

BEEKEEPERS.ASN.AU



Amateur
Beekeepers
Association
NSW

THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS
FEBRUARY • MARCH 2022

How to fix a
**LAYING
WORKER HIVE**

ASBESTOS ALERT
Check your
imported smoker

ONLINE AGM:
MARCH 12
DETAILS INSIDE

**HOW TO
PREPARE
WINNING
HONEY**

Native bees
An exciting
future

**CLEAN AND
BRIGHT!**
Laundry tips for suits
and veils



Amateur Beekeepers Association NSW

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The *Amateur Beekeeper* is the journal of The Amateur Beekeepers' Association of NSW Inc. It is distributed to members six times a year, in December, February, April, June, August and October. Contents are for general information only: members should always seek advice tailored to their individual circumstances. The editor will consider adverts from businesses relevant to beekeepers to run free of charge where they contain a special offer to ABA members. Please email editor@beekeepers.asn.au

Do you have a story or photo you'd like to be considered for the next issue. Send it in to editor@beekeepers.asn.au

President's letter



JUST AS WE give up on holding a face-to-face AGM, it looks like restrictions are about to end for most of us. If we'd known that was all it would take, we'd have planned an online AGM ages ago!

Whilst we know some clubs have been able to hold some events over the past two years, it's not been the case for everyone, and in some areas there's a whole "generation" of members who've never met their fellow club members.

So it's time to dig out the club's bee suits, and dust off whiteboards and projectors ready to trot along to your club meetings, and practice your social skills!

By now you will have received an email inviting you to attend the ABA's first online AGM. This has been a challenge to organise, but the upside is that by removing the travel, more members than ever should be able to attend. Click the link in the email to register for the AGM. This can be done in advance, so I encourage you not to leave it til the last minute.

Sheila Stokes, ABA President



Win an ABA keyring!

We'd love to know how many of our members have completed the FREE online Biosecurity for Beekeepers course (BOLT).

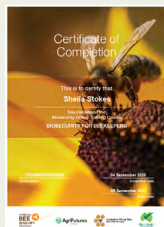
Upload your BOLT certificate to the ABA Portal before 12 March for a chance to win one of 100 free ABA keyrings.

HOW TO GET YOUR BOLT CERTIFICATE

- Go to honeybee.canopih.com.au
- Click Register and follow the instructions to access the BOLT course

ALREADY DONE YOUR BOLT COURSE?

- Log in at pha.canopih.com.au
- Go to My Learning Transcript
- Click the green certificate PDF



TO ENTER OUR DRAW

- Log in to the ABA Portal at beekeepers.asn.au/portal and go to the My Journal section
- click Add a New Entry, select Training, then BOLT Biosecurity for Beekeepers Course
- attach your certificate, and Submit.
We will also accept Certificate III in Beekeeping Pests and Diseases AHCBEK313 unit certificate

ABA AGM ONLINE

Date: 12 March @ 10am AEDT

Look out for details of how to attend our AGM

THIS WILL be the first time that we have held an online AGM.

Due to COVID, the meeting that should have been held in winter/spring last year was postponed. We were hoping by now we could have rescheduled a face-to-face meeting. But that wasn't to be. With the distances some members would have to travel and the health risks of large gatherings, we are instead holding a virtual event.

UNFORTUNATELY THIS MEANS THE INTERCLUB COMPETITION WON'T HAPPEN AT THIS AGM.

Instructions on how to join the Zoom meeting were sent to members on Friday, February 18. All financial members are invited to attend. You will need to log in using the email address we have for you on the membership system – that's the email account where you received your invitation. We will need you to register so only those entitled to vote can vote, and so accurate records can be kept.

Where two or more members have used the same email address in the membership system, we will be sending instructions on what they need to do.

NOMINATIONS FOR POSITIONS ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE ABA SECRETARY BY 5 PM, MARCH 4.

All positions are declared vacant at the AGM. Members of the current executive will seek re-election. Nominees must be proposed and seconded by a current financial member of the organisation. If the nominee has not served on the committee before, please include a brief background statement that can be shared with members prior to the vote.

ASK QUESTIONS AND PARTICIPATE

The President's report and the Treasurer's report will be presented at the meeting. You will have an opportunity to put questions via an online Q&A system during the meeting, and in an informal member forum after the AGM.

ALREADY UPLOADED YOUR CERTIFICATE?

Relax! You don't need to do anything – you're already in the draw!

We'll do a random draw after the AGM and send up to 100 lucky members their free keyring.

AGM

Proposal to change our name

Recently we surveyed ABA members about altering the organisation's name

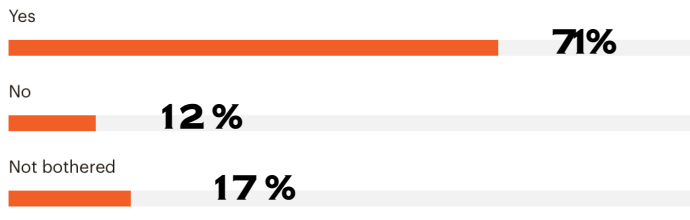
JUST five years ago the ABA was a lively affiliation of 20 clubs and 950 members – all in NSW. Today? We have 33 clubs and 4700 members spread along the eastern seaboard and into the Northern Territory.

It's obvious that a rich heritage helping small-scale beekeepers has served us well. But, with a growing base outside of NSW, is it time to refresh our name and showcase the way we operate today?

We asked all members for their views

The first question was simple: do you support changing the name to remove "of NSW" from the registered name? 980 members responded.

"Do you support changing 'Amateur Beekeepers Association of NSW Inc' to 'Amateur Beekeepers Association Inc'?"



The mood for change is strong!

88 per cent are for (71 per cent) or not fussed (17 per cent) about a change. Many who took the survey added comments. "Makes sense." "More inclusive." "About time."

For the 12 per cent against change, reasons ranged from: wanting to retain the reference to our beginnings; the thought that the majority of members are in NSW so it isn't necessary to change yet; and not wanting to become too generic by losing all reference to location.

Dozens of respondents suggested names they preferred. A common theme: if NSW is out, something to designate we are Australian needs to come in. A few wanted to ditch the term Amateur in favour of Recreational or Hobbyist.

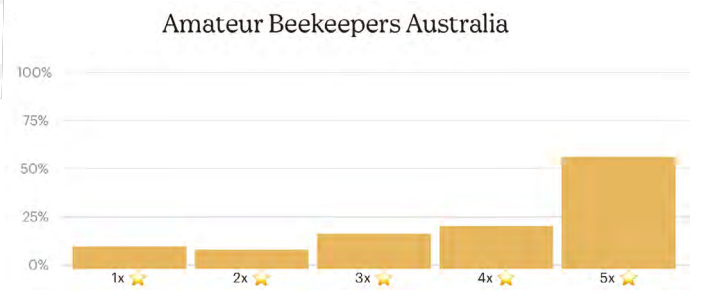
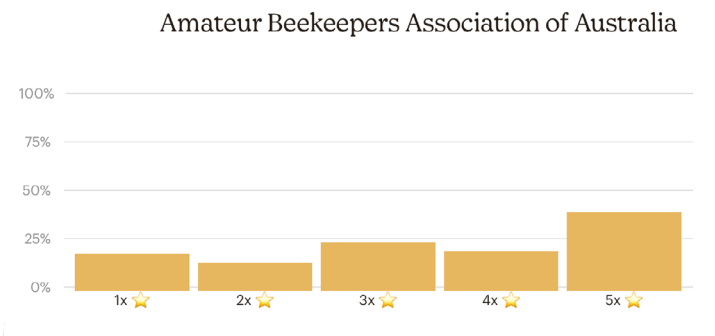
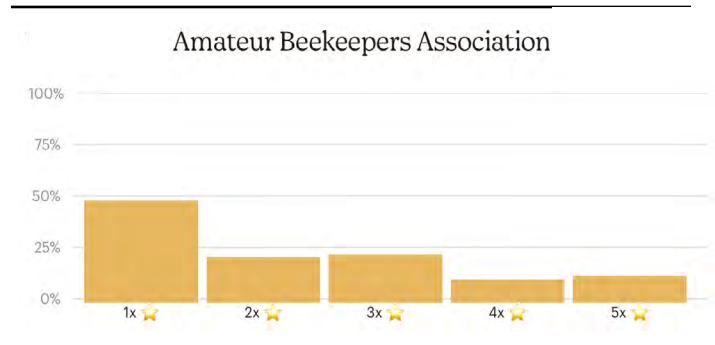
The upcoming AGM gives us the opportunity to formally endorse a new operating name. We organised a second survey to gather members' views on three candidates that highlight who we are and who we represent. The aim: to find a title that honours our past and our future.

THREE OPTIONS

The organisation is commonly known as 'the ABA', so there's a strong argument for a name that can still be abbreviated to ABA.

One option simply removes 'of NSW' (as we surveyed in the first call to members); one swaps NSW for Australia; and one simplifies the name to three essential elements. Everyone was asked to rate each of the three options on a scale of one to five stars.

The following charts show all responses, with the bars indicating the percentage of members awarding that many stars to each option.



Amateur Beekeepers Australia (the graph directly above) was much preferred by voters. Two in every three gave this a high or very high rating. Amateur Beekeepers Association was the least popular (nearly half awarded this just one star.) The remaining option had very mixed reviews.

RESULTS IT'S TIME TO CHANGE OUR NAME

THE FAVOURED OPTION:

AMATEUR BEEKEEPERS AUSTRALIA

SURVEY FAQs

Answering your survey questions

Here we answer the most common queries about changing our name

WILL IT AFFECT MY INSURANCE? The insurance available to ABA members already covers beekeeping and associated activities Australia wide. So nothing changes there. The cost (currently \$15 for individual third party cover) is down to the fact we can negotiate on behalf of dozens of clubs and thousands of members. (Five years ago, when we had a quarter of the membership, a similar policy offered through a different insurer cost up to \$85 per person.) While no one has a crystal ball to know what premiums will be in the future, our experience shows that a larger organisation negotiating insurance on behalf of many members can get a much better deal than a smaller organisation offering a much smaller chunk of business to an insurer.

CAN'T THE NEW NAME INCLUDE THE LOCATION OF MY CLUB? The proposal we're looking at here is to change the operating name of the umbrella organisation that supports all clubs and members.

The current proposal is to adopt the business name Amateur Beekeepers Australia as the operating name of the association, and to leave the registration as an incorporated association unchanged.

We saw from survey comments that some members are confused about the relationship between the ABA and clubs.

In essence: each club is its own legal entity, and chooses to affiliate with the ABA for the all benefits that connection offers. Individual club names are for their own members to decide.

WHY CAN'T CLUBS OUTSIDE OF NSW JOIN THEIR OWN LOCAL ASSOCIATION?

For many years NSW was the only state with a beekeeping association dedicated to the needs of noncommercial beekeepers. Other states and territories developed along different lines, with one association representing all beekeepers – commercial and amateur – in their region.

Recently, clubs outside of NSW have seen the advantages in aligning themselves with other recreational beekeepers. As such, some have asked to affiliate with the ABA and, after careful consideration, the ABA has welcomed them in. Currently several more clubs based outside of NSW have asked for information and are considering whether to affiliate.

AREN'T WE ALREADY NATIONAL? The ABA recently became a member of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council. So it does already represent amateur beekeepers in meetings and decisions of the peak body for beekeepers across Australia.

WON'T THIS ALL COST A LOT OF MONEY? We believe we can keep any expenses to a bare minimum. That's why we're not proposing a radically different operating name such as Bees R Us. (Thanks for the suggestion though). No multimillion dollar logo redesigns, outside consultants and new corporate uniforms here!

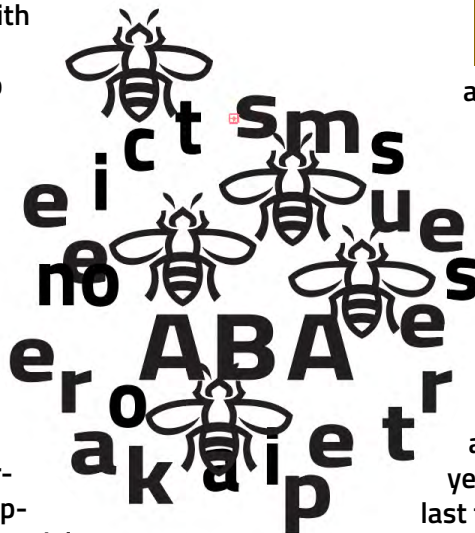
The immediate tasks would be to rework the logo and adopt this new design in all online materials. This work can be handled by volunteer executive with professional skills in the areas.

To avoid waste, all printed materials would be used up before reordering. Clubs using a version of the existing logo would be offered assistance to move to a new design, as appropriate.

The ABA executive has already sought advice on the best way to introduce a new name so as to minimise costs and tasks. By registering the new name as a business name and not changing our current registration as an incorporated association, the ABA and clubs will not need to change their constitutions.

IS ALL THIS REALLY NECESSARY? If you're in this camp, chances are you gave up on this article paragraphs ago. But it does matter to a lot of people, particularly members with a long connection to the organisation, and for many members outside of NSW. The two surveys we just ran received an extraordinary number of responses – both votes and comments. And the executive is very conscious that a previous attempt to change the name of the organisation 20 years ago left a mess that had to be reversed several years later. "Be careful. Remember the last time," was a pertinent comment shared by a supporter of change in this survey.

THANK YOU to all members who participated in our surveys. Your responses have led us to the point where we can take a proposal to the AGM that has the demonstrated support of the vast majority of the membership. We believe that **AMATEUR BEEKEEPERS AUSTRALIA** captures the mood of the membership and the role of the ABA in 2022 – and honours our rich heritage.





How to rescue a laying worker hive

Brian Window explains what to do when the workers in a queenless colony start laying eggs

The clearest sign you have laying workers is a number of drone cells spread over the brood frames. Large areas of drone brood and little or no worker brood can also be due to a drone laying queen, and the two cases are treated differently.

Drone Laying Queen

The brood should be carefully inspected to see if a queen is present or if there are worker cells among the drone cells. If you find a queen, the hive can be re-queened in the usual way using a caged queen after the original queen is eliminated.

Laying Workers

Usually this situation occurs in a hive where a new queen hasn't returned from her mating flight. With no queen pheromones in the hive (and no scent of open worker brood), a number of workers will start to lay. Of course, being unmated, they can lay only unfertilised (drone) eggs. The clearest signs of a laying worker situation, besides plenty of drone cells, are multiple eggs in the cells, often on the walls of the cell and not in the middle of the bottom of the cell. (Workers lay haphazardly and cannot easily reach the bottom of the cell to deposit their eggs.)

If a queen is introduced in a cage to a worker laying hive, she will be killed on release because the bees think they have a queen.

There are a number of recovery methods.

Open Brood Method

In this approach, a frame with brood at all stages of development (eggs, larvae and capped) is taken from another hive, and placed into the brood box of

the laying worker hive. This has to be done a number of times, spaced about a week apart, until the hive finally draws a queen cell. This queen has to hatch, mate successfully and start laying before the hive can be considered saved. This process can take a weeks, and the hive will be unproductive all this time. Inserting frames from other hives does also carry a disease risk.



Replacement Methods

These basically replace the laying worker hive in the apiary with a colony (a nuc or a single box) with a known productive queen and good bee numbers. The new hive could be productive within a short period.

The main concern when using the replacement method is to ensure that the bees from the laying worker hive do not kill your valuable queen when the hives are merged.

If the laying worker hive is weak and there are other hives in the apiary, it may be best to shut down the laying worker hive completely. The hive can be moved some metres away and all the bees shaken off the frames onto the ground. Remove the empty hive. The bees will make their way into the other hives. The replacement hive with the new colony can be placed in the location the next day.

If the new hive is in a matching box, it may be united with the laying worker hive by placing the brood boxes on top of each other with a sheet of newspaper with slits made with the hive tool be-

LAYING WORKER
This is a regular worker bee that, in the absence of a queen, begins to lay eggs. These eggs can develop only into drones. As the colony has no queen and no ability to raise female bees, it will dwindle and die out if a beekeeper does not intervene.

QUEENRIGHT
A colony with a fertile queen that is laying eggs

tween them. Put the queenright box on the bottom, with the queen excluder and paper on top. The bees will chew out the paper and become merged.

If the new hive is in a nucleus, the frames should be removed from the laying worker brood box and the nucleus installed to one side with the queen over towards the wall. The bees from the laying worker frames should be shaken off some metres away, and the best frames used to fill up the brood box.

Sometimes a dusting with talc over the frames is used to create more confusion among the bees.

SAFETY ALERT:



Asbestos found in bee smokers

Beekeepers are urged to check any bee smoker imported into Australia for this deadly material

CHRYSOTILE ASBESTOS has recently been detected in the bellows of some manual bee smokers imported from China.

The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities had previously issued a national safety alert for asbestos detected in the insulation component of imported battery-powered electric bee smokers. Now the warning has been extended to manual bee smokers as the bellows of some may be constructed with a woven cloth-like material which includes a high concentration of asbestos.

Not all imported manual smokers contain asbestos in the bellows. Some are constructed with leather, plastic or other material. Buyers, however, should be cautious and check with the retailer or supplier to find out exactly what the material is.

In electric bee smokers, an insulation board situ-

EXPLAINED

Slumgum

What is it good for?

Slumgum is the name for the dark sludge left over from refining beeswax – a combination of brood cell linings, dirt, propolis, pollen and bee matter. It's heavier than wax and so will sink to the bottom of a container of setting wax. It's tempting to simply throw it away. But like any product of a hive, it can be put to good use.

Firelighters: Slumgum will contain some beeswax. Soak paper, card or pine cones in the slum gum or use it as a coating. Alternatively, tip a small amount of slum gum onto newspaper and wrap into a parcel. Take care when using: wax ignites easily.

Compost: Slumgum can be added to compost, a worm farm or buried in the garden. Don't leave it exposed as the smell will attract bees. It breaks down and makes great fertiliser for vegetable gardens.

ated between the handle and the canister, may have been made with bonded asbestos.

In Australia, the importation, manufacture, supply, sale and use or reuse of asbestos and asbestos-containing products is not permitted, except under very limited circumstances. However, some countries around the world continue to manufacture and supply asbestos-containing products and materials. In addition, some supplier countries may classify goods with low levels of asbestos as 'asbestos-free' or 'non-asbestos'.

Various makes and models, all of a similar nature, are advertised in online shopping websites by sellers based outside Australia and are cheap to buy. Consumers and commercial importers are advised to avoid suppliers of these products.

If you suspect you have a bee smoker with asbestos, do not tamper with it without professional advice.

Damaging the structure of the components may release asbestos fibres into the air.

[Click here](#) for further information and the contact details of state workplace safety authorities.



4th AUSTRALIAN Bee Congress

CELEBRATING HONEY BEES

8 - 11 June 2022

At the heart of a healthy Australia

Rosehill Gardens, Sydney, NSW

www.australianbeecongress.com.au

HOW TO . . .

Clean your bee suit

YOU DON'T WANT to clean your beekeeping suit only when it's dirty. Over time, bee venom and pheromones can absorb into the fabric. Any allergic reaction to bees can increase with prolonged exposure to venom. Plus you want to remove all the sweat, wax, propolis – and dirt.

These directions work for most beekeeping suits and jackets – sting resistant/ventilated or cotton material.

How often you need to wash a suit varies with use and environment. Most beekeepers will need to wash their protective clothing **twice a season (or at least once a year)**. Washing it too often will wear down the fabric, so you don't want to wash it weekly.

There isn't any reason why it can't be washed in a washing machine when proper care is taken. You can totally hand wash, but most machines have enough settings that they can make the job easier.

Make sure all the pockets are empty. That includes papers or notebooks, scraps, knives, tools, queen cages, bits of beeswax, lucky coins or any other small pieces of equipment that you usually have hidden in your pockets. You don't want these gumming up the works, especially the beeswax.

Unzip the veil if it can come off. The screens on some veils are not the most durable so treat them with a little extra TLC. Handwash rather than use a machine. Those "delicate" garment mesh bags will work well to protect "fencing" style veils. Or you can put your veil in a pillow case, tied shut.



Set it aside to dry separately from the rest of the suit. You don't want to get a hole in the screen and learn about it in the middle of a hive inspection.

Before removing the veil, **take a video or photos of how it is attached** to the top. This will make it easier for you when putting it back. Zippers are not as intuitive as they should be.

Before putting clothing in the washing machine, **pre-treat the stains**, including propolis stains. It won't get all the propolis out, but pretreating will certainly help. You can do this with toothpaste or pre-treatment products.

Machine washing the jacket or suit by itself will probably help to get it cleaner than if you wash it with the rest of the laundry. **Use the delicate or gentle wash cycle.** Remember to hand wash the veil.



Article from foxhoundbeecompany.com
Used with permission

Use warm – not hot – water, so you don't damage or shrink the fabric. Use fragrance-free soap or just try it with water only. You'll be surprised how much dirt that water alone will get out.

Don't add fabric conditioner, overly strong detergent or other products. Bleach can be very helpful, but honey bees are very sensitive to smell, so the less fragrance, the better.

Don't use a dryer. The dryer could shrink the fabric. Plus if you have any stuck-on wax or propolis, the heat of the dryer may melt and spread it in the dryer.

One of the best things you can do for delicate clothes like beekeeping suits and jackets is to put them on a hanger and **air dry until they are completely dry**. The ventilated material will dry very quickly this way.

If you're storing your beekeeping equipment, don't store it wet in the autumn because it will grow mildew and be absolutely disgusting the next time you use it.

Zip it all back together and you are good to go.
At least until the end of next season.



WEB STORE

Shop online and support the ABA

For all your ABA merchandise, essential biosecurity equipment and more, go to beekeepers.asn.au/shop



Beekeeper's Log Book 2021/22 \$15

Want one for each hive? Grab some spare copies now We have limited stocks -- when they're gone, they're gone. A5 size. 60 pages plus cover.

2020/21 edition: last copies available. Special price \$5



Enamel and metal keyring \$10

Featuring the ABA's distinctive bee, framed by the outline of NSW.

On the back, there's room for you to add your ID -- perhaps your beekeeping registration number or a trusty contact. 40mm across

Our popular warning signs suit backyard beekeepers. 200mm by 265mm. Made from lightweight UV-stable material similar to that used for real estate signs. With eyelets for easy fixing to a wall, a tree, a post or gate.

Text reads: CAUTION. THIS AREA HAS BEEHIVES. THERE ARE MANY BEES ABOUT. BEES CAN CAUSE A PAINFUL STING. IF YOU ARE ALLERGIC TO BEE STINGS YOU MUST NOT APPROACH THE HIVES AS A BEE STING CAN BE FATAL **SIGNS \$10 EACH**



Sugar Shake Kit \$15

Contains all you need to perform a sugar shake test to check your bees for mites. Includes jar, mesh lid, scoop, sugar, instruction sheet and link to demonstration video

Enamel lapel pin \$7
Featuring the ABA bee.
Pin with butterfly clip



ABA Bucket Hat \$15

Enzyme-washed cotton bucket hat. In navy with a contrasting sand coloured trim/underbrim, and embroidered logo in yellow. Or sand with a navy trim/underbrim and embroidered logo in black. Available in two sizes



Canvas tote \$15

Quality cotton canvas tote with logo on one side, plain on the reverse. Reinforced shoulder straps. 420mm x 420mm.



AFB brood sampling kit \$4

Make sure you have a brood sampling kit at the ready every

time you open your hives for inspection.

Contains instructions, glass slides, mailers and a laboratory form – all you need to send suspect brood samples off for scientific diagnosis. Versions for NSW/NT and QLD. (The laboratory forms are different for each state.)

Please note: laboratory testing fees are payable. However if you suspect AFB and are a registered beekeeper in NSW, NT or QLD, your state veterinary laboratory will not charge for this service.



Classic Enamel Pin \$6

Biosecurity Manual for Beekeepers \$3.50

This is your essential guide to local pests and diseases, produced by Plant Health Australia. Available through our shop at cost price. 64-page A4 printed manual.



“**HONEY PRODUCTS** promote many beneficial human responses due to bioactive constituents, including anti-bacterial, anti-microbial, anti-viral, anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, anti-ulcer and anti-atherogenic activity.”

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS INTO NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PREMIUM AND MEDICINAL HONEY. AGRIFUTURES AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 2021

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Toad at the hive

Report gross, greedy amphibians

BACKYARD BEEKEEPERS and community members in peri-urban areas of the Hunter, Greater Sydney, South-East, and North Coast regions are asked to keep a look out for cane toads and report their findings. Cane toads love to eat bees, so beekeepers can assist by looking out for them around backyard hives.

The Toad at the Hive observation event will run throughout the month of February.

In the summer when the nights are warm, bees cluster at the front of hives for ventilation. Cane toads are more active in this season and at night they will sit at the entrance of the hives and feast on bees.

Register at <https://forms.office.com/r/cBFQ1tzgMJ>

Observe your hives around 9.30pm or later, as this is when toads search for food. Use a torch (a red beam is best as bees may fly at white light). Wear your protective gear if you are more comfortable.

Report it! If you see a toad, it is important NOT to kill it as it may be a native toad or frog. Take a photo and use the FeralScan app or NSW DPI online form to report your sighting.

You don't need to have bee hives to get involved!

You can look in your own backyard, open areas, or local waterways (freshwater).

Even if you don't find any toads, reporting the absence of a cane toad is an important part of the 'Toad at the Hive' blitz. Knowing which areas are cane toad free helps in the management and control of cane toads within NSW.

Download the FeralScan app from the App Store or Google Play, select ToadScan and follow the prompts. If you prefer not to use an app you can report online at dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/sighting or call the Invasive Species Unit on 1800 680 244. (Email: extension@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

Where to look: Hives are particularly vulnerable if located near fresh water or in yards where toads can shelter during the day. As night encroaches, they move out from their sheltered position to find food – this may also be the leftovers at the dog or cat bowl.

The time you can commit is up to you, just a night here or there or several nights throughout the month if you wish. Cane toad or native frog? Learn about the differences between native Australian frogs and cane toads at all life-stages to help you to make a positive ID when you are out toad-busting.

Cane toads can cause devastating impacts on our communities, native wildlife and ecosystems due to their ability to spread to new areas, use limited natural resources and to poison animals that try to eat them. Cane toads are poisonous internally and externally and have no natural enemies.

By taking part in this community surveillance activity, you are helping to protect the environment from the impact of exotic pests.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, go to: <https://bit.ly/PEBN-ToadHive2022>



NEWS

A strategy for native bees

The native bee 'industry' now has its own strategic plan to guide research and development

Australian native bee honey production is estimated to have an industry value currently of less than \$1 million. By 2030, this value is expected to be \$3 million to \$5 million, with native bee honey retailing for \$200 to 450 per kilo.

The supply of colonies for beekeepers and the provision of pollination services for growers are where the highest returns in the value chain currently rest, according to Michael Beer, general manager of business development for AgriFutures Australia.

[The Australian Native Bee Strategic RD&E Plan \(2022-2027\)](#) just released by Agrifutures, notes that the native bee industry in Australia is at the cusp of potential significant growth, largely due to wild and managed pollination by stingless, social and semi-social species. Industry growth is also likely to come from the high value of native bee honey, the potential uses and value of propolis, and increasing community interest in the value of having native bees in our environment and communities, and for general wellbeing.



Australian Native Bee
Strategic RD&E Plan
(2022-2027)

January 2022
by Olivia L. Reynolds and Michael Robinson



Download this free report for a wealth of interesting information about Australia's native bees, the threats to their welfare, and ways in which they can contribute to our agricultural sector. agrifutures.com.au/product/australian-native-bee-strategic-rde-plan/

A banner for the 3rd Australian Native Bee Conference. It features three circular images: a honeycomb, a native bee, and a bee on a yellow flower. The text "3RD AUSTRALIAN Native Bee CONFERENCE" is prominently displayed in white on a dark background. Below this, a red bar contains the dates "11-12 JUNE • 2022" and the location "SYDNEY • NEW SOUTH WALES".

3RD AUSTRALIAN Native Bee CONFERENCE

11-12 JUNE • 2022

SYDNEY • NEW SOUTH WALES

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIVE BEE ASSOCIATION INC invites beekeepers, farmers, educators, industry leaders and researchers to share knowledge at the 3rd Australian Native Bee Conference. Attendees and speakers will discuss how to increase understanding and unlock the potential of our native bees, a valuable but underutilized natural resource.

To register, apply to speak, contact the ANBA, or find out about the programme, social events, sponsorship, trade show and competitions, go to anba.org.au/anba-conference



COMPETITIONS

Showing honey at agricultural shows

It's easy to improve your chances of winning. Bruce White shares tips

THE KEEN INTEREST shown by the public in the exhibits at agricultural shows is rewarding for all competitors. Winners should also get much satisfaction from the prize cards, and these can be used to promote the sale of honey at farmers markets.

This article aims to help beekeepers prepare honey and give guidance to stewards or judges involved with apiculture contests.

Harvesting the honey



The first important step is to select your best combs. Look for newly drawn white combs that are fully capped. If all cells on a frame are fully capped the honey is at its maximum density.

Hold frames up with a bright light behind the comb and inspect for any stored pollen. If pollen is present, either reject the comb or cut out the pollen cells prior to removing the honey. Pollen must not be mixed with show honey.

By using a bright light you will also be able to tell if the honey is all of the same floral type.

The best way to remove the honey for showing is to press it from the cells. Uncap the combs with a clean knife or other suitable instrument and force the honey from the cells. This minimises air entering the liquid honey.

The other method is to extract the white combs using a small hand extractor. This will avoid the risk of overheating the honey. The extractor should be made of food-grade stainless steel or food-grade plastic.

If propolis is on the frame, remove it before placing the frame into the extractor. When pouring the honey into the settling container, pour it down the inside

surface to minimise air bubbles getting trapped in the honey. Honey is hygroscopic and can absorb moisture from the atmosphere. If possible, use a small bucket or plastic ice cream container so it can be filled to the top. Ensure the lid is airtight.

Allow the honey to settle for several days at a temperature of 37°C. This will allow any air bubbles, wax or other matter to rise to the surface where it can carefully be skimmed off.

After the settling

With the honey at about 37°C, pour it down the edge of a cone-shaped nylon strainer. Nylon straining material is available from beekeeping suppliers and can be sewn into a cone shaped bag so the point of the strainer almost touches the bottom of the container.

The best container for the straining process is a plastic bucket with a gate at the bottom or an ice cream container. After straining the settled honey carefully remove the strainer.

Allow the honey to remain in the straining container for about one week.

After a week, pour the honey into your show jars by opening the honey gate on the bucket or cut a hole in the bottom of the ice cream container. Vent the lid before pouring, then pour the honey down the inside edge of the jar to minimise air bubbles entering the honey.

All jars in an entry should be filled to the same level for uniformity, with the honey just not touching the inside of the lid when the jars are level.

The selection of jars is very important. Hold the jars up to examine them before filling to ensure there are no flaws from the glass moulding, and cull any with imperfections. Equally important is the cleaning of the jars with a quality glass detergent.

The jars must comply with the show schedule (usually 500g glass round jars).

Store the filled jars in a closed cardboard box with partitions so the jars don't touch each other. If stored in the dark, the honey colour is unlikely to change in the short term.

Granulation can be inhibited by storing at temperatures lower than 0°C.

Liquefying granulated honey

This must be done with extreme care to avoid overheating the sugars and darkening the honey. Use warm air or a water bath so the honey is kept



below 43°C. It is preferable not to liquefy already granulated honey for liquid class entries.

Classes

All honey in the same entry should be of the same blend or floral type.

Judging Qualities

Based on the Sydney Royal Easter Show point score, some variation to the points may occur at other shows

Liquid Honey

	MAXIMUM POINTS
FLAVOUR	25
DENSITY	25
COLOUR	25
AROMA	10
CLEARNESS	10
BRIGHTNESS	5

Flavour Honey should be palatable – free from “tang”, off flavour, fermentation and acidity. If the honey is for a floral type class e.g. Yellow Box, the honey must be characteristic of that floral type.

Density Honey varies in density. The highest points are awarded to the highest density. Density can be determined either with a refractometer, by rating the buoyancy of a glass rod near the honey surface, or rating the rising of an air bubble by inverting the jar.

Colour At the Sydney RAS, classes are for light, very light, medium and dark. A Pfund honey grader can be used to grade honey by colour.

With very light honey, the lighter the colour the higher the points awarded. Other classes are within the prescribed colour ranges.

Aroma Honey with a pleasing aroma scores the highest points. Fewer points are awarded for honey with offensive aroma or no aroma, or those with fermentation, or showing they have been overheated. Aroma varies according to the floral source, hence honey from Clover, Stringybark and Yellow Box has a distinctive bouquet.

Clearness Honey must not have a dull or cloudy appearance, it should be clean and have a sparkle.

Brightness Slightly warm the honey in the jars before showing to increase the brightness. This will remove any minute crystals and give the entry more brilliance. The honey must be at room temperature for judging.

Chunk Honey

This is a jar of honey with a cut out section of capped comb placed into the liquid honey.

APPEARANCE	25
COLOUR	25
FLAVOUR	20
DENSITY	20
CLEARNESS	10

Prepare the honey as for liquid honey showing except you need to select a comb of honey as you would for showing a frame of capped honey.

Using a hot knife, cut out a section of the comb after first pulling out the wires in the frame that held in the comb foundation.

The comb section of honey should fit into the jar through the lid opening, touch the bottom of the jar and, at the top, sit so it just misses touching the lid.

The comb honey and liquid honey should be the same colour and floral type.

Cut out the section of comb and allow it to drain over a grid i.e. wire queen excluder. Pieces of wax should drain away so your exhibit has no particles of wax present.

Granulated Honey

The general requirements are similar to liquid honey. Of major importance is the texture of the granulation and firmness of set.

EVENNESS OF GRAIN	30
FLAVOUR	30
FIRMNESS	30
COLOUR	10

Evenness of grain

Classes can be fine or course grain. In the case of fine grain, the granules should be even and almost indistinguishable to the palate and tongue. Floral types such as Lucerne and Clover have natural fine

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grains. Course grain floral types are usually Eucalypts.

To achieve even granulation, 10 to 15 per cent of the selected granulation honey, called "starter", is mixed with the selected liquid honey you wish to granulate. Mix the starter thoroughly at 18°C to 24°C with the liquid honey until the whole mix is the same colour and consistency and incorporating as little air as possible.

Leave the mix at 14°C for 12 to 36 hours. Before it sets firmly, the honey should be poured slowly into the show containers, pouring down the inside of the jars to prevent air bubbles. Store at 14°C so the mix will set in about three weeks.

Best results are obtained if the granulated honey is in firm condition just before showing.

Flavour

The flavour will be determined by the floral source of the starter and liquid honey used in the mix.

Firmness

The mix should set firm but be easy to spread. The starter used will determine this characteristic.

Colour

The colour should be off-white to cream. This will be determined by the starter and liquid honey used.

Creamed Honey

Use a fine grain starter, or save some of the previous batch of honey you creamed. The point score is as for granulated honey.

Mixing the starter into the liquid honey is done in such a way as to add air to the mix.

Creaming machines are available from beekeeping suppliers. Dough mixing machines or motorized mincing machines can be used.

Don't use a regular kitchen mixer: the honey is too dense and the motor may overheat. With a dough mixer, beat the honey until it won't turn any whiter. Or pass the honey through the mincer or a commercial cream machine until it is white as you can get it.

Comb Honey

Frames and section are best drawn above the brood chamber with the hive fitted with a queen excluder. You don't want comb that been used for brood. A queen excluder also reduces the amount of pollen in the comb or section. Ensure frames and sections are correctly assembled and fitted with foundation.

Select colonies that leave an air space under the cappings. This gives the cappings a whiter appearance. Avoid taken frames or sections from colonies that leave no air space, or those that collect and deposit a lot of propolis as this could stain the cappings

Remove sections and show combs that have been on a heavy honey flow as soon as the whole frame or section is completely capped. This prevents discolour-

ing from bees walking over the cappings.

Hold up each frame or section with a light behind it. Cull ones with pollen.

FULLNESS	30
COLOUR OF CAPPINGS	30
EVENNESS	20
GENERAL APPEARANCE	20

Fullness

Highest points are awarded to combs or sections that are well drawn out.

Colour of cappings

Cappings should be whitish in colour.

Evenness

Cells should be even, with no depression on the surface. Cappings should be the same colour as each other, indicating the honey inside is from the same floral type. Some section classes may indicate light or dark honey. If not, light honey is preferred.

General Appearance

Clean or sandpaper wooden components to remove any stains. Frames must be shown in a bee-proof wooden display case with glass or perspex sides.

For sections, use food wrap, cellophane, perspex or glass sided cases over the section to make it bee-proof.

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Do you have skills and some spare time to help run the association? We'd love to hear from members who are keen to lend a hand either on a regular basis or when on special projects.

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