


# THE BUZZ



The official newsletter of the Gold Coast Amateur Beekeepers Society Inc. Est. 1979  
 Website: [gcabs.net.au](http://gcabs.net.au)  [Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeping Society](https://www.facebook.com/GoldCoastAmateurBeekeepingSociety)



**Varroa Destructor  
hits Australia!**

**See page 4 for what  
it means for us!**

## DATE SAVERS

*The Gold Coast Amateur Beekeeper's Society inc. welcomes new members, existing members and visitors to attend our meetings. Non-members attending will be asked to make a gold coin donation.*

### MEMBER MEETINGS – July & August

- **Sun 17th July 10am – noon** Topic: Swarm Prevention & Management. Presenters: Kevin Tracy of Bee Zone Apiaries & Kathy Knox, GCABS Secretary & Education Officer. Location: GCABS clubhouse.
- **Sun 21 Aug 10am- 12:30pm** Venue: 'Mariefields', 229 South Pumpenbil Rd, Tyalgum, NSW. This farm visit to the beautiful property of John and Carol Quayle in the scenic Mt Warning Caldera, was originally scheduled in May but had to be postponed due to heavy rain. Topic: Checking hives for Spring build-up and alcohol wash for Varroa mite detection. Bring your PPE (Beesuit/veil) and a chair. SUBJECT TO VARROA RESTRICTIONS BEING LIFTED - SEE NEXT MONTH'S BUZZ.
- **Sun 18th September** - Member meeting, details TBA.
- **Sun 16th October** GCABS Annual General Meeting (AGM) at GCABS clubhouse.

### OTHER EVENTS

- **Thurs/Fri 7-8 July** - On-line workshop: "Anti-counterfeiting your product's packaging for hive to table delivery". See page 7 for details
- **Wed 13 July 6:30pm** -- Beyond Beginners- beekeeping seminar with Kevin Tracy. Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/beyond-beginners-beekeeping-seminar-tickets-331613243137>
- **Aug 6-7 – BOTANICAL BAZAAR** – a popular annual Garden and Sustainability Festival at Nerang Country Paradise Parklands. We plan to have a stall there so please volunteer a couple of hours (or longer!) to help run it. Contact Ann on 0402 996 101 or Leonie on 0428 177 450.

## From GCABS President



*Of course the big news this month has been Varroa Destructor infiltrating Australia via the Port of Newcastle. Whilst there has been a certain inevitability about the fact that this day would come, I think we can all be incredibly grateful for the level of preparation that has gone into readying us for this day and the measures being taken to stop it in its tracks. As I write, whilst looking hopeful, the final outcome of these efforts is still unclear.*

*In the meanwhile we can only continue to look after our bees as we always do, and whilst many of our members who are across the border in NSW have precautionary restrictions placed upon their activities, those in Queensland do not. Still, we should ALL be prudent in what we do. Kevin Tracy has written a great article for us on page 4 to ensure we are informed and know what best practice is for us as amateur bee keepers.*

*We will be following Kevin Tracy's advice (page 4) but otherwise leaving our hives alone until late July, just external inspection to make sure things look "normal". Hope everyone has a great month, and we'll see you at our July meeting, which focuses on swarm prevention and management. Given we had an early swarm season last year, and how important swarm prevention is to help stop varroa spread, this is very topical for us!*

*Cheers... Colin Allen - President*

## 2022/23 Membership Renewals

There has been a delay at the ABA getting these processed, not helped by resources being pulled to the varroa problem. 2022/23 membership renewal emails will be issued ASAP and we have been assured that insurance coverage will continue in the interim.



*A warm welcome to our newest member:  
Adam P.*

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All welcome to attend our online Committee meetings via this link: [meet.google.com/fyq-ujco-kth](https://meet.google.com/fyq-ujco-kth) Next meeting Mon 1st Aug 6:30 pm.

## July Honey Flora - S.E. Queensland

*Submitted by Jim O'Regan*



Black Sheoak. Blue Gum. Brisbane black Wattle. Brisbane Golden wattle. Broad-leaved Banksia. Caley's Ironbark. Dusky-leaved Ironbark. Forest Boronia. Glycine. Golden Candlesticks. Grey Ironbark. Mountain Coolibah. Mugga. Paperbarked Tea-tree. River Sheoak. Scribbly Gum



*Left: Hairpin Banksia - Taken at Binna Burra last month by Colin Allen, Centre: Qld Blue Gum, Right: Brisbane Golden Wattle*

## June Member Meeting Review

by Noel Grummet

Over 80 enthusiastic members and friends were captivated by the presentation by Stuart Anderson, co-founder of Flow Hives, with son Cedar, as in a very entertaining fashion, he explained the journey from initial desire to today – a 20 year journey with lots of lessons learnt along the way.

Flow Hives came from a desire by Cedar to take the heavy lifting and mess out of honey harvesting – a goal we would all say amen to. Accustomed to inventing (mostly unsuccessful) items together, the father-son team spent 10 years working out the basis for the system and, wary of banks and other traditional funding options, learned about Crowd funding, such that upon its launch in 2015, the initial target of \$1m was exceeded (to the tune of a total of \$12m, a record for the Indigogo platform), with 25,000 orders from 100 countries around the globe, the new enterprise achieving that delivery from concept to customer in 12 months. Stuart said that they now have 180,000 customers around the world.



Stuart outlined many learnings along the development phase and since. For example, the exporting of so many frames around the world meant that wax foundation could not be included, neither could they find a supplier who could meet the demand for orders.

Currently, Flow Hive has 50 employees at their northern rivers headquarters and have 2 factories manufacturing the hives and frames in Brisbane, with a smaller operation at their headquarters. Stuart and Cedar were not setting out to be disrupters, but reactions from traditional beekeepers were often bitter, deprecating or wildly inaccurate. They continue to innovate the product to be more environmentally friendly and to address issues raised by customers.



Education in keeping bees has been a continuous focus from the beginning with their online [www. TheBeekeeper.org](http://www.TheBeekeeper.org) course now having more than 70 sessions utilising experts in various fields from around the world. Subscriptions to this online tool have also resulted in more than \$360,000 being donated to global bee projects, focused on pollinator habitats, research and remediation.

A lively Q&A followed, including issues around cleaning, harvesting, design changes, freezing and irradiation impacts, unauthorized copies from China, bees avoiding the Flow frames; ants, with many individual questions fielded by Stuart after the formal presentation.

It was a very entertaining and informative morning about a local Aussie invention that has taken the world by storm, encouraging many more people to get involved in beekeeping and reducing some of the occupational challenges of traditional beekeeping. Surely a plus for the planet.

# Varroa Destructor in Australia!!

Bees and beekeepers in Australia have enjoyed a Varroa destructor-free environment for decades despite its incursion into most other countries. The general opinion has always been that this would not always be the case, so the discovery of Varroa destructor in sentinel hives on 22nd June in Newcastle was not exactly a shock, yet it is a massive concern. We hope it can be eradicated quickly before it causes major devastation to Australia's honeybee industry, but we have to act wisely and quickly.

Here follows a piece written by our own Kevin Tracy of BeeZone Apiaries. He prefaces it by stating that these are his personal views and are not necessarily those of anyone else. He represents no organisation, association, club or training organisation other than BeeZone Apiaries.

## Varroa Destructor has Arrived

Kevin Tracy



### Do Not Panic!

Beekeepers worldwide have been dealing, managing and coping with Varroa destructor for a long time now. We have the benefit of their experience, knowledge and research. Your individual decisions and behaviour affects all beekeepers.



The arrival of Varroa destructor is not the end of beekeeping, but it requires far greater management skills than we have practiced before now. Varroa destructor has been, until now, an exotic pest to us in Australia.

### Know your enemy

For a long time it was thought that V. destructor fed only on the haemolymph ("blood") of the Honey bee and was not a true parasite. It was proven by Dr Sammy Ramsay that this is not the case. The mite, not insect, feeds on the fat bodies of the bees in such a way as to cause permanent damage. (Dr Sammy Ramsay et al - "Varroa destructor feeds primarily on Honey bee fat tissue and not the haemolymph" and/or view Dr Ramsay on YouTube)

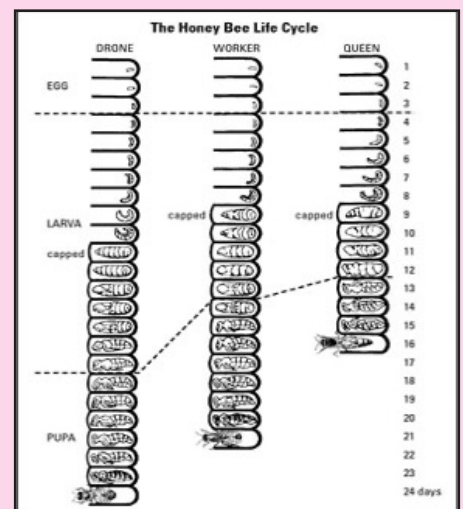
A visual inspection of your colony will not readily reveal the mite as they are "buried" on the underside of the bee's abdomen tucked between *sclerites* (segments).

### Be totally disciplined in your monitoring

Sugar Shake was the nice way to monitor. No bees were harmed, so we thought. However, with the actual discovery of V. Destructor beyond Sentinel hives, it is time to be more efficient and carry out Alcohol Wash as the method for detection. Yes, bees die in the wash. (Bee Aware Fact Sheet – Alcohol Wash pdf and <https://beeaware.org.au/archive-pest/varroa-mites/#ad-image-0> ). Report your results to the appropriate authority whether positive or negative.

### Know the life cycle of Honey bee Drones

Drone cells and larvae are preferred by the mite because of the longer time for the drone to hatch. The mite can still reproduce in worker cells. Varroa mites are also Vectors (spreaders) of Honey bee viruses. Eg Deformed Wing Virus (DWV), Parasitic Mite Syndrome.



Management strategies are many and varied. They include “organic” and chemical treatments. To summarise thus far:

1. Become Varroa destructor alert
2. Manage our hives “professionally”
3. Be as informed/educated as possible

### What else can we do right now?

Be aware of and alerted to “Official Updates” only. There are a lot of rumours and hearsay, not to mention Instant Experts. In Queensland there are no orders in place as yet with regards to hive manipulations. (This is subject to change).

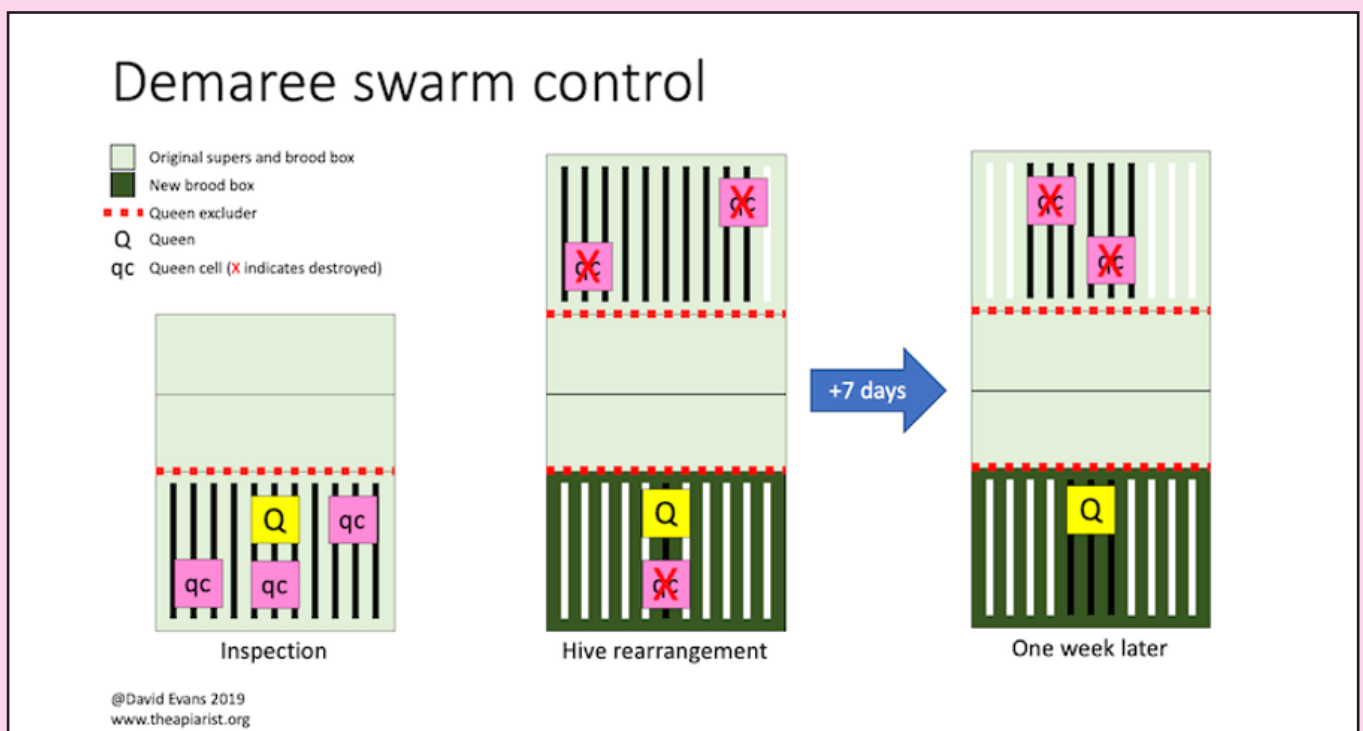
Get into your hives. I suggest all of your hives, and carry out your Biosecurity inspection. Do a bare minimum of Alcohol Wash in each and every one. Get help if you need it. (Bee Aware - <https://beeaware.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Alcohol-washing.pdf> file also YouTube videos re Alcohol Wash for mite detection)

Yes, this is a big ask, but there are hives in NSW being destroyed based on a zero tolerance within the perimeters and with low percentage testing, even when tests indicate no mites. I am aware of the Protocol to destroy colonies, but does it give a genuine picture of the actual mite population across colonies? We will not discuss feral hives...



### Swarm Management is VITAL

*Varroa destructor and the phoretic stage* – “By riding on adult honey bees, Varroa mites can be rapidly spread to new areas due to the swarming, robbing and drifting habits of honey bees.” – Bee Aware. Where we are able to carry out Swarm Management, we should do so ASAP. There are ways to perform swarm management manipulations without increasing hive numbers eg Demaree Method. The key words for Swarm Management are TIMING and SPACE



## PLEASE NOTE:

Dr Kathy Knox and I will be giving a presentation with the focus on **Swarming and Swarm Management at the July 17th Meeting of GCABS**. I do hope that you can come along. The more people who care the better the future of Beekeeping in Australia. More than ever with our Beekeeping – If we are not in this together, we are not in it at all. As I said at the start, your individual decisions affect all beekeepers. CHOOSE WISELY.

## Australian Honey Bee Industry Association (AHBIC)

AHBIC is your peak industry body, which fights for Australian beekeepers. You can view the minutes of their June AGM [HERE](#).

## My Australian Bee Congress experience

*Amanda Eid*



Firstly, I have to say, “How amazing are bees.”

Sorry, I am a little excited; I think spending four days swamped in bee information at the 4th Australian bee congress has that effect.

From a beginner’s point of view (mine), I did not know what I was in for. I went to learn more about the animal I am quickly growing more in love with. It did not disappoint; I got that and a whole heap more.

The congress opened my eyes to the many facets of the industry. From fascinating science research projects to the latest technology in helping beekeepers keep their hives safe and healthy. All of the biosecurity talks were very informative, and it was great to hear about our support as beekeepers to help control pests and diseases to keep them at bay.

I really had no idea how big the bee industry is.

However, one of the things that stood out to me was the resilience of our Australian beekeepers. We were lucky enough to hear from a few beekeepers that took the stage to share their experiences as commercial beekeepers. Through their chats, I realised they have been through a lot, from the impacts of the international honey trade to the



*GCABS Kathy Knox speaking at the congress*



effects of the current challenging weather situation. It was an eye-opener and brought newfound respect for the beekeepers themselves. Overall, it was great to see bee lovers from all over Australia come together and support one another in an industry with a bright future. Bring on the next bee congress !!

## Bee Education

Are you interested in joining a University of Qld citizen science project to gather data on stingless bees? See the link below to find out more.

<https://biological-sciences.uq.edu.au/engagement/native-bee-citizen-science-project?fbclid=IwAR0URQ-GAo1R6pYLCnLGfcHBChYNbARfrXr21VuKp5ogZsfvndT63tZ-o>

## Anti-counterfeiting your product's packaging - online workshop

This industry initiative is a part of the B-QUAL grant project awarded in 2020 for Delivering quality assured Australian Honey Bee Products.

Protect your label and avoid forgery. Copying labels is easily done - with a well-thought out strategy your brand is safeguarded.



Judgement of a honey product is largely based on the information supplied by the label on the jar. The connection of the label to the honey within the jar is the work of traceability and chemistry, but what happens when the label is tampered with and the two do not align?

This workshop will guide you through simple techniques to identify your risk, learn about the ways you can protect your label and create a solution for customer trust in your brand.

Held on-line in two three-hour sessions, on Thursday and Friday, this workshop will enable you to work with the tools provided to reach your solutions. Confidentiality is respected, as the goal of the workshop is for you to arrive at a solution you can implement.

This workshop is for all Australian beekeepers packing their honey, or packers packing beekeeper honey. Please register for both days for the complete workshop.

DATE: Thursday 7th and Friday 8th July 2022

TIME: 10.30 am – 1.30 pm EST

FREE REGISTRATION: Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/anti-counterfeiting-your-products-packaging-for-hive-to-table-delivery-tickets-356191878497>

COST: \$50 per person (\$25 per day), for non B-QUAL and non B-TRACE members. Free for B-TRACE members

## Good news story

Logan's dyslexia made it difficult for him to keep up in the classroom. But when a teacher's aide suggested beekeeping, a switch inside him flipped....

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-26/how-beekeeping-gave-logan-dyslexia-a-different-way-to-learn/101135738>

## JOBs in Your Bee Yard this July

Winter is the time for maintenance & to prepare for the spring build up & the start of swarm season.

- Minimal inspections. Choose warm, sunny, windless days and be time efficient.
- Prepare for Swarm Season which could start this month. Attend the Swarm presentation at our member meeting on 17 July to further educate yourself.
- Prepare clean spare hive boxes with sufficient frames and foundation, lid and base in readiness for catching swarms.
- Clean, repair, paint and replace current hive ware as necessary.
- Ensure your bees have sufficient food stores.
- **If you notice any signs of varroa mite, AFB or other reportable biosecurity events with your hives, report to Biosecurity Queensland as soon as possible.**

With regard to NSW beekeepers, here is an excerpt from the latest Biosecurity directive as of 1st July 2022:

You must not touch or move your hives unless to feed using an approved internal feeder, or to inspect for mites by one of these approved methods: sugar shake test, alcohol wash, brood uncapping. You are now allowed to feed hives using an internal feeder. This feeder must allow only bees living in the hive to access the feed. You cannot introduce a feeder that has been used for feeding bees in the last 10 days. You must not leave sugar or sugar syrup in the open where it can be accessed by bees from other hives .

The ABA is working directly in liaison with NSW DPI and AHBIC so please check all emails sent to you as ABA members in order to keep up to date with this dynamic emergency situation.

You can also check this DPI website for the latest news [HERE](#).

## Nerang Country Paradise Parklands & Native Plants Qld Newsletters

You may or may not be aware that as members of GCABS you are now also automatically members of NCPA, the wonderful community facility where our clubhouse is located. They publish a monthly newsletter, including a contribution from GCABS. You can read/download last months newsletter by clicking [HERE](#). You can also see the latest Native Plants Qld (NPQ) newsletter [HERE](#).

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