



Pure gold – native bee honey the star of exclusive gift for celebrities at The 61st TV WEEK Logie Awards

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The who's who of Australian television will be the first to indulge in the golden, sweet taste of local 'sugarbag' native bee honey thanks to an exquisite chocolate being created for The 61st TV WEEK Logie Awards.

Held at The Star Gold Coast for a second year running, celebrities and other A-listers staying overnight for the glitzy event will discover the bespoke and local honey-infused treat in their hotel rooms and suites as a VIP gift.

It comes after The Star Entertainment Group in April committed to an exclusive long-term supply partnership with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC), representing the Traditional Owners of North Stradbroke Island – the Quandamooka People – following a 16-month trial.

The deal enables up to 140 hives to be established on the island, with The Star Entertainment Group being the only company outside of the Quandamooka People to access the honey. The Star will receive 50 per cent of the honey supply.

The partnership is also creating exciting jobs and training opportunities for the Quandamooka People – both on the island and through exposure and training opportunities with The Star Entertainment Group.

With his sights set on a career in tourism and hospitality, 15-year old Quandamooka tourism trainee and cultural guide Tu Wai McDonald has been learning how to make the handmade chocolates from The Star Gold Coast's chefs.

"The honey means a lot to me as I'm currently helping our lead bee keeper monitor the hives we currently have on the island – making sure they continue to be in a good and stable condition, and insect-free," Tu Wai said.

"Through the partnership, it's awesome that I get to meet and learn from many of The Star Gold Coast chefs – they've taken me on a tour of their different restaurants and cuisines, and I've learnt some of the different cooking techniques they use such as tempering the chocolate for the TV WEEK Logie Awards.

"I've always loved cooking with my dad, who comes from Quandamooka country, especially stews and curries.

"I've already completed a food safety and food handling certificate, and am currently halfway through a Certificate II in Tourism, so this opportunity is giving me another taste of the possibilities I can explore in the future."

The Star Gold Coast Executive Sous Chef Sarah Jewell said the flowing, golden native bee honey with an almost citrus-like tone will deliver a unique and local bush flavour to complement the handmade dark chocolate.

"It's always a chef's dream to work with native ingredients and we are delighted that this product has come from North Stradbroke Island, literally on our doorstep," Chef Jewell said.

"We are pleased to involve Tu Wai in the process – he's been learning a few cooking techniques from our Executive Pastry Chef including how to temper the chocolate and inject the native bee honey into the moulds.

“As the supply has not yet grown to full capacity, we have about two litres of native bee honey to use, which is enough to make 1800 individual chocolates for our celebrities.”

QYAC CEO Cameron Costello said he was delighted to learn the native bee honey will be enjoyed by Australia’s biggest celebrities, helping promote the Quandamooka People and one of its emerging Indigenous products.

“The TV WEEK Logie Awards has always been a golden night for our Aussie stars – and now we have one of our own stars to showcase and that is our exclusive, locally-harvested ‘sugarbag’ native bee honey,” Mr Costello said.

“Unlike European bees, our native bees can only make a small amount of honey – up to 1kg per hive annually – so they’re truly native to North Stradbroke Island and all the celebrities are going to love the taste.

“Having our native bee honey showcased this way will also help critically raise our profile on a national stage – and that of North Stradbroke Island where there is an abundance of stunning natural beauty and activities to explore.

“We’re realising an Aboriginal native bee honey microfood business on the island that is enabling jobs and training outcomes for people like Tu Wai, while The Star gets an exclusive and local Aboriginal product to use.”

The Star Entertainment Group General Manager Tourism, Food and Beverage, Strategy and Partnerships Michael Hodgson said the native bee honey is helping the company continue creating authentic experiences.

“We want to give all the celebrities and A-listers a real Queensland treat that highlights our SEQ region and one of the vibrant Indigenous communities that call it home. It’s about creating authentic experiences and food is a fantastic way we can do this,” Mr Hodgson said.

“With only a small supply of honey available at this stage – but which will grow significantly as we double the hives on the island each year – it makes the chocolate an even more exclusive and bespoke gift and we hope gives our guests a delicious thrill as they celebrate yet another year of outstanding Australian television.

“Along with our consortium partners, we are investing billions into building world-class tourism and entertainment destinations in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, which will deliver up to 100 restaurants, cafes, and bars if our plans are developed in full.

“That’s why growing partnerships with our surrounding communities is important to us – to ensure we have local ingredients to showcase around the clock through our bars and dining precincts, events, and as VIP gifts.”

Mr Hodgson said the company started working with QYAC in 2017 and has come a long way.

“We’re proud to help support long term and sustainable development for the Quandamooka People within their local area and for their own people – and the honey partnership is just one of the ways we are working together,” Mr Hodgson said.

“For example, our Treasury Brisbane chefs also created a VIP/Elders marquee at the opening of the recently launched Quandamooka Festival, and they will do the same for the closing event on 31 August.”

The 61st TV WEEK Logie Awards will take place on Sunday, June 30, at The Star Gold Coast in Queensland. All the action from the red-carpet arrivals and awards-show celebrations will be telecast on the Nine Network and 9Now.

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