

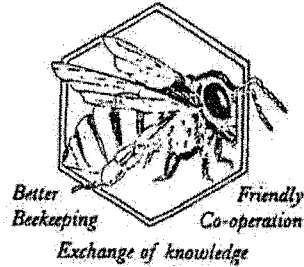
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Secretary: ..... *[Signature]* .....

## ***SOUTH AUSTRALIAN APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC.***

*Founded 1945*

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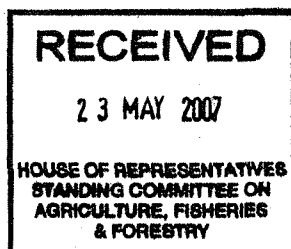


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Following is a submission from the South Australian Apiarists' Association to the "New Inquiry - the Future Development of the Australian Honey Bee Industry".

Any further information can be obtained from either of the two contacts above.



*[Signature]*

## Submission of the South Australian Apiarists' Association

### Inquiry into the Future Development of the Australian Honey Bee Industry - Terms of Reference

#### 1) **It's Current and Future Prospects**

- Honey is currently a major source of income.
- Successive dry years and drought have had a major impact on apiary business profitability
- Bushfires pose a major threat to both honey and bee building resources.
- Declining access and health of native vegetation will impact on profitability and sustainability.
- Endemic and exotic bee diseases may impact on profitability and viability.
- Trends towards "generic" branded honeys will impact on consumer appreciation of honey and overall profitability of the industry
- Pollination services currently provide a relatively low percentage of overall income but demand for these services may increase in the future.
- The average age of beekeepers is 54 years and there is a need to attract younger people into the industry to ensure its future.

#### 2) **It's Role in Agriculture and Forestry**

- Pollination is worth approx \$3.2 billion
- Incidental pollination (ie pollination of foods etc not targeted) is worth in excess of this figure.
- Bee keepers provide fire fighting resources, anti vandalism, track maintenance service to areas with bee sites
- Paton (1996) suggests that managed hives in some ecosystems may have a positive effect on vegetative reproduction.
- Industry relies on agriculture and horticulture. Downturns or impediments to agriculture may result in similar impacts to the bee industry.
- Apiary industry needs to realise the actual value of pollination services to all sectors of agriculture. Partnerships with agriculture must add value to both industries.
- After the introduction of exotic pests such as varroa mite, there will be a large reduction of incidental pollination from feral bees and create increased demand for managed honeybee pollination

#### 3) **Biosecurity Issues.**

- Current endemic diseases require sufficient regulatory enforcement and there is a need for a national endemic disease control program.
- Exotic pests and diseases need stringent quarantine and surveillance (keeping pests and diseases out of Australia is more cost effective than eradication programs).
- Need to increase knowledge of management and identification of all apiary pests and diseases by apiarists.
- Requirement to have compulsory training in the identification and management of major pests and diseases.

- Recognised treatments of exotic pests and diseases must be pre-registered for use should an incursion occur.
- Readiness and incursion teams must be continued and all members highly trained.
- Quarantine facilities for the importation of honey bee genetics need to be kept available.
- Remove Eastern seaboard restrictions – ie divide Australia into 4 main quarantine regions being Tasmania, Kangaroo Island, Western Australia, Eastern Seaboard including South Australia.
- Australia's "clean green" status gives opportunity to good prices for export products therefore quarantine is essential
- Reliant pollination industries need to be made aware of the affects exotic pests will have on our industry and gain support from them to strengthen our surveillance and preparedness.

#### **4) Trade Issues**

- Requirement for honey standards relating to impurities, chemical contamination and other basic honey quality issues is required to ensure both domestic and imported honey is of equally high consumer standards.
- Remove Eastern seaboard restrictions – ie divide Australia into 4 main quarantine regions being Tasmania, Kangaroo Island, Western Australia, Eastern Seaboard including South Australia. Improved movement of bees and bee products between SA and the Eastern Seaboard (while protecting other areas of Australia) will improve profitability of both horticulturists and apiarists.
- Apiary industry needs to realise the actual value of pollination services to all sectors of agriculture. Partnerships with agriculture must add value to both industries.
- Australia needs to realise all potential trade opportunities including packaged bees, pollen, honey, queens etc. The increase in potential trade increases the requirement for good biosecurity.
- Imported low price, low quality honey is a threat to both the image and profitability of the industry; thus the need for honey standards.

#### **5) The Impact of Land Management and Bushfires**

- Monoculture agriculture leads to bee nutritional issues.
- Large scale agriculture and corporate landholders can make large sections of land unusable or unavailable to the bee industry.
- Increased bushfire frequency in dry periods leads to reduced areas available to the industry including changes to vegetation type and structural diversity.
- Prescribed burning programs, whilst beneficial to protection of essential vegetation types, may lead to adverse changes in vegetation type and structure.
- Use of pre-emergent herbicides leads to loss of beneficial pollen plants
- Large scale mono cultures and mono forestry reduces lands available to the industry.
- Government policy regarding access to conserved lands has a large impact on both honey production and management of hives for pollination
- Uncertainty in Government policy leads to industry uncertainty
- Many forms of horticulture are unsuitable for the bee industry due to the high

frequency of insecticide sprays.

**6) The Research and Development Needs of Industry**

- Suitable pollination hives (pollination standards for each crop type)
- Costings of production of each pollination hive type.
- Queen bee genetics and longevity.
- Preparing hives for Pollination in adverse conditions (Supplementary feeding bees to prepare for pollination).
- Pollen supplements and substitutes
- Varroa resistance in bees
- Alternative Varroa control (i.e. non resistance)
- Education of bee keepers regarding management of potential exotic parasites
- Develop methodology for treating Varroa without losing honey production (ie extending treating period beyond high yielding summer honey crops)
- Educating general public about the benefits of bees and effect of Varroa and other diseases.
- Use of technology in bee keeping. – Both record keeping and labour saving devices.
- Most of our apiary industry researchers are within 10 years of retirement and we need to attract some younger people into this area to continue research into the future.

**7) Existing Industry and Government Work that has been Undertaken for the Honey Bee Industry**

- Dollar for Dollar funding of RIRDC
- Dennis Anderson CSIRO funding
- AQIS - Port surveillance, Sniffer Dogs, Quarantine, Certification of Export Honey
- Eastern Creek Quarantine Facilities
- State Regulatory agencies
- AHBIC (bee keeper funded) – coordination of all aspects of apiary industry including queen bee improvement program, B-qual, State Associations