

# BEE BIZ NOVEMBER 2019

The Newsletter of the Northern Rivers Amateur Beekeeping Association Inc.

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## President Report

Hi fellow members,

I hope those of you that have been caught up in the recent bush fire events have come through unscathed. I trust you rescued your bees and moved them to safer ground.

You will note we have moved the location of the Xmas party to Rocky Creek Dam. I hope the area won't be affected by the bush fires between now and the end of November.

The dry certainly is affecting honey production big time. I had a request recently for 100 kg. from a bee keeper in Brisbane. I rang a few people who I thought may have some stock – but no, everybody is leaving what little honey they have for the bees to eat.

I wish you all a rainy Xmas and a cool new year.  
Best wishes Jamie

## Secretary Report

It is a pleasure to announce that Barry O'Connor has agreed to be the new editor for the newsletter, starting in the new year. He will bring a welcome new approach to the publication, and we should all support his efforts with material.

The committee has decided to keep the NRABA membership supplement the same as in 2019 at \$5 per member. The membership fee for the ABA has been set as \$30 (with early bird discount to \$15) for the 18 month period. The cost of the optional personal third party insurance for up to 100 hives has been set at \$20, the same as in 2019. These charges cover 18 months, in order to change from the calendar to normal financial year.

Memberships can be paid after the 1<sup>st</sup> December, and must be paid by the 31<sup>st</sup> December to get the early bird discount (go to [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au)). If you have problems with the site accepting your payment, contact the ABA membership officer Ana Martin ([membership@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:membership@beekeepers.asn.au)) for assistance.

There are a number of members from near the border and north of the border who are in the club to access the low cost public liability insurance policy. With the Gold Coast joining the ABA next year, it is anticipated that such members will transfer to the Gold Coast. There is also a new Far North Coast Beekeeping Association being formed to cater for beekeepers north of us. Members can chose which club they wish to join on the ABA website, [beekeepers.asn.au](http://beekeepers.asn.au).

The committee has been discussing changes to the constitution to be put to the membership at the next AGM, probably at the end of February 2020. A discussion paper about these changes is attached to this newsletter, which will be the last for 2019. The next newsletter will come out in the middle of January 2020.

## Update on last field Day

The last field day at Mongogarrie was a tree identification day, where members could see the common eucalypts in a forest environment and learn of their honey and pollen supplying potential from an expert beekeeper, Geoff Manning. There were also a few hives belonging to Brian for the keen beekeepers as well as beginners to examine.

After morning tea, the hives that were nearby were examined quickly for the benefit of our beginners, with the overall result that they were healthy, had plenty of stores and in fact were bringing in nectar. Brian explained that he kept the four hives there because they supplied high quality honey (iron bark?) that he and his friends like.



Typical Hive Inspection Photo. ( recognize Col and Geoff)

There are few sources that explain the details of the complex field of honey and pollen sources in the Australian bush. Much of the information does reside in the heads of beekeepers, particularly old beekeepers, but it is never written down- it vanishes when they die. Some authors, like Clemson, scratch the surface, but a lot remains to be documented. The new book by Doug Somerville of the DPI seems to be a major advance, and the club has ordered a copy for the library. ( It would be a wonderful present for any beekeeper, if you want to drop a few hints among family, but expensive at \$175).

The tree identification walk/ride started off on the top of a ridge, dominated by spotted gums with occasional grey gums, grey (or gum-topped) box and grey iron bark, all good trees for honey and/or pollen. Geoff Manning identified the trees and explained how species such as spotted gum can vary in their performance in different parts of the country.

After driving down a rough ridge that had all those sitting on the backs of utes wishing they had walked, the terrain changed to alluvial flats, which had some large broad leaf tea trees or paper barks, and forest red gums and iron barks. There

were flowering small leaf tea trees and some flowering silky oaks in these areas.

The procession came out at the olive grove, where there was a spotted gum just starting to flower. In the olive grove was a pig, who demonstrated the saying “happy as a pig in mud”.



.Photos by Barry O'Connor

The owners of the property, Maria and Angelo Leo, were most hospitable, invited all into their home, and entertained the members with cold drinks and stories while they ate their lunches. You meet the most wonderful people when you put beehives on private properties.

## **Flowering Report**

At the last outing we had a walk about looking at the trees useful to bees.

Depending on how you look at it, the most valuable could be Spotted Gum because of its excellent quality pollen. In our region it seldom yields nectar. The species on the south coast in contrast is a reliable nectar source. Grey Box on the other hand is a good nectar source, they go together like a ‘horse and carriage’. The main problem though is Spotted Gum flowers very irregularly maybe eight or ten years between flowerings, it also holds its bud for around two years. Grey Box is more regular meaning that it flowers more often without good pollen.

Also present was Grey Ironbark, another excellent honey tree, but no pollen. So it does rely on a Red Gum flowering at the same time. More likely than the above, because they both flower every year or two.

Yellow Stringybark/White Mahogany was flowering as it still is elsewhere. My elsewhere was an excellent budding, but here it seemed to be scrappier. A useful tree, often giving pollen to back up Grey Ironbark, and on occasion nectar.

There was some Rough Barked Apple showing bud, not a complete budding, very similar to what I see around my trips to town. It is starting to flower, good pollen but seldom nectar. They are called apple because if you cut into the tree with an axe it looks like an apple. Forestry bods regard apple as an indication that the country was probably grassy woodland originally. As well as that the small size of the majority of trees would indicate what we were looking at was regrowth.

Those who did not attend missed out on Brian's idea of a short walk. However we were made most welcome by the family who owned the property.

Closer to home you may be seeing some Black Tee-tree flowering around town, both in gardens and as a street tree. It does give a bit of nectar, but is not really important as there are not usually enough to be significant. In odd places along watercourses there can be useful amounts.

Geoff Manning

### **From the hives**

The two loads of 16 hives each have been moved out from Rous Mill area to the Bungawalbyn area without mishaps. The hives were reduced to a brood box and one nearly empty super to make them easier to move. In the process, the brood boxes were all inspected for AFB and a laying queen; They all came up clear in both assessments (aside from the one hive that is in the process of requeening itself). The good result with the queens could be attributed in part to the small amount of swarming that occurred this year, and in part (maybe) to the nicely coloured fronts of the brood boxes.

Out at Bungawalbyn, there were no obvious flowering trees, but the hives have been bringing in a reassuring flow of nectar despite the drought. It is quite difficult to see the flowers of some eucalypts when you are in a forest and the trees are tall. (Geoff Manning would say you should be carrying binoculars.) The second supers were put on immediately after the move.

Brian Window

### **Venues for field days**

There is always a need for volunteers to host a field day, and we need some for 2020. It can be at your place or at a hall nearby, as long as some beehives can be made available to show beginners

### **Stings**

All beekeepers are reminded again to read the article by Jim Wright attached to the last newsletter about the effect of bee stings and the building up of allergies. It is important to recognise the symptoms.

Here's a little advice on harvesting honey:

The Man who performs this Operation, will save himself best from the Bees, if he has no Hair on his Head, and that his Head be rubb'd with Vinegar: but if he should happen to be stung, he may apply a Copper Half-penny to the wounded part, and holding it there for a Minute or two, it will prevent the swelling, or any After-pain.

Source: Bradley, R. (1727). The country gentleman and farmer's monthly director, containing necessary instructions for the management and improvement of a farm, in every month of the year. With several particulars relating to the improvement of bees, never before made publick.

Supplied by Geoff Manning

### **Prize in Lismore Show**

Congratulations to Tony Lamont, who won the prize sponsored by the NRABA at the Lismore Show (North Coast National). The prize was a hive tool, engraved with

*N.R.A.B.A. Prize  
A. Lamont  
Lismore Show 2019*

It was awarded for the exhibitor in the small producer category who got the highest point score for any grade of honey.

### **AFB Awareness Month**

Well, we have finished this month, and the secretary has received no new requests about sending boxes up to Steritech. Could it be that for some reason, the epidemic of this disease has abated? It is not a big enough sample to say that definitely, but we can hope. The DPI should have the data for different areas.

### **Steritech Trip**

The secretary has been notified of a small number of boxes requiring sterilisation at Steritech. It takes 40-60 boxes to fill a pallet and get the best economics. Anyone with any number of boxes to go should notify the secretary.

## Services Directory

Summary of available products and services

Paul Davey (hive care)(Mullumbimby) 0491 608 272

David Fairhall (queen cells, mated queens, nuclei) (Lismore) 0444 513 771

Leland Eglington (Steel beehive stands) (Alstonville) 0455 555 136

Stephen Fowler (nuclei, hives, all sorts of bee equipment, buys wax) (Alstonville) 0418 412 621  
Michael Koenen (Warre hives)(Alstonville) 0414 621 975

Merv McDonald (nuclei, hives, hive care) (Alstonville) 0439 166 016

Rob Stone (mated queens, nuclei)(Casino) 0487 598 105

Ross Wood (mated queens, nuclei)(Grafton) 0421 817 710

Corrections and additions welcome

## Field day Sunday November 24th 2019

The next field day will be on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November, and will be our Xmas Get-together, the last meeting of the year

From the time when the club was first formed in about 1992 up until about 2002, this Xmas dinner was held at Rocky Creek Dam. There were these huge camphor laurel trees dominating the picnic area, and the club members could drive in under these shady trees and set out the dinner. Then in about 2002, the area was regenerated, with the killing of the camphor laurels, the defining of where you could drive, and the planting of rainforest trees. The result was no shade. So the club shifted the Xmas get-together to Evans Head for a few years.

Nearly 20 years have passed, and the trees have grown! So we are shifting the Xmas picnic back to Rocky Creek Dam for this year and possibly longer. It is still not as shady as 20 years ago, but nothing stays the same forever.

For those who are not familiar with the reserve, it is a very peaceful location alongside the dam. There is an easy walk down to the spillway, and back up the old watercourse, with turtles and platypus in the pools. There is plenty of lawn for children and adults to run around on.

The club will provide all the food and tea and coffee. Club members should bring .

- Shoes and a hat (perhaps sun cream) for the walk,
- Chairs for sitting on,
- Picnic kit including cups, cutlery, plates for eating and drinking from
- BYO alcohol or soft drinks
- Nametags
- An item of non-perishable groceries (no honey!!) to be put into a basket to make up a hamper to be raffled.

Morning Tea 10 am. Coffee, tea. etc with panatone and stollen

Lunch 12 am Australian Ham, chicken, tofu dish, and salads, followed by Xmas pudding with custard or cream

Snacks including nuts, sultanas, grapes and watermelon will be provided. Some cordial will be supplied for any children.

The raffle will be held at the end of the day, and will have the hamper as first prize, and some bee frames and boxes as second and third prizes. Tickets for the raffle will be \$2.

Members of the NRABA/ABA and their immediate families are free; guests are welcome at a cost of \$5 each.

**Those wishing to attend have to let the secretary know the number coming with them by Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November. (0466 790 736 or [northernrivers.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au](mailto:northernrivers.secretary@beekeepers.asn.au) )**

### *Directions*

From Lismore, head to Dunoon, and follow the road through Dunoon towards Mullumbimby, turning off to Rocky Creek Dam.



## CONSTITUTION CHANGES PROPOSED FOR AGM 2020

The committee intends to seek approval at the next AGM probably in February 2020 for some changes in the NRABA constitution. At the 2019 AGM, the constitution was updated from the 1984 model to the latest model supplied by the Department of Fair Trading, with a modification to change our financial year from the calendar year to the usual financial year.

The proposed changes are to eliminate the “misinterpretation” of the constitution which caused so many difficulties in 2018-2019. It is proposed that the club adopts the constitution produced and adopted by the Bega club; this constitution is recommended by the ABA for all the new bee clubs that have been formed. The changes from our existing constitution are in the section 2, titled Membership Generally. After the section 2(3), we propose to add the following sections 2(4) and 2(5).

**(4) Ordinary membership is available to all beekeepers and people who are interested in beekeeping.**

**Ordinary members:**

**(a) on becoming a member of the association, become a member of the ABA**

**(b) must pay an annual association membership fee**

**(c) must pay an annual ABA membership fee**

**(d) have voting rights.**

**(5) Associate membership is available to persons who are not beekeepers who are interested in attending club activities as observers. An associate:**

**(a) must pay an annual club associate fee**

**(b) does not have voting rights**

**(c) is ineligible for appointment or election to the committee**

**(d) is not entitled to member discounts offered by the association.**

These clauses have the effect of making sure that all ordinary members are members of the ABA, and hence pay their fair share of the expenses of running the club, and the effect of creating associate members with no voting rights in the NRABA or the ABA, to be used for people such as spouses to show that they are part of the club.

There is a small loss in autonomy by our club in adopting these changes. At present the club can disaffiliate from the ABA by a resolution of the Committee. The changed constitution would require a General Meeting as well to change the constitution to remove the references to the ABA. In practice, if the club was considering disaffiliation, such a major decision should go to a General Meeting anyway. So the loss of autonomy is small.

The removal of conflict over membership and the creation of associates make these changes well worthwhile. There are also administrative gains, in that the fees and membership register for associates will be handled by the centralised Pay Subs Online system.

Brian Window, Secretary

## MINUTES NRABA COMMITTEE OCTOBER 2019

Time 5 pm Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October

Place Room 5 Lismore Workers Club Members present B Window, J Mudge, K Virgen, Greg Booth,

- Apologies Ray Smith, Paul Towner
- Minutes of Committee meeting September 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Matters Arising
  - Treasurer on leave, so some matters deferred.
  - Secretary has purchased Epien and Claratyne.
  - Jamie Mudge volunteered as a suitable speaker on insecticides for Wollongbar Garden Club..
  - When Foundation movie; no action to be taken.
- Correspondence
  - Secretary reported that he had sent an email to Rhys Nelson suggesting he consider starting a desensitisation routine, along with a copy of the Jim Wright article on such matters. The article will be put in the newsletter.
- Reports
  - Treasurer on leave
  - September Field Day income raffle \$69, meals \$100, attendance 20+
- Agenda Business Items
  - (1) Field Day
    - Program
    - October; the proposal to hold a tree identification day at a eucalyptus forest at Mongogarie (or elsewhere) was accepted, with Geoff Manning as expert. Secretary to arrange.
    - November; there was preliminary discussion about holding the Xmas get together at Rocky Creek Dam; Secretary to explore whether it can be booked.
  - (2) The following were accepted as new members. ( moved Greg Booth, s Kevin V; passed)

Vanessa Palamara, Richard Howard, Barbara Joblin, Alison Taber, Graham Gillard, Brodie Gibbon

Membership officer to let Vince know, secretary to let new members know they were accepted and to welcome them.
  - (3) Constitution
    - Secretary foreshadowed altering the constitution at the next AGM to create Associate members ( with no vote, and non beekeepers), and to make it compulsory for members to join the ABA. The Bega club constitution, which is recommended by the ABA for new clubs, was basically what will be proposed. It was suggested that the wording should allow members of other clubs affiliated with the ABA to become associates.
    - Secretary pointed out that while including the ABA in the constitution does complicate matters if the club decided to dis-affiliate, it did not change the status from an affiliate to a branch of the ABA.

The new constitution requires a majority vote to change, not a 75% vote like the old constitution.

(4) Newsletter

-Circulation; Secretary suggested the Jamie Mudge contact Col Rankin ( not a member) to get an email address while he contacts Reg Crouch ( member) for an email address, so the club does not have to mail out any newsletters.

Secretary expressed surprise that he had not received from the previous editor a list of addresses for the four \$5 memberships that had been issued.

-Advertisements; committee members agreed with the services directory approach to listing advertisers.

(5) Brochure and Membership

Committee members to consider the brochure further. Secretary pointed out again the virtues of people going through the web site, reducing the workload for him, the treasurer and the membership officer.

(6) Planning for Xmas Party

There was discussion about having it at Rocky Creek dam. Secretary to explore further. It was suggested that people could be invited to bring the sweets or cake.

Generally there is no requirement on members to bring food.

- General Business

-Refund; It was agreed to refund the president the remainder of the cost of his cancelled airfare to go to the ABA forum in August ( \$ 116.25; the ABA refunded the other part), after he sustained an injury that prevented him from flying. (Moved BW,s GB; passed)

-Complaint; Secretary complained that he had not been refunded for three field days, totalling well over \$500, partly due to treasurer absences and resignations; he expected the new treasurer to sort this out ASAP after he returns from leave.

- Meeting finished at 6,15 pm

- Next Meeting

Time 5pm 4<sup>th</sup> November

Place Lismore Workers Club

President Jamie Mudge

Secretary Brian Window