

# The CROSS-POLLINATOR



## Newsletter of the Australian Native Bee Association

**Issue 55, June 2024**

Original articles, new information and news from  
the world of native bees

<https://ANBA.org.au/>

We acknowledge and pay respect to the past,  
present and future Traditional Custodians and  
Elders of this nation and the continuation of  
cultural, spiritual and educational practices of  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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## Bees, like humans, can preserve cultural traditions

### Different colonies build in competing architectural styles

The master builders of the insect world are the hundreds of species of stingless bee, native to the tropics and subtropics, which weave combs of unparalleled variety and intricacy inside hollow tree trunks or other cavities. Now a group of evolutionary biologists led by Viviana Di Pietro at KU Leuven, in Belgium, reports that, like humans, these tiny-brained creatures are capable of building according to different architectural traditions which are then handed down over generations. Read more in [The Economist](#). Photograph: Viviana di Pietro.

# The CROSS- POLLINATOR

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**Disclaimer** The Cross-Pollinator is a forum for people to express their views and observations. The author of each article is responsible for the statements expressed within; their opinions are not necessarily those of the ANBA.

The **Australian Native Bee Association Inc** promotes the conservation and sustainable use of all Australian native bees. ANBA achieves that by providing resources, disseminating information, supporting members and communicating with stakeholders.

## Message from the Management Committee

Dear members,

This issue of the Cross-Pollinator marks five years of production. In June 2019, the first issue came out and here we are 55 issues later. Congratulations and thanks for your support. This newsletter is more than that, it is a forum for members to have their say, to share an idea or a story. Members have embraced this role enthusiastically and we continue to receive wonderful content. We appreciate your contributions.

We would love to hear why you choose to be a part of your association? Was it to become a mentor to others and share your experiences? Perhaps it was to seek information and grow your expertise in the industry. Or maybe it was to join a community with a shared passion and connect with others.

Member logos: Would you like to show your support for your Association? Go to our website, <https://www.anba.org.au/anba-publications/> download one of our logos and post it on your website or social media page.

Your membership profile: Please keep your membership up-to-date by editing your profile on the website. It is also handy to include an alternative email address, just in case.

Did you know that websites and email addresses in this newsletter are hot? So you can click on this pdf and go straight there.

*Tim, Ian, Megan, Peter, Steve, Helen, Dean, Michelle, Sophie, Diane, Elaine, Trevor, Cheryll, Liz and Stewart.*



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**Next Cross-Pollinator: Issue 56, July 2024. Deadline** for contributions: Monday 7th July. Send your news/stories/notices/events to the editor: [tim.heard@anba.org.au](mailto:tim.heard@anba.org.au)



## FEATURE ARTICLE

This month's feature article is by Dr. Giorgio Venturieri who was a researcher in the Amazon, Brazil where he pioneered the agricultural utilization of stingless bees both for honey production, and crop pollination. Relocating permanently with his family to Brisbane, he swiftly became one of the pioneering members of our ANBA community. Currently, Dr. Giorgio leads his bee enterprise, NATIVO, specializing in the sale of colonies and providing consultancy services for crop pollination across Southeast Queensland. Here he is on the left with co-author Chris Fuller.



# MANAGING TETRAGONULA CARBONARIA FOR MACADAMIA POLLINATION: SQUARE BOXES, DIVIDERS, AND COMMUNAL STANDS

by

Giorgio Venturieri, Nativo Bees

and

Chris Fuller, Kin Kin Native Bees

## Introduction

The diversification of plants and animals (including native species) used for agricultural purposes has proven to be not only environmentally sustainable but also excellent economically. The use of native bees for commercial pollination is a positive example of this policy.

Australia is home to approximately 2,000 species of native bees. Most of these species are solitary and challenging to produce on a large scale, with few successful examples of agricultural use compared to social bees. In the case of solitary bees, the best measures to date have been the protection, management, and enrichment of the landscape, which support the feeding and nesting sites, and subsequent increase in numbers of these bees.

Meliponini, commonly known as stingless bees, are a highly diverse group of social bees with around 600 species distributed across the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. They have proven to be excellent pollinators for tropical and subtropical agricultural crops, such as tomatoes and eggplants in Brazil, mangoes in India, açai in the Amazon, and melons and strawberries in Brazil and Indonesia, among many other examples.

Australia's tropical and subtropical regions host 11 species of stingless bees, distributed across two genera, *Tetragonula* and *Austroplebeia*. The use of these bees for commercial crop pollination is promising, with numerous studies on this topic being produced in recent decades. Notably, *Tetragonula carbonaria* has been highlighted for its use in macadamia pollination. However, improving the multiplication of colonies is needed as well as developing management strategies for these colonies in commercial macadamia plantations.





Stingless beehives on Giorgio's style communal stand

An effective pollinator of a commercial crop must align with the phenology, size, morphology of the flower, and abundance during the blooming period of the target crop. While *T. carbonaria* as a proven pollinator for macadamia, their occurrence and abundance in commercial plantations often fall short compared to honeybees, the primary bee species utilised for this purpose in Australia. Enhancing the number of *T. carbonaria* colonies and refining management strategies within commercial macadamia plantations are essential for their optimal utilisation.

The honeybee, being social bees of suitable size for the flowers of these crops, can still be used. However, using indigenous bee species for indigenous crops has ecological and strategic advantages. Another advantage of using smaller stingless bees is that they remain within the plantation, due to their much smaller flight radius compared to honeybees. This results in greater fidelity to the target crop.

In the Brazilian tropics, stingless bee management strategies involve using square hives housed in communal stands. In Australia, we have adapted this Brazilian approach to manage *T. carbonaria* for macadamia pollination. Grouping the hives offers several management advantages, including protection from rain, sun, and pests, as well as ease of inspection. Additionally, this method allows macadamia farmers to more easily avoid the hives when applying pesticides to the crop.



Successful macadamia pollination result



# Management of *Tetragonula carbonaria* in macadamia orchard

The importance of managing native stingless bees for macadamia pollination stems from the following factors:

- 1. Macadamia nut production benefits from cross-pollination, leading to increased fruit set, larger fruit size, and improved fruit morphology.
- 2. *Tetragonula carbonaria* is an effective pollinator of macadamia.
- 3. The monoculture approach for producing macadamia excludes many natural pollinators from the landscape.
- 4. Macadamia trees exhibit a brief flowering period. Consequently, so the introduction of pollinators is recommended.
- 5. The management of native bee species enhances pollination diversity, leading to higher yields and reducing dependency on the European honeybee.
- 6. The management of native bee species contributes to their preservation through their utilisation
- 7. The introduction of pollinators benefits the environment because this practice avoids the need to convert natural environments to agriculture.

The case study focuses on a 40-hectare plantation located NE of Gympie, featuring approximately 10,000 macadamia trees, each around 40 years old. The plantation is bordered by tree plantations and secondary vegetation.

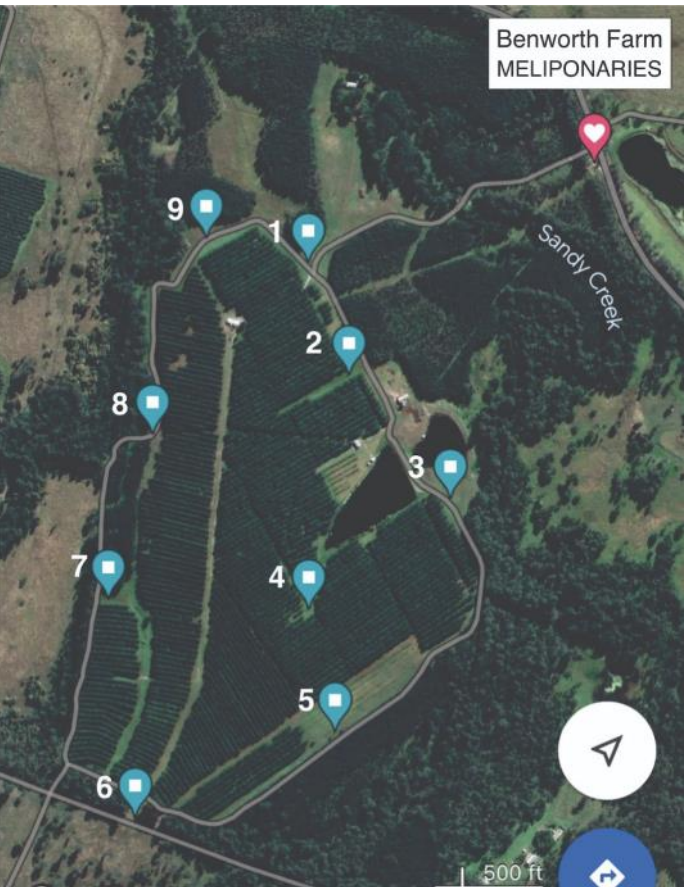


Macadamia orchard used in this report

Initially the hives were distributed in communal stands spread over the cultivated area.

The box design we used is a square box with external measurements 220 mm by 220 mm, and consists of two or three levels where the first two levels are intended for brood and the food used to sustain a stable colony. A third level can be added to produce honey, pollen or propolis. This box model was based on an original model conceived by the Angolan researcher Virgílio de Portugal-Araújo in the 50s. Today, this box model is widely used in various parts of the world.

The wall thickness of the boxes was at least 33 mm. This thickness contributed to better internal temperature control by the bees inside the box.



Site map showing locations of the communal stands



Square hive based on the design used in Brazil



To facilitate colony multiplication with minimal damage to nest structures, thus avoiding the exposure of food to natural enemies and drowning of bees, two dividing plates with a central hole of 110 mm were added between the base and the second level in these boxes.



Parallel division plates help to divide the colony in the middle with minimal damage to hive structures.

Scattered throughout the plantation, nine communal stands were distributed, each capable of housing up to 16 colonies. These stands provided protection from rain, flash flooding, and natural enemies such as cane toads. Another function of the shelter was to provide shade during the hottest period of the year, in summer when the shadow projection at noon is vertical. These shelters had a disadvantage regarding the increase in spider populations, requiring periodic review for spider control; we used a handheld gas torch for this purpose.

All the colonies were provided by the company Kin Kin Native Bees. All colonies were over a year old since their last division.

The division of colonies began in October 2023, out of a total of 48 colonies. Of these 48, only two were not strong enough to be divided. The division was made in half, leaving the lighter division in the original position, aiming to attract more foragers. In most cases, the divider was placed on top of the original box.



Spider control using a handheld gas torch.

To facilitate recognition of the new entrance by the forager workers, pieces of resin were placed in the entrance hole of the new box.

In February 2023, the divisions were redistributed among the stands in the area. The stronger side of the division was moved to the new location, thereby providing more forager worker bees to the lighter side and reducing conflicts between the reallocated colonies in the new location.

When relocating the divisions to another stand, certain precautions must be taken. For example, weak colonies



Communal stand before hive division and relocation.





Stand with its colony recently divided; note that the divisions were placed on top of each other.

resulting in many deaths. However, strong colonies generally stabilise over time.

In this work, out of the 48 divisions, only one colony was lost to the attack of small hive beetles by February 2023.

For June 2024, a general review of the divisions is planned to verify the survival of the colonies, spider control and possible reinforcement of broods from very strong colonies to very weak ones.

### Acknowledgments

To Tim Salmon, for allowing the studies on his macadamia plantation. To Dean Haley, for his valuable comments on this manuscript.

should be placed with weak ones with their entrances facing different directions to minimise fighting. Conflicts can occur, especially when a strong colony is placed among other strong colonies already in place, often



To facilitate recognition of the new entrance by the forager workers, pieces of resin were placed in the entrance hole of the new box.



Massive resin and seed deposits decorating the entrance hole of the mother hive.





## RNA NATIVE BEE HONEY COMPETITION INSTRUCTIONS

The ANBA is once again sponsoring the Ekka Native Bee Honey Competition.

This year the entries are to be submitted in 50 gram jars (last year was bottles) as the jars allow for better judging conditions. An example is shown in the photo below.

As per last year, ANBA is offering its members free jars for their entries. These can be posted or collected. If you would like to receive jars for your entry, please contact Ian Driver on [ianmdriver@gmail.com](mailto:ianmdriver@gmail.com) or 0402 784 171. Please ensure you have lodged and paid for your entry before requesting the jars. Entries close **18 July 2024** and must be delivered to the Ekka on **3 August 2024**.

Enter here: <https://www.ekka.com.au/competitions-and-display/agriculture/apiculture/#iwanttoenter>

Ian Driver is also again offering to take the honey entries into the Ekka if they are delivered to him by Friday **2 August 2024**.

If you have any questions please contact Ian Driver directly.



## When Bee Foundation takes out gold for World Bee Day

The When Bee Foundation has won a coveted global prize for outstanding achievements in the preservation, promotion and research of bees and other pollinators.

The Golden Bee Award is an initiative of the Government of Slovenia, a country with more beekeepers per capita than any other country, and the birthplace of World Bee Day, which was designated as 20 May by the United Nations in 2017.

The Golden Bee Award was launched in 2021 for the protection of bees and the recognition of the role of bees and other pollinators in ensuring food security, sustainable agriculture, nature conservation, biodiversity and cultural heritage. The award recognises outstanding achievements in bee research, promotion and preservation.

Ms Chambers says the Foundation's notable impact is due to its inclusive nature, working across both environmental and agricultural needs, incorporating honey bees, native bees and other pollinators in its programs.

"Whether you're talking about honey bees, native

bees or other pollinators, the solutions are the same. Increasing floral resource availability, increasing habitat, minimising chemical use ... these actions are beneficial for all pollinators."

Ms Chambers says the same approach works when it comes to managing the needs of the environment and agriculture.

"It is important to move away from this idea that agriculture is the biggest threat to the environment, when it also has the opportunity to be part of the solution.

"We want to support everyone, whether that's farmers, backyard gardeners or inner-city residents, to take steps to support all pollinators." [Read more](#)

At an awards ceremony in Ljubljana, Slovenia, When Bee Foundation CEO Fiona Chambers (right) accepted the Golden Bee Award





## Propolis project Introduction

Dr Trong Tran, a senior lecturer in organic chemistry at the University of the Sunshine Coast, has been awarded \$360,000 from the Advance Queensland Industry Research Fellowships program for the project “Unlocking stingless bee propolis for a sustainable future”.

This fellowship will enable Dr Tran to collaborate with Native Beeings, a Queensland-based food and agribusiness specialising in Australian stingless bee propolis, along with the Australian Native Bee Association, Sugarbag Bees and Vanadit Pty Ltd to unravel

the potential of native stingless bee propolis for the development of innovative propolis-based products. The project will ignite a new industry in Queensland, create more job opportunities and contribute to the sustainability of Queensland's diverse bee species crucial for pollinating the state's fruit crops.

Extracting propolis from a stingless bee hive.



## Stingless Bees Guard Tasty Honey With Barricades, Bouncers and Bites | Deep Look

Read accurate information and see stunning videography and on stingless bees, with a focus on central America in this clip, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlN3LiPvuVA>



Stingless Bees Guard Tasty Honey With Barricades, Bouncers and Bites | Deep Look

## COLONY LOSS SURVEY IN LATIN AMERICA

**First large-scale study reveals important losses of managed honey bee and stingless bee colonies in Latin America**

In this 2-year survey, an average of 30% of honey bee colonies and 40% of stingless bee colonies were lost per year across the region. Summer losses were higher than winter losses in stingless bees but not in honey bees.

*Scientific Reports* **volume 14**, Article number: 10079 (2024). Read the full paper [HERE](#).



## By Walter Krainik, edited by Elaine Bean

Years ago, when I first tried to bud a new hive, I realised later that the mother hive wasn't strong enough. It failed when water got into the front box during a storm.

The next time I was more prepared. I drilled out the mother hive entrance to accommodate a 19mm diameter tube of 10-20mm in length. I then left this external entrance tube in place for a few weeks for the bees to become familiar with and scent up. I moved this tube to the entrance of the new box to help the bees locate it.

The empty bud hive sat alongside the older mother hive. I did not wish to move the mother hive away as they were acclimatised to each other. I could swap them around and the bees just went in, with no fighting. They had both been split from one original hive and one could be used to strengthen the other by swapping their positions left to right and vice versa. Then I needed to build a stronger stand to securely hold all the boxes.

I waited for the unusually warm autumn weather to subside before commencing. I joined the bud box in the evening when all the bees had returned, and the night was cool enough for them to not fan air into their box. I joined the boxes with a 19mm water irrigation piece, sanding down the barbs so they fit into the holes exactly. I moved the scented entrance pipe from the old box to the front of the bud box.

On the second day, I noticed fewer bees going into the bud box. The mother hive was extremely busy, so I swapped them. The bees were a little confused however, more bees were now going into the empty front box. Then a few days later I swapped them again. After a few days, I could see through the viewing panel they were using the joiner tube going to the back box.

Then I noticed they were carrying a few dead callows out. The bee count going in and out was starting to fall, so I swapped the sister boxes again. I came to the realisation that they really liked the old dark reddish resinous front entrance on the hive next to them, so I cut some black tape and placed it around the new entrance on the bud box to darken it. This worked wonders. I inadvertently tested this a few weeks later when I removed some of the tape which had started to peel off. I was soon going back to the shed looking for the black tape to darken the entrance. The bees are very attuned to it, especially if the box next to it has an old prominent resinous entrance.

After 6 weeks and they had sealed up the corners. I noticed they were starting with an entrance tube at the rear box, and as the morning warmed up, I could barely count the bees flying back with and without pollen to both box-

es. There were 80+ bees returning per minute plus the ones bumping one another on the way out.

This was going into winter, I weighed the box and found the weight dropping, while the sister box next to it gained 1 kg. I should have disconnected the eduction and waited to spring to start again. I later spoke to a more experienced beekeeper, the budding season for him was to connect at the start of September and disconnect in December.

I did a hard section split on the older sister box at the end of winter before the pests showed up. So far both hives from the split have been going strong and sit alongside each other. At this point in time, I count that I have 3 ½ hives. The eduction is still connected.

My final tip was to line up the entrance holes at the same height because I'm sure the bees do visit or come back to the neighbours' place sometimes.

P.S. The inside dimensions of the boxes are the same. The boxes appear uneven on the outside as some sections are made of thicker wood.

Photo of the original eduction configuration.



A photo of the current configuration, with the newly split hive and the eduction still connected in the centre





# Native Bee Workshops, Events, Services and Products

Members of ANBA are invited to promote their events, services and products in the Cross-Pollinator.

Please send details to [tim.heard@anba.org.au](mailto:tim.heard@anba.org.au).

## Report of last Meeting—Sun 19 May

The last meeting heard from guest speaker Giorgio Venturieri speaking on the topic Managing *Tetragonula carbonaria* for Macadamia Pollination: Square Boxes, Dividers, and Communal Stands. Read a report on page 20.



## A Green Soul Native Bees

Ian Driver at A Green Soul Native Bees runs native beekeeping workshops across South East Qld. Workshops include presentations on native stingless and solitary bees, hive splitting, and honey tasting. You get to build and take home your own bee hotel. To find and book the next workshops go to the [A Green Soul Native Bee website](https://www.agreensoul.com.au).

## Workshops by Sugarbag Bees

Sugarbag Bees offer seminars and workshops presented by Dr Tim Heard. If you want to learn more generally about bees, especially stingless bees and beekeeping, come along to workshops held in various venues in Qld and NSW. The workshops are a mix of photographic slideshows and practical sessions. Click [HERE](#) for events.

Also see the Branch News for events in your area.

## Brewarrina bee event, October long weekend, 2024

Organised by Dean Haley

A bee workshop will be held at the Brewarrina cultural museum grounds on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October.

The picturesque outback town sits on the banks of the Barwon River, overlooking 40,000-year-old fish traps. This is the town featured in the Aussie movie *Emu Runner*.

I'm starting to get some good expressions of interest for this, including from experienced native beekeepers. If you are a native beekeeper coming along, why not provide a five minute talk, and share a yarn with the locals. Please let Dean know if you are keen.

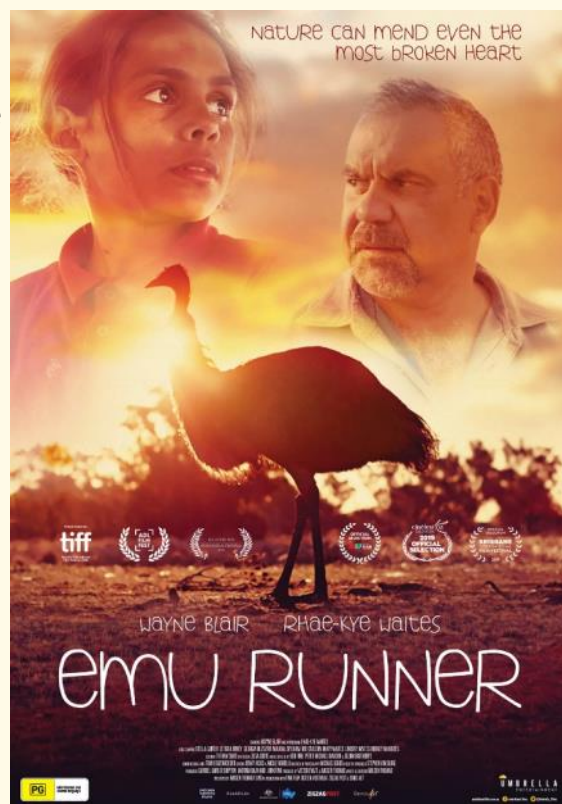
**Latest update - Professor Mary Fletcher has volunteered to give a small talk.**

To find out more, or register interest please send Dean Haley an email at [truebluebees@gmail.com](mailto:truebluebees@gmail.com)

Visit <https://visitbrewarrina.com.au/attractions-activities/> for things to see and do in the Brewarrina region, and where to stay. The opal fields of Lightning Ridge are an easy day trip away, as is the historical town of Bourke. Bird watching and fishing can be very good.

Getting there: Brewarrina is on the Kamilaroi highway between Walgett and Bourke. Roads are sealed and usually in good condition.

If accommodation fills up, there are very good private camping (glamping) facilities with clean bathrooms and bush kitchen for just \$30 per night at Beds on The Barwon.





### The latest from our eleven branches

ANBA supports a network of local branches which help members to conserve, utilize and enjoy native bees.

Currently the eleven functional branches are based in **Sydney, Hunter, Mid North Coast, Coffs Harbour, Brisbane, Wide Bay, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Cassowary Coast, Cairns and Northern Territory.**

### Potential new branches

**Toowoomba.** Please contact Dylan Watt by email, [dylan231192@gmail.com](mailto:dylan231192@gmail.com)



#### Illawarra/Shoalhaven

There has been some interest in forming an Illawarra/Shoalhaven branch of ANBA, but we do not quite have the numbers required. If you're located in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven or surrounds and would be interested in forming a branch and enjoying some local activities, please email Christie Peters [christie-peters@hotmail.com](mailto:christie-peters@hotmail.com) or call her on 0412 497 312.

## Cassowary Coast branch

The Cassowary Coast branch has been busy hosting a workshop, visiting a school and providing advice to the Bingil Bay Distillery this month.

Mission Beach Wellness Weekend is held in the month of May and last weekend our branch ran a solitary bee workshop for the general public as part of the weekend. There was much interest with approximately 25 attendees. Suzanne Muzic from our branch gave a talk about the types of bees most commonly seen around her property. Suzanne has become very knowledgeable about local bee species and we greatly value her growing expertise in this field. Her talk focused on local species and their identification, behaviour and nesting habits. The workshop finished with attendees constructing a mini bee hotel to take home.

We also visited El Arish State School to work with the year 4 to 6 students who were tasked with building a bee hotel as part of their technology unit. By the end of the session, the students had a better understanding of how they needed to know about the nesting habits of bees in order to provide nesting structures to suit the bees in their gardens. Students were able to construct a mini bee hotel which will be combined with more of their constructions to make a bee resort. We look forward to seeing their finished resort for solitary bees.

It seems that information about bee nesting sites is in high demand this month. I also had an opportunity to visit and provide advice to Bingil Bay Distillery on how to create bee friendly structures and sculptures for all types of bees in their gardens and look forward **to being part of this project and seeing how it evolves.**

Our next meeting will be held at the beginning of July. For the finalised details, please check your ANBA emails or Cassowary Coast Native Bee Association [Facebook page](#) or ANBA calendar on the ANBA website or the next Cross-Pollinator.

Kind regards: *Liz Lang, Chairperson*





### Cairns branch

Cairns is back to its beautiful winters and put on quite a show yesterday at the EcoFiesta, which is our biggest and best festival of the year with all stalls promoting eco and green associations.

A huge crowd was in attendance enjoying the many musical items, food stalls and browsing the stalls such as ours.

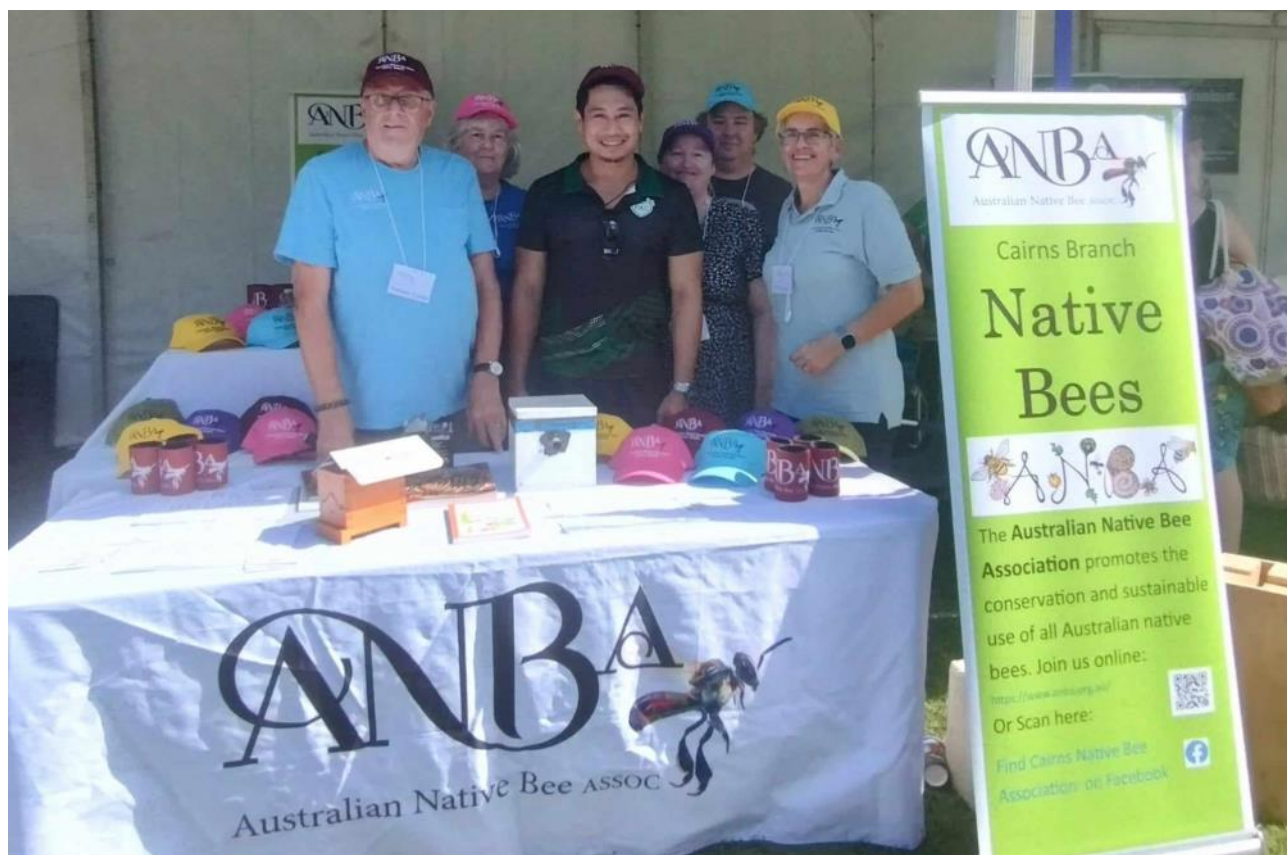
We were run off our feet all day doing what we do best, raising awareness and helping to educate the community on the importance of our native bees. Olly brought a live *T. clypearis* hive which was a star attraction! We even had merch to sell and I wouldn't be surprised to see people around Cairns wearing one of our stylish caps!

We were booked for an educational appearance at one of our local pre schools which is always a fun experience. Next week Julie and I will have a small stall at the Woree State High School which is holding their own mini EcoFiesta.

Our next branch meeting will be held soon and will be advertised on our FaceBook page when we have a date and venue sorted.

From: Stewart Clarke [sclarkehk@gmail.com](mailto:sclarkehk@gmail.com), Chair and Representative to ANBA

[Cairns Native Bee Association Facebook group](#)





### NT (Northern Territory) branch

#### Nightcliff Seabreeze Festival

The NT Branch attended the Nightcliff Seabreeze festival on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> of May.

There was a steady stream of visitors to the stall. Barry provided *Tetragonula mellipes* honey for tasting, which proved very popular. Most people liked the taste and was surprised that it was so different from honeybee honey.

The observation hive and a poster of the native bees of the NT Gina Cranson's poster of Native bees of the NT sparked a lot of interest too.

Members were around to answer questions and hand out information and business cards. We gained at least one new member. We also sold some merchandise.

Sarah Sutcliffe's children's book, "No stings attached" proved the most popular, with stubby coolers coming in a close second. There were a number of enquiries to purchase Gina Cranson's poster of Native bees of the NT and Tim Heard's book, "The Australian Native Bee Book". We will look into stocking this for resale in future.





### Land-clearing Rescues

During May, members of the NT Branch assisted out in searching for native bee colonies in land that had been cleared for subdivision in Darwin's rural area. Sherronna, Wes, David, Anne, Jason and Kate spent a Sunday morning searching through seven large log piles. Three colonies were found in total, with a fourth found separately.

The group made plans and successfully relocated three of the four colonies. The last colony was in the very centre of the pile and couldn't be removed without machinery. The members made plans to relocate it when they could get access to an excavator, however the log pile was unfortunately burnt off before this occurred. This was a devastating outcome for all members involved in the original search and rescue activity, but they were grateful to have been able to find, save and relocate three of the four nests.

The NT Branch is working to build a collaborative approach with the developers and contractors, so that the bush can be searched prior to land clearing occurring in the future. Thank you and well done to all members who assisted.

*From Leane Watermeyer*





### NT (Northern Territory) branch (Continued from previous page)

#### May 2024 Branch Meeting

On Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of May we had our NT branch meeting at Mr Mark Turner MLA Member for Blain's Conference room at Oasis Shopping Village.

We had a virtual presentation with Dr James Makinson from the University of Western Sydney about the role of stingless bee pollination in NT mango orchards. James delivered an excellent talk and was kind enough to answer questions afterwards.

After the talk we had a quick meeting. We had a debrief on the Seabreeze festival. The stall was deemed a success. We discussed the purchase of Tim Heard's book, "The Australian Native Bee Book" and Gina Cranson's poster for re-sale. We will keep the venue at Oasis shopping centre as our regular meeting spot as it is much better equipped to deal for virtual presentations.

#### June 2024 Branch Meeting

At our meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, we discussed hives to be made by Darwin correctional facility to use for rescues. Surplus hives could then potentially be sold at events. We also discussed our upcoming events and creating a public Facebook page for the branch to advertise these.

#### Upcoming events

We have been invited to have a stall at the Native Plant Biodiversity Event at Jingili Water Gardens on 20 July. The committee accepted and members are looking forward to attending this event.

Bunnings sausage sizzle on 28 July.

Our next branch meeting and AGM will be held on Monday 8 July.

### Plant of the month For June, Barry Conde highlights *Celosia argentea*

The forage plant for this month is *Celosia argentea*, family Amaranthaceae. It is known as a pollinator magnet. Its official common name is woolflower, however, it is more commonly known as celosia. It is an ornamental plant, is edible and is a good forage plant for our *Tetragonula mellipes* bees in the Darwin dry season supplying nectar for the

Cockscomb form



bees. It originates from Nigeria, where it is the most common spinach eaten there, being called Lagos or Nigerian Spinach. It is a very hardy annual, withstanding hot dry conditions.

The *Celosia argentea* species occurs in three forms, the wheat (Spicata) group, the plumed (Plumosa) group and the cockscomb (Cristata) group. The cockscomb group was commonly grown by Australians for several generations as an ornamental. A Darwin stingless bee colleague, Simon Cassidy bought a cockscomb plant over 12 months ago because stingless bees were on the flowers. There are now many varieties of each of these available in Australia and worldwide, grown largely as ornamentals. Flamingo Feather in the Spicata group is also very attractive to our mellipes stingless bees.

Spicata form  
(Flamingo feather)





## Wide Bay branch news

Our proposed meeting on site at a local Macadamia Farm had to be postponed due to weather, it is proposed to hold the site visit later in the year. We were able to hold our meeting at a member's home.

Pollination and pollen sources were the main topics of discussion for members of the Wide Bay branch at this month's meeting. As we move towards late Autumn, many members have noticed a change in the number and type of plant species serving as native bee food sources in local backyards and the challenges of providing a well-balanced bee-friendly garden year-round was discussed. This was also relevant to the group's reading this month of the pollination section of Tim Heard's book.

The region has had a very wet and windy couple of months and some members have found their hives have lost weight over the last 4-6 weeks as pollen and honey stores have been utilised by the bees. The group shared ideas about the merits of several methods of monitoring hives' food stores such as weighing hives and visually inspecting returning foragers for the quantity and colour of gathered pollen as an indication of the variety and abundance of nearby food sources.

Although the days are beginning to cool, a very full hive belonging to this month's meeting host was determined to be strong enough to split. Having performed/witnessed a smaller, more docile hive split at the last meeting, some attendees were surprised by the rapid and aggressive defensive response of this colony the moment the hive tool was inserted. The group agreed that the colony's large population and strong defence response bode well for its continued health after this successful split. The group also took the opportunity to inspect a number of different hive material types in use by the host, including locally made hardwood boxes and commercially produced foam composite core boxes.

*From Stephen Curran, Secretary, Wide Bay Branch*

For more info on branch activities, visit our [Facebook page](#)





## Gladstone branch

### Follow up with community Hives

I personally have several hives out in the community for various community members that I am monitoring as educutions and have been inspecting them at regular intervals for their respective owners. I have found these are a fantastic way of educating interested public about native bees whilst at the same time learning more about them myself. I find no two educutions are the same and they never fail to surprise me.



Tracey in her garden

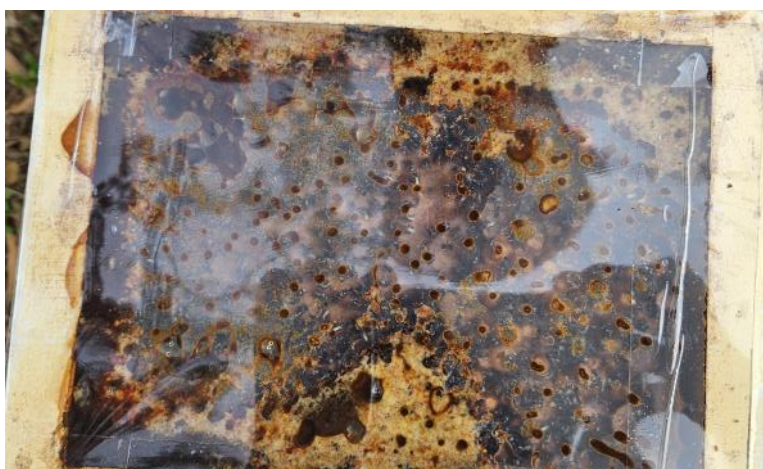
One such hive is in Gladstone where I was contacted about a hive that for some reason had failed after being relocated some time previously. On inspection I found it had a lot of structure but no brood or stores and no sign of attack by predators. To me it appeared it may not have requeened perhaps from moving too early, so it has now been connected to another strong hive. Tracy has now built a special area in her garden to accommodate the bees which she refers to as her Bee Haven and reflection area. On a visit to inspect progress after just 6 weeks we not only found it to be very active but to the delight of Tracey there were lots of bees coming and going from an old hollow stump not 1 m away.

### Water Meter Rescues and Fostering Project

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May we visited the home of Karmen to inspect the development of one of our foster hives #5 which has been connected to the Toolooa School box. On inspection we found the new box quite full of stores but still no brood evident. Our intention was to perhaps transfer some brood from the host hive #5 into the new box but when we opened it we found all the brood in the upper box and none in the bottom box so closed it up to wait for further development

Interestingly we checked Karmen's personal hive for potential splitting and found it in the same condition, looks like Karmen is raising high-rise bees only.

On Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May, Foster Hive Coordinator Ross and myself visited the Calliope Community Gardens with President Doug to inspect the progress of ANBA Foster Hive #1, This hive was a water meter rescue 12 months ago and became our first Foster Hive placement 3 months later in Aug 2023 and it has been growing and pollinating there since. We were delighted to see that the 2 stage box was completely full and ready for propagating from but with the cooler weather we will wait for spring.



Calliope Garden Hive with Doug & Ross





### Gladstone EcoFest ANBA Display

On Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June we had the opportunity to attend Tondoon Botanic Gardens to promote Native Bees with a display and presentation to the public. Our team of volunteers rocked up early in rather cool conditions to set up and then welcome the public, many of whom showed a very keen interest in native bee keeping. Of particular interest was the display hives of different bee species including two AA and two TH. Thank you Wayne Piper for your very special TH hive which is destined for the Kin Kora Kindy soon, more on this later.



EcoFest display

Interestingly we had no less than 3 people come to us reporting hives in their brick walls, two of which are in local schools and our branch has been asked to help them manage these

For more info on branch activities, visit our [Facebook page](#) ANBA Gladstone Branch.

*Ian Anderson*

### Events planned

We are now planning to hold a management committee very soon to discuss our pathway forward over the cooler weather and look at future events.





### Brisbane Branch

Brisbane Branch meet from 1- 3pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month at Bulimba Community Centre, 1 Barramul St, Bulimba. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday allows us to sidestep Mother's Day and other "First Sunday of the month" events. Visitors are welcome.

#### Report of May meeting

On Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> May we had 26 members, 7 visitors, and I'm not sure how many online attendees (but at one stage counted 14) turned out to hear our own Giorgio Venturieri speak. I have known Giorgio for many years now. I've bought bee boxes from his Nativo business, drank Brazilian Cachaça rum, and had many good conversations and laughs. But other than being a damned good bloke, Giorgio is an international Stingless Bee expert, a highly accomplished scientist, and had a high job in Brazil's Embrapa (similar to our CSIRO) for many years. It was an absolute pleasure to have Giorgio as a guest speaker in our club.

I won't summarise Giorgio's talk, because I know he has written an article for this month's Cross-Pollinator that covers his main points. It was really good to see so many people attend in person, and I caught up with a few people I hadn't seen in months. A great event.

Part of my thinking with the bee hotels we make, is that they could be sold at the QLD garden expo in July to raise some funds for our branch. We've had some branch members volunteer for this event, but still need a few more (please email me or Greg Shea).

Thanks everyone, love to see you at the next meeting.

*BEST WISHES from the Brisbane branch committee: Dean, Tim, Greg, Jennifer, Peter, Steve and Nina.*

For more info on branch, visit our [Facebook page](#).



#### Next meeting—Sunday 16 June, 1PM

Our next meeting will be a mixture of hands-on work and show and tell with our club members. Ian Driver (another all round good bloke) will guide us to make our own solitary bee hotels. I have also asked members to bring along examples of their own solitary bee hotels for show and tell. I'd love to **see** different techniques and variety.

We will not hear from an invited speaker to our June meeting but give members the chance to present from the floor. The mic is open to anyone who would like to spruik their latest idea or invention. Please send your proposal to Dean Haley, [josephhale67@gmail.com](mailto:josephhale67@gmail.com).





## Coffs Harbour branch

The Coffs Harbour branch meeting on Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> of May took place at the South Coffs Community Garden where we were welcomed by member John Higgins. John gave us a tour of the beautifully kept garden which is home to native bees. The community garden is run by volunteers and features communal beds as well as rental beds. Over the years, the garden has worked with various local community groups, and sustainability workshops are run on a regular basis. Fresh produce is available for purchase Sunday mornings while a market stall can be found at Toormina Gardens every first Friday of the month. The garden is completely organic and features a bush tucker area and a greenhouse. Being awarded a grant to support native bees paved the way for a *Tetragonula carbonaria* hive to be installed in the gardens which was complemented by planting bee-friendly flowers and trees and adding native bee books to the library on site. Since they were split 2.5 years ago by Tim Heard, the *Tetragonula carbonaria* hives have performed well. Given the garden's location, during the Varroa mite incursion the hives had to be moved out of the gardens but were recently welcomed back.

We talked about the success of our ANBA stall at the Coffs Harbour Show and if a new category for native bee honey judging should be added for future shows. We further discussed plans to apply for a Community Grant.

From Lena Alice Schmidt

General enquiries [coffs@anba.org.au](mailto:coffs@anba.org.au).



For more info on branch activities, visit our Facebook page [ANBA Coffs Harbour Native Bees](#).

### Events

If you would like to host a future meeting please contact Lena ([l.alice.schmidt@gmail.com](mailto:l.alice.schmidt@gmail.com)).





## Sydney Branch Shines at St Ives Show

The Australian Native Bee Association's Sydney Branch held a stall at the St Ives Showground this May. Despite the cold snap, our members braved the chill to share their passion for Australian native bees with the community.

The event was abuzz with excitement as attendees were welcomed to our stall to engage in a range of activities. Highlights included a honey tasting session, an observation hive, and numerous engaging conversations about the fascinating world of native bees.

A special shoutout to Nigel, Adam, Natalie, and Kellie, who manned the stall over the weekend. Their enthusiasm and knowledge sparked curiosity among visitors of all ages. Adam shared his experience: "We had a great day talking all things Australian native bees. It was wonderful to see so much interest in our display, and the honey tasting was incredibly popular."

The honey tasting was a standout attraction. Visitors were treated to three different samples: Malaysian honey, TC (Sydney honey), and a Queensland honey (hockingsi on Saturday and Australis on Sunday). The results were surprising, with preferences almost evenly split across the three varieties, highlighting the diverse palates of our audience.

Adam noted, "It was really interesting giving people three samples to taste and asking them which was their favorite. Preferences ranged from quite sour to caramel sweet, and everyone seemed to have a great time."

The event was not only a chance to educate the public but also to grow our community. Many attendees showed interest in joining the Australian Native Bee Association, with several taking photos of our banner, scanning the QR code, or planning to visit our Facebook groups and website.

Nigel added, "There was lots of interest from the public in native bees. Several children mentioned they had hives at their school, which their parents had never seen. It was a great opportunity to educate and inspire."

Our team handed out roughly 750 stingless bee honey samples over the weekend. The small but delightful samples left a lasting impression, with attendees appreciating the unique flavors of our native honeys.

"We went through a pack and a half of paddle pop sticks, serving approximately 750 samples," Adam estimated. "The Malaysian honey, being a bit thicker, didn't run off the stick as easily, which made for an interesting comparison."

The Sydney Branch's presence at the St Ives Showground was undoubtedly a success. We are thrilled to have engaged with so many people and are hopeful that our efforts will lead to a growth in membership and increased awareness of the importance of native bees.

*From Michelle Carrick*





## Hunter branch



The Hunter branch began with a meeting in Lake Macquarie on July 4<sup>th</sup> 2023. Since then we have been very busy running a total of 10 events for our ever increasing number of members. Our weekend events have included a splitting workshop with Tim Heard and Steve Flavel, hive budding/ education workshop with club member Garry Worth and a walk in the Newcastle Botanic gardens learning about local native bee friendly plants.

Our monthly evening events have included a selection of different hive designs and guest speakers presenting on subjects such as catching invading swarms and trap hives, solitary bees, and the potential effect of the Varroa response on native bee colonies.



We have also taken part in some community events, a pollinator education event run by Maitland council and the Tocal Field Days where Diane and Jim from Mid North Coast branch joined us. Jim was demonstrating making solitary bee hotels which the kids loved. Our stall had a crowd of people out the front talking all things native bees for the whole 3 days.

We are coming up to our AGM on the June 18<sup>th</sup> where we will be having a Native Bee Honey Masterclass with Adam Hutchinson from Bayu Australia. There will be tastings of native bee honey from Malaysia and Brazil as well as TC, TH and AA from Australia. We hope to see you there.

From Sophie Poole, [berigora26@gmail.com](mailto:berigora26@gmail.com)





## Branch Executives

Branches arranged from South to North.

### Sydney branch

*Chair:* Sam Higgins, [sam.higgins@outlook.com.au](mailto:sam.higgins@outlook.com.au)

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### Hunter branch

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*Assistant Events Co-ordinator:* Bec Barker

*Development Officer:* Garry Worth

*Membership Officer:* Diane Call, [dianeraewynncall@gmail.com](mailto:dianeraewynncall@gmail.com)

*Social Media Officer:* Lynda Stephenson

*Representative to ANBA Management Committee:* Sophie Poole, [berigora26@gmail.com](mailto:berigora26@gmail.com)

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