



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Inquiry into the future development of the
Australian Honey Bee Industry

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 6 August 2007

Chair: Alby Schultz MP
Deputy Chair: Dick Adams MP

More trees for bees

The critical issue facing the honey bee industry in Queensland is loss of floral resource security. The Queensland Government has set a deadline for the removal of all apiary sites from national parks by 2024. This decision has left the local honey bee industry reeling, asking where its bees will go in future.

In its submission, the Queensland Beekeepers' Association stressed the importance of floral resource security to the future of the industry, stating: "The honeybee industry in Australia has been established on the use of public lands of many varying tenures. To remove honeybees from newly formed National parks robs the industry of the very resource it needs to survive. Any reduction of this vital resource will have a catastrophic impact on not only the honeybee industry but also on agriculture that depend on pollination services."

The House of Representatives agriculture committee will meet with representatives of the Queensland Government and Queensland beekeepers at its next public hearing in **Brisbane**, on **10 August 2007**, commencing at **9 am** and concluding at **5 pm**.

The committee is keen to learn how the competing needs of conservation and food production can be reconciled to prevent the decline of an industry vital to the Queensland economy, an industry essential to billions of dollars worth of agricultural production and national food security.

Committee chair, Alby Schultz said: "Bees need trees. If we are going to shut bees out of national parks then they have to have somewhere else to go. Letting the industry just shut down is not an option. Honey bees are vital to agriculture, honey production is vital to apiculture, and native flora is vital to both honey production and hive health. If governments want to shut bees out of public land, then they need to create alternative resources. If they can't do that, they must maintain access to public land."

Mr Schultz criticised what he regarded as a knee-jerk reaction to the presence of bees in national parks. "There is no evidence of honey bees significantly impacting native flora and fauna. Moreover, they are already widespread in the natural environment. Excluding bees from public land is to risk great economic disruption for little environmental benefit."

Witnesses include representatives of the Queensland Government (Submission 25), Capilano Honey (Submission 55), the Queensland Beekeepers' Association (Submission 67), the Australian Queen Bee Breeders Association (Submission 60), Mr Don Keith (Submission 26) and Dr Max Whitten (Submission 38).

PUBLIC HEARING—Honey Bee Inquiry—Brisbane, Friday 10 August 2007

WHERE: Holdway Room, Tattersall's Club, 215 Queen St, Brisbane
WHEN: Friday 10 August 2007, 9am–5pm

Public and media most welcome

For media comment: please contact the committee chair, Alby Schultz MP, on (02) 4822 2277 (02) 6277 4386 or email Alby.Schultz.MP@aph.gov.au.

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

For contact on the day: Mr Schultz: 0428 693 553. Secretariat: 0419 468 689