

ARCHIBALD HONEY

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To the Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport.

Dear Sirs,

I would like to present a submission to the Senate regarding the Asian bee (*Apis cerana*) invasion.

We are third generation beekeepers as well as honey packers.

In our opinion, the incursion of the Asian bee will be utter devastation for beekeeping, as we know it now. It is imperative that the incursion of this bee is stopped with efficient surveillance before it is too late.

It has been mentioned that maybe control of the bee would be more viable. I have no faith in such a statement. Look at the invasion — out of control pests, such as rabbits, foxes, cane toads, and now within our industry, chalk brood and small hive beetle. To control, once the pest has invaded does not work at all. Once the Asian bee is allowed to invade, it will be too late for action.

I cannot understand how such a major catastrophe could be allowed to happen, when it is possible to stop it now, with costs incurred, very minimal to the overall outcome to be achieved, not only for the honey industry, but also for all Australians in general. It will affect many industries in a chain effect, including our food chain. Pollination with our managed European Honey Bees (*Apis Mellifera*) will be decimated. Without controlled pollination of our food crops, including Almond pollination, which is a huge business venture, Australians will enjoy less home grown produce. What a disgraceful outcome, when with a comparatively small effort the outcome could be different.

The Asian bee as I understand it, is not manageable to work in controlled boxes. It eats honey, it will readily steal honey from worked hives, causing huge problems, but it doesn't store honey as our European bees do. Asian bees swarm continually, and so can move many kms per year - maybe 100kms, thus incursion once let proceed would travel very fast through out Australia.

These Asian bees would be a huge problem for society as they swarm and infest people's walls, letterboxes, and small crevices, uncontrolled. People with an allergy would be greatly compromised with these conditions.

Australian honey is a product sort the world over, because it is a pure, clean, natural product. Trade would be compromised with the advent of the Asian incursion, which can carry and will no doubt bring Varroa mite with it. Australia is free of the menace so far. If we continue our surveillance of our coastline, our honey can continue to be a good clean product. Once we have Varroa, it will need chemical control and our honey is down graded considerably on

the world stage. Varroa can never be eradicated once here. Australia is the only country I know of that is still Varroa free. When Varroa mite invades, bees are weak, and cannot thrive. The Varroa mite sucks the strength out of the bees and then you have hives with continual health problems as we all keep hearing about elsewhere, and chemicals to combat each problem.

Australian bees were sort by other countries with the above mentioned problems and there was quite a big business in trade of them, but this has been stopped at present, simply because no one wants an Asian bee incursion and our bees are being put at risk with the lack of surveillance at present.

Once the incursion has happened, beekeeping, as we know it now will be over. The Asian bee can and will mate with our queens, even though they are a difference species and that will be the beginning of the end of beekeeping in Australia. Wherever there is an incursion of the Asian bee, commercial beekeeping is ruined.

In summary:

- Beekeepers livelihoods will be wiped out.
- The food chain will be compromised with pollination problems
- Chemical control of Varroa will leave our honey industry down graded, and less sort
- After on the world market.
- Supplies of Australian bees to the world will be decimated
- People will be plagued with continual swarming bees in walls, letterboxes etc.
- People with an allergy to bees will be compromised.
- There will be no turning back!

Most Australians will be affected in some way, if this surveillance is not reinstated immediately.

It will be too late if time is allowed to elapse while the issue is debated.

It seems unbelievable to me, that with Australia in such a prime position with the ability to produce such high quality, sort after honey it would not make every effort to keep it that way.

Australian honey is a unique product.

Yours sincerely,
Rosalie Archibald
Partner of Archibald Honey.