can look forward to hearing from Hayley, who will be presenting at our July meeting.

Registration of Hives now Compulsory in ACT

- Effective 23 May 2016, all hobbyist and commercial beekeepers in the ACT in Australia are required to register their hives
- Registration is free and can be completed online at http://www.tams.act.gov.au/parks-conservation/plants_and_animals/animal_licensing/registration-for-bee-hives
- Both commercial and non-commercial operators need to register, unless already registered in NSW

Beekeepers are asked to:

- adhere to the [ACT Code of Practice](#)
- maintain a record of movement, sale or disposal of beehives
- promptly notify the ACT Chief Veterinary Office of any signs of a notifiable disease

Don't just be a bee owner, be a bee keeper

We can be proud of the work our association members do for bee biosecurity, with the apiary at Jerrabomberra Wetlands (JW) leading by example. The JW apiary team follows the [ACT Code of Practice](#), runs a sentinel program to look for [varroa](#) and [tropilaelaps](#) mites, keeps detailed records and rigorous hygiene standards, and runs training programs, using different hives and types of management systems.



Frank Derwent and Alan Wade inspect JW hives

The apiary management team are acutely aware that honey bee biosecurity is all about bee condition. "The idea is that we want people to do the best with what they've got: we want them to become not just bee owners, but beekeepers." This work was featured recently on the **Farm Biosecurity** website. [Read more....](#)

Special interest group on native bees

A special interest group (SIG) is being set up within the Beekeepers Association of the ACT dedicated to native bees.

Some of the activities this group may be:

1. Collecting and identifying ACT native bee species
2. Photographing ACT native bee species
3. Building suitable dwellings for native solitary bees
4. Monitoring native bee activity in the ACT
5. Preparing presentations and/or articles on native bees
6. Keeping stingless bee colonies on the NSW coast or in QLD.

There is still much to learn about native bees and amateur bee enthusiasts can actively participate in work to improve our understanding and enjoyment of these bees as well as contributing to their survival.

If you would like to participate in this group or make a suggestion, you can contact me at peterabbott@iinet.net.au or on 0421 227 315. Even though the winter is a quiet time for native bees, it is a good time to do some research on native bees and prepare for their Spring activity.

Peter Abbott
Native Bee SIG Coordinator



Training Update

Jerrabomberra Wetlands (JW) Courses

An **Introduction to Backyard Beekeeping course** was conducted at JW on Sunday 12 June; 17 students attended. Noting the time of year, no practical component at the Association's apiary was conducted. Nonetheless, attendees found the morning session most informative.

Interest in attending this course was such that a second course will be conducted at JW on 24 July. At the time of writing, this course is fully subscribed with 17 students. However, interested members can request to be placed upon the waiting list. If sufficient interest is received, an extra (third) course will be conducted in late August.

A **Pests and Diseases course** is planned for Sunday morning 14 August.

CIT Backyard Beekeeping Courses

Negotiations with CIT Solutions have recently been completed and the following course dates agreed:

BRU226	Beekeeping in the Backyard	2 sessions	Saturday	8.30am - 4.30pm	8/10/2016	15/10/2016
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The Association has a dedicated group of tutors who assist in conducting the CIT courses, both classroom and practical, at the Association's apiary located within the CIT campus. This apiary is in addition to the apiary at JW.

If you are interested in joining this special group of volunteers, please contact me.

Both experienced and beginner beekeepers are welcome.

John Grubb
Association Training Manager



Interested in talking about beekeeping?

The Association receives numerous requests from community groups asking for speakers to present on the topic of beekeeping. If you are interested in joining a register of Association members who would be interested in speaking at these events, please send your details (name and email) to stephainewong@gmail.com

Your name and details will be added to register that will be provided to people and groups seeking speakers, who may choose to contact you personally.

Stephaine Wong
Association Events Coordinator

ART in aid of bees

Swarm Trap Exhibition
Nishi Gallery, Hotel Hotel

Opening: 6pm 30 June 2016
Exhibition: 1-10 July 2016



As beekeepers, we know about swarming: what they are; why bees swarm; how to catch, relocate and rehouse them. But many people in the broader community are not aware of what the swarming process is, misunderstand or are simply frightened by the whole thing.

Swarm Trap is a three year project designed to demystify and celebrate bee swarms. It is taking beekeeping into spaces that usually don't discuss bees and challenges a bunch of architects, fashion designers, industrial designers, craftspeople, makers and artists to design bait hives, based upon a solid set of design parameters discussed in Professor Thomas D. Seeley's 'Honeybee Democracy'.

These traps make their debut in the **Nishi Gallery Kendall Lane, Canberra**, before being shipped out to various bush, suburban and city locations in September 2016. The process will be documented, published in a small book and exhibited in Melbourne at the end of the honey season (Autumn 2017).

Swarm Trap aims to:

- Catch wild swarms before the pest controller is called in, or before the bees set up shop in inappropriate places such as compost bins or trees next to bus and tram stops.

- Assist beginner beekeepers who want to catch their own bees.
- Encourage an increase in sustainable and natural backyard beekeeping. Australia has some of the healthiest and happiest bee populations in the world and is currently free of the [varroa mite](#) (*Varroa destructor*) and [Colony Collapse Disorder](#) (CCD). By beefing up the numbers of hives tended to by caring beekeepers in backyards, we will have the best chance of coping with the Varroa mite, or CCD, when and if it arrives.
- Introduce some truly multi-generational, wild genetic stock from remote bush sites with established feral swarming populations into urban apiaries – diversifying the genetic stock in urban apiaries is good for bees.



Our website: www.actbeekeepers.asn.au

It's all there in one handy location: information, news, forums and links. Register to take part in the forum discussions, ask a question or provide advice.

Have you taken a look?

More photos and information from our [forum](#) at the [website](#) or [Facebook](#)



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