

## National Bee Pest Surveillance Program Steering Committee – Meeting 4

### Communiqué

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program (NBPSP) Steering Committee was held by teleconference on Thursday 28 May 2020. The committee includes representatives from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE), all state and territory governments, the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC), Plant Health Australia (PHA) and Hort Innovation.

Below is a brief description of the items discussed and the major outcomes of the meeting.

### Meeting summary

#### Review of the program

Ron Glanville (Biosecurity Advisory Services) provided an update on the preliminary findings of an operational/management review of the NBPSP. This review was conducted between March and May 2020 through interviews with stakeholders from all state and territory governments, the Australian Government, Hort Innovation, and AHBIC. Several preliminary findings were presented to the committee for discussion and consideration. A final report will be circulated once it is finalised.

#### Update on surveillance activities and projects

Each jurisdictional committee representative provided an update on program delivery in their respective state or territory, and PHA provided an overview of national program delivery. All state and territories continue to perform exotic bee pest and pest bee surveillance activities, including on Norfolk Island. The impacts of the summer fire season, ongoing influences of drought and lack of floral availability on sentinel hive health were felt across the nation. There are 176 active beehives and 156 catchboxes positioned across 33 ports. All those involved in the NBPSP continue to work hard to achieve the program's goal of early exotic pest detection.

#### Bee Surveillance Portal

PHA has been delivering online training to NBPSP surveillance personnel on the new Bee Surveillance Portal ([bit.ly/2NuYe9d](https://bit.ly/2NuYe9d)) which aims to improve program management and data recording nationally.

#### Program enhancements

DAWE provided a grant to PHA in 2017 to enhance various components of the NBPSP. Most of these enhancements have either been completed or will be completed in the coming months ([bit.ly/3i6JzPB](https://bit.ly/3i6JzPB)). Some of the key components delivered include establishing exotic honey bee virus testing biannually, trialling Asian hornet traps, improving Asian honey bee surveillance, and improving the consistency of activities by developing standard operating procedures. In addition, 40 upgraded remote 'smart technology' catchboxes are scheduled to be deployed by the end of August 2020.

#### Asian hornets

The committee continues to monitor the emerging Asian giant hornet (*Vespa mandarinia*) situation overseas and investigate approaches that may assist in the early detection of hornets should they arrive in Australia. Recent trap trials conducted by the NBPSP proved not effective for the early detection of the exotic Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina nigrithorax*). The committee agreed that the development and dissemination of awareness and reporting material on exotic hornets to beekeepers and staff at sea ports and air ports is an effective method to raise awareness of these emerging threats to the industry.

### Next meeting

The next meeting of the NBPSP Steering Committee will be held in November 2020 in Canberra.

### More information

For more information about the NBPSP visit [planthealthaustralia.com.au/national-programs/national-bee-pest-surveillance-program/](https://planthealthaustralia.com.au/national-programs/national-bee-pest-surveillance-program/)