

# The Waggle

Newsletter of the Gold Coast Regional Beekeepers Inc.

*Furthering knowledge in Beekeeping by assisted learning and practical experience*

[www.gcrb.org.au](http://www.gcrb.org.au)

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*Welcome to the December 2020 edition of The Waggle*

- **President's Chat**
- **Beehive Inspection Report 21 Nov**
- **Bunnings Sausage Sizzle Update**
  - **A place for hives**
- **News: Wax Rendering & Transparency for Beekeeping**
  - **Committee Members**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> December**

**8:30 hive inspection**

**10:00 coffee & tea**

**Vietnam Veterans Complex**

**18 Leagues Club Drive, Nerang**



## Presidents Chat

Tis the season to be jolly, well I do sincerely hope that you are feeling some Jolliness as we enter the final throws of this historically amazing year. Our amazing little bee club has shone bright and I feel grateful to all our members who have contributed in ways to make good things happen in our space.

An indication of this is that members are still putting their hands up this close to Christmas to help with vacant club roles. Thank you to Julie and Kathy who respectively have taken up the membership and newsletter roles within the club, their enthusiasm we will all benefit from. Drew has been burning the candle late into the night taking the lead role in tidying up our club Constitution to get it into a more accurate depiction of what our club currently requires.

Late last month I had the pleasure of introducing our new club Secretary "Windy" to the club, as I have always said, the Secretaries position is the "Engine Room" of any club, so to have a member who is willing to dedicate the time and energy to the role is fantastic for the club. Windy brings experience and ability beyond the Secretaries role so the committee will benefit from his input.

I had a meeting a number of weeks ago with the President and Vice President of our other local Beekeeping club the "GC Amateurs" to discuss ways in which we could collectively work together in 2021 to add value to our members and the local industry as a whole. We came up with three key initiatives that we agreed to investigate further with the desire to implement next year. I look forward to being able to announce further information with regards to them soon.

If you as a member have something to add please reach out to myself or someone on the committee as we are always looking for input from members both positive and negative as that is how we grow as a club.

On behalf of the committee I would like to wish all members a happy and safe festive season and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible for our last 2020 club day on the 19<sup>th</sup> December.

Greg,

**The "Appy Apiarist"**

## Beehive Inspection Report 21st November 20

We had a very good roll up to the hive inspections before the meeting on Saturday. It was great to see several new beekeepers with their hands in the hives getting practical experience. Lots of good questions and discussion took place during the inspection which we all learnt from.

As usual the hives didn't let us down and we took 33 frames of honey off. Three of those were from the flow hive. This should return about 95 - 100 kg of honey to the Vets.

Because we have been taking so much honey off over the last few meetings, we have let ourselves get a little behind with our brood inspections. Next meeting, we will dedicate one team doing a brood inspection and will continue that for the meetings following. Any members who want to learn more about brood inspections you're welcome to have a hands-on practical experience with the opportunity to ask any questions you have and listen to the discussions that will take place. As we all know brood inspections are a vital part of keeping a healthy hive so very important that all members are confident in how to conduct a brood inspection and the things you should be looking for.

See you on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 😊



## Bunnings BBQ – Sun 29 Nov 20 – Report

The fundraising BBQ held at Bunnings Nerang on Sun 29 Nov raised \$612.93 for the day. While this is down on previous events it is still a good result for the club and will allow us to purchase future equipment. Several factors were in play on the day including it being the weekend of Black Friday, which means slow foot traffic at Bunnings.



I would like to acknowledge the following members for sacrificing their time to assist on the day:

- ❖ Peter Handy
- ❖ Errol Harris
- ❖ John Polley
- ❖ Drew Maywald
- ❖ Fiona Fernie
- ❖ Allan Cunningham
- ❖ Greg Foster
- ❖ John Walton
- ❖ Hanna Li
- ❖ John Crawford

By the way – did you know, each volunteer is entitled to a free coffee from Bunnings!  
Now, that is a TREAT!

See you at the next Sausage Sizzle.

### Looking for a place for hives??

Kieran O'Callaghan of Parkwood has 9,000sm that backs on to hundreds of hectares of bushlands.  
Looking for a beekeeper who is honest and reputable. Call Kieran on 0412 920 404, for more information.







## Wax Rendering using Solar Wax Melter

Disclaimer – The old and bold of the Club have probably been doing this since time immemorial but there are enough new members who may not know or understand the process of melting bees wax using a solar melter. As a further disclaimer this is my first year of using a solar melter and I am still learning.

So, what is a Solar Wax Melter? It is usually a box with a glass top, a tray or sieve, and something to collect the wax in once it has melted. There are solar melters made from old Styrofoam boxes (ask your local green grocer), a sheet of glass, a sieve and an ice-cream container to collect the wax. My melter is home built out of plywood with a double-glazed glass lid. Internally it has a steel tray that will hold at least two of my Slovenian frames (if required) or two sink sieves to hold the cappings or wax blocks. I use the deep take-away food containers to collect the melted max and other fluids i.e. encapsulated honey.

The first picture here shows the raw cappings from the October rob of the club hives with some previously melted wax and dead bees included. A word of warning – do not add water to this mix and then leave overnight in a small space – it will start to ferment and the smell will go through everything. Luckily for me I left it in my large shed but with a lid on the bucket, so the first whiff when I opened it would likely had me over the limit. After draining the water from the mix I started putting it through the melter.



You will need a sunny day to ensure the melter works effectively as, according to Wikipedia, beeswax has a relatively low melting point range of **62 to 64 °C**. If beeswax is heated above 85 °C discoloration occurs. However, using a digital thermometer in melter I found the wax didn't start melting until the thermometer read above 95°C with the melter rarely getting over 110°C. Be warned though, the flash point of beeswax is 204.4 °C. The next picture shows the melter in action. This is running some of the cappings and previously melted wax through a double sieve using the sink sieves and some fly screen wire. This method catches all of the dead bees and around 99% of the other contaminants while

letting the wax and other fluids through. Another word of warning – the wax, other fluids and any metal parts in the melter can be extremely HOT and will burn you, especially as you try to lift the collection containers out.

The third photo shows the results after the first rendering. As you can see the other fluids are at the bottom of the container while the wax is at the top. The wax took about 90 minutes to solidify before I could drain the other fluids off. The bottom of the wax will be quite sticky and have contaminants embedded in it. I found that a quick rinse under clean water will get rid of the stickiness, and at that point it is ready for sale. However, to get the maximum price for the wax, currently \$17/kg, I put the wax through the melter again but this time I replace the flywire with chux cloths. The micro fibres of the chux strain out the last of the



contaminants.

This photo shows the wax after a second rendering. I poured the wax from my normal collection containers into commercial moulds which are 500gm capacity. I then left the wax in the moulds overnight and in the morning, it just took a gently tap for them to 'pop' out.

So, from start to finish it took a couple of days but the results are well worth it in that it resulted in 4.5kg of top-grade wax being sold to finance further purchases for the club for use by members. I will admit I did get burnt fingers and my shed was rather sticky for a few days after, but the lessons I learnt and the satisfaction I got from doing this certainly out way any inconveniences I suffered.

As with everything there are pros and cons to using a solar wax melter with the biggest pro being it costs absolutely nothing to operate the melter. The biggest con to using a solar melter is that you need hot, sunny days and the time to monitor the melter so the collection containers do not overflow.

If any new members have any queries about solar melters, or Slovenian hives, I am quite happy to have a chat.

Yours Aye  
Steve 'Windy' Hill  
"Non apis inde tulit, non Victus"

## Beekeepers welcome transparency

The research was welcomed by industry players such as Kim Fewster — a fourth-generation beekeeper based in Muchea — about 50 kilometres north of Perth.

Mr Fewster said the lack of regulation around quality and labelling highlighted the need for more transparent traceability systems.

"We get asked all the time: 'How do I know it's real?'. Well you don't, you have to take the beekeeper at their word based on their reputation," he said.

"But with better quality assurance systems in place, when that question comes up, we'll say: 'You can get it tested anywhere in the world, if it's not pure honey, it's not from us'."



Fourth-generation beekeeper Kim Fewster says a lack of regulation highlights the need for more transparent traceability systems.

Beekeepers hoped that establishing a collection of detailed information over a large sample size would also fast track the development of a new standardised testing model for Australian honey products.

"Our overseas customers are very interested in the origin and provenance of our honeys," Mr Fewster said.

"If we can scientifically verify information about our honeys in a way that is internationally recognised, that gives our customers a lot of confidence that what they're paying for is what they get."



### Tools to prove honey quality

Two years ago, research found that one in five Australian honey samples were adulterated — meaning the honey had been mixed with other non-honey substances — a claim that was disputed by the industry.

Mr Muir said it was important that industry had the tools to prove the authenticity of its honey.

"We've had these allegations made in the past and we've not been in a position to counter claims of adulteration," he said.

"We know that the honey that we produce is clean and green, but to actually prove that was the problem we had a few years ago.

"We're giving industry the ammunition that when someone makes a claim, as happened a few years ago, that we have the science to disprove it."

Posted 31 July 2020 ABC News

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The club would like to thank Rachael & Vern for their generous support

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Monday - Friday [ 8am - 5pm ]  
Saturday [ 8.30am - 12pm ]

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**Beekeeping Supplies**

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Wishing you, your families, friends and bees a lovely Christmas Season!