

Townsville and District Beekeepers Association (Inc)



PO Box 1115, Aitkenvale QLD 4814

www.beesnorth.com.au

Newsletter No 9, October 2023

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- Club activities – heaps of them
- Neon Cuckoo bee feature
- Sell/swap/buy hives and material
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- AGM Voting form, TDBAI Club officials
- Reader input/feedback???
- Shop prices at : <http://www.beesnorth.com.au>

Next Meeting: AGM
Sunday, October 22 @ 10 am
Michael Hooper Park,
Isaac St, Deeragun

Bring a chair and something to share at morning tea.
Tea, coffee, milk, sugar, cups, hot water will be available.
Free chats with experienced and novice beekeepers are available.
The Club Shop will usually open 1st Saturday of the month.
Please check the website for details

Australia no longer free of Varroa destructor – the battle is lost

<mailto:https://app4.vision6.com.au/v/10433/1794736098/email.html?k=1sGepaOxk89jFH6a2d9IOTKHueVsJtIPGsvr7dJ3cM>

Announcement made by the National Management Group for the transition to management of varroa mite (Varroa destructor)

Following an announcement made by the National Management Group on 19 September 2023 regarding the transition to management of varroa mite (Varroa destructor), Queensland will join other Australian states and territories in transitioning from eradication to management of varroa mite. To date Queensland remains free of varroa mite.

During the transitional phase to a formal management plan, a pause on the issuance of permits for movements of beehives and bee-related material from New South Wales (NSW) into Queensland will be in place while the risks are being assessed. The lead agency (NSW Department of Primary Industries) will continue to suppress and contain varroa mite as part of transition to management.

Queensland beekeepers are being asked to regularly monitor their hives and immediately report unexpected hive deaths, deformed bees, bees with parasites, poor brood patterns and dead brood to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23. Early detection is key to containment and tracking of this pest.

Any person that owns a beehive should:

- apply online at daf.qld.gov.au to become a registerable biosecurity entity
- regularly check their hive and report the findings to the Bee 123 form or call us on 13 25 23
- keep thorough records on all movement of hives, bees and apiary equipment
- maintain sound biosecurity measures such as come clean and go clean by utilising barrier systems and decontamination techniques.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries acknowledges the hard work done to this point by the NSW government and beekeeping and pollination reliant industries.

Read the announcement [here](#).

And see how it is reported overseas:

[Australia abandons efforts to eradicate deadly honey bee parasite](mailto:https://www.beeculture.com/australia-abandons-varroa-eradication/)
<mailto:https://www.beeculture.com/australia-abandons-varroa-eradication/>

Eds' Comment: Possibly the biggest hit to commercial and hobby beekeeping is on its way. Most feral hives will die out, and these actually contribute significantly to crop, pasture and broad acre pollination. Only maintained and treated hives will get through stressful periods of winter or drought and dearth. Hives will need to be treated with some form of miticide and so the "organic" label and the clean green image of our honey, wax, pollen and bee products will be a thing of the past. Varroa is considered by many to be a major factor in CCD hive losses (up to 45% each year in USA). The Kiwis got Varroa in early 2000's and managed to get through it, but the first few years saw a lot of commercial beekeepers leave the industry, and hobbyists shy away from the increase maintenance required.



Bee pupa with Varroa destructor
<mailto:https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/biosecurity/biosecurity-economics/benefit-cost-framework-responding-varroa>

I am really disappointed that commercial fruit and nut cropping industries were permitted to move inspected and approved hives around NSW during this outbreak, as well the unapproved hive transfers by unscrupulous operators. Some of these hives turned out to be infected with Varroa and the red zone circles on the outbreak map of NSW makes it look like it has chicken pox – all over. And what a tragedy for the beekeepers and queen breeders who were forced to destroy their hives in the failed 18 month, \$132 million and 30,000 hive burnings.

It's a new world in Australian beekeeping from now on.

Club activities

Requeening workshop on 1 October

TDBAI members ran a requeening workshop recently to help Club members de-mystify the art of successfully requeening a hive with some hands-on training and guidance from some of our old older hands. The small group allowed every one to have a go at handling the brood frames, looking at the new queen and her attendants, and hearing about the pre-requisites for improving your chances of a successful new coronation. It's expensive business these days at \$30 - \$40 for a new queen and, as they say, timing is everything. If you are too late and your hive has gone feral or you have a laying worker- too bad. Photos show the assembled re-queeners with Al Ziegenfusz at the helm, new queen in her cage, Al opening the brood box, finding the old red marked queen – can you see her?, doing the power squat to shake off the brood bees, and a close up of her big fat royal majesty.



St Benedicts School EcoFest

St Benedicts School had a big display from TDBAI on 14 September. Members were on hand during their EcoFest to describe the items on display.

Also, members were on hand at the Townsville Grammar Junior School at North Shore campus for another display on the same day.



Photos from Dr John Carr of the Committee Meeting at West End Pub on Saturday 16 Sep, General Meeting at Michael Hooper Park on Sunday 17 Sep, and setting up the bee yard.



TDBAI is holding a Beginners Workshop 29 October – can you help out?

Beginners Workshop on Sunday 29 October, the estimated timing will be 9am - 4pm, location Kelso (to be confirmed).

Cost to members is \$30, non-members \$55, this includes lunch etc, as well as some take-home items.

Please advise if you want to attend.

“It’s always the pretty ones you have to watch out for”

Article by Bec Crew

<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/blogs/creatura-blog/2015/03/neon-cuckoo-bee-a-shiny-parasite/>

THE NEON CUCKOO BEE (*Thyreus nitidulus*) is just stunning, with its metallic blue sheen and slick, black wings. And its scientific name, which means ‘a little shiny’ in Latin, is adorable too. But don’t be fooled – this species has no problem doing some pretty disgusting things to get ahead in life.



A neon cuckoo bee (left) preys upon the native blue-banded bee. (Image credit: Photobitz)

Found in New Guinea and throughout eastern and northern Australia, in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory, the species has evolved a parasitic lifestyle to ensure the survival of its offspring. It preys on a similarly – but not so brilliantly – coloured native species, the blue-banded bee (*Amegilla cingulate*), which you can see in the extremely well-timed image above. Neon cuckoo bees prey on native bees.

When a female neon cuckoo bee has eggs to lay, she won’t build a burrow nest of her own, but will instead seek out the burrow nests of female blue-banded bees. Unlike many species of bee,

blue-banded bees are solitary insects, but the females often come together to build their burrow nests near each other. Which is pretty convenient for an expecting neon cuckoo bee – if she finds one nest, she’ll probably find two or three.

Inside these burrow nests will be several brood cells, into which the blue-banded bees will have laid their own eggs. In preparation for hatching, the blue-banded bees will fill each brood cell up with pollen so her offspring will have plenty of sustenance the moment they complete that tough journey through the confines of their tiny egg shells.

But if a blue-banded bee baby is really unlucky, instead of hatching to find its very own all-you-can-eat pollen buffet, it will find itself in a stark, empty brood cell, with a fattened intruder sitting by to watch it starve to death. What happened? Well, that fat intruder’s mother found a blue-banded bee burrow nest that hadn’t been sealed yet, and when there were no blue-banded bees around, she slipped in, laid her egg, and got out of there quick-smart. If the baby neon cuckoo bee hatches earlier than the blue-banded bee baby, it will get all the pollen and a great start to life.

It’s always the pretty ones you have to watch out for.

Townsville is hosting the QBA and AHBIC conferences in July – get involved and help our Committee set up and welcome the attendees. You will learn heaps from the beekeepers coming to town.

Sell/Swap/Buy

We have several members with items available for sale

Established bee hives (members wanting to downsize)

Burdekin area - contact Joel on 0428 317 632

Charters Towers area - contact Leonie on 0407 612 092

Queens, Italian, mated, from Denmar Apiaries, available next week,

contact Lilian on 0409 076 041 or Frana on 0401 014 948

Hive hardware

Nuplas 10 frame full depth boxes, assembled. Used, but steam cleaned. Multiple available @ \$40 ea. Contact Frana on 0401 014 948 to place an order.

34 half-depth Bee Boxes @ \$65 each. These boxes are complete with Nine frames included, some are brand new and the rest are used and have been treated. Contact Paul on 0408 174 786.

Assorted items (listed in an earlier newsletter) including wax melter, frames, nuc boxes, contact Graeme on 0400 607 868 for a full list.

Other assorted second-hand items will also be on offer on shop day, 7 October.

Happy Beekeeping

Bees on the Internet

Scientists Develop a Drug to Protect Honey Bees from Viruses



By [Sustainability Times](#)

Honey bees are invaluable both for biodiversity and agriculture as they are excellent pollinators, yet their numbers worldwide have been dropping dramatically. The causes include climate change, habitat loss, pesticide use and diseases.

It is in this latter category of threats that entomologists from the University of Florida, the Agricultural Research Service-USDA, Louisiana State University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have made marked progress. They have done so by prompting honey bees' cells to produce free radicals for protecting the insects against a range of potentially deadly viruses.

In field studies researchers used a compound called pinacidil to alter potassium ion channels, a protein found in the cells of bees' and other living things. Altering these channels produced slightly more free radicals, they explain. The scientists gave the drug to honey bee colonies by mixing it into sugar water and drizzling it over their honey comb at night. The bees consumed the sugar water and also fed it to their young, thereby spreading the drug throughout the colony. The treatment protected bees from six viruses that take their toll on honey bee colonies: Israeli acute paralysis virus, deformed wing viruses A and B, black queen cell virus, and Lake Sinai viruses 1 and 2.

"This approach is especially exciting because it doesn't just target a specific type of virus but helps with many different viruses," stresses Daniel Swale, an associate professor in the UF/IFAS entomology and nematology department.

"Additionally, we demonstrated that our treatment works both in the lab and in colonies that each contain 80,000 bees in the field," he adds. "This is huge because in a hive setting bees are exposed to so many different viruses and stressors, so successfully controlling viruses in that environment is very encouraging."

While viruses are not the greatest cause of deaths among bees, they can contribute significantly, according to the experts.

"Varroa mites are the number one cause of honey bee losses, but it's important to point out that varroa mites, aside from physically weakening bees, also transmit viruses to bees. If we can mitigate viruses in honey bee colonies, that would be a big step forward," says Michael Simone-Finstrom, a research molecular biologist with the ARS Honey Bee Breeding, Genetics, and Physiology Research Lab in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

In their study the researchers also showed that pinacidil helped more bees survive in colonies infested with varroa mites. Administering the drug to commercial honey bee hives may work only for some beekeepers as it is fairly expensive. However, this research shows the way in developing other drugs that cost less.

"One of the big take-aways from this study is that potassium ion channels can be a target for improving immune system function in honey bees and possibly other insects. We would like to find a molecule, such as a peptide, or a new technology that has the same effect as pinacidil but is more accessible to beekeepers," Swale says.

WA Beekeeping industry put out the call to resist the Varroa invasion from “over East”

<https://www.bicwa.com.au/so/ffOhpQTFE?languageTag=en&cid=3614c88f-6584-4095-a050-42d4743860e1>

Shown below are the steps being taken by the WA beekeeping industry to try to keep Varroa mite out of WA – good luck with that, we hope you are better at it than us “over East”.

In the wake of the Varroa incursion in New South Wales moving to management, BICWA is taking proactive steps to protect Western Australia's beekeeping industry. Our commitment is resolute to stop this impending threat.

BICWA has undertaken a series of radio and TV interviews to raise public awareness about the impact of Varroa on honeybees and share insights learned from the experience in NSW. You might have come across segments on Channel 7 and 9, and interviews on ABC Perth, as well as a few country stations.

BICWA had meetings with DPIRD delegates responsible for WA's biosecurity, followed by a discussion with the Minister's office. These interactions highlighted the urgent need for decisive action.

BICWA has established clear and comprehensive requirements for achieving Varroa Free Status in Western Australia.:

1. Request to pause honey imports: A temporary pause on the importation of honey has been requested as the current treatments used do not kill viruses carried in the honey. Varroa management without the viruses is far easier. We are asking for time for the importation treatments to be reviewed.

2. Community awareness and regular alcohol washing detection: Educating beekeepers about Varroa and promoting alcohol-washing techniques to inspect hives are key strategies. BICWA will distribute an information sheet on cost-effective practices to protect your bees from Varroa.

3. East-west freight surveillance: Rigorous surveillance measures for freight transported from eastern states to WA are essential. Current surveillance is confined to ports, and this has been shown to be insufficient. BICWA is also requesting the trialling of novel landscape-scale surveillance technologies as added protection.

4. Hive tracking app for every beekeeper: Implementing a system to track the movement of all bee hives will enhance DPIRD's ability to provide a fast response to a Varroa incursion. Simply knowing where all the hives are in the state and where they have moved from is critical information in an emergency.

5. High-Risk Area Barriers: Establishing barriers around areas with a high risk of Varroa infestations will help prevent the potential spread of this pest.

6. Chemical use in Varroa control: If Varroa arrives, BICWA is advocating against the use of synthetic chemicals (so treatment will be with organics). This has been shown to enable the successful development of resistance to Varroa and maintain honey quality for consumption.

7. Varroa Response and Emergency Plans, including compensation: BICWA has requested direct involvement in the development of the Varroa Response and Emergency Plans from DPIRD. BICWA is advocating for the compensation of all beekeepers when their hives are euthanised and for commercial beekeepers to be compensated for any loss of income resulting from the stoppage of hive movement.

During this challenging period, BICWA is standing with Western Australia's beekeeping community to protect our thriving honeybee populations and ensure the continued success of our industry.

We strongly encourage you to reach out to fellow beekeepers you know and inquire whether they are receiving our newsletters. Staying informed about the latest developments in our industry is vital.

Our strength lies in numbers, and the more members we have, the more impactful our voice becomes when engaging with the government to advocate for our industry's support and highlight its significance. Your support and active involvement can make a significant difference!

Now is the critical moment to rally behind BICWA!

A substantial workload awaits, and the time available is running out. Your contribution helps us persevere during this crucial time as we stand up for our bee community and support your executive team and those who selflessly dedicate their time to serve your interests!

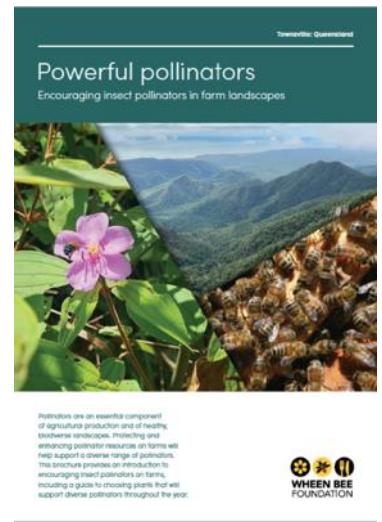
Blooper of the Month? Send me your blooper for totally anonymous recognition- honestly!

Download your free copy - how to promote insect pollination in our Townsville region

<https://www.wheenbee.foundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SF001-X-24.1-Pollinator-Guide-Townsville-QLD.pdf>

What a great guide to what, where and when to plant in order to attract all those vital insects, like European bees, butterflies, moths, hoverflies, native bees and flies.

Sponsored by:



Hive testing is part of every beekeeper's "Biosecurity Entity" obligation

From Robert Stephens at Biosecurity Queensland

The detection of Varroa mite in NSW serves as a timely reminder that beekeepers should be inspecting their hives every 16 weeks and reporting their results via the Bee123 survey form. It is vitally important that beekeepers report all negative test results and not just when they suspect something is wrong. This negative data is essential for showing the effort that your industry is going to and helps us provide evidence that Townsville is free of Varroa and other bee pests and diseases.

It's vital all beekeepers act now and look for varroa by using the alcohol wash and drone uncapping method, then report your surveillance results (including negative data) to the Bee 123 portal.

The only way Australia can eradicate and prove freedom from Varroa is through nation wide surveillance activities.

Rob Stephens Plant Biosecurity & Product Integrity M 0407 374 232 E robert.stephens@daf.qld.gov.au W www.daf.qld.gov.au

From the Club Shop volunteers

Hi Bee Club members

Update - our website is up again, you can place your orders via beesnorth.com.au

Next shop opening is first Saturday of the month.

Location: 3/38 Rendle St, Aitkenvale

Time: 9am - 10:30am

Collection at other time by arrangement and when volunteers are available.

If you experience difficulty accessing the web site for orders, please use the following email address to contact the club for shop purchases and other queries - tsvbeeclub@gmail.com

Remember the Shop etiquette – politeness and patience are key components to success

To all visitors to our Club Shop – please be respectful, patient and polite to our Volunteer shopkeepers. Please arrive with a smile, a dose of patience, and remember your manners.

Email orders will be given priority and serviced – but walk in orders may not be completed.

Pre-order by email before midnight on the Thursday before shop opening time.

Use this email address: tsvbeeclub@gmail.com



Golden Rules for the Club Shop:

Please follow this guide:

1. Order **AND Pay** by Thursday midnight **before** the opening day, by email: tsvbeeclub@gmail.com
2. Bring your order number and print out of the request with you
3. Arrive at the Shop **after** 9:00 am, pay for your order, **don't hang around inside the Shop to chat** – too many people inside.
4. Non-emailed or late orders may not get any attention if the Shop is too busy.
5. Please take your purchases and make room for the next shoppers, thanks

General Meeting Minutes held on 15 September 2023

Native bee Newsletter – join the group and check out some great info and photos

The CROSS-POLLINATOR - Newsletter of the Australian Native Bee Association

Original articles, new information and news from the world of native bees. The Association has branches in Sydney, Brisbane, Wide Bay and Gladstone, but no Townsville branch?? Are there enough interested native beekeepers to get one "flying"?

Check out these sites: <https://australiannativebee.org.au/>
<https://www.facebook.com/Australian.Native.Bee.Association/>
<https://www.instagram.com/australiannativebeeassociation/>

TDBAI Office holders and Committee for 2022/2023

Position	Name	Nominated	Seconded
President	Nick Smith	Alan	Mick
Vice president	Mark Finn	Mick	Beryl
Secretary	Liz Henning	Naomi	Mark
Treasurer	Derek	Mick	Nick
Assistant Treasurer	Frana McKinstry	Ron	Derek
Newsletter Editor	Lindsay Trott	Mick	Nick
Assistant Editor	John Carr	Nick	Ron
Membership Officer	Frana McKinstry	Nick	Mick
Shop Manager	Mick Olsen	Maria	Doris
Shop Assistant	Alan Z	Paul	Liz
Native bees	Nick Smith	BS	MO
Librarian	Beryl Smart	Mark	Naomi
Website/Social Media	Mick Olsen/Nick Smith	Beryl/Liz	Mick/Naomi
Native Bees	Nick Smith	Mick	Naomi
Committee	Miles F	Liz	Doris
Committee	Danny K	Nick	Mick
Committee	Maria F	Naomi	Ron
Committee	Naomi O	Mick	Nick
Committee	Doris N	Derek	Beryl
Committee	Ron N	Nick	Naomi
Committee	Paul P	Mick	Mark

Welcome to our New Members

- Existing Club Members are encouraged to assist/mentor our Newbees. They have joined the club to learn about bees, so even if you only have limited experience, give them a hand if you can. Invite a Newbee to your hive opening and discuss what's inside the box, let newbies experience hive openings to become more confident, and you will learn more yourself by trying to explain what's going on in there.

Subscribe to the Bee Aware e-newsletter and stay up to date

The Bee Aware newsletter is an e-newsletter for beekeepers and growers of pollinator-reliant crops, or anyone else simply interested in beekeeping or the pollination of crops. Each newsletter contains the latest in news, research and development, as well as upcoming events relating to honey bee biosecurity and the pollination of horticultural and agricultural crops. Townsville features in Issue 52 due to the latest AHB and Varroa incursion.

<https://beeaware.org.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

Annual Membership Fees are due in July/August each year - currently \$30/p.a.

Membership fees can be made electronically to:

Name:- Townsville and District Beekeepers Association BSB:- 633000

Account:- 141466078

Refer :- Please make sure you add your Surname so that your membership can be signed off.

Email contacts for the Office Holders 2020/21

You can use these email contacts for the Office Holders, and hopefully they will have figured out how to access them and will respond ASAP.

president@beesnorth.com.au, treasurer@beesnorth.com.au, shop@beesnorth.com.au, editor@beesnorth.com.au

And for all web and membership enquiries : membership@beesnorth.com.au

Swarm Contact List:

Please advise editor@beesnorth.com.au if you wish to be removed from this list. Contact me with your name, phone number and suburb if you want to be added to the list.

Kelso/Kirwan: Steve Kersnovske - 0417 344 419

Douglas/ Gulliver: Sonya Verburgt - 04 0853 0991

Alice River/ Bluewater: Sharene Dougall – 0415426903 Ronelle Nord – 0417752622 Duane Saltmer - 0400 339 508

Amanda Woodcock – 0405784083

Black River through to Rollingstone: Alex Jenkins - 0459472166

Aitkenvale: Pat Dury - mob 0419252829

- Swarm List People: Please contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 for any swarm or strange bee activity in the Townsville region. For all swarm collections, please collect 300 bees or roughly 10% of brood comb and submit to Biosecurity Queensland for pest and disease monitoring. Remember that Varroa is down South and we don't want it up here.

Newsletter Editor needs your input – why not tell me your story?

From The Ed.

The Newsletter Editor receives some wonderful stories and photos from some of our Members. And it makes our Newsletter a personal and relevant method of communicating our bee adventures with to all our Members, many of whom cannot get to the meetings or events. Some of these stories are amusing – like The Blooper Series (The Ed seems to feature in a lot of these), Product Reviews, stories from the many events, markets and school visits, information from our more learned members, news about workshops and open days, and so on.

Club Member Profile Questionnaire

Name /HIN /Suburb /Native or/and European bees /No of hives/area of hive locations?

Type of hives? / Type of foundation? /Beetle protection?

Year commenced beekeeping? /Who was your mentor? /Who is involved in your household? Is anyone allergic/sensitive to stings?

What has been your biggest success? / failure?/ mistake?/ biggest lesson?

What would you do differently if you had to start beekeeping again after a disaster like fire/AFB/Varroa/cyclone

Do you sell/barter/give away honey? How much honey does your average hive produce? Do you make any other products from your hives?

Do you volunteer for the Club at Open days, markets, school events, public displays? Would you like to participate?

Any stories you would like to tell? Attach photo please?

That's it!!!! Just fill it out and send it to me, and you will be a rock star in the Monthly Newsletter.

Please provide more than just a one word answer!!

The Ed

AGM Nominations

Hi Bee Club members

In order to get a head start on the AGM, can you start thinking about your role in the club for 2024? Reply asap.

Please consider

1. nominating yourself for an executive position
2. nominating someone else for an executive position
3. nominating to remain as a committee member
4. nominating others for the committee

We will be taking nominations from the floor t the AGM, however if we can get some positions sorted beforehand, that will speed the entire process.

Given that Townsville is hosting the QBA and AHBIC conferences in July, it will be a full year. A list of the positions:

President, Vice President, Secretary
Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer (If Required)
Event Co-ordinator
QBA Co-ordinator (Temporary Position)
Community Liaison Officer
Biosecurity Awareness Officer
Newsletter Editor, Assistant Editor
Membership Officer
Shop Manager, Shop Assistant
Librarian
Website/Social Media Officer
Native Bees Representative
Committee 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,7, 8
QBA Festival 2024 Sub Committee 1,2, 3, 4, 5
QBA Festival 2024 Sub Committee 2

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023
NOMINATION FORM
OFFICE BEARERS / MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

I, of.....

Being a member of the above named Association hereby nominate

..... of.....

To be (position) for Townsville & District Beekeepers Association Inc during the year 2022 / 2023

Nominated by:
(Signature)

Seconded by:
(Signature)

Dated:

Note: Form to be returned to TDBA Secretary before AGM

Cut along dotted line

**TOWNSVILLE & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016
PROXY FORM**

I, of.....

Being a member of the Association, appoint

Of

As my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the above named Association to be held on

18 October 2022, and at any adjournment thereof

Signed this..... day of.....2016

.....
(Signature)

This form is to be used: - In favour of the resolution ./ - Against the resolution

Note: Form to be returned to TDBA Secretary