

# NEW SOUTH WALES APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC.



North Coast Branch.

Sec.  
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## Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport

### **Science Underpinning the Inability to Eradicate the Asian Honeybee**

1. Because we have the distinction of being the first country to try to eradicate the Asian Bee there is so far no evidence as to the scientific underpinning of eradication, one way or the other. It appears that the recent upsurge in personnel led to the finding of younger nests. This gives some hope that eradication would be possible if the program was continued.

As far as we can ascertain, local naturalists have not been sought as a matter of urgency to help in the program. This is a pity as these people usually know a favourite area intimately. As well they are used to looking at the environment and noting anything unusual. In our view this has been a major and so far missed opportunity.

2. Other than the interaction of Asian and European bees on the Solomon Islands and to some extent what happened in New Guinea there is no science to tell us what is likely to happen in Australia. However even from the comparatively limited knowledge gained from around Cairns it does appear that the Asian Bee will be a problem to the environment, to people and the beekeeping industry and the attendant industries dependant on honey bee pollination services

There is virtually no scientific work on the effect of the Asian Bee in Australia, for obvious reasons. However a number of credible scientists, based on their experience elsewhere are fearful of the general deleterious effects of the Asian Bee should it not be eradicated. There would seem to be no reason to suppose that this bee will not spread along the whole of the eastern side of Australia, at least on the seaward side of the Divide.

3. This branch covers an area rich in horticultural pursuits. Most of these crops either need, or benefit, from bee pollination. Not all this is paid pollination, but, for example, the author receives one hundred dollars per hive for pollinating blueberries. If the Asian Bee proves to be as devastating as feared there is evidence that much of this pollination will be at the very best, problematic.

During the author's beekeeping career, four incursions relating to bees have entered Australia. European Brood Disease, Chalk brood, Small Hive Beetle and now the Asian Bee. All these diseases or pests have had a large impact on the industry and its viability. Of these the Asian Bee was contained when discovered, and still is at the time of writing. The

potential environmental, public nuisance and agricultural costs would indicate that every effort is demanded to eradicate this pest. So far the monetary cost of eradication has been modest, as is the budgeted cost, something that Australia can easily afford to implement. The cost of not succeeding will be with us forever.

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(Past Pres. Australian Herpetological Society, etc..  
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