



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources
Inquiry into the future development of the
Australian Honey Bee Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 15 May 2008

Chair: Hon. Dick Adams MP
Deputy Chair: Alby Schultz MP

Bees are back

Relaunch of honey bees inquiry

The House of Representatives Primary Industries Committee has resumed its inquiry into the **future development of the Australian Honey Bee Industry**.

Announcing the relaunch of the inquiry, Committee Chair Dick Adams said: "Bees are vital to the future of Australian agriculture and the economy. We must do all we can to ensure the future viability of the Australian honey bee industry. We must also protect Australian honey bees from the impact of invasive pests and diseases such as Varroa Destructor. If Varroa reaches our shores it has the potential to devastate our agricultural industries."

The inquiry has examined the honey bee industry in terms of:

- Its current and future prospects;
- Its role in agriculture and forestry;
- Biosecurity issues;
- Trade issues;
- The impact of land management and bushfires;
- The research and development needs of the industry; and
- Existing industry and government work that has been undertaken for the honey bee industry.

The committee had received 91 submissions and conducted six public hearings for its previous inquiry into the honey bee industry during the 41st Parliament.

The committee will take up the work of its predecessor and use the large volume of evidence collected to produce a report expected to be tabled in coming weeks. The committee is not seeking further evidence, but wishes to thank all those who have contributed to the inquiry.

Mr Adams said that the evidence presented to the committee had highlighted the challenges facing the industry, especially the challenges of biosecurity, resource security and economic viability. It had also highlighted the research and training needs of the industry and the need to retain and renew human capital in the face of a rapidly ageing apiary workforce.

"The Australian honey bee industry faces many challenges, but also real opportunities for growth and development. It is up to governments, the honey bee industry, and the pollination industry more broadly, to work together to ensure that the opportunities are grasped and the challenges overcome for the benefit of all. The industry must build on its base of strong traditions and innovate for a prosperous future."

For media comment: please contact the committee chair, **Dick Adams MP**, on (02) 6277 4293 or email Dick.Adams.MP@aph.gov.au

For background information, including the terms of reference, contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4500 or at pir.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/pir