

**MR WAYNE WENDT, MP
MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST
CHAIR OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND FISHERIES,
RURAL AND REGIONAL QUEENSLAND MINISTERIAL
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

**Queensland Beekeepers' Association 105th AGM and
Conference**

**Joseph Banks Ballroom, Rydges Esplanade Resort, Cairns
11:30 am - 2:00 pm Thursday 2 July 2009**

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Acknowledgements:

- Councillor Val Schier, Mayor of Cairns Regional Council
- Incoming Committee of the Queensland Beekeepers' Association for 2009/10
- Guest Speaker: Randy Oliver from California
- Other conference presenters
- Ladies and gentlemen
- Departmental staff

I would also like to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Gimuy Yidinji people where this event is taking place.

Good morning one and all.

Can I firstly apologise on behalf of the Honourable Tim Mulherin MP Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries, Rural and Regional Queensland and Member for Mackay who unfortunately couldn't attend today.

However, I must admit that his absence has enabled me to be here today and I can tell you that I am extremely pleased and honoured to have the opportunity to open the Queensland Beekeepers' Association's 105th Annual General Meeting and Conference.

Can I commence by congratulating the Queensland Beekeepers' Association on what promises to be a rewarding conference here in beautiful Cairns, and I would also like to congratulate the incoming Committee of the Association for 2009/10, on their election.

As we all know the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries plays an important role in supporting our primary industries, which contribute an estimated \$13.04 billion to the Queensland economy annually.

And as you can imagine the honey bee industry is an important factor in this production.

For instance in 2008 the House of Representatives Standing Committee enquiry into the honey bee industry, found that the contribution of pollination to Australia's agriculture and horticulture industries was not only critical to production, but worth an estimated \$4 billion a year.

With this in mind it is important to note that Queensland also has significant agriculture and horticulture industries and the estimated value of pollination services in our state is around \$1 billion.

When you think about it, the value for pollination dwarfs the value of production from honey and honey products of \$80 million a year for Australia, with the Queensland value being about \$16 million a year.

For instance I didn't know that horticultural crops such as almonds, avocado, carrots, onions and cauliflower are 100 per cent dependent on pollination by bees.

And many other horticultural crops such as mangoes and macadamia nuts are substantially dependent on bees for pollination, while other crops such as canola and pasture crops including lucerne and white clover, are also dependent on bees for pollination.

What is important to remember is that the Queensland Government is committed to the ongoing development of agriculture as a key contributor to the State's economy, and with that in mind there are a number of ways in which Queensland's department of Primary Industries and Fisheries is working with, and for the Queensland honey bee industry.

Here in Cairns for instance we have the most notable example of this co-operation. By that, I speak of course about the all-out assault against the incursion of the Asian honey bee.

This co-operation provides an example of how industry and government, including local government, can work together, and I think that it is important at this point to acknowledge the important role that the community is playing in biosecurity.

For example I was particularly impressed with the arrangements made with the Skyrail Rainforest company to establish feeding stations along the Skyrail route within the rainforest up to Kuranda, as part of the Asian honey bee surveillance program, and the alertness of the public in noticing and reporting unusual bees and bee swarms.

I don't have to tell any one here today that it is critical that we locate and kill all Asian honey bees, because they have the capacity to carry and spread a particular (Varroa) mite that can destroy feral and hobbyist hives, and thereby have a significant economic impact on the commercial bee industry, not to mention the pollination of commercial crops and the environment in general.

Another pest of course is the small Hive Beetle infestation which is posing an ongoing problem for beekeepers.

I'm pleased to advise that Biosecurity Queensland is working with the Queensland Beekeepers' Association and scientists in Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, to research methods to control this infestation through the use of traps and biological controls.

In addition, research has begun on attractants to draw small hive beetles out of hives into traps. And I think it's significant to mention that the findings of the latest research into traps by Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, will be presented during this very conference.

I'm also advised of the recent successful conclusion of the joint Queensland Beekeepers' Association – Biosecurity Queensland project to evaluate pollen substitutes, and I am sure many of you will be interested in the results when they are released, which should be ????.

I suppose it's good to know that Biosecurity Queensland is providing services to the bee industry such as laboratory diagnostic services for bee diseases and pests, and general disease management advice through our Apiary Officers.

As you all know these officers undertake health certification to facilitate interstate movements of bee hives, as well as exports of live bees and honey, because the greatest threat facing the honey bee industry is from incursions of pests and diseases.

Even though Australia is extremely fortunate to be free from serious bee mites, such as the Varroa mite. I know beekeepers across the state are collaborating with Biosecurity Queensland to improve surveillance for these pests.

As such continued vigilance by the honey bee industry, the community and government will be necessary to minimise the risk of these incursions, and if that's not possible, then to detect them early enough to allow effective eradication.

In conclusion I want to wish you all the best as you consider the Queensland honey bee industry's future in the rest of today's and then tomorrow's sessions, and I thank you for your contribution to maintaining Queensland's reputation as a quality provider of agriculture and apiculture products.

Therefore, without further ad hue it is my pleasure to declare this 2009 Queensland Beekeepers' Association, 105th Annual General Meeting and Conference, well and truly open.