

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a small scale commercial apiarist operating a 50 hive apiary business called Highlands Apiaries.

I have been an apiarist at various levels for 50 years.

The Federal Government's decision to withdraw funding for the eradication of the Asian Bee will likely result in catastrophic damage to the Australian apiary industry and associated rural enterprises. Studies have shown that the Asian bee will likely have a quite rapid damaging effect on the European Honey Bee population across all climate zones in Australia.

I refer you to the effect on the Solomon Islands' European Honey Bee population which was decimated within a short period after the incursion of the Asian Bee.

Experts have highlighted the negative flow on effect across many aspects of Australian agriculture.

At a local level Highlands Apiaries provides honey to nine outlets in the Wingecarribee Shire, and provides pollination services to cucurbits growers in the Brayton area.

When (not if) an unchecked Asian Bee decimates the European Honey Bee, honey will have to be brought in from other areas in this country or overseas. This will add to the cost of production and increase the carbon footprint resulting from food production.

I have invested a considerable amount of money over the years in the building up and running of my apiary and the equipment required to run that business. A conservative estimate would be around \$100,000.00 over the last 10-15 years. If the likely damage from the Asian Bee comes to pass, this enterprise will be of little value.

I ask that funding be restored to the Asian Bee Eradication program, and that efforts to eliminate this pest be resumed.

Yours faithfully,

Reg Marsh