**EWCA NOMINEES PTY LTD t/as**

# BEES NEEZ APIARIES

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Senate Standing Committees on Rural Affairs and Transport

By email: rat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Science underpinning the Inability to Eradicate the Asian Honeybee.**

I wish to address items (c) and (d).

I operate 700 beehives in Western Australia, I travel over 80,000kms per year taking my hives to various areas to collect honey and pollen. We employ 6 local people, 3 fulltime and 3 casual.. We also have a small retail outlet that we sell a small percentage of our produce from to the public.

If the Asian bee does spread from a new incursion and the Varroa mite is attached it will create the need for my business to change its management techniques and adds a huge cost factor in the extra labour cost required to manage a hive. There is a possibility that chemicals will need to be used to help control the mite, this in turn creates problems with residues of chemicals contaminating the honey and beeswax. Western Australia has a clean and green product at present, this would be destroyed and devalue all of our currently clean products. This in turn may impact on the price to us the producer but also to our consumers of products such as customers that purchase our honey and beeswax candles, no longer will we be able to promote the fact that they are chemical free. Beeswax is like a sponge and it will become heavily laden with these chemical residues which then reduce the attractability of burning a beeswax candle in your home to *purify* the air – more like *putrify* the air!

Even without Varroa the Asian bee will eliminate feral colonies of Europoean honeybee and have a large impact on managed honeybees eg In the Solomon islands there were 2000 hives in 2003 by 2008 there were 5 hives left and no ferals, effectively wiping out the beekeeping industry. Farmers will have to pay to have their crops pollinated which no doubt will increase the price of these foods which impacts on everyone. Although I do not do any paid pollination of crops I pollinate Canola from as far as 6 hours north of Perth and follow down to East of Perth. There are only 28,000 beehives in Western Australia, already there are not enough managed hives to pollinate effectively any crops so were we to lose the feral colonies to the Asian bee it would effectively wipe out the horticultural industry as well.

I am also part of a bee breeding program called Better Bees WA, that breeds queen bees on Rottnest Island off Perth. Each year we take bees over to breed them away from the mainland and any feral hives that may impact on the genetics that we are trying to breed from. The Asian bee would make it very difficult to maintain strong breeding colonies for both drones and queen production making it difficult to continue the strong genetic lines that we have spent years creating and devalue the whole project. Better Bees are about to send Queens overseas to test their resistance to the Varroa mite.

**Declaring the Asian bee endemic will destroy Australia's $5 to $7 million live bee export market, already we are seeing that California has ceased all imports of our bees due to the incursion of Asian bee.**

The Asian bee will become a public nuisance, already we get hundreds of calls a year asking for European honeybee swarms to be removed, this is nothing compared to if the Asian bee is let loose on the environment.

Although it may take a financial commitment to eradicate the Asian bee, it will save millions of dollars from being spent at a later date to control larger problems. Examples of this are the Small Hive Beetle and the Cane Toad.

Time has already been wasted, the longer it takes to cut through the red tape we are risking this incursion of Asian bee becoming out of our reach, action needs to be taken immediately to reinstate the eradication of this pest. At least whilst it is being managed the risks of more swarms entering the country possibly carrying the Varroa mite are less, which in turn gives our researchers and even our Better Bees WA program, more time to explore ways so that when it eventually gets here we may stand more of a chance of being able to deal with it more effectively so we may be better prepared.

Thank you for your time to read my submission, I trust a positive outcome will be the result.

Yours faithfully,

**David Leyland**