

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir,

My name is Warren Taylor and I own the largest beekeeping company in Australia employing 30 beekeepers and factory staff.

My company supplies queen bees and package bees to the export markets and to the Australian beekeeping industry to allow beekeepers to restock losses and increase hive numbers. This year we have sold many thousands of queen bees and package bees to restock hives lost through normal winter losses, others to restock hives lost in recent devastating floods and also to restock thousands of hives lost to Small Hive Beetle. This incursion of Small Hive Beetle occurred at Richmond NSW in 2002 and "scientist" told us that it would only cause minor damage to beehives in coastal areas. Small Hive Beetle has spread extensively throughout NSW and Qld and has destroyed over 50% of hives in some beekeeping businesses.

Australian Queen Bee Exporters Pty. Ltd. also supplies hives for pollination of almonds in Victoria and plums/peaches in the Hawkesbury district.

Due to the large number of hives I operate, my company also produces honey which we normally export to Germany, UK and U.S.A.

My major income is derived from export of package bees (swarms) to California to pollinate almonds. Due to the govt. decision to cease controlling the incursion of Asian bees in Cairns and to declare it endemic the USDA has banned Australian bees costing my company \$2 million in sales. I was preparing to increase this to \$5 million by 2015. I should point out that it was due to the incursion of Small Hive Beetle in 2002 that cost our company \$1.5 million in sales of package bees to Korea. Fortunately, we were able to replace this lost market with a new market to the U.S.A.. Without this major export market I am unable to continue to operate my company in its present size meaning that Australian beekeepers will in the future, be unable to purchase volumes of queen bees and package bees. This will be devastating to Aust. beekeepers but more importantly will have serious effects on availability of managed colonies for pollination when the destructive mite Varroa Destructor enters Australia. Varroa Destructor **will** destroy all feral nests and the 60% of Australian agriculture and horticulture that needs pollination will have to rely on managed colonies.

I have been beekeeping for over 40 years and no other person will be able to fill the gap caused by me exiting this industry. My company has over \$3 million invested in hives, factories, vehicles, honey processing equipment etc. The govt. spends \$100 million to control locusts but seems unwilling to invest a few million to protect Australia's food security.

As I travel the world and see the support beekeepers get in other countries due to the value of honeybees for pollination it is impossible to comprehend the thinking of the Australian government. Even to ask people like myself to justify the need to eradicate (or control) this damaging incursion reeks of stupidity.

Is government so ill-advised that the Minister is unable to (without my help) recognise the value of bees and beekeeper?

Warren D Taylor
Australian Queen Bee Exporters Pty. Ltd.