

Townsville & District  
**BEEKEEPERS**

[www.beesnorth.com.au](http://www.beesnorth.com.au)

ASSOCIATION  
PO Box 1115  
Aitkenvale. Qld. 4814



**Newsletter No. 7: June 2025**

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**Next Meeting:**

**2pm Sunday 8 June 2025**

**Michael Hooper Park  
Isaac St, Deeragun**

**Bring a chair. Tea, coffee and nibbles available.  
Free chats with experienced and novice  
beekeepers.**

***Club Activities by President Frana***

It's been busy time for club members with several events undertaken. One of these was World Bee Day activities in conjunction with TCC and Sylvies Early Learning Centre. Sharon and Frana went along to the Perfumed Garden in the city, gave a presentation to the children then assisted in planting out herbs and shrubs into the new garden. We have already provided another native bee hotel to be installed here too.

This was followed by a jaunt to Ingham to host a display at the inaugural Canegrowers Herbert River Link2Country Expo. The first day saw over 750 school students through the exhibits with a lot of interest in our stand. Honey spinning was our featured activity though we had to stop in the afternoon when the local bees found us. We should have heeded Doris' advice and taken the mesh gazebo up. Friday night on site was a lot of fun and between us we took out four of the main prizes. We had an early finish on the Saturday as it was overcast and drizzly so were all home by about 4pm. Was it worth going? Definitely. Especially as we met Tony Perrett (below), the Minister for Primary Industries, and had a chance to bend his ear.



The next event was a late WBD visit to one of the Goodstart kindergartens, the little ones were fascinated by the live bees we had on display and also enjoyed the books and crocheted native bees. The second kindy scheduled for the same day cancelled due to a gastro outbreak. That respite was good news for our volunteer(s).



### ***From the President***

In addition to attending these community events, some of our members are also doing in person and online meetings and interviews around varroa management, and other issues, with NVMMP, BQ, QBA and external stakeholders. Reports will follow as required.

We have four members registered to attend the QBA conference and Field Day on the Gold Coast & Beaudesert from 18-21 June. Prior to this, on 15 June we have the "Our Townsville" event at Anderson Park, another call for volunteers to nominate will come out shortly. This is a chance for members to sell honey and other products too.

Lastly, we recently applied for a couple of grants for funding, the first of these was successful and we have money available to buy bee-related books to donate to Early Learning centres, preschools etc. The second grant application has been approved 'in principle' pending a brief rewrite. Fingers crossed for that one too.

Frana McKinstry  
President  
TDBAI  
0401014948



## Heat Treatment for Varroa. Is it any good?

The Bee Club recently had an interesting demonstration of the equipment involved in heat treatment of brood frames to reduce the numbers of Varroa mite. Al Cooney showed us the ins and outs, without Varroa mite of course, of how the system works. See below for a reference on the good, bad and realistic ability of heat treatment to manage Varroa loads.

Efficacy and trade-offs of an innovative hyperthermia device to control *Varroa destructor* in honeybee colonies

Christoph Sandrock · Jens Wohlfahrt · Willi Brunner · Pascal Brunner

Journal of Pest Science (2024) 97:1433–1450

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10340-023-01709-2>

The above publication, received from our resident bee doctor John Carr, explains how heating brood frames to 42.5°C with Varroa infected larvae, combined with an oxalic acid treatment, might prove useful for suppressing Varroa infestations and prevent the infestation from reaching the “treatment threshold”. Varroa mites have a lower heat tolerance than adult bees and can survive the heat. The brood frames had special heating coils embedded in them, with close control of temperature controlled by an electronic set up. The study recorded the treatment methods and tracked larval and Varroa survival after the treatments, as well as hive health and honey production.

While the heat treatment was effective at lowering the Varroa counts below the threshold for synthetic chemical use, there were a few issues that caught my eye.

Uncapped brood was killed at this temperature while capped brood and adults survived reasonably well. Only immature Varroa inside capped brood cells were impacted by the heat treatment. Phoretic (adult free ranging) Varroa were not affected by the heat treatment. Honey production from heat treated hives was reduced.

So, is heat treatment a good idea? Sounds like it can be useful to reduce Varroa numbers to below synthetic chemical threshold levels, but it kills uncapped brood, lowers honey production, and doesn't kill adult phoretic or free living Varroa. It's a management tool to consider.

Oh, Dr John tells me this is how bees deal with wasps – by overheating them in a ball. There's some horror movies on YouTube showing the process – go Bees!!!



NATIONAL  
Varroa Mite Management  
PROGRAM

Free varroa mite  
information session  
25/6/25



All beekeepers  
welcome!

Carla Kersnovske will be holding Varroa information sessions at the Club Shop, 3/38 Rendle St, Aitkenvale.

The next one will be on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> of June 6 pm to 8 pm.

Its free!!!! Be prepared – its coming

As your local VDO, Carla is available for workshops, one-on-one training and demonstrations. Another option may be to get a small group of like-minded beekeepers together and we can discuss as a group, what we would like to do as a collective in the future.

Feel free to reach out to me by calling 0467 236 135 or emailing [carla.kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:carla.kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au)

## **Varroa is now in:**

**Varroa has been detected in the North Burnett, Gold Coast, Quilpie and Lytton in Brisbane as well as previously reported locations, Lockyer Valley, Somerset, and Tingalpa Brisbane – check your hives**

Varroa inspection demo on 25 June 6-8 pm. am

<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/news-media/news/varroa-mite-detected-qld>

### **Do the alcohol wash and check for these blighters!**

Contact Carla or Rob Stephens immediately if you see any Varroa mites.

**Rob Stephens** Plant Biosecurity & Product Integrity

**M** 0407 374 232 **E** [robert.stephens@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:robert.stephens@daf.qld.gov.au)

Fill in the [Bee 123 form](#) even if you don't see any mites – a negative result is what we all want to see.

In early March [Varroa destructor was detected for the first time in Queensland](#). Since this time, it has been found in multiple commercial and recreational apiaries in the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Regional Council areas, Gold Coast and Burnett. The areas of infestation can be seen on the [varroa mite surveillance map](#).

### **Green drone comb foundation for detecting Varroa**

Varroa are more prevalent on drone brood due to the longer incubation and development time (24 days) compared to workers (21 days) and queens (16 days). One management tool is to place frames with bigger cells than worker cells (see photo of green drone comb below) to encourage the queen to lay drones. You can then dispose of the drones with an uncapping fork (in lower left of photo) and reveal the juvenile Varroa, which are the tiny white critters in the photo.

In *Apis mellifera* colonies, the size of the worker cell is 5.20–5.40 mm, while the width of the drone cell is 6.20–6.40 mm. Eagle eyed readers will notice that the green drone comb foundation has 59 x 34 cells which is fewer than the normal worker brood foundation.

Green drone comb foundations are available from Carla Kersnovske [carla.kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:carla.kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au)

**Free prize:** First to answer wins a hive tool. How many cells on a full depth Langstroth frame????



White juvenile and brown adult Varroa mites on a green drone comb. Photo from Alison Beswick NSW DPI

Photo: Alison Beswick

### ***Bee artwork at HPSS***

Check out the wonderful mural in the Bee Club meeting area at Hermit Park State School – thanks Lesley for the photo.

You can see it in the background where Al is showing off the Varroa Controller incubator box.



### ***Native bees on Magnetic Island***



These fabulous images of local native bees on Magnetic Island were taken by resident Beat Lehmann. The top 2 photos are of a Fire-tailed Resin bee which has black head and thorax. Its abdomen is distinctively bright orange-brown in colour. The wings are tinted in black as well. This is a solitary bee and builds nests of resin, gum or mud in enclosed spaces such as the space between folds of fabric and old [Mud-Dauber Wasp](#) nest. They will nest in drilled wooden blocks too. They love native bee houses.

[https://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane\\_bees/FiretailedResinBee.htm](https://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_bees/FiretailedResinBee.htm)

The lower photos are of a female Great Carpenter bee, Australia's largest bee. It's also solitary and lays individual eggs in chambers loaded up with pollen and honey in the tips of dead tree branches like frangipanni. You can see the perfect round holes in the branches after the larvae have developed and chewed their way out. These bees, and our blue banded bee, are excellent at buzz pollination, so handy to have around tomatoes, Eggplants, potatoes, blueberries, and of course many Australian native flowers and trees.

<https://wildlife.org.au/news-resources/educational-resources/species-profiles/invertebrates/great-carpenter-bee/>

While we are on the topic of native bees, how about this stunner – the neon cuckoo bee. And just like its name suggests, this bee behaves like the cuckoo bird version and lays its eggs in someone else’s nest. The neon cuckoo bee specifically targets the uncapped cells of blue banded bees, and out paces the blue banded bee development and starves it to death – brutal!

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



## ***From the Internet***

### ***European bees get a bad rap***

Scientists have recommended limits on urban beekeeping after a peer-reviewed study found introduced honeybees could be harming Australian native bees and risked driving them to extinction.

The Australian research, published in [Frontiers in Bee Science](#), found native bees living in areas with high densities of introduced honeybees had fewer female offspring and a higher death rate in their first year of life. Dr Kit Prendergast, the lead author of the study, said honeybees posed a threat to the health and size of native bee populations – and there was a risk population declines could eventually lead to local extinctions. “By boosting honeybee numbers, you can be harming native bees,” said Prendergast, a native bee scientist and conservationist at the University of Southern Queensland.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/may/20/australian-scientists-recommend-limits-on-urban-beekeeping-to-protect-native-bees-from-introduced-honeybees>

### ***Plants produce more nectar when they ‘hear’ bees buzzing***

Plants can “hear” bees buzzing and serve up more nectar when they are nearby, scientists have found. The research suggests that plants are a more active partner than previously thought in their symbiotic relationship with pollinators. The behaviour could be a survival strategy that favours giving nectar and sugar to bees over so-called nectar robbers that do not offer plants any reproductive benefits.

“There is growing evidence that both insects and plants can sense and produce, or transmit, vibro-acoustic signals,” said Prof Francesca Barbero, a zoologist at the University of Turin, who led the research.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/may/21/plants-produce-more-nectar-when-they-hear-bees-buzzing-scientists-find>

## ***Club Member Profile***

Richard Sweeney wrote this summary of his bee adventures for Editor Lesley Barr. We do ask for more than one word answers to make it a good story, so thanks Richard.

Plenty more members can offer their stories.

Name - Richard Sweeney

Suburb - Balgal Beach

Bee type - One native hive located in the front garden. Two European bee hives located at the rear of the garden. Lots of big trees between us and the beach.

Type of hives /Type of foundation/Beetle protection - Brood box is mostly wax foundation. Top box is waxed plastic. We use cooking oil under the base in slide-in trays.

Year commenced beekeeping - 2023

Who was your mentor? - Jeff Fisher got me started and he is also a bee club member.

Who is involved in your household? - My partner Moira Sharkey

Is anyone allergic/sensitive to stings? Fortunately, no-one in our household has an allergy to bee stings.

Biggest success? - Not quite sure as to having any major success, have had some really good honey.

Failure/biggest lesson - losing a complete hive during the recent big wet, when we were on holiday.

During the last two weeks on return the hive had gone, lots of honey and brood but no bees. By the

time we inspected the hive and it was full of maggots. I burned all the frames and started again with a new nuc 6 weeks ago.

What would you do differently if you had to start beekeeping again after a disaster like fire/AFB/Varroa/cyclone? Take more time during hive inspections and try to be more aware of potential problems.

Do you sell/barter/give away honey? We use some honey but generally give most to friends, around Balgal Beach.

How much honey does your average hive produce? When we harvest, each hive normally produces 6-7kgs.

Do you make any other products from your hives? No, we don't make any other products other than honey.

Do you volunteer for the Club at Open days, markets, school events, public displays? Yes we do volunteer for club open days when we are available. We have done some open days in the past couple of years.

Would you like to participate? Always willing to participate.

Any stories you would like to tell? One funny story - We were on holiday for two months and had Harvey and Annette house-sitting. We told Harvey to keep a distance from the bees, but Harvey decided to put his head close to the entrance to watch the bees coming and going. He got stung and had bees following him. He got stung a few times and had to jump into the pool to get away from them. He kept well away after that day but likes the honey.

Attach photo please? No photos.

## **Check out all these activities and events that you can be involved in**

Hi all,

We have frequent requests from community organisations, schools and businesses to present on various bee-related topics, with a number of events coming up over the next 2-3 months.

We are looking for members to volunteer at any that may be of interest. No particular bee experience is necessary, its about community engagement.

Please let us know which of the following you might be interested in assisting with:

**Thursday 12 June** - Rotary Club (covered)

**Sunday 15 June** - Our Townsville, Anderson Gardens. This is a big one, equivalent to Eco-Fiesta

**Tuesday 1 July** - Scout Camp event at Bluewater (scouts from all over Qld attending)

**Thursday 24 July** - St Benedicts EcoFair

**Sunday 27 July** - TCC event at Lou Litster Park

**Saturday 23 August** - Rollingstone Pineapple Festival (another big one)

**Wednesday 27 August** - Lions Club presentation (covered)

Regards to all

Your TDBAI committee

## **QBA Conference is on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> and Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June on the Gold Coast**

**And look at these other Conferences this year.**

*State Conferences - plan your year ahead!*

11 - 13 June 2025 [VAA Annual Conference](#)

19 + 20 June 2025 [QLD Beekeepers Association 121st State Conference](#)

4 July 2025 [South Australian Apiarists Association Conference AGM](#)

5 July 2025 [AHBIC AGM 2025, South Australia](#)

Reserve the date in 2026:

18 - 21 June 2026 Australian Honey Bee Congress in Adelaide, Convention Centre

## **Minutes of May General Meeting TDBAI**

Minutes will be distributed separately

### **Reminders for membership renewal are sent by email – now \$35/p.a.**

Membership fees can be made electronically to:

Townsville and District Beekeepers

BSB: 633 000

Account: 141 466 078

**Please make sure you add your Surname or subscription number so that your membership can be signed off.**

### **From the Club Shop volunteers**

**Preferably – log onto the website and place your order there: Members Only \ Shop**

**Alternatively** you can place your orders via [shop@beesnorth.com.au](mailto:shop@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 times by arrangement and when volunteers are available.

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. We are doing this for fun. It's not a business, it's run by volunteers.

Email orders will be given priority and serviced – but walk in orders may be completed if time allows. Pre-order before midnight on the Thursday before shop opening time.



#### **Golden Rules for the Club Shop:**

Please follow this guide:

- Order and pay by Thursday midnight **before** the opening day.
- Bring your order number and print out of the request with you.
- Arrive at the Shop **after** 9:00 am
- Non-emailed or late orders may not get any attention if the Shop is too busy.
- Please take your purchases and make room for the next shoppers, thanks.

### **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 Newbees experience hive openings to become more confident, and you will learn more yourself by trying to explain what's going on in there.

### **When Bee Foundation**

Keep up to date with the latest news and research from the When Bee Foundation which is an Australian not-for-profit charity that promotes awareness of the importance of bees for food security and raises funds for research.

**Their newsletter provides very informative industry updates as well as education on bees. Check out their page and subscribe to their newsletter [here](#)**

## **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/>

## **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 2024/2025**

Position	Name	Contact
President	Frana McKinstry	<a href="mailto:president@beesnorth.com.au">president@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Vice President	Al Cooney	
Secretary	Liz Hennig	<a href="mailto:secretary@beesnorth.com.au">secretary@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Treasurer	Louise Clark	<a href="mailto:treasurer@beesnorth.com.au">treasurer@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Event Co-Ordinator	Shandelle O'Reilly	
Biosecurity Awareness Officer	John Carr	
Newsletter Editor	Lindsay Trott	<a href="mailto:editor@beesnorth.com.au">editor@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Assistant Editor	Lesley Barr	
Membership Officer	Frana McKinstry	<a href="mailto:membership@beesnorth.com.au">membership@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Shop Managers	Ron Newitt & Mark Finn	<a href="mailto:shop@beesnorth.com.au">shop@beesnorth.com.au</a>
Shop Assistant	N/A	
Librarian	Beryl Smart	
Website/social media Officer	Vacant	
Native Bees Representative	Jon McKinstry	
Committee 1	Doris Newitt	
Committee 2	Maria Finn	
Committee 3	Greg Skellern	
Committee 4	Carla Kersnovske	
Committee 5	Blake Steward	
Committee 6	Wendy Aspery	

## **TDBAI Committee is involved in many activities – can you lend a hand?**

Contact any of the Committee Members to find out how to get involved

### ***Swarm Contact List:***

Please advise Lindsay Trott [editor@beesnorth.com.au](mailto:editor@beesnorth.com.au) or [trottlindsay@gmail.com](mailto:trottlindsay@gmail.com)

Or: Lesley Barr [lesleybarr@y7mail.com](mailto:lesleybarr@y7mail.com) 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.

### **Swarm Collection – honey bees**

Alex Jenkins **Townsville to Rollingstone** 0459 472 166

Ben Taylor **Douglas, Riverside Gardens** 4728 4992 or 0428 186000

Sonya Verburgt **Gulliver** 0408 530 991

Sharene Dougall **Bluewater** 0415 426 903

Phillip Plant **Townsville, Ayr, Rollingstone** 0456191 000

Bruce Mogensen **Railway Estate/Idalia** – 0427 174 705

Liz Hennig **Northern Beaches** – 0409067 367

Ronelle Nord **Alice River, Rupertswood** 0417 752 622

### **Native bee removal**

Bruce Warren 0413 395 928

Jon McKinstry 0401 014 948

### **Nest Removals from houses, trees and other structures**

Alex Jenkins **Townsville to Rollingstone** – 0459 472 166

Phillip Plant **Townsville, Ayr, Rollingstone** 0456 191 000

Remember that Varroa is now in Qld and we don't want it up here – check those swarms.

### ***Editor needs your input – why not tell me your story?***

#### ***Club Member Profile Questionnaire***

Send stories and pictures to :

Lindsay Trott: [trottlindsay@gmail.com](mailto:trottlindsay@gmail.com) Or: [Lesley Barr <lesleybarr@y7mail.com>](mailto:Lesley Barr <lesleybarr@y7mail.com>)

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!! Cheers The Ed.

### ***Blooper of the Month?***

***Send me your blooper for totally anonymous recognition- honestly***