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Secretary: ..... *[Signature]* .....

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The Secretary  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee  
House of Representatives

By email: [Aff.Reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:Aff.Reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: New Inquiry. The future development of the Australian Honey Bee Industry.**

It is my opinion that the greatest dilemma the industry currently has is how to entice younger people in. Our industry mainly consists of generations of older beekeepers that do not have a following of children that are interested in continuing in beekeeping. It does not offer attractive enough monetary returns for the great amount of effort and labour involved.

The wider community is not educated enough on beekeeping to know that it is a viable choice for a career. There is no official educational program to assist any potential newcomers to the industry.

I feel that we have inadequate access to natural resources through our government departments. It appears that whenever there is any query with regards to access to Crown land, beekeepers are always the first to be discarded.

Department of Conservation do not consider beekeepers requests for controlled burning programs to be carried out at certain times that will not affect the flowering of trees. They seem to have no understanding of the impact that a burn can have on a future crop flowering for that area. Beekeepers have minimal impact on the environment and invariably will leave a site in a condition similar to before it was used. *With this in mind you would think it would give us some leverage to having a say on when burns are carried out and allowing us access to natural vegetation areas, which currently we are prohibited from using eg. Dundas Nature Reserve, Goldfields Woodlands Nature Reserve.*

Poor honey prices offered by the major packers in Australia are not conducive to being able to support a beekeeping business that needs to employ workers **and** increase the business profitability.

Due to lack of support from the Agricultural Departments there has never been any assistance to promote pollination, especially in Western Australia. This makes it difficult for honey producers to diversify into this important area. Considering that there has been lots of research done in Australia to prove that pollination is of benefit to the growers, it has never been promoted by government departments.

More research needs to be carried out into medicinal uses of honey and alternative uses i.e. the health benefits of honey over sugar or other sweeteners.

The public need to be educated about the beekeeping industry and what would happen if there weren't an industry. They need to be made aware that around 60% of our crops are dependant on honeybee pollination, and if all honeybees and feral honeybees were to disappear through an exotic disease outbreak, there could be a 2 billion dollar impact on agriculture and a loss of approx 11,000 jobs.

We need to reinforce to Quarantine departments and the public the importance of protecting our borders against possible incursions. Too often we have customers who query why they can't bring honey into Australia, if they were enlightened more through the media to the impact a disease outbreak could have, it may in turn make Quarantines job a little easier.

Beekeeping should be included in the syllabus for Agricultural schools as an important subject to be studied. There are many different facets of beekeeping i.e. Queen breeding, pollen production, packaged bees, pollination, honey production etc. Beekeeping can also incorporate a variety of trades i.e. truck driving, carpentry, metalwork, botany and animal husbandry.

Another major plus for honey is that it is environmentally friendly. An article in the American Bee Journal taken from the Canadian Honey council website discusses that honey is the sustainable and ethical choice for consumers.

Ref: [www.honeycouncil.ca](http://www.honeycouncil.ca).

In closing I would like to say that I feel the industry has a great deal to offer not only to myself, but also to the community through providing good quality products that are not available anywhere else in the world. We may only be a small industry but we are an extremely important one. Considering the worldwide problems with bees not surviving, Australia can benefit from this opportunity by selling our relatively disease free bees to the world, if only the government and public will get behind us.

Yours faithfully,

*David Leyland*