



Townsville & District

BEEKEEPERS

ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1115

Aitkenvale. Qld. 4814



www.beesnorth.com.au

Newsletter No. 9: October 2025

In this Issue:

- Travelling President reports
- Newsy articles from the Internet
- Varroa in South Australia, and Qld
- Club activities
- Meeting Minutes
- TDBAI Club office holders
- Shop details – sell swap, shop, and coffee

Next Meeting:

2pm Sunday 19 October 2025

**Hermit Park State School
Entrance off McKimmin St**

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

Gallivanting President still able to submit reports from O/S

President Frana was keen to point out that no Club funds have been expended on her international sojourn. Despite all the travelling and conferencing, she has still managed to report in on the new and interesting developments from overseas.

President's report

Hi Bee club members,

This month's report is a summary of the Apimondia Conference held recently in Copenhagen.

In short, it was a fabulous experience. There were 300+ presentations in four concurrent sessions over four days. Over 400 poster displays, nearly 200 trade stands, and over 8,000 registrations. There was an amazing opening event on the first evening, then a Town Hall reception, a Scandinavian reception and a Slovenian reception on different afternoon/evenings.

Also featured were the Global Honey Bar – some 50 metres of honey samples from all over the world, a large section of items for judging, an Australian bench-top honey spinner (about the size of an air-fryer) won gold, and a native bee book, "The Hive" by Brisbane-based teacher Megan Daley won bronze (we have this in the club library). Many food trucks were on site and there were several pre- and post-conference tours available.

Of note – there was no honey judging, a result of many adulterated honeys entered at the 2023 Chile conference. Also there was a lot of information and products aimed at dealing with the Asian Hornet – we really need to avoid that beast. Another area of concern is the slow creep of *Tropilaelaps* mite which is making its way to western Europe. This mite is 1/3 the size of *Varroa* and causes even more damage.

There were many stands featuring Chinese products. While the hardware items are fine, the honey, wax and propolis-based items (including lots of medicines) didn't seem to be well-received. They even had dried drone-brood powder available. I was keen to see the *Varroa* management products and presentations. There was plenty to see in that area including the *Varroa* Controller (our club has one) and another hive-based heat treatment and monitoring device, about \$1,000AUD per hive.

The most exciting thing is a newly developed treatment called Norroa. It's an RNA-based product that targets the mites' DNA, rendering them infertile. It has been approved for use in some US states and undergoing the approval process in others. It can be used with honey supers in place and stringent testing has shown no impact on bees or other insects.

In other news, **the AGM is scheduled for Sunday 19 October**. Please consider nominating for a position on the committee.

Happy beekeeping

Frana

And here is Frana's report from **the QBA Conference on the Gold Coast**, in case you missed it – lots of info here.

https://mcusercontent.com/3e58ed5f92f9006c61eab71e0/files/59d95e7c-04e5-ee4c-44ac-3eef42593eee/QBA_Conference_Report.pdf

September Bee Club Meeting: It's a wrap!

Beryl sent in some photos from the last Club meeting where Sonya gave a talk and demonstration on ways to use the wax cappings. Members had the chance of making a wax wrap & firestarter.



Minutes of September TDBAI Committee Meeting

MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING 14 SEPTEMBER 2025, HPSS.
OPENED 2.00PM

25 IN ATTENDANCE WITH 5 APOLOGIES.

Club members and visitors were welcomed by Ron who was standing in for President Frana who is currently overseas. Whilst overseas Frana will be attending the International Bee Conference in Copenhagen.

Housekeeping - Toilets, exits etc and refreshments.

Visitors and guests welcomed and Handout packs given out.

Reports -

Beryl (librarian). Books available to borrow. Must be returned within an acceptable time frame.

The Bee Shop (Ron & Mark) They are both happy with the way the shop is running.

As both President and Treasurer are overseas no reports available.

Minutes of the last meeting were detailed in September's newsletter and with a show of hands they were passed as read and correct. Ron asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes. No matters raised.

General Business

1. Club advised it had been decided not to renew the lease on Michael Hooper Park.

This decision was made partly because of ongoing vandalism, problem with water, power and recurring flooding.

2. Club Hives have a new home at Cowboy House in Pimlico. Many members offered to assist with the relocation.
3. Advised that the Varroa Controller had been purchased with Grant money from Bravus.
4. Carla spoke to the group and emphasised the importance of regular inspection of hives and necessity of reporting findings via Bee123 app.
5. Tropilaelaps mite has been mentioned in the media recently. It was suggested we research online for details.
6. Christmas Party to be held Sunday 14 December at the Bohle Barn from 11.30am

Ron asked if there was any New Business. No matters raised.

Ron then introduced the guest speaker Sonya who undertook a workshop on the uses of wax. Workshop was appreciated by all.

Meeting closed 3.30 with afternoon tea following.

The new normal – varroa mite in Queensland

The Adelaide Advertiser reports (Sept 4 2025) that Varroa has been detected in South Australia for the first time. It was found on some hives from Queensland that were being used in almond pollination services.

Since the first detection of varroa mite in Queensland in March this year, the pest has spread to a total of 15 local council areas with nearly 242 infested premises reported.

The [surveillance map](#) highlights the affected areas.

Currently there are more than 130 infested premises in Queensland. Some beekeepers may now be on their second round of treatments, depending on mite numbers. This means the rotational use of mechanical, cultural and chemical options is the new normal for these beekeepers.

Anyone with a hive should be checking for mites monthly and reporting their results to [Bee 123](#), even if no mites are found.

For support from your local varroa development officer, email varroa@dpi.qld.gov.au

Carla Kersnovske M: 0467 236 135 E: carla.kersnovske@dpi.qld.gov.au

W: www.dpi.qld.gov.au

Varroa Development Officer (National Varroa Mite Management Program), Biosecurity Queensland

For more information about varroa mite in Queensland:

- head to www.dpi.qld.gov.au/varroa.
- email varroa@dpi.qld.gov.au
- subscribe to the [bee e-alert](#).

It's important to remember that support is available from our varroa development officers. They are on hand to provide free advice to all Queensland beekeepers and assist with early detection and integrated pest management.

Email varroa@dpi.qld.gov.au

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 Carla by calling 0467 236 135 or emailing carla.kersnovske@daf.qld.gov.au

Do the alcohol wash and check for these blighters!

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

Rob Stephens Plant Biosecurity & Product Integrity

M 0407 374 232 **E** 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.

The areas of infestation can be seen on the [varroa mite surveillance map](#).

For further information regarding workshops in other regions of Queensland, please contact us via email at varroa@dpi.qld.gov.au

Regards

Carla Kersnovske M: 0467 236 135 E: carla.kersnovske@dpi.qld.gov.au

W: www.dpi.qld.gov.au

Varroa Development Officer (National Varroa Mite Management Program), Biosecurity Queensland

From the Internet

Canadian beekeeper gets robbed

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/sep/09/canada-bees-honey-heist?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

A Canadian beekeeper has described fending off thousands of “robber [bees](#)” as they raided her shop in a brazen attempt to steal honey. Christine McDonald, who owns Rushing River Apiaries in the British Columbia city of Terrace, said she entered her shop to find it overrun by the swarm.

“I think that’s the most panicked I have felt ... There’s thousands of bees, I don’t know where they’re coming from, and I need to protect all of the honey,” she told CBC News.

Raids of rival hives are common after hot, dry summers, when a “nectar gap” emerges between spring blooms and autumn flowers. Larger bee colonies also need more food to collect and store. McDonald says she avoided disaster by throwing a tarp over the equipment and products, but ended up “sacrificing her bathroom” in order to trap the invading bees.

By leaving the lights on in the room, she lured the bees away from their target. McDonald later scoured the shop in search of ingress points, discovering that the bees had entered through a gap in the door frame, which has since been sealed.

She said it took four or five days before the ravenous bees stopped trying to return to her shop.

“I think they’ve learned that, nope, there’s no more food here,” she said. “We can’t get in.”

Honey Bee Health Coalition is a great source of info

<https://honeybeehealthcoalition.org/resources/varroa-management/>

This site has videos, links, info and really good info on how to deal with Varroa. A great source of pooled info from some very experienced beekeepers.

Can honeybees harm the environment?

On a tiny Italian island off the coast of Tuscany, scientists conducted a radical experiment to see if the bees were causing their wild cousins to decline.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/18/hives-honeybee-boom-tuscan-island-italy-aoe?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

The best way to “Save all the Bees”? – don’t become a beekeeper

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/07/help-bees-dont-become-a-beekeeper-honeybee-hive-biodiversity?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Seems like over enthusiastic beekeeping and an over-abundance of honeybees is having adverse effects on native and solitary bees as pollinators.

Bee stings might actually be good for you

<https://beeculture.com/minding-your-bees-and-cues-48/>

The active ingredient in bee stings – melittin – is being investigated for a multitude of beneficial effects :

1. Fish Food Additive

An Egyptian study of red tilapia encapsulated bee venom using nanotechnology and investigated whether the fish benefited from microdosing of honey bee venom. Now don’t start feeding bee venom to your fish, but this study described potential bee venom benefits to the fish: improved intestinal health and digestive enzyme activity; enhanced antioxidant and anti-inflammatory biomarker activity; strengthened immune system and protection against a pathogenic bacterium.

2. Bee Venom and Prostate Cancer

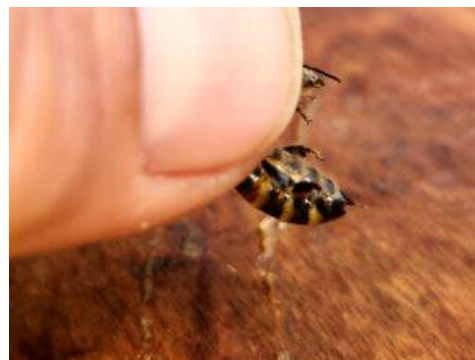
The same nanotechnology used in the red tilapia was studied for delivering anti-cancer drugs to prostate cancer cells in culture (El-Didamony et al. 2022). The goal of this research was to improve bee venom delivery to cancer cells and evaluate efficacy of bee venom. In another win for bee venom, both bee venom and the encapsulated bee venom were more effective in destroying prostate cancer than cancer drug, doxorubicin.

3. Antimicrobial Properties

While stories of antimicrobial properties of honey and propolis abound, what do you know about the bee venom peptide melittin? There is a significant body of honey bee product antimicrobial research reviewed in a paper by Obeidat et al. (2024). In addition to summarizing the work of other researchers, they report on their own study about honey, propolis, royal jelly, bee venom and melittin. Their work revealed that bee venom and melittin led the way in antimicrobial activity, followed by propolis, royal jelly and honey. The efficacy of bee venom was attributed to the destruction of cell membranes by melittin. Interestingly, the research also documented a decrease in bee venom’s melittin levels in Summer and Fall compared to venom collected in Springtime. The success of bee products against antibiotic-resistant bacteria and fungi is very hopeful.

4. Diabetic Kidney Disease

Not only is bee venom showing promising signs as a diabetes therapy (Sadek et al., 2024), a recently published study demonstrated its reversal of diabetes related kidney disease in rats. In addition to kidney improvement, this study



showed that there were no efficacy differences between venom injection and oral ingestion, a preferred method of delivery (Ahmed et al., 2025)

5. Wound Healing Enzyme Inhibition

Too much of a good enzyme can cause problems. A Turkish research team studied the impact of bee venom on inhibiting two enzymes, collagenase and myeloperoxidase (Keskin et al., 2024). While both enzymes are important for normal wound healing, both can cause tissue damage in high levels and are present in chronic wounds. In this report, the in vitro (think test tube!) bee venom inhibition effects on collagenase and myeloperoxidase enzymes were demonstrated for the first time. Did you know that the levels of bee venom components vary by honey bee hybrid and geographic location of the colony (Hussein et al., 2019)? Well, this study reported that differing geographic origins of bee venoms in Turkey had significantly different inhibition effects on the studied enzymes. These test tube studies add to the work done by scientists to help standardize the use of bee venom in products that support wound healing and the regeneration of skin.

6. Viral Infections.

Another review paper reports in detail about bee products, in particular bee venom and its efficacy in fighting viral infections (Otreba et al., 2025). The authors cite bee venom's anti-inflammatory properties and immune-triggering response caused by the melittin peptide as the reason it is effective against viral infections. Which viruses have succumbed to the power of bee venom? The list includes: influenza A, herpes simplex and hepatitis C, to name a few.

Bees for Development Organisation support deaf Ugandan beekeepers



Kasule at the training apiary in Jinja

Meet Kasule, a hearing-impaired Beekeeping Trainer and Apiary Master in Jinja, Uganda for our Partner Organisation, TUNADO.

He trains beekeepers in all aspects of beekeeping and works with seven groups of people with disabilities, using sign language to communicate.

“A lot of deaf people have lost their jobs in Jinja and they are suffering. So in the past, I have targeted such people and told them about beekeeping and the potential in beekeeping ... many of them were encouraged to join beekeeping and are now selling honey and other products from beeswax”

Tropilaelaps – the next bad thing

<https://theconversation.com/deadlier-than-varroa-a-new-honey-bee-parasite-is-spreading-around-the-world-264891>

For decades, beekeepers have fought a tiny parasite called Varroa destructor, which has devastated honey-bee colonies around the world. But an even deadlier mite, *Tropilaelaps mercedesae* – or “tropi” – is on the march. Beekeepers fear it will wreak even greater havoc than varroa – and the ripple effects may be felt by the billions of people around the world who rely on honey bee-pollinated plants.

Tropi's natural host is the giant honey-bee (*Apis dorsata*), common across South and Southeast Asia. At some point, the mite jumped to the western honey-bee (*Apis mellifera*), the species kept by beekeepers around the world. Because this host is widespread, the parasite has steadily moved westwards.

It has now been detected in Ukraine, Georgia and southern Russia, and is suspected to be in Iran and Turkey. From there, it is expected to enter eastern Europe, then spread across the continent. Australia and North America are also at risk.

Why tropi spreads so fast

Like varroa, tropi is a tiny mite that breeds inside capped brood cells, the life stages of the honey-bee when the late larvae and pupae develop inside honeycomb cells that are sealed by a layer of wax. The mite feeds on bee pupae and transmits lethal viruses, such as deformed wing virus – the deadliest of the bee viruses. But there are crucial differences.

Varroa can survive on adult bees for long periods, but tropi cannot. Outside brood cells, it lives only a few days, scurrying across the comb in search of a new larva.

Because tropi spends more time in capped cells, it reproduces quickly. A capped cell that contains a female varroa will result in one or two mated varroa offspring emerging with the adult bee. Tropi offspring develop faster inside a capped cell than varroa offspring, so a tropi “mother” may result in more offspring emerging than a varroa infested cell, more quickly overwhelming the colony.

As a result, colonies infested with tropi can collapse far faster than those plagued by varroa.

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.

Club Shop – now a shop, swap and stop – and sell

We will have a gazebo set up with new items on show and a **coffee machine**, so call in or stay on after collecting your order. A great opportunity to ask questions about your bees, or just to have a chat. We will also have a Buy Swap Sell table, not limited to beekeeping items. feel free to bring things along.

Shoppers – log onto the website and place your order there: Accounts\Shop

Alternatively you can place your orders via email shop@beesnorth.com.au 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.

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.

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.



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	president@beesnorth.com.au
Vice President	Al Cooney	
Secretary	Liz Hennig	secretary@beesnorth.com.au
Treasurer	Louise Clark	treasurer@beesnorth.com.au
Event Co-Ordinator	Shandelle O'Reilly	
Biosecurity Awareness Officer	John Carr	
Newsletter Editor	Lindsay Trott	editor@beesnorth.com.au
Assistant Editor	Lesley Barr	
Membership Officer	Frana McKinstry	membership@beesnorth.com.au
Shop Managers	Ron Newitt & Mark Finn	shop@beesnorth.com.au
Shop Assistant	N/A	
Librarian	Beryl Smart	
Website/social media Officer	Brenden Driemel	
Native Bees Representative	Jon McKinstry	
Committee 1	Doris Newitt	
Committee 2	Maria Finn	
Committee 3	Greg Skellem	
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 or trottlindsay@gmail.com

Or: Lesley Barr 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?

Send stories and pictures to :

Lindsay Trott: trottlindsay@gmail.com Or: Lesley Barr <lesleybarr@y7mail.com>

Blooper of the Month?

Send me your blooper for totally anonymous recognition- honestly