



# THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER

Bimonthly newsletter for  
THE AMATEUR BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

*Better Apiculture Through Knowledge*

Volume 48 Issue 1

[www.beekeepers.asn.au](http://www.beekeepers.asn.au)

April/May 2011

Vice Presidents: Victor Bilokin, John Humphries  
Secretary: Dave Wilson 94842596  
Treasurer: Sheryl McIntosh  
Newsletter Editor: John Humphries 49828715  
Next deadline for material to be included in this newsletter:  
Friday, 20th May

### Another successful Field Day

A big thank you and congratulation to the Alistair Kilfeather and the Macarthur branch for organising such an informative day.

The Men's shed was a good venue with Camden with the Lions Club putting on a sausage sizzle.

Excellent speakers and a good crowd, some of whom had traveled some distance to attend.

Doug Somerville opened the day with a talk about AFB. This was followed by candle maker, Kate Burton the proprietor of Queen Bee. Jamie Crighton from Steritech spoke about irradiating equipment.

Des Cannon the editor of the Australasian Beekeeper, spoke about his beekeeping experiences – more hives certainly make more work, but not necessarily more profit!

Nick Annand spoke about the Asian invasion of *Apis Cerana* – look out for these bees they seem to be similar in size and colouring to European wasps?

Eric Whitby showed off his back-saving hive lifter and went on to explain the drum he uses to collect swarms. Eddie Sijnstra enlarged on Kate Burton's candle making talk and explained his method of moulding foundation sheet with many interesting facts about melting and moulding beeswax – Soap and water is the lubricant to use. *More notes in next issue*

### From the Illawarra Club

VALE: NORA PERKINS

It is with great regret that we advise the sad passing on 26-Mar-11 of our esteemed Hon. Member. Mrs. Perkins has been a stalwart of the branch for approx. 50 years.

For further details contact our Secretary Geoff Henning 02 9528 4292.

## Your Association's Annual General Meeting in conjunction with the Inter-branch Colonel Pulling Competition

hosted by the Northern Rivers Branch at Casino on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2011

*Apiaries Judge - Nick Annand DPI    Quiz – Eddie Sijnstra    Branch Entries Judge – Geoff Manning*

**Please look upon this event as 'participation' rather than 'competition'!**

The pre-AGM dinner will be at the Clydesdale Motel & Steakbarn on Saturday evening the 7<sup>th</sup> May with the Club's AGM and COMPETITION on Sunday morning 8<sup>th</sup> May followed by a BBQ lunch.

The Motel is located on Johnston Street (Bruxner Highway) heading east towards Lismore corner of Kent Street., Tel 6662 5982. Tariff we are advised is \$99 to \$105 depending on room size.

The Clydesdale Motel & Steakbarn has limited accommodation, so first in, best dressed. There are several alternative motels not too far away and there is a 24 hour Taxi service over the weekend.

Other motels include:

Casino Motor Inn, 90 Hare Street, Tel 6662 1777

River Park Motel, 123 Centre Street, Tel 6662 2999

Squatter's Homestead Motel, 161 Centre Street,

Tel 6662 3888

Milgate Motel, 118-120 Centre Street, Tel 6662 1022

Trains:

Ex-Sydney 7.15am arrives Casino 6.44pm – daily

Ex-Sydney 7.10am arrives Casino 3.55pm – daily

Depart Casino 9.53am arrive Sydney 9.05pm – daily

Depart Casino 7.30am arrive Sydney 6.52pm – daily

## Abandoned or neglected hives

**Mick Rankmore**

*Regulatory Specialist, Apiaries - Agriculture Compliance Industry & Investment, NSW*

Abandoned or neglected hives of bees or hive materials often become matters of concern and complaint within the beekeeping industry. Complaints are usually made on a variety of allegations. The most common are as follows:

1. There is a positive identification of disease in the hives.
2. Abandoned or neglected apiaries may represent a disease risk to nearby colonies.
3. Their unsightly appearance reflects badly on the standards of management of the better beekeepers and they present a poor public image of beekeeping generally.
4. Property changes ownership and the new owner can't identify the owner of the apiary.

### What are abandoned hives?

Any of the following reasons may indicate abandonment:

- The owner/manager pays no attention to the identification, management or welfare of the hives.
- Hives are not identified, and an Apiary Inspector has taken reasonable steps to locate the owner of the hives without success.
- The owner of the hives fails to contact an Apiary Inspector within 20 days of a notice being left clearly displayed in the apiary requesting the owner to do so.
- Hives are owned by an unregistered beekeeper and the owner is unable to be contacted.

### What are neglected hives?

The following are some of the indications of neglect:

- Hive material is unsound and would allow the entry of robber bees.
- Hive material is missing from the hive, such as lids, frames or bottom boards.
- Hives do not have removable frames to allow disease inspection by an apiary inspector.
- Dead-out hives show American foulbrood (AFB) scale.
- Disease is present in hives to the extent that other apiaries are at risk.
- Dead-out hives in an apiary are not sealed and allow robber bees to remove honey or other materials which may be infected with disease organisms.
- Exposed honey combs or other apiary products and/or appliances are accessible to robber bees.
- Hive material is knocked over and scattered about the apiary.
- Apiary sites are overgrown with vegetation which prevents an apiary inspector from access to the hive for disease inspection.
- Hives have excessive dry rot or white ant damage.

### Reporting abandoned and/or neglected hives

The *Apiaries Act 1985* and *Apiaries Regulation 2005* confer specific powers to deal with abandoned and neglected beehives.

Before an Apiary Inspector can exercise those powers, the inspector must be satisfied on reasonable grounds that any bees, beehives, apiary products or appliances within an apiary are abandoned or neglected or are infected.

Complaints or information, from beekeepers or other persons, of alleged abandoned or neglected hives must be in writing.

An 'Advice form' is available for persons to submit the information. Advice forms are available at the Industry & Investment NSW - Primary Industries web page <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/about/legislation->

[acts/apiaries](#) or by contacting Industry & Investment NSW, Gunnedah Office, phone (02) 6741 8374.

The identity of the person supplying the advice and the detailed information provided in their advice is treated confidentially and is not disclosed to other beekeepers or to the owner or occupier of the land on which the bees are located, unless required by law.

If there are reasonable grounds to assess that the beehives may be abandoned or neglected, then an apiary inspector will inspect the site. Depending upon the findings, follow-up action may include:

- no further action if the hives are found not to be abandoned or neglected;
- provision of advisory information to the beekeeper by an Apiary Livestock Officer if improved management is required;
- written direction to the beekeeper for the apiary to be 'put into order';
- if AFB is detected, written direction to the beekeeper to irradiate or destroy the infected bees and hive material;
- seizure and disposal of the hives.

### What does 'put into order' mean?

An Inspector's powers to direct beekeepers to 'put hives into order' may include (but are not limited to) the following directives:

- Stand fallen hives upright.
- Replace missing frames or other defective hive parts which could make the colony vulnerable to attack by robber bees.
- Prevent robbing.
- Replace missing frames to allow inspection of brood for disease symptoms.
- Remove dead-out hives from the apiary and store them in a bee-proof manner.
- Transfer bees, honey and bee combs from unframed hives into framed hives.
- Identify all unbranded brood boxes with the beekeeper's registered brand.
- Keep normal access to the beehives clear from obstructions to allow hive inspection.

Industry & Investment NSW - Primary Industries will report back to the person who provided the original 'Advice form' when the matter has been investigated.

For further information, contact Mick Rankmore, Industry & Investment NSW - Primary Industries, phone (02) 6741 8374 during business hours or mobile 0402 078 963.

Email: [michael.rankmore@industry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:michael.rankmore@industry.nsw.gov.au)

## Australia's Honeybee News

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## Letter to Federal Minister Tony Burke from ABA Illawarra member Graeme Webber

Dear Minister Burke,

Appalled at your government's premature retreat from the Asian Honey Bee invasion, I am writing to urge that you seek advice from your Department about the likely impacts on native flora and fauna as this new exotic pest fans out across Australia. During recent weeks, wide media attention has been drawn to the devastating impacts of this nuisance bee upon apiarists and the multi-billion dollar crops which rely upon European bees for pollination. Much has been said about these issues (and rightly so), but very little has been said about the impacts on native animals from this aggressive insect which has a high tendency to swarm and take over hollow branches and other roosting sites for native animals. Evidently, small cavities that are needed by micro bats, sugar gliders and a plethora of other native animals will be invaded by the Asian honey bee, whereas feral colonies of European honey bees are not interested in such small spaces. Having smaller but more plentiful hives, I fear the Asian Honey Bee will eventually occupy a much greater percentage of roosting sites.

It can also be said that migratory beekeepers move from honey flow to honey flow, and generally only pose competition for native animals during abundances of nectar. When the honey flow starts to subside, the beekeeper would normally remove his/her hives – but Asian bees will compete with all nectar gathers all through the year without offering any dividend to mankind in terms of a valuable and prized food source, namely honey (and pollen).

As you would know, the issue of beekeepers being ejected from national parks has been a vexed issue for some decades. But from what I am learning about the pervasive and aggressive behaviour of this new introduced bee, comparing domesticated bees to Apis Cerana is as hippie to barbarians. Yes, domesticated bees have their critics, but there are many reasons why Apis Cerana will be far worse for the natural environment. I hope all environmentalists will therefore put aside their issues with beekeepers and join the fight against this common enemy – yet another invasive insect to threaten our natural and developed environments.

Minister, I note your comments to Parliament yesterday (2 March 2011) when you said that attempts to eradicate the Asian bee had been wound back due to scientific reasons from an independent panel of experts. I ask you, as Environment Minister, to explain what scientific advice you have sought/obtained to illuminate the likely fallout from this pestilent insect on native fauna.

It seems obvious to me that any cost/benefit considerations of canceling the eradication program of Apis Cerana in the Cairns area in North Queensland has failed to pay proper attention to the non-economic impacts for native animals. To find out that billions of dollars worth of agriculture and the invaluable biological heritage of native animals are not being adequately safeguarded appears to be incredibly short sighted to me. It has been reported that the white flag has gone up on Apis Cera after the spending of only \$3 million... a paltry amount considering reports that \$50 million was spent during the past year alone on mitigation (not even eradication) of plague locusts. Wind-pollinated paddocks aside, how many crops which rely on European bee pollination will be viable when the Asian Honey Bee takes over? Less food for the grasshoppers, I suppose. How many people have stopped to consider the financial impacts on nurseries and the cut flower industry?

Without the hum of busy bees, where will the seeds come from? Who has taken stock of the increased public health risk of bee stings from wild colonies of aggressive Asian bees which constantly splinter into small but feisty swarms which colonise urban environments?

I don't know too many people who subsist on wattle seeds and gum leaves. The fact of the matter is that much of our food supply has been introduced from other countries over the past two centuries, and many of those foods absolutely require European honey bees to efficiently and tirelessly pollinate them to keep the food cycle going for both humans and other herbivores. Whether they realise it or not, every single person has a stake in this issue. Do graziers not realise what will happen to self-sown pastures such as clover if European honey bees are decimated and clover seed is not propagated into the ground? This is only one example.

Beekeepers, like their bees, are often taken for granted. Agriculturalists may not have any direct contact with beekeepers, but swarms routinely peel off from apiaries to provide pollination services for free. One wonders how these wild colonies of European bees will be able to compete and withstand hive robbing when experts warn that professionally-managed hives are in peril of the Apis Cerana onslaught. It is about time we all had a bit more respect for the humble bee – one of the foundational stones of our food web because they are being placed in jeopardy by government apathy, ignorance and budgetary scrooging.

As a budding beekeeper myself, I am acutely concerned about the devastation that has been forecast in Australia by Apis Cerana. The case study of the Solomon Islands (where the European bee population crashed from 2000 hives to just five within eight years) is alarming. I am only a small-scale amateur beekeeper but I had been planning to upscale my hobby during the next several years into a livelihood.

I am well aware of the serious impacts being caused by another quarantine failure – the small hive beetle. While this cursed beetle is causing serious disruption to apiarists, it does not have the potential to also drive native animals out of their lodgings, as per the Asian bee. This is a very important factor which ought to cause concern for environmentally-friendly voters.

Minister, I again urge you to investigate the likely impacts of Apis Cerana on the native environment and advise Cabinet of the likely biological disruption, as I am sure that the full impacts of this outbreak for the longer term have not been properly taken into account. I believe these broader environmental considerations substantially add to calls from apiarists and other agricultural groups for millions of extra dollars to revive and ramp up a decent attempt to ward off incalculable damage from this bee.

And what is the next plan of attack, if any? Where is the public awareness campaign to educate the wider community about the threats posed by this species of bee, and how to identify it? Or would such awareness be a pointless diversion of public funds, given the absence of a suitable program to deal with bees that might be reported in the wider community?

I look forward to answers to the questions and issues I have raised in this letter. As indicated above, I have sent copies of this correspondence to a number of other recipients to broaden awareness about this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Webber, *Amateur Beekeeper, Tomerong, NSW*

## NSW Seminars on native bees by Dr Michael Batley, Australian Museum

*Fee for seminar: \$5 per person*

"Native Bees"

Monday 20th June 2011 at 1 pm

Hills Shire Garden Club,

Barton Hall, David Road, Castle Hill.

Contact: Betty Rymer (02) 9654 1831

"Flowering Plants and their Pollinators"

Monday 25th July 2011 at 10 am

Australian Plants Society,

Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, St Ives.

Contact: Wendy Grimm (02) 9144 5600

### Central Coast Branch

Meetings held on 3rd Wednesday of the month commencing 7.30pm at SOHIER COMMUNITY HALL, entry off Shirley Rd., Ourimbah, on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Starting time 7.30pm. All things relevant for amateur beekeepers. New visitors are more than welcome to attend.

*President: Martin Roberts (02) 43721381*

*Secretary: Toni Mitchell (02) 43321597*

### Northern Rivers Branch

Our meetings/field days are held on the last Sunday of the month. 10.00am start.

*President/Secretary: Merv McDonald 66283687*

*Treasurer: Peter Dickson-Smith 66492009*

### The Illawarra Beekeepers' Association Inc

Meetings are held at the Bee Garden, Eton Street (south), Sutherland.

MEMBERS: PLEASE NOTE CHANGE TO START TIMES FOR THE NIGHT MEETINGS

April 2011

Monday 11th (7pm) Night Meeting Eric Whitby will give tips on how to prepare / present beekeeping produce for entry in competitions.

Sunday 17th April (10am) Field Day – Requeen branch hives.

May 2011

Monday 9th (7pm) Night Meeting - Talk planned on Native Bees.

Sunday 29th May (10am) – Field Day – Autumn Hive Inspection for pest and disease

*President: Lamorna Osborne*

*Secretary: Geoff Henning 9528 4292*

### Macarthur Beekeepers Assoc Inc

The Macarthur Branch meets at the Jack Nash Tennis Centre at Jack Nash Place, Currans Hill at Mount Anna on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm

Field days at Campbelltown apiary at 9:00 am

*President: Bruce Wallis 9605 6688*

*Treasurer: Jean Haavasalu 46818540*

*Secretary: Barry Austen 48 851 705*

**Members are recommended to have a look at the website [www.biobees.com](http://www.biobees.com)**

### Nepean Branch Inc.

Nepean Branch Meeting at Nepean High School, from 9.30 onward.

Sunday April 10th. Mostly theory, plus some practical.

Sunday 8th May, Mothers Day, AGM in Casino.

Our Branch meeting on May 15. If you require further info, ring Eddie on 4751 3941.

Thanks for all the help with extracting and cleaning of the shed as well as working the bees.

*President: Eddie Sijnstra (02) 4751 3941*

*Secretary: Paul Richardson (02) 4739 0381*

### Hunter Valley Branch

THIRD Sunday, 17th April (brought forward one week due to Easter)

- General meeting and apiary inspection weather permitting.

Sunday 22nd May - General meeting and apiary inspection weather permitting.

Meetings held at Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. The usual day is the fourth Sunday of the month.

*President: John Humphries (02) 49828715*

*Secretary: Jim Wright (02) 4959 3138*

### Parramatta District Branch

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of month. Field Day on following Sunday. Meetings held at James Ruse High School Ag Section, Carlingford

Meetings in Agriculture classroom – field days in club apiary – entrance via Baker St

Wednesday meetings 7:30 pm start

*President: Peter Thorley*

*Secretary Dave Wilson 94842596 Treasurer: Norm Webb*

*Extractors Claudio Natoli 9629 9621*

*Ray Szymanski 9869 2400*

*The Amateur Beekeeper is the newsletter for The Amateur Beekeepers' Association of New South Wales Incorporated.*

*Contributions to The Amateur Beekeeper are welcome. Material must be submitted, in writing, to the Editor before the 15<sup>th</sup> of month to be considered for inclusion in The Amateur Beekeeper the following issue or subsequent issues at the Editor's discretion. Articles published do not necessarily contain the views of the Editor unless specifically expressed and whilst every care is exercised, the Editor and/or Council of ABA (individually or corporately) do not hold themselves responsible for errors or omissions. Information contained in this publication is provided as general advice only. For application to specific circumstances, professional advice should be sought. All inserted material must be booked with the Editor and may not necessarily contain the views of the Editor and/or Council of ABA.*

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