



**Amateur  
Beekeepers  
Association**  
NSW MID NORTH COAST

# The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Mid North Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association

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## February 2020 Newsletter

### MNC ABA President's Report

Hello Everyone,

It was wonderful to spend some time in New Zealand this month, but even more wonderful to return to a green countryside, with water everywhere. Unfortunately, the wet weather caused the cancellation of last month's meeting.

The fires have been terrible and the impact has spread across individuals, communities, infrastructure, wildlife, habitats, flora for bees etc. These impacts will be felt for a very long time. Then, to top it off, the welcomed rain has caused flooding, severe erosion and other losses in areas. Some pockets of the coast, not impacted by fires, saw beehives doing quite well, with some harvesting of honey occurring. I was lucky enough in this regard.

At the time of writing this report, with the constant wet weather, I have not had the opportunity to check my coastal hives again. However, I suspect that they may have gone backwards. I also expect a "beetle explosion" and possibly some chalkbrood because of the warm, damp conditions, coupled with possibly weakened hives. I will let you know at the next meeting.

Members should have received their new, blue, membership cards, with a logbook and Biosecurity Manual. We all need to be recording our hive activities, whether you use the logbook or another system is up to you. Please take the time to read and understand the Manual. Our meetings will help further your understanding and obligations.

Some commercial contacts that I have are receiving \$6.50 kg for bulk honey and about \$16 - \$17 for wax. You may think about the value of the honey that you have lovingly produced, bottled and labelled for sale.

The Apiarist's Association has a Conference at Tamworth in April. At the end, on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April, the local branch will host a special field day for the likes of us and anyone else interested in bees. These are traditionally very worthwhile to attend. Cost is usually nothing due to local donations but may have a minimal charge this year given the harsher times.

I have been asked to do a presentation entitled "what is happening here?" (or words to that effect). I would love some photos as "discussion starters" to help me make it informative and interesting. I have some but

### Next Meeting

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2020

**Time:** 10:00am for 10:30am start

**Address:** 503 Roses Rd  
Gleniffer

**Contact:** Merridy 0421 690 403 or  
Warren 0413 497 356

President:  
Secretary  
Treasurer:  
Membership Officer:  
Public Officer:  
Vice Presidents:  
Committee:  
Publicity Officer:  
Librarian:

Allan Thomas Ph: 0428 712 587, email: [beekeepingworkshops@gmail.com](mailto:beekeepingworkshops@gmail.com)  
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Newsletter Editor: Mal Banks  
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Bio-Security Officer: John Carroll  
Technical Advisor: Dasha Miller  
Ass. Librarian: Elsbeth Haenggi



# The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Mid North Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association

would like more from which I can select. So, if you have a clear photo of something good, bad, interesting, puzzling, related to bees/beekeeping, I would be very appreciative.

The ABA has asked for some honey samples from the various branches for an ongoing AFB testing trial. Three of our members are doing this. More information at the next meeting.

Talking of AFB, a very enthusiastic, diligent, recreational beekeeper on the Tablelands has recently discovered AFB in his Flow Hive. A slide has been sent off for confirmation. He is “crushed”. Some points that I would like to make are: that it can happen to the best of us; we need to be able to recognise it and know what to do if we end up with it in our hive(s). We should also know practices to minimise the risk of contracting and spreading it.

I have a two-day beekeeping course shortly at Merridy’s, on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March. Contact one of us if you are interested. There will be another at Tamworth on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March.

Regards

**Allan  
President**

## Membership and Fees

There has been a fantastic take-up of members renewing their membership online and taking advantage of the early bird discount.

The vast majority of members from 2019 have renewed their membership. There are a few who have not paid their membership fees.

1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2020 – 30 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2021 (18 months)	\$30
MNC association fee (18 months)	\$15
Optional Public and Product Liability Insurance (flat fee)	\$20

If you are unable to pay online, then contact me on 6649 0990.

**Please pay these fees by the end of March or you will cease to be a member of the MNC or the ABA.**

## Bio-Security Update

The objective of the Bio-security Code of Practice is to manage diseases, decrease their spread and respond to outbreaks. Changes are designed to bring NSW into line with other states.

Beekeepers must be ready for bio-security practice from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

### All beekeepers must:

- ◇ Regularly inspect hives, every hive, every frame. A minimum of two inspections a year, 4 months apart or as required through the season
- ◇ Testing one hive per apiary, or stand of hives, twice a year for exotic pests, Varroa and Tropiclaelaps mites, using sugar shake, uncapping drone brood or alcohol wash techniques.
- ◇ Keep an active record of these activities.



# The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Mid North Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association

## And those with more than 50 hives must:

- ◇ Have a minimum knowledge of disease management
- ◇ Submit annual honey samples for AFB spore count testing
- ◇ Declare compliance with regulations and keep accurate records

The principles of biosecurity include training beekeepers to observe signs of diseases and to control them. With adequate knowledge, beekeepers will be able to report notifiable diseases and help reduce their incidence.

## Reportable diseases are:

- ◇ American Foulbrood
- ◇ European Foulbrood
- ◇ Chalk Brood
- ◇ Nosema

Report by phone on 02 9741 4780 or 1800 680 244

Or by email to [quarantine@nsw.gov.au](mailto:quarantine@nsw.gov.au)

**Mark Page**

**NSW DPI Bee Biosecurity Officer**

## Bushfire and Drought aid

The NSW government [provides assistance](#) to primary producers affected by drought and bushfire conditions. For agricultural or livestock emergencies, beekeepers should call the Agriculture and Animal Services Hotline 1800 814 647.

Producers are encouraged to call the hotline to report damage and stock losses and to request assistance. Available help to NSW beekeeping businesses through the Agriculture and Services Hotline includes:

- ◇ Emergency fodder (7-day supply of sugar only. Pollen or other supplements are not eligible.)
- ◇ Emergency stock water
- ◇ Veterinary assistance
- ◇ Stock destruction and burial
- ◇ Livestock feeding and management advice

For drought assistance, NSW-registered beekeeping businesses may access site fee waivers for apiaries on public lands, primary producer vehicle registration waivers and subsidies for the transport of fodder and water through the NSW DroughtHub.

The [NSW DPI Primary Producers Assistance Guide for Beekeepers](#) (PDF, 858.28 KB) outlines the drought assistance available for beekeepers as above as well as contact details for rural assistance in the form of financial counsellors, farm household support, emergency water infrastructure, mental health support and emergency assistance insurance claims.

The [Australian Taxation Office's primary producer guide](#) helps explain some of the tax elements for beekeepers as there are tax provisions their accountants can utilise.



# The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Mid North Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association

## The Buzz with Rod Bourke

Despite a reasonable spring, many parts of NSW are facing a tough outlook for the next 3-6 months. It is important to prepare your hives adequately now so that they can idle along with as little stress as possible.

Ensure hives have a good store of honey (at least 15-20kg) and sufficient bees in all boxes to keep hive beetles under control. Consider reducing weak hives to a single box with 3-4 frames of honey, as weaker colonies do better in a smaller volume. All weak hives should have their entrances reduced so that they can adequately defend themselves against robber bees.

If your colonies are weak, you need to find out why and try to do something about it. Hives suffering nosema, chalkbrood or European foulbrood may need to be moved to a location with better conditions (natural pollens and nectar) to improve the health of the hive, otherwise, if a move is not possible then be fed pollen substitute and small amounts of sugar syrup. Older queens may need to be replaced as hives fare better with younger well-mated queens (although it is also common for most queens to reduce laying when conditions are poor). Any hives with American foulbrood need to be destroyed and made bee proof before treating equipment appropriately.

Many hives will be discharging their drones (as they feel conditions do not require them anymore) so you may see a lot of dead drones and older field bees in front of hives. This is often seen when hives are preparing for a period of tough conditions, but can also be the result of extreme heat conditions, nosema or pesticide poisoning. The bees know that there are tough times ahead and we, as beekeepers, should be ensuring that we have our hives set up in such a way that the bees are comfortable and not stressing about inadequate honey stores or too much space to protect from beetles and wax moth. Cover these requirements, and your bees should do ok.

**Rod Bourke**  
NSW DPI Bee Biosecurity Officer

## Club News

### Foundation and Apithor

Michael Worraker has our clubs supplies of Wax Foundation and Apithor SHB traps. Please contact him on 0408 293 031 or by email. The price of foundation will now be \$2.50 per sheet.

### Services and supplies

**Michael Worraker** - also has queen cells for sale at various times

**Ross Wood** - Mated queens and Nucs (Grafton). Contact 0421 817 710

**Steve Fowler** - All manner of beekeeping equipment for sale. Steve and Janet usually turn up at meetings with a ute full of gear. To pre-order call 0418 412 621

**Glenn Locke - Mt Coramba Apiculture** - Flow hive mentoring and troubleshooting, queen bees and nucs. Contact 0459 066 297

**Steve Hayes - Little Star Bees** - Nucs and hives plus courses with native bees. Contact 6564 8737

**Di McQueen and Scott Richardson** - queens, nucs, hives and beekeeping equipment - [honeybeehives.com.au](http://honeybeehives.com.au)  
Contact 0411 097 275



# The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Mid North Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association

## Honey Collection

For all those who have put in their honey, we are negotiating with Capilano for a Non-Contracted one-off sale. Stay tuned.

## Beekeeping Workshop

Allan Thomas is holding a beekeeping workshop at our place at Gleniffer on the weekend 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March. For more information and registration, please email: [beekeepingworkshops@gmail.com](mailto:beekeepingworkshops@gmail.com)

## Upcoming events and training

AHC31818 Certificate III in Beekeeping & Beekeeping Traineeships: Applications now open. Course is delivered via face-to-face training and online study over a 12-18month period. Contact [beekeeping@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:beekeeping@dpi.nsw.gov.au) for more information or go to <https://www.tocal.nsw.edu.au/courses/bees>

Beginning in Bees short course: Held at Tocal College 13-14 February, 6-7 March and 3-4 April 2020. Contact Sophie Smethurst on 02 4939 8881 or ph 1800 025 520 for more information or go to <https://www.tocal.nsw.edu.au/courses/bees/beginning-in-bees>

Queen bee breeding short course: Held at Tocal College 10-11 March 2020. Contact Sophie Smethurst on 02 4939 8881 or ph 1800 025 520 for more information or go to <https://www.tocal.nsw.edu.au/courses/bees/queen-bee-breeding>

41<sup>st</sup> Annual Tocal Beekeepers Field Day: 17th October 2020. Save the date.

**Library** - Please make use of the library and return items ASAP.

I think most members will want to look at Dr Doug Somerville's new book, so I think we may have to discuss the option of a ballot system.

This book covers over 500 plant species, including native species, crops, pasture species and weeds. Each species is photographed and described for identification and includes a map of geographical distribution. Each is given a star rating for their value as pollen and or source of nectar. There is also a chart for showing the flowering time as a guide, as this varies depending on local conditions.

This publication covers areas including:

- ◇ What makes an ideal apiary site?
- ◇ Hive stocking rate
- ◇ Honeybee nutrition
- ◇ Star rating for value as a source of pollen and/or nectar
- ◇ A note on flowering charts
- ◇ What's in a name
- ◇ Describing plants
- ◇ List of families- genus/species





# The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Mid North Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association

◇ Individual plant profiles

*Edited Review from January ABK magazine*

**Bee Suits** - Katrina and I are in the process of repairing/replacing 4 of the club bee suits. Note: Most of the suits were damaged by rats, however, please be careful with the zips when donning and removing the suits.

## Media

1) A story in the ABC news on Tasmania's Leatherwood honey

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2020-02-08/wounded-world-war-i-soldier-leaves-century-old-honey-legacy/11944274>.

2) A story again from the ABC news on Bumblebees in Canada

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-07/climate-change-fuelling-bumblebee-extinction-fears/11945352>.



Leatherwood hives in North Tasmania

## From Ozgroup - Pollination Seminar

Hello everyone,

I hope you are all safe in this time of extreme weather. I am contacting to let everyone know that OzGroup and DPI NSW will host a pollination expo this year to assist in networking between beekeepers and growers. We also want to encourage education on best practices when having bees on a farm. We are hoping to have different presentations this year and a panel discussion to really address questions beekeepers or growers have around pollination. Tentative date is the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March (11/12/13/14th) I will confirm more details by next week.

Please share with any beekeepers who are interested in attending, learning more about pollination or participating. Please contact me when you can to let me know if you are interested in attending or having a stallholder spot (it will be indoors).

Thank you for your time,

**Anika Miller Cooper**  
**Field Officer**  
**Oz Group Co-op Ltd**

PO Box 106, Woolgoolga NSW 2456

Ph: 02 6654 7119

Mobile: 0499 908 454



# The Bee Line

Newsletter of the Mid North Coast Amateur Beekeeping Association

## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at Gleniffer.

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2020  
**Time:** 10am for 10:30 start  
**Address:** 503 Roses Rd, Gleniffer  
**Phone contact:** Merridy on 0421 690 403 or  
Warren on 0413 497 356.

**Activity:** There will be a hive activity

## Please Bring Protective Clothing

**Cost:** \$5 lunch

### What to Bring:

- ◇ Chairs
- ◇ Protective Clothing
- ◇ Salad or luncheon item
- ◇ Something sweet for morning tea or dessert
- ◇ Something for the raffle

## Directions:

From Bellingen, turn right at the Post Office and cross Lavenders Bridge to Nth Bellingen, and then left at the roundabout into Wheatley Street, which turns into Gleniffer Road.

A few kilometres out of town the road bends right. If you go straight ahead that is Roses Road. Continue on for about 5 - 6km and we are on the left. If you get to the turnoff to John Locke Place, you have missed our driveway. Our driveway is 800 metres long and should be driven slowly. Plenty of parking near the house or the veggie patch. Note that Roses Road is a loop so if you miss the first turn continue on to the top end of Roses Road.

## Enquiries:

Mal Banks - 6649 0990 or Michael Worraker - 0408 293 031

Please give comments, ask questions, make suggestions, or give feedback at the next meeting.