



Beekeepers Association of the ACT

Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the
Australian Capital Territory Incorporated

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>

March 2017

Monthly meeting: 16 March 2017, Yarralumla Primary School at 7:30pm

AGENDA

1930 Introduction & Welcome: President (Cormac Farrell)

1935 Beeginners Corner

1955 Pesticide stress in honeybees (Dr Amy Paten)

2030 Networking (light supper)

2100 Meeting close

Steve O'Hearn Secretary (0408) 657 871

President's Report

Biosecurity update-
good news from QLD

SIG-native bees
contacts

Call for Committee
nominations by 30
March

Native bee news

Annual Field Day
pictures

Book reviews

Links to our websites

Classifieds

President's Report

Dear Members,

It has been a big month, with the **Canberra Show**, and our major **Annual Field Day**, showcasing backyard beekeeping to literally hundreds of people.

The **Canberra Show stall** was a big hit with the public, and congratulations to all of the winners in each category, and especially to **Toni Hogan** for taking out the **David Banks Memorial Award** for the most outstanding honey exhibit. I knew Dr Banks, he died in the line of duty protecting Australia's biosecurity, and it is fitting that our top award is in his memory. **Lyn Shiels** did a brilliant job in organizing the stall, and it was also heartening to see so many members volunteering to assist. It was a lot of fun seeing the kids clustered around the display hive.

The Field Day was a huge success, despite the crummy weather. We had over 460 people through the gate, and both the presenters and vendors were kept busy with enthusiastic and engaged visitors. Two things really stood out for the day - firstly the amazing and professional job done by our events co-ordinator **Stephanie Wong**. As with any major event, there were a thousand

things to organise, and she managed this while working overseas, getting us all organised and producing promotional material.

The second thing was how amazingly well the apiary had been prepared for the day. **Jeff Matzen** and **Frank Derwent** (ably assisted by **Alan Wade** and **Christine Johannides** deserve credit for a job well done. Without the work that they have done to check and prepare the hives we simply would not have been able to run the event like we did. Opening hives in gaps in the rain usually causes problems, but most attendees were able to observe practical demonstrations without needing to suit up. This was not an accident, or luck. It was the skill of our hive managers on full display, and I was really proud to show ACT Government MLAs around the apiary.

All of this doesn't come without a lot of work - we need enthusiastic members to put themselves forward to join the committee. Please consider nominating, many hands make light work, and most positions don't need an in-depth knowledge of beekeeping. **The call for nominations will go out soon, and these need to be submitted by 30 March.** Have a go - it is a lot of fun, and a chance to spread the fun of beekeeping as our pastime continues to grow. I hope that everyone had a great Christmas and New Year and that your hives are finally starting to put down some stores in the lead up to autumn.

Regards,

Cormac Farrell, President

Biosecurity update

The response to the incursion of Asian bees in Townsville moved into the proof of freedom stage on 28 February. While the numbers of staff working on the eradication response has reduced, key members of the team will be retained. It's expected the proof of freedom stage will take three years. No foraging Asian bees or *varroa jacobsonii* have been seen in Townsville since the destruction of the tenth nest in November.

Local beekeepers have been trained in checking managed hives by either alcohol washes, sugar shakes or drone brood uncapping, which will be ongoing throughout the proof of freedom stage. No further bulletins will be released, unless the situation changes.

(Taken from the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council report 2 March 2017)

[Latest varroa outbreak update](#) from the Australian Honey Bee Council

Special interest group on native bees

If you would like to participate in this group or make a suggestion, contact me at peterabbott@iinet.net.au or on 0421 227 315.

Peter Abbott
Native Bee SIG Coordinator

Call for Nominations

Like to do your bit for your club?

Why not nominate for a committee position?

Nomination forms are due in by 30 March 2017

See the Calling Notice for AGM nominations pdf or
or email enquiries@actbeekeepers.asn.au

Native Bee News

Native Bee Spotting

I've had an interesting summer season getting close-up and personal with our Canberra native bees, mainly in the Botanical Gardens (with a research permit), but also in my garden and elsewhere. I've collected over 50 species and will continue work on identifying them over the winter months. Native bee taxonomy is a tricky business and I am still a novice, but fortunately there is help from useful websites and willing experts. Native bee activity is getting quieter as we move towards winter, but if you see or photograph any, let me know.

The image (left) is a 5mm masked bee (*Hylaeus amiculinus*) on a bottlebrush. Centre and right images are the native bee homes at Jerrabomberra apiary



Our first attempt at making homes for native bees at the Jerrabomberra apiary has produced some encouraging results – the bored holes in wood have attracted resin bees (*Megachile* sp.) and a variety of wasps! Other potential homes will be tested in the next summer season.

Peter Abbott

Native Bee SIG Coordinator

Our Field Day - 4 March 2017



L to R: MLA Representative Chris Steele, Alan Wade and ACTBKA President, Cormac Farrell at the Field Day. MLA Caroline Le Couteur also attended the Field Day.

Left: Presenters for the Field Day were distinguished in their fields Dr Doug Sommerville and Elizabeth Frost, both from NSW Dept of Primary Industries, and Adrian Iodice, natural beekeeping pioneer.



Dr Doug Sommerville
Dr Doug Sommerville is the technical specialist for honey bees at the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI). At the Field Day, Doug will be presenting on essential beekeeping principles - perfect for beginners. He will also be sharing his expertise on how to choose a hive and selecting plants for a bee friendly garden. With 40 years of beekeeping experience, Doug has done extensive research in many aspects of beekeeping, including pollination and honey bee nutrition. Doug keeps over 100 hives and his knowledge and practical approach to beekeeping will appeal to beekeepers of all levels.



Elizabeth Frost
Elizabeth Frost is the Honey Bee Education Officer at Tocal Agricultural College (NSW DPI) where she develops and delivers a nationally accredited beekeeping course mapped to the Certificate III in Beekeeping. With a trainer's eye, Liz will guide Field Day participants through a thorough hive inspection and show beekeepers how to safely inspect larval frames to NSW Bee Labs. Liz will also be sharing her experience working with the 'Bee Informed Partnership' in the USA, where she assessed commercial migratory bee hives for a national survey on good beekeeping practices. Liz's enthusiastic and vocational approach to beekeeping will motivate beekeepers to run home to inspect their hives!



Adrian Iodice
Adrian Iodice is one of the pioneers of the Natural Beekeeping movement in Australia. After beekeeping with conventional hives for many years, Adrian travelled to Germany to study at the 'Mollifera Centre for Organic Beekeeping'. Adrian adheres to natural, practical and healthy natural sustainable beekeeping throughout Australia and will be bringing his passion and guidance to the Field Day, where he will present on the principles of natural beekeeping. The natural beekeeping movement is committed to restoring ecological integrity and focusing on the health of bees. It seeks to shift the mindset of beekeeping from honey production to a more holistic and harmonious approach that works with the bees rather than against them. Learn more about natural beekeeping with one of Australia's most respected practitioners.



Above: Dr Doug Sommerville presenting on essential beekeeping principles to a wet but enthusiastic crowd



Left: Alan Wade explains the activities of the native bee special interest group

Book reviews

Honeybee Democracy (2010) While we rely on groups to make weighty decisions, how often do they get it terribly wrong? **Thomas D Seeley's** scholarly book unpacks the complexity of bee swarm decision-making and demonstrates the similarities to primate brains, including our own. He makes a strong case for learning how to structure a decision-making group from the bees. He also tried it himself, when head of the Dept of Neurobiology and Behaviour at Cornell University, in the monthly faculty meetings. (And, by the way, the 'queen' is not a decision-maker!)

Australian Native Bees - A Practical Guide (2016)

Interest in native bees will undoubtedly increase with this new publication from the NSW Dept. of Primary Industries. It is an easy to read, highly illustrated, practical guide to Australian native bees, with a particular focus on bees in NSW. Anyone with an interest in bees will gain something from this guide. It starts with general chapters on bee biology and the role of bees in agriculture and in the urban environment. Subsequent chapters examine bee nests, bee identification, stingless bees and bee biosecurity. The numerous illustrations make it an easy-to-read publication, with something for everyone.

It is available from the ANBG bookshop or [online](#) for just \$35.



online

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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