

North Eastern Apiarists' Association Annual Conference – 5th May, 2017

Quality Motel Gateway, Ryley St, Wangaratta

Minutes

Presidents welcome;

Elwyne called the conference together, thanked members and interstate visitors for their attendance and asked for any apologies.

Apologies:

Rick Horne, Philip McPherson, Fred Keam, Frank and Miles Papworth, Neil Cleeland, David Jackel.

Elwyne then reminded the conference that a funeral service for Paul Griffiths would commence today at 1pm. Paul was a founding and life member of this Association, who made an enormous contribution to the Associations affairs and beekeeping in general.

Minutes silence for industry participants recently deceased:

Paul Griffiths, Mrs Val Gell.

Presentation of previous minutes:

Motion:

“That the minutes of the NEAA Inc’ Annual General Meeting of 8./6/2016 be received and confirmed.”

Moved: J. McMonigle.

Seconded: K MacGibbon.

Carried

Presidents Report:

Elwyne spoke to her report [printed in Conference folder] and thanked the Committee for their work over the past twelve months.

Motion:

“That the Presidents report be accepted.”

Moved: D. Whitehead.

Seconded: S. Murphy

Carried

Treasurers Report:

Rodney Whitehead talked through the Financial Report [printed in Conference folder]. There being no questions the motion was put:

“That the Treasurers Report be received and accounts be paid.”

Moved: R Whitehead.

Seconded: S. Murphy

Carried

Resources Report – NEAA.

The report was read by David Briggs [Attached]

State Resources Report – VAA.

Ken Gell presented the VAA Resources Report highlighting;

- Sunraysia Planned Burning program – concession to beekeepers by DELWP to leave a 100m buffer around bee sites will go some way to offset impacts of burn program.
- Ken reported that he has had beekeepers seeking assistance with planned burns only days out from the burn, and reminded the Conference that all branches of the industry need to be maintaining a dialogue with planned burning program staff throughout the year, well in advance of burning season if they are to have any hope of alleviating burn impacts.
- Delays in issue of licence renewals has been a cause of some consternation for beekeepers, but was able to reassure the conference that no sites will be lost and licence renewals should start to be sent out in late May. [further confirmation of this from the Department was published in the conference folder] Ken also reminded the Conference that once the new licensing system is established, sites that remain unpaid after thirty days will be declared vacant.
- Report on the ecological thinning trial of Shelbourne Forest Reserve – well received by most beekeepers and will seek to encourage greater use of thinning programs to improve canopy development in other forests.
- New Industry/Department Liaison Group is currently under development.
- Finally, the VAA has received an enquiry from Trust for Nature regarding use of TFN properties as bee sites. The Trust for Nature is a non profit, Non Government organisation that purchases properties for ecological development and restoration. They also enable private landholders to apply covenants on private property to protect environmental features.

Leptospermum Plantation Establishment – Rod Wardell, Grand Ridge Propagation Nursery.

Rob Introduced himself and his background. Grandridge established ten years. Rob and his partner run a small mixed farm and the nursery and has recently acquired two hives to gain more insight into beekeeping.

Why Plantations?

- Global demand far outstripping supply from NZ
- Australia has available land at a cheaper price than most other countries.
- Plants can be tested for DHA
- Simon Williams has developed formula for conversion of DHA to MGO and this is a reasonably stable relationship
- There is significant stocking pressure on wild plants
- Plantations consist of all improved and selected stock whereas wild populations are genetically diverse in their production of DHA
- Rob doing a lot of work to identify natural resource base including
 - Jelly Bush – Polygalifolium – Northern NSW
 - Woolly Tea tree – good prospects
 - Continentale
- Species combinations can produce up to a 5month flowering window.
- DHA is genetically determined, but yield varies with site and conditions
- For medicinal honey production, targeted species must be primary nectar source
- Leptospermum are deficient in pollen and colonies working a site for extended time would need pollen supplementation.
- Plantation spacing – 2m row spacing x 3m between plants - can go to 5m row spacing if grazing with Sheep. Cattle Goats not recommended.
- Cardboard guards recommended
- Mulch and water in first year very beneficial
- Fertiliser use at planting recommend. Leptospermum will respond to fertilizers use
- Plants grow best in full sun, no eucalypt completion
- Sooty Mould - poor site ventilation
- Webbing caterpillar
- Profit share arrangements in place in NZ – 30% landholder/ 70% beekeeper established as reasonable

Morning Tea Recess

Into the Future – Sustaining a honey production and crop pollination services industry in Victoria.

Panel Discussion Report attached.

Luncheon Recess

Official Opening:

Rural City of Wangaratta Mayor, Mr Ken Clarke welcomed delegates to Wangaratta acknowledging the importance of rural primary industries to the municipality and that the Apiary industry was an important component of that.

Member for Ovens Valley, Tim McCurdy then spoke of his understanding of the Apiary Industry, experiencing unprecedented growth in public awareness, undergoing some structural change due to generational transfer, increasing recognition of the importance of pollination and demand for pollination services, and how crucial sustained access to the public land floral resources of the State is to the future of the industry.

Tim emphasised the importance of industry representatives speaking to both sides of Government right now in advance of an election year ahead. Policy development is currently underway for political parties and that is the time to keep them informed of industry needs. He also emphasised the importance of the industry making sure that it's position was well understood by the rest of the farming and agriculture sector as they also are forming their approach to government.

Tim invited the industry to present to a policy round table of regional backbench party members in the near future. Ian Cane responded that for the industry to present on the question of Timber Harvesting on bee sites would be most helpful.

With that Tim then congratulated the NEAA on its conference and declared the conference open.

Before Tim could leave the podium, President Elwyne requested that he take up the question of the desperate need for more staff in the Apiary branch of the Department in view of the unprecedented growth and structural change in the industry, and its strategic importance to food security of the state.

Tim responded that he would be happy to receive a submission from the Association and he would take that up with his colleagues. Tim advised that successful submissions to Government take the form of a proposal for a solution rather than just a list of problems.

Medicinal Properties of Eucalypt and other honeys - Dr Shona Blair, University of Sydney

Presentation information attached.

Dr Blair presented a comprehensive overview of the various ways in which different honeys aid in wound repair and as a pro-biotic for lower bowel function. A copy of this presentation is available from the NEAA.

Questions led to discussion of the gap between research and marketing leading to many unrealistic and unhelpful claims made for therapeutic qualities of honey, with real value undermined and lost in the process. The industry is fundamentally a food oriented industry and would need a concerted effort to develop the connections and understanding to develop markets in competition with conventional drugs and dressings in the medical sector.

The medical profession is gradually more receptive to the use of honey as a wound dressing due largely to increasing incidence of resistant bacteria.

The claims of botulism spores surviving in honey was questioned. This is theoretically possible though no accurately confirmed cases of infant poisoning have been confirmed. Botulism spores cannot germinate in an adult gut due to high acidity. Infant stomachs are not as acidic so the possibility of spore germination exists. Not feeding honey to infants under 12 months of age is considered a sensible precaution.

Antifungal activity of honey requires a sophisticated [and expensive] test so this is not available to industry. On the other hand testing to show the pre-biotic effects of honey is relatively straight forward and could be more greatly utilised by the industry. Also noted pre-biotic effects of honey are very resistant to heat.

Election of Office Bearers and Ordinary members of the Committee.

Dr Shona Blair took the chair and declared all positions vacant.

Calling for nominations positions were filled as follows:

Position	Nominee	Nominator	Seconder
President	Shaun Murphy	Elwyne Papworth	Kevin MacGibbon
Vice President	Elwyne Papworth	Don Whitehead	Kevin MacGibbon
Second Vice Pres'	Andrew Turnbull	Elwyne Papworth	Shaun Murphy
Secretary	David Briggs	Shaun Murphy	Chris Box
Asst' Secretary	Moss MacGibbon	David Briggs	Shaun Murphy
Treasurer	Rodney Whitehead	David Briggs	Shaun Murphy
Ordinary Mmber'	Philip McPherson	David Briggs	Elwyne Papworth
Ordinary Mmber'	Linton Briggs	Shaun Murphy	Chris Box
Ordinary Mmber'	Mick Leahy	Linton Briggs	Shaun Murphy
Ordinary Mmber'	Andrew McCallum	Elwyne Papworth	Shaun Murphy
Ordinary Mmber'	Kevin MacGibbon	Don Whitehead	David Briggs
Ordinary Mmber'	Don Whitehead	Moss MacGibbon	Andrew McCallum
Resources Manager	Philip McPherson	Elwyne Papworth	Kevin MacGibbon
Resources Delegates	David Briggs Don Whitehead	Elwyne Papworth Elwyne Papworth	Chris Box Chris Box
Declaration of NEAAV Inc' Representative to Victorian Apiarists' Association Executive Council			Kevin MacGibbon

Elections concluded, Elwyne Papworth resumed Chair to complete business of this Annual Conference.

Timber Harvesting on Licensed Bee Site forage Ranges – Mr Ian Cane, VAA timber harvesting delegate.

Ian re-capped on current position with VicForests negotiation. Engagement of Forest Solutions to evaluate single tree selection harvesting of two coupes has yielded valuable information about the effectiveness of the harvesting prescription the VAA is seeking to establish to ensure long term equitable co-existence for apiary and timber harvesting. Broadly the current draft prescription has

been shown to be workable and effective at achieving something close to retention of 50% of the pre-harvest basal area of a coupe.

Yesterday's field trip to those coupes also highlighted the interest of DELWP regional staff in this process and the necessity of having experienced forestry expertise tease out the management and silvicultural implications of the prescription. The field trip and ensuing discussion with VicForests staff indicated the prescription as it stands needs some refinement to account for the cumulative effect of successive harvesting programs and retention of both size and species representation in different forest types.

It is anticipated that a completed report on this evaluation will be presented at the VAA Conference in June.

Department Report - Mr Joe Riordan, Senior Apiary Inspector, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Joe Riordan presented and discussed with members the following points:

- Every year the department finds evidence of dead-outs and clinical AFB infection in Almonds
- Exponential growth in Hobby sector of industry – in excess of 6000 participants to date
- Currently 4 full time staff state wide
- Department priority is strategic – Varroa Preparedness.
- Transition of smaller operations to larger operations is creating a biosecurity risk
- There are positive examples of beekeepers learning from AFB infections
- National Residue Survey
- State Quarantine Emergency Response Preparedness
- Tracking of interstate queens entering Victoria
- Beekeeper training programs
- National Bee Pest Surveillance Program
- Currently 270 Sugar Shakers – Need to reach 500 [very few commercial beekeepers involved]
- \$40,000 worth of hives stolen in the last twelve months [reported]

General Business:

Motion:

“That in light of significant increases in industry scale and structure the NEAAV Inc’ request the VAA Inc’ to petition the Victorian State Government to increase staffing levels of Apiary Officers by two FTE, with at least one position to be metropolitan based.”

Moved: Kevin MacGibbon

Seconded: Len Plumb

Carried

Motion:

“The NEAAV Inc’ endorses the VAA Inc’ executive Council’s decision to seek the opinion of members about whether to establish a voluntary code of practice that includes limiting the stocking of licensed public land bee sites to a maximum of 300 colonies for each occasional occupancy”

Moved: Linton Briggs

Seconded: Len Plumb

Carried

Motion:

“The NEAAV Inc’ collate the outcomes arising from the panel discussion at this conference on sustaining industry growth, circulate to members and to the VAA Inc’ Executive Council for further consideration.”

Moved: Linton Briggs

Seconded: Shaun Murphy

Carried

Funding of Forests Solutions consultancy:

Kevin MacGibbon reported the VAA submission to IAC Compensation Fund Committee was not successful. Reason cited was failure to obtain three quotes and beekeeper representative members voted against proposal.

Motion:

“The NEAAV Inc’ Conference recommends the VAA take up this matter with the minister directly and without delay.”

Moved: Linton Briggs

Seconded: Mick Leahy

Carried

Ian Cane spoke of the importance of the engagement of Forest Solutions to every commercial beekeeper in the state and that this requires a show of support from this conference and other beekeeper associations.

Motion:

“That the NEAA commit to contributing \$3000 to the cost of engaging Forest Solutions if an alternative funding solution cannot be found”

Moved: Shaun Murphy

Seconded: Mick Leahy

Carried

Prior to concluding the conference Kevin MacGibbon reminded members of the VAA Conference and election process. This will be an online process with online transaction of payments and donations, conference registration and election of VAA Committee members. The VAA Secretary will inform all members by email or post as per their chosen method of communication.

Close of General Business.

Conference Closed