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**IPSWICH AND WEST MORETON
BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION INC.**

June 13th 2007

President George R Pallot

Mr. Bill Pender,
Inquiry Secretary,
Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry Committee,
House of Representatives.
P.O.Box 6021
Parliament House,
CANBERRA, ACT 2600

By email: Aff.Reps@aph.gov.au

**Re: Submission to the New Inquiry
The Future Development of the Honey Bee Industry**

The Ipswich and West Moreton Beekeeping Association Inc., is probably the largest Association in SE Queensland representing some 70 beekeepers - mostly hobbyist along with several significant and well respected commercial honey producers, pollinators, queen breeders, and other providers of associated products. In total our members manage probably about 3000 hives.

We are non-political and we are certainly not blinkered as to the requirements, the concerns, and of course the aspirations of our friends in the Honey Bee Industry across Australia - in fact it must be stressed we share their views.

The Current Prospect.

The current prospect gives cause for great concern for several reasons. The effects of the present drought are devastating. The threat to the honey bee is very real from the existing diseases and pests (especially the Small Hive Beetle), the Varroa mite on our doorstep, and the great concern felt with the present problem of CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder)

in the USA and the UK. It is as yet not confirmed but there is the theory that CCD could be a variation of an existing disease or pest which has become resistant to present methods of control - research is continuing.

In Queensland under current legislation in the year 2024 the Honey Bee industry will lose the ability to locate apiaries in the State Forests that will become National Parks. Estimates suggest that in excess of 75% of the nectar and pollen source for the Honey Bee Industry in Queensland is derived from the State Forests. No realistic viable alternative has as yet been identified or provided. It is difficult to imagine that there is an alternative when Beekeepers are already experiencing great difficulty in establishing enough sites even WITH the facility of the State Forests -this is in large part due to the extensive land clearing in recent times.

The Future of the Honey Bee Industry

We believe that with this New Inquiry there is at long last recognition of the extreme importance and value of the Honey Bee Industry within the Domestic and Export Economies of this great country of ours.

We also believe that with adequate funding correctly and specifically directed to the areas of need the health and strength of the Industry will be maintained and enhanced. The important areas of such need in our opinion is Biosecurity, Research and Development, and Education

Biosecurity

It can never be stressed enough the importance of surveillance and security at our ports and airports - and never more so than now with regard to the Honey Bee Industry and the distinct possibility of the arrival of the Varroa Mite and the acknowledged arrival of the Exotic Asian Honey Bee - Apis Cerana - in Cairns. (we are desperately hoping that the problem has been contained). We believe that greater funding is required to maintain the integrity of our border security - the envy of the rest of the world. Evidence of the risks are there with the battle we are fighting with the Small Hive Beetle(origin S. Africa) and, although not a beekeeping problem, the Fire Ant (origin S. America)

Research and Development

In this area more funding and personnel are desperately needed, at both Federal and State levels, to research methods of combating existing pests and diseases and to establish a real infrastructure putting into place a system to protect against these VERY REAL threats and actually be there to deal with the reality. Horses and stable doors!!!

Education

We would suggest that this is looked at in at least three ways.

First of all at student level - opening the eyes of the young - encouraging the schools of this wonderful country to get our children and youth to understand the Honey Bee and recognise its GREAT importance in our food chain and the survival of our countryside. We in this Association are trying very hard to 'do our bit'. Several of our members are actively involved in beekeeping in one of our local Colleges to the point where they have been winning prizes at local Agricultural Shows. We have also donated

educational books to the libraries of many of the local schools to foster interest and understanding and hopefully bring along another generation of beekeepers. A structured curriculum promoted through TAFE or University for Apiculture is another area deserving of serious consideration. This would obviously lead to more informed involvement in Beekeeping.

Secondly the public at large need to understand the importance and value of the Honey Bee Industry, particularly its contribution to the economy. This is supported by the fact that the value of pollination service provided by beekeepers to the horticultural and agricultural industries is estimated to be somewhere between 3 and 5 billion dollars. This figure would rise substantially should the Varroa Mite arrive and wipe out all the feral colonies which at the present time provide much of the pollination requirements of this country. Additionally, the contribution of the export and domestic trade of honey, bees (colonies and queens), and by-products such as beeswax, are worth almost \$100 million.

Thirdly, those in areas of administration at local and Government levels need to recognise and understand the foregoing educational needs.

Land Management and the Survival of Our Countryside

Recognition needs to be given to the value of the Beekeeper in his/her contribution in the Management of the bush and the State Forests by his/her very presence therein. The Beekeeper's continual visits to these areas enable a constant watch to be maintained and also enables him/her to alert those in a position of responsibility to any undesirable happening occurs. Their continual usage of these areas also assists in the access being kept open which is essential in the time of emergency.

We as an Association are encouraged by the prospect of this Inquiry and the obvious awareness of the Government that the Honey Bee Industry is in need. We look forward to a fruitful outcome.

We Respectfully Submit,

On behalf of: The Ipswich and West Moreton Beekeepers Association Inc.,.

George R Pallot
President