


**Submission to House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Agricultural Fisheries and Forestry Inquiry into the future  
development of the Australian Honey Bee Industry**

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**Terms of Reference:**

**1. Its current and future prospects**

I believe the prospects are bleak due to the threats and realities of the following:  
Climate Changes produce heat waves and drought the results are:

- a. Loss of hives; they meltdown.
- b. Drought kills trees in forests and on farms
- c. Irrigated crops are less productive
- d. Fires render parks, forests and farm trees unproductive for up to 20 years.  
Some that are killed may take 30 – 50 years to return to full honey potential
- e. 10% of all hives in Victoria burnt in one day in 2006

Public land managers restricting areas of access to beekeepers, forest management prescriptions e.g. Fuel reduction burns during and just prior to heavy flowerings.

Post logging site rehabilitation eliminating all bee site clearings within 2 years and no replacement available. Past wildfires have the same result. No replacement sites available in unburned parts of parks, like flora same region. Distorted data bases in 2003 and 2006.

Native vegetation regulations prevent apiarists from maintaining the legal required 3 meter no vegetation other than standing trees from all hives on public land in Victoria. Fires then burn hives. We are damned if we do and damned if we don't. When they do the clearing they are exempt from the Planning Act.

Encroachment of urban areas and hobby farms restricts use of free hold bushland and adjacent parks and forests. Vandalism is rife at times due to the above change in land use.

Climate change/drought reduces duration and values of honey flowerings (nectar secretion) water quality and availability for bees becomes a real challenge especially when we may live 300/500/800 kilometers from hive sites.

There are many other challenges that exist; these are but a few.

## 2. Its Role in Agriculture of Forestry - Agriculture

Over half my bee sites are on farmers properties where remnant vegetation survives on the farms or roadside and water courses. As well as this resource crops such as canola and some pasture plants and so called weeds are of significant value to apiarists.

Agriculture benefits from pollination of fruit, vegetables and pasture seed crops. I am sure other industry submissions will provide advice on this subject. I used to produce bees for pollination services. I have not been involved recently due to the seemingly impossible task of avoiding pesticide damage and kills to hives. This issue is very poorly understood from a legal or residue perspective. I doubt if organic honey exists. If its really deadly the hives are dead and will not produce honey. There are other situations that are not as clear cut as total mortality of all bees.

### Forestry

Some overseas countries have Australian Eucalypt forests bred to produce timber and honey. Australia seems to be uninterested in these potential crop systems as the Brazilians do

Forests other than the Gippsland Apiary/Forest Plan do not take into account the age class stands that best ensure sustainability of wood production and honey and beeswax at the same time.

This plan should be considered and implemented across all forests types where wood utilization and honey production can be integrated.

The Forests Act of Victoria sets out this dual purpose but seems not to be practiced.

The Gippsland R.F.A. Investigation was provided with evidence that an 80 year harvest cycle produced revenue for the state from wood royalties that were exceeded by apiary royalties (site fees) over the same 80 year cycle.

Apiarists pay their way in the forests. We provide a heavily subsidized service to agriculture. We are largely free of freebies but this will not last if the future threats come to bare. We don't need "Tree Pull" packages just a fair shake.

**Biosecurity**

Why should the Apiary Industry be expected to shoulder such a high cost share of the national surveillance program?

Individuals incur costs with the Sentinel Hive Program yet State and Federal officers are paid to provide the service. WorkCover and indemnity are not provided to the volunteers. Horticulture has a real financial interest yet they have not shared the costs.



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