

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

Additional Evidence

Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

Good morning members

My attention has been drawn to comments supplied by Dr. Denis Anderson in answers to questions asked at the public hearing in Brisbane. These comments are:-

“Advance the domestication of the Asian honeybee in Queensland, particularly for its use as a managed pollinator of commercial crops.

Benefit: Provides an alternative pollinator to European honeybees in the event of Varroa destructor incursion.”

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council strongly disagrees with these comments by Dr. Anderson for the following reasons:-

1. We have work by Professor Ben Oldroyd which shows that there is interspecific mating of cerana drones with mellifera queens. This will lead to less bees in a hive and therefore reduce the productivity of the hive. If domestication of cerana is attempted and it is spread throughout Australia it will be to the detriment of the European bees.
2. Fortunately the cerana that arrived in north Queensland did not have *Varroa jacobsoni* on it. The beekeeping industry lives with the fear that another incursion of *Apis cerana* Java genotype may have this mite. If there is a large pool of cerana already in Australia this mite will breed up very quickly. The experience in Papua New Guinea was that *jacobsoni* did not initially reproduce on mellifera but, after exposure of around 30 year, it has now. It would be expected that with exposure of mellifera in Australia to *jacobsoni* via the Asian bee, that *jacobsoni* would eventually start reproducing on mellifera.

Regards

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