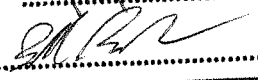


# MONSONS HONEY & APIARY PRODUCTS

August 9, 2007

Bill Pender  
Inquiry Secretary  
Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
Ph: 02 6277 4500  
Fax: 02 6277 4424  
[aff.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:aff.reps@aph.gov.au)

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## Re: Inquiry into the future development of the Australian Honey Bee Industry

Dear Bill and Inquiry Panel Members

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on August 8 in Canberra. I was impressed with your genuine interest in our small but vital industry, knowing that honey bees are crucial to so many agricultural industries.

I would like the opportunity to add a little information to two of the questions asked of me yesterday. These questions were in reference to my personal submission to the inquiry.

### Question 1

If I were given the budget for Bio Security, what would I spend it on?

As part of my response, I talked about removing border restrictions, especially in the Eastern States, enabling one Health Certificate to allow beehives free movement between the States.

I would also set up a closely monitored surveillance program that I think would go a long way to delay and hopefully eradicate incursions of exotic diseases and pests, such as varroa and other mites.

Some 77% of Australia's beekeepers run less than 40 hives, enabling them to regularly visit and monitor their bees. I would resource serious beekeepers from this group, using hives located near shipping ports. An essential part of the program would be to educate these beekeepers as to what they would be looking for and how to identify pests and diseases. I would be providing them with screened bottom boards, insecticide strips, sticky mats and other necessary materials. They would be asked to check their hives

regularly and report any changes as soon as they were discovered. Additional funding would be needed for laboratory fees, to examine sticky mats and bees, etc.

Many beekeepers do not have access to beekeeping magazines and don't attend conferences, so they are left out of the loop. Therefore there is a need to reach all beekeepers with a wide spread information and education program outlining diseases and pests, how to identify them, which ones to report and how to treat them, etc. Beekeeper registration databases would be one source of contact.

### Question 2

#### Where did I personally place Australia's provision of Bee Laboratories in the World Scene?

I responded by saying that we were well down the list. But I must emphasize that we are endowed with world class expertise. A good example is CSIRO's Dr Denis Anderson and his team. Denis is at the forefront of bee technology and is the one responsible for renaming the varroa mite to Varroa destructor, after discovering that it had jumped hosts from the Asian bee, Apis cerana to the European bee, Apis mellifera. Dr Denis Anderson has also traced the history of the Tropilaelaps mites that have spread from the giant Asian bee, Apis dorsata to the European bee. He is very respected for his work and is constantly liaising and working with other scientists around the world.

I must admit that after visiting Bee Laboratories in the US and Thailand I thought how great it would be to have a permanent world-class laboratory in Australia that specialised in bees. However, it's not just the need for a lab, it's funding for continued research that is paramount. The US has five laboratories that support a much larger beekeeping industry than ours. However, there was some concern about continued funding for all these labs while I was there in February. I guess this situation has changed dramatically with work being done with Colony Collapse Disorder.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before your panel. I wish you success as you carefully consider ways of protecting and enabling the beekeeping industry to grow and meet the demands of the future.

Regards

Trevor Monson  
Pollination Specialist  
MONSONS HONEY