

# Future of the beekeeping and pollination service industries in Australia

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Submission prepared by Plant Health Australia

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# Plant Health Australia



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## Introduction

Plant Health Australia (PHA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport inquiry into the future of the beekeeping and pollination service industries in Australia.

PHA is the independent national coordinator of the government-industry partnership for plant biosecurity in Australia, which includes honey bee biosecurity. As the coordinators of honey bee biosecurity, PHA has undertaken a suite of preparedness projects over recent years, all in partnership with industry and governments.

The information and recommendations contained in this submission deal primarily, although not exclusively, with the second of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference (b) *current challenges facing the beekeeping industry domestically and internationally, and its future sustainability*; and (f) *any related matters*.

## Recommendation

PHA seeks Committee support for the Australian Government component of funding for ongoing and proposed biosecurity programs, to which industry also contribute—the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBPS), which is currently funded until June 2015 and the National Bee Biosecurity Program (NBBP), to improve the health of honey bees in Australia into the future.

Both programs are honey bee biosecurity initiatives funded by government and industry partners, coordinated by PHA.

The submission that follows provides:

- A description of PHA and our role.
- The role of honey bees in Australian agriculture.
- The main biosecurity threats to honey bees in Australia.
- Projects undertaken by PHA in conjunction with governments and industries to improve beekeeping in Australia and prepare for an incursion of a serious exotic pest.
- A proposed program to ensure the continued protection of honey bees in Australia.
- Conclusion and recommendation.

## Plant Health Australia – Facilitating the national plant biosecurity partnership

Australia's biosecurity system not only protects Australia's lucrative plant production industries, but provides benefits to Australia's unique and highly valued natural ecosystems. Pests<sup>1</sup> can have serious impacts on the natural environment and native species through predation, parasitism or direct competition. Similarly, the social value of public amenities, such as parklands and private non-commercial plantings (e.g. fruit trees, community and home gardens), can be reduced through the impacts of pests.

Australia's biosecurity system is strengthened by sharing responsibility between governments, industry and the general public. PHA, a not-for-profit company, is the national co-ordinator of the plant biosecurity partnership in Australia.

PHA Members include the Australian Government, all state and territory governments and currently, 33 peak plant industry organisations, who together account for the majority of plant production in Australia (List of Members at Table 1). Honey bee biosecurity is a part of the PHA partnership because the honey bee industry and all pollination-reliant industries are Members of the company.

PHA's main activities are funded from annual subscriptions paid by Members, and the company undertakes non-subscription funded projects for individual Members or groups of Members.

Through PHA, current and future needs of the plant biosecurity system can be mutually agreed, issues identified and solutions to problems found. PHA's independent and impartial approach to servicing Member needs allows it to put the interests of the plant biosecurity system first and support a longer-term perspective.

### **PHA is the custodian of the national response agreement for emergency plant pest incursions**

For plant industries the [\*\*Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed\*\*](#) (EPPRD) is the formal, legally binding agreement that sets out how exotic incursions of pests that affect our crops are dealt with and cost shared. The arrangement is between Plant Health Australia (PHA), the Australian Government, all state and territory governments and national plant industry representative body signatories.

The EPPRD establishes a role for all affected parties in the event of an emergency plant pest incursion, their contribution towards the costs of an eradication response and includes the potential for Owner Reimbursement Costs (ORCs) for producers.

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) is a signatory to the EPPRD.

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<sup>1</sup> The term pests is used in this document to cover all exotic (not currently present in Australia) insects, mites, snails, nematodes, pathogens (diseases) and weeds that are injurious to plants, plant products or bees.

**Table 1: Plant Health Australia’s Members**

<b>Member type</b>	<b>Member</b>
Government	Australian Government
	Australian Capital Territory Government
	New South Wales Government
	Northern Territory Government
	Queensland Government
	South Australian Government
	Tasmanian Government
	Victorian Government
	Western Australian Government
Industry	Almond Board of Australia
	Apple and Pear Australia
	Australian Banana Growers’ Council
	Australian Forest Products Association
	Australian Ginger Industry Association
	Australian Honey Bee Industry Council
	Australian Lychee Growers’ Association
	Australian Macadamia Society
	Australian Mango Industry Association
	Australian Olive Association
	Australian Processing Tomato Research Council
	Australian Table Grape Association
	Australian Walnut Industry Association
	AUSVEG Ltd
	Avocados Australia
	CANEGROWERS
	Canned Fruit Industry Council
	Cherry Growers of Australia
	Chestnuts Australia
	Citrus Australia
	Cotton Australia
	Dried Fruits Australia
	Grain Producers Australia
	GROWCOM
	Hazelnut Growers of Australia
	Nursery and Garden Industry Australia
	Onions Australia
	Passionfruit Australia Incorporated
	Pistachio Growers Association
	Raspberries And Blackberries Australia
	Ricegrowers’ Association of Australia
	Strawberries Australia
	Summerfruit Australia
Wine Grape Growers Australia	
Associate	Cotton R&D Corporation
	CSIRO
	Grains R&D Corporation
	Grape and Wine R&D Corporation Horticulture Australia
	Horticulture Australia Limited
	Plant Biosecurity CRC
	Sugar Research Australia
Victorian Farmers Federation	

## The Australian honey bee industry

The Australian honey bee industry consists of approximately 10,500 registered beekeepers who own a total of around 550,000 hives<sup>2</sup>. Only 17% of registered beekeepers have more than 50 hives, but they reportedly account for more than 90% of Australia's total honey production and production of honey bee related products and services<sup>3</sup>.

The industry's peak body is the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), which is a Member of PHA. There are also a number of state and territory apiarist associations who represent beekeepers at a state and territory level.

Native floral resources in Australia produce large quantities of pollen and nectar, making this continent an ideal climatic and geographic region for the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*).

The Australian honey bee industry produces 20,000 – 30,000 tonnes of honey annually. Australia is the ninth largest producer of honey in the world and is one of the largest exporters, with about a third of honey produced in Australia exported to over 38 countries, in bulk and retail shipments<sup>4</sup>. Other honey bee products include beeswax, queen bees and packaged bee sales, and paid pollination services.

### Value of the honey bee industry

The industry has an overall estimated Gross Value of Production (GVP) of \$90 million a year,<sup>5</sup> however this doesn't include the value to agriculture and the economy through pollination services.<sup>6</sup> As honey bees forage for nectar and pollen their activities pollinate plants. This contributes significantly to agricultural and horticultural crops production in Australia.

The extent to which crops benefit from pollination varies between crops. Some, such as almonds, are 100% reliant on honey bees for pollination, while others benefit from increased seed or fruit set, improved storage qualities, enhanced shape of some fruits and melons, and more even maturation of some crops<sup>6</sup>. Specialist pollination services are essential to the breeding of new strains of many crop, pasture and horticultural species. Pollination services from honey bees are estimated to contribute \$4 - \$6 billion annually to the Australian economy.<sup>7</sup>

There are a number of biosecurity pest threats to the Australian honey bee industry that would have a negative impact on the pollination services and honey bee industry.

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<sup>2</sup> Hafi A, Millist N, Morey K, Caley P, Buetre B (2011) *A benefit-cost framework for responding to an incursion of Varroa destructor*. ABARES report to client prepared for the National Biosecurity Committee, Canberra.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (2008) *Australian honeybee Industry Survey 2006-07*. Canberra: RIRDC.

<sup>4</sup> Kneebone M (2010) *A study of existing and prospective markets and marketing activities for Australian honey*. Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). RIRDC publication No. 10/145.

<sup>5</sup> RIRDC (2012) *Honeybee RD&E Plan 2012-2017*. Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). RIRDC Publication No. 12/049.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon J and Davis L (2003). *Valuing honeybee pollination*. Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC). RIRDC Publication No. 03/077.

<sup>7</sup> Commonwealth of Australia (2008) *More Than Honey: the future of the Australian honey bee and pollination industries*. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources, May 2008, Canberra.

## Biosecurity threats to the honey bee industry

Australia is currently free from some of the most significant pests of honey bees that occur elsewhere in the world, notably the Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor* and *V. jacobsoni*), Tropilaelaps mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae* and *T. mercedesae*) and Tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*).

The establishment of these bee pests in Australia would be challenging for the honey bee industry, causing losses of production in both honey bee products and pollination services. Every other beekeeping region in the world has experienced large reductions in the number of beekeepers and number of hives after the introduction of Varroa mite. In addition to this, feral honey bee colonies that previously provided free pollination for crops all but disappeared.

Established bee pests also cause significant economic and social harm and need strategic management to limit the impact to individual beekeepers and the broader industry and economy. In particular, American foulbrood (AFB) (*Paenibacillus larvae*) is present in all Australian states and territories and is the most fatal and costly established pest. Evidence shows that current policies and systems to manage pests such as AFB are ineffective, with pest problems worsening. Other established pests, such as Small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) and Nosemosis (*Nosema sp.*) cause ongoing challenges for beekeepers.

Overseas experience suggests that if major established pests are not properly controlled when a pest such as Varroa mite arrives, the effects on bee health worsen. For these reasons, greater national coordination and industry leadership is urgently needed to manage established bee pests, as well as prepare for the possible establishment of exotic pests, such as Varroa mite.

## PHA and honey bee biosecurity

PHA has brought together a range of stakeholders to fund and implement a suite of initiatives to better manage established pests and diseases of honey bees, and prepare for the arrival of exotic pests and diseases.

The organisations involved include the Australian Government, state governments, the peak industry body AHBIC, HAL (using funding from pollination-reliant industries), RIRDC, the Northern Australian Quarantine Strategy (NAQS), the When Bee Foundation and the Federal Council of Australian Apiarists' Associations (FCAAA) .

Current, completed and proposed projects that PHA has conducted with funding from stakeholders to boost honey bee biosecurity, are detailed in the following pages.

## Projects coordinated by PHA to secure the future of honey bees in Australia

### Strengthening honey bee biosecurity preparedness

Funded by HAL

For the project *Biosecurity Implementation to strengthen Australia's honey bee and pollination responsive industries* PHA undertook the following four initiatives in 2011/2012:

#### Industry Biosecurity Plan for the Honey Bee Industry

This biosecurity plan prioritised the greatest pest threats to honey bees in Australia and set out actions to take to mitigate those risks.

The Honey bee IBP was endorsed by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) in December 2012. Endorsement of the Honey bee IBP by the Australian government and all state and territory governments through Plant Health Committee (PHC) was received in January 2013.



#### Biosecurity manual for growers on biosecurity threats and best practice

PHA developed the 60 page Biosecurity Manual for the Honey bee Industry to raise awareness of biosecurity threats to honey bees and provide practical advice for both commercial and hobby beekeepers on how to protect their honey bees from key established and exotic pests and diseases.

Every registered beekeeper in Australia received a copy – PHA coordinated a mail out of 13,000 manuals in late 2012.



The manual is available online at [www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Biosecurity-Manual-for-the-Honey-Bee-Industry.pdf](http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Biosecurity-Manual-for-the-Honey-Bee-Industry.pdf)

#### Online biosecurity training

The main content from the grower manual was converted into an online training module providing free access to the awareness raising material. The Honey Bee Biosecurity module is available on PHA's website:

[www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/training](http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/training).



#### Planning for specific pest threats

Contingency plans were developed for four pests of honey bees, Varroa mites (*Varroa destructor* and *V. jacobsoni*), Tropilaelaps mites (*Tropilaelaps clareae* and *T. mercedesae*), Tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*) and Braula fly (*Braula coeca*), mapping out the best approach to a future possible incursion of these exotic pests.

## National Bee Pest Surveillance Program

Ongoing program funded by AHBIC, the Australian Government, HAL and RIRDC with in-kind support from state and territory governments



The National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBPSP) is an early warning system to detect any incursion of exotic bee pests and pest bees.

The Program involves a range of surveillance methods conducted at locations around Australia, often ports, that are considered to be the most likely entry points for bee pests and pest bees throughout Australia<sup>8</sup>. At a national level, PHA coordinates and administers the Program.

The NBPSP greatly increases the possibility of eradicating an incursion, and limits the scale and cost of any eradication program.

The NBPSP also allows the continuation of queen bee and packaged bee exports. It supports Australia's pest free status claims and assists exporters in meeting export certification requirements.

For the NBPSP sentinel hives are tested every two months using an acaricide (miticide) to provide a means of early detection of any Varroa mites and Tropilaelaps mites, that have entered on exotic bees through ports. Honey bee samples are also checked every two months for Tracheal mite.

Since PHA took over management of the NBPSP, the number of sentinel hives at high risk ports around Australia has increased from 26 in 2011, to over 130 by the start of 2014.

Another aspect of the program is including more hobby beekeepers through a 'social' surveillance element (BeeForce project) which was a 2-year trial study conducted in Geelong and Melbourne and funded by HAL and RIRDC.

Incorporating the trial of the recently developed remote surveillance hives (catchboxes with cameras) at ports around Australia will greatly aid in the early detection of bee swarms in and around ports. This project was funded by HAL and RIRDC.

### Honey bee surveillance – a cost-effective prevention measure

The NBPSP is a world leading surveillance program, costing \$210,000 per year, funded between the honey bee industry, pollinator-reliant plant industries and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture.

Given that CSIRO<sup>8</sup> has estimated that the arrival of an exotic pest, such as Varroa mite, would cost Australian agricultural industries around \$72 million per annum for 30 years, the program is highly cost effective.

The report shows that every year that exotic pests are kept out of Australia has significant benefits for beekeepers, plant producers and the broader Australian economy.

For more information on the NBPSP go to [www.nbpsp.planthealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.nbpsp.planthealthaustralia.com.au)

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<sup>8</sup> Barry S, Cook D, Duthie R, Clifford D and Anderson D (2010) *Future Surveillance Needs for Honeybee Biosecurity*. Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. RIRDC Publication No. 10/107.

After the recent incursion of Asian honey bees (see AHBT2M below), the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) and PHA developed pest bee surveillance techniques, such as a method for floral sweep netting, for inclusion in the program. Pest bees targeted in the NBPSP at high-risk bee pest locations include Giant honey bee, Asian honey bee and Red dwarf honey bee. Swarm capture at ports also provides a means of early detection of Africanised honey bees and Cape honey bees.

## Preparing for a Varroa mite incursion

### Funded by the Australian Government

Beginning in 2011 PHA established the Varroa Continuity Strategy Management Committee (VCSMC) to improve preparedness for the Varroa mite, a pest known to have damaged honey bees and beekeeping in all beekeeping regions across the world except Australia. It is widely accepted that it is just a matter of time before an incursion of Varroa mite in Australia occurs.

The initiatives were recommended in a report by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture *A Honey bee industry and pollination continuity strategy should Varroa become established in Australia* (the Continuity Strategy)

This strategy formed part of the Australian Government's response to the report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources Inquiry into the Future Development of the Australian Honey Bee Industry, *More Than Honey: the future of the Australian honey bee and pollination industries*.

The main objective of the Continuity Strategy was to have arrangements in place that allow the honey bee industry, crop industries responsive to honey bee pollination and governments to prepare for, and respond quickly and efficiently to the establishment of Varroa (and other bee pests) in Australia to minimise the impact on the honey bee industry and pollination-reliant crops.

Over two years PHA drove implementation of the strategy and produced the following products, in readiness for a Varroa incursion:

- Varroa Continuity Strategy Communication Plan
- Emergency Communication Framework Recommendations
- Varroa mite Emergency Communication Framework
- Varroa Transition to Management Program
- Control and Management Zones for Varroa mite in Australia

### Partnership-funded preparedness

Funding for the Varroa Continuity Strategy was provided by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture.

The Varroa Continuity Strategy Management Committee was comprised of representatives from the Department of Agriculture, AHBIC, Almond Board of Australia, HAL, RIRDC, CSIRO, University of WA, NSW DPI, VIC DEPI, and DAFWA with PHA chairing and providing the secretariat.

## Asian Honey Bee Transition to Management Program

### Funded by the Australian Government

The Asian Honey Bee (AHB) an exotic pest first detected in 2007 was declared not technically feasible to eradicate by the National Management Group (NMG) in January 2011, after evaluation of the emergency response showed eradication was not possible. The NMG agreed that further action on a national scale was warranted to transition from an eradication program to a situation where industry and the community had the tools and knowledge to effectively manage AHB.

The Australian Government developed the *Plan for Transition to Management of the Asian Honey Bee* after consultation with the Queensland government, PHA, AHBIC and several key researchers. The plan set out work to develop tools and techniques that enabled the industry and community to live with AHB and to be able to manage them in a way that ensured they did not develop into a significant issue for the industry or community.

The Australian Government invested \$2 million from July 2011 to June 2013, through a Caring for our Country grant to enable the plan to go ahead. In addition, the Federal Council of Australian Apiarists Association (FCAAA) and AHBIC provided \$200,000 each, which was used for complementary R&D projects.

The Asian Honey Bee Transition to Management program (AHB T2M) was administered by PHA, and consisted of a series of operationally based contracts which were funded through the project and were primarily delivered by Biosecurity Queensland.

The AHB T2M Program formally finished on 30 June 2013 with the following key outputs:

- Greater awareness and knowledge of AHB for the BeeAware website (See page 10).
- Improved surveillance methods adopted across Australia as part of the NBPSP (see page 8).
- Preparation of transition to management principles for incorporation into the EPPRD, subject to agreement from EPPRD signatories.
- Improved contingency plans and biosecurity planning and preparedness for the honey bee industry. Knowledge gained through the AHB T2M, such as remote nest treatment and the confidence of surveillance techniques was obtained during this process, allowing incorporation into the industry contingency plans for exotic pests.

## Ongoing PHA projects

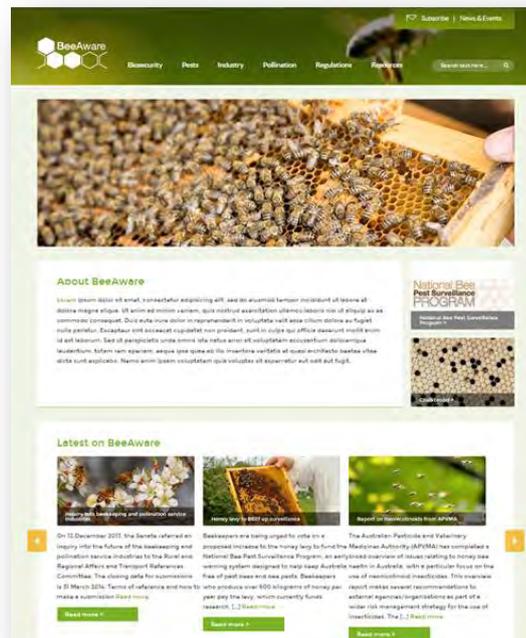
### BeeAware website

#### Funded by HAL and RIRDC

The BeeAware website is a follow up project relating to the Varroa Continuity Strategy.

As the last major honey producing country in the world not to have Varroa (the world's worst honey bee pest), Australia has the opportunity to be prepared for an incursion.

PHA is developing a website with information about key exotic pests, established pests and diseases, and pollination information for growers of pollinator-reliant crops, to raise awareness of the issue ahead of an incursion.



### Preparing for hive movement restrictions

#### Funded by HAL

Following an incursion of Varroa, border and regional restrictions for hives are likely to be put into place to delay the spread of the pest. This will disrupt current arrangements where beekeepers travel across borders to deliver pollination services.

PHA is investigating how these restrictions will affect beekeeping and pollination services using the almond industry as a case study, for Project, funded by HAL with levy contributions from 10 industries.

The project will ensure the almond industry is prepared for a potential incursion of Varroa mite by having a predetermined biosecurity framework and documented options available to growers, industry stakeholders, and governments to ensure the continued growth and stability of the almond industry. All ten contributing industries will also be profiled for knowledge, preparedness and planning in relation to Varroa mite and bees.

Workshop Acari, described on page 11, will be hosted by PHA in June 2014.

### More beekeeping services required

Feral bees, wild colonies that currently provide free pollination services, will die out following an incursion of Varroa.

Within a short period, crop producers will require the services of beekeepers to bring in honey bee hives to ensure that pollination still occurs.

As a result, Australia will have a hugely increased demand for beekeepers.

The BeeAware website ensures that there is a national 'go to' website for beekeepers and growers of pollination-reliant crops.



Workshop Acari aims to increase the readiness of industries for movement restrictions of hives in the event of a Varroa incursion.

The workshop has three main objectives to increase preparedness:

1. Improve the awareness of pollination dependant industries on the current research on Varroa mite management and alternative pollination techniques.
2. Identify the role that pollination dependant industries can provide to support honey bee biosecurity.
3. Identify recommendations for future contingency planning activities to be undertaken by pollination dependant industries in relation to maintaining their business continuity during a Varroa mite emergency response.

## Arranging chemicals for use in a Varroa incursion

### Funded by PHA

The immediate availability of chemicals that will safely and effectively combat Varroa mite will be paramount in the event of an incursion. In Australia, however, chemical use must be approved prior to use. PHA is working with the APVMA, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and chemical supplier BASF to seek pre-emptive emergency use and minor use registration of Mite Away Quick Strips™ (with formic acid as the active constituent) in preparation for an incursion.

This emergency use and minor use application initiative is an ongoing action item which formed part of the Varroa Continuity Strategy.

## Working with AHBIC to provide additional levy funds for honey bee biosecurity

### Funded by the Australian Government

PHA is currently leading a project on behalf of AHBIC to reform and increase the honey levy. The funding provided to AHBIC for this project was received from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture as seed funding to develop these biosecurity programs.

Among other changes, AHBIC are proposing to raise the honey levy from the current 2.3c/kg to 4.6c/kg to pay for improved industry biosecurity – endemic pest and disease management and surveillance of exotic bee pests and pest bees.

The levy funds would be used to:

- Continue to contribute \$75,000 per annum to the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program.
- Instigate a National Bee Biosecurity Program, which will include the appointment of a new Bee Biosecurity Officer in each state. This position will be underpinned by a Code of Practice for beekeepers as described below. Industry is proposing to invest \$400,000 per year for this initiative.

PHA is assisting AHBIC to publicise the proposed changes, which beekeepers will vote on until early July 2014.

## **National Bee Biosecurity Program and Code of Practice**

### **Development of the program funded by RIRDC**

The proposed National Bee Biosecurity Program is an initiative managed and administered by PHA and AHBIC, with funding from RIRDC for development.

Overseas experience suggests that if established pests and diseases are under control and beekeepers are well educated, then the impact of an exotic pest, such as Varroa mite, is reduced. This program aims to improve the management of established pests and diseases in Australia, as well as increase the preparedness and surveillance of exotic pest threats in the honey bee industry. This would be achieved through the establishment of a mandatory Code of Practice for commercial beekeepers.

Once developed, it is envisaged that the ongoing program would begin in July 2015 and consist of a partnership between PHA, AHBIC and state governments. PHA would provide national management and governance support, the honey bee industry would provide significant funding resources on an annual basis and AHBIC would be the key drivers of the program as well as provide advocacy and communication about the Program to the honey bee industry and other stakeholders.

To enforce the mandatory Code of Practice, and to help ensure that Australian commercial beekeepers are following appropriate biosecurity procedures, the program would employ a Bee Biosecurity Officer in six states. The positions will be within the state government departments of primary industries, funded through a combination of beekeeper levies and state primary industry agency contributions.

It is envisaged that National Bee Biosecurity Program will:

- Reduce the honey bee industry's reliance on government for established pest and disease management.
- Reduce the incidence of established pests and diseases such as American foulbrood.
- Improve surveillance for exotic pests and diseases.
- Assist beekeepers to source healthy honey bee colonies.
- Reduce the cost of established pest and disease compliance activities for government, since the Code will be a cost-shared partnership between industry and government.

## Conclusion

Australia is in a unique position to maintain a healthy honey bee industry, the value of which, especially to pollination-reliant crops, is well demonstrated. Keeping out exotic pests that have damaged production overseas, and effective management of established pests, are vital components in the sustainability of the industry.

As the honey bee biosecurity coordinator in Australia, PHA has completed many valuable projects aimed at securing the future of honey bees for both the beekeeping and pollination service industries in Australia.

The ongoing and proposed projects undertaken by PHA with non-subscription funding are a blueprint for strengthening the national honey bee biosecurity system and for managing risks associated with bee biosecurity and other threats that have the potential to adversely affect the honey bee industry.

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), PHA's Member representing the honey bee industry, has taken greater ownership of the biosecurity challenge, including in the coordination and co-funding of future biosecurity challenges of both established and exotic pests. The current proposal to beekeepers to raise additional funds from the honey levy for these biosecurity programs demonstrates ongoing commitment to the principle that biosecurity is a shared responsibility.

The initiatives described in this submission align with broader government biosecurity objectives. The Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) officially endorsed by the Australian, state and territory governments (except Tasmania) in January 2012, states the national goal for biosecurity is:

*To minimise the impact of pests and diseases on Australia's economy, environment and the community, with resources targeted to manage risk effectively across the continuum, while facilitating trade and the movement of animals, plants, people, goods, vectors and vessels to, from and within Australia.*

The national honey bee programs currently underway clearly align with this statement. The honey bee intermediate objectives and priority actions also directly correlate with the priority action areas described in schedule 2 to 8 of the IGAB. The programs currently being pursued are to ensure that industry is moving in the same direction as broader national biosecurity policy.

## Recommendation

PHA seeks Committee support for Australian Government component of funding for ongoing and proposed biosecurity programs, to which industry also contributes—the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBPS), which is currently funded until June 2015 and the National Bee Biosecurity Program (NBBP), to improve the health of honey bees in Australia into the future.

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