

## **The House of Honey**

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To whom it may concern,

I would like to submit my details regarding my business and why I think we should reinstate the funding for the eradication of the Asian Bee. I have put our points down under the below headings.

### **Where you operate**

Swan Valley, Perth, WA

### **What investment you have in your business**

My wife Kim and I operate a partnership business whereby 100% of invested funds are of our own personal source.

### **What economic contribution your business makes to your local economy**

Our business is tourism based and participates in a local tourism council. We offer courses to apprentices (food industry), offer educational opportunities to schools and rely heavily upon tourism in our special Swan Valley area.

### **Which crops you pollinate and what the impact to those farmers will be if your hives are not available**

We are involved in Avocado and strawberry farm pollination, both of which would suffer in production ability should our bees not be available.

### **How many people you and your farmers employ**

We employ 3 adults

### **How many people locally you buy your supplies from and the impact of your business on them**

Many of our products sold in the outlet are from West Australia e.g. Pollen, health products and bee equipment. Our business contributes to these businesses on a regular basis, many of whom would suffer in our absence.

**The social costs to your area if this decision means a decline in another rural industry in your area. Eg. Impact on local schools, hospitals, etc**

Many businesses in our area are of a rural nature; many vegetable and grape growers would find difficulty in obtaining pollination sources. This would affect their income, and have a knock-on effect to local schools, hospitals and other tourism-based businesses.

**What the uncertainty over the Asian bee and other threats to our industry is doing to your current or future plans**

The uncertainty concerning an Asian Bee presence poses many problems for us as a business. A decline in productive hives/areas/pollination contracts means a loss of income, making an already marginally-profitable business needing re-assessment and a possibility of closure. A large factor of our future decisions rest upon continued profitability.

**Any concerns you have over the costs of this decision on the value of your business should you wish to leave the industry**

An exit from the industry based upon Asian Bee presence and possibly the Varroa mite along with it would certainly devalue if not cement the possibility that the business would not be re-saleable due to unprofitability. This would place us in severe financial difficulty.

**The costs you envisage if you have to adopt the hive management practices required to “live with” Asian bees – on top of small hive beetle, etc (eg. Smaller hive entrances)**

Should the Asian Bee incursion be here to stay, a whole new management strategy of our bee colonies would have to be adopted. Not only would hardware changes need to be made on each hive but Australia losing it's “Clean Green” bee image would follow. This would eventuate through the necessity of chemical control of the Varroa mite, which would certainly accompany the Asian Bee. This in turn would affect our ability to export honey overseas, and certainly affect our sales of “clean” honey to the lucrative tourism market we rely heavily upon. Financially this figure is difficult to estimate, however I expect it to be as high as 40% of our current turnover.

**The human cost (worry, etc) that this issue is causing you.**

The issue of the Asian Bee incursion is indeed a worrying one. We have to consider the real possibility that operating in an Asian Bee environment would force us to seriously consider abandonment of our business, which would in turn affect others in our area. The very presence of the aggressive Asian Bee would turn an already bee-sceptical public into belief that bees are nothing but pests.

It is difficult to believe the real possibility of an Asian Bee presence- in a world where the humble European bee is being constantly attacked by pesticides, human indifference towards their amazing ability to pollinate numerous crops. My real fear is that this may be the final opportunity in what is almost the last place on Earth where bees are unaffected by the Varroa Mite- and we as a country simply abandon an achievable eradication program based upon monetary cost alone?