



MEDIA RELEASE

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HONEYBEES LAUNCH WORLD BEE DAY FESTIVITIES ...VERY SWEETLY

There was a significant buzz at the Slovenian Embassy in Canberra today as the programme for Australia's contribution to World Bee Day was launched, along with a new and very special beehive.

Why bees? Why Slovenia? Ambassador Rifelj explained that Slovenia has a long and inventive history in beekeeping, as shown by the new hand-painted hive and its specially selected, docile, ("non-stingy") occupants.

Bees and other pollinating insects have been under increasing threat worldwide due to pesticides and diseases. Without them, both crops and other parts of our biological world cannot thrive.

World Bee Day is celebrated on 20 May, the birthday of Slovenian beekeeper Anton Janša who is regarded as a pioneer of modern beekeeping. "Some would say that he was to beekeeping what Newton was to gravity" said Ambassador Rifelj. Mr Janša became famous as a teacher and author of beekeeping writing that 'amongst all God's beings there are none so hardworking and useful to man ... as the bee'.

Honey from the Embassy hive was shared with guests at the inauguration, celebrating the Embassy's more recent tradition of producing honey in O'Malley. The bees themselves calmly continued collecting pollen even while the ribbon was being cut.

The Ambassador concluded with "Today we celebrated Slovenian beekeeping and its humble contribution to the biodiversity of Australia. But to celebrate the global importance of bees and beekeeping I would also like to invite you to this year's celebration of the World Bee Day. It will take place on 19 May in the Parliament House and later that day at the Swedish Embassy."

Full details of all Australian World Bee Day Events can be found at

www.worldbeeday.org.au

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