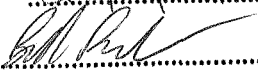


Submission No:	64
Date Received:	20/4/07
Secretary:	

## **Submission into the Future Development of the Australian Honey Bee Industry**

The Geelong Beekeepers Club is a group of beekeepers that come from an area of 150 Kilometres around Geelong. The group has been established nearly 10 years. The monthly meeting has 35 to 40 members attend from a base of approximately 100 beekeepers. The meetings are for the exchange of knowledge, beekeeping goods, and for teaching the new beekeeper through field days.

Recreational beekeeping gives great satisfaction to members, producing their own clean green honey and other hive products, such as pollen, propolis, beeswax, and making of mead (honey wine).

Pollinating the gardens of the suburban areas for free. Gardening is the largest participant activity in Australia. Members receive many requests for bees to pollinate the backyard pumpkins of the city gardens.

It is very sad to see the gradual demise of Victorian government infrastructure In the Beekeeping Industry. The Victorian government just does not invest enough money into Apiary Inspectors, and Research staff. If an outbreak of Varroa or Tracheal mites were to occur in Victoria we would be sorely understaffed. For Example when Fireblight was introduced into the Melbourne botanical gardens it was a major job to find and kill the 40 feral hives, and this did not include the adjoining suburbs where hives would also have been found.

Publications of the Victorian Beekeeper and the Honey Flora of Victoria have been out of print for many years and yet the Victorian government will not fund the reprinting of these important books, or allow the copyright to be wavered so someone else can print them.

If any diseases and pests like Varroa, Tracheal mites, Africanised bees, or Colony Collapse Disorder arrive in Australia, we will see the demise of beekeeping and the flow on consequences will be dire.

Overseas experience has shown Beekeeping groups, Beekeeping suppliers (foundation wax, beehive boxes, and equipment manufacturers) and many commercial beekeepers just give up. The cost for treating a beehive with chemicals will be over \$30 per hive per annum. Due to our mild winters honeybees often carry brood through out the winter thus making it impossible to effectively kill the Varroa mites hidden in the brood.

In Victoria approximately 2,000 beekeepers are registered and we estimate another 1,000 are not. This would make it harder to control a disease out break. An advertising campaign is required to locate unregistered beehives and the New Zealand idea of registering the locations bees are kept may be beneficial.

**A great need exists for community beesites around the urban areas. During swarming season it would be beneficial for public land to be available as community bee gardens. Beekeepers often need places locally for extra swarms they have removed from the community and for control of their own hives.**

**An example exists in Sydney and was established with money from the Bicentenary (1988) celebration. It would be an excellent idea for governments to make similar beekeeping facilities available.**

**Australia is in the fortunate position of being the last remaining country free of Varroa and mites. Unique bee breeds (Ligurian and English Black) are now only found in Australia. An effort should be made to conserve the world's honeybee races in Australia, before they die out overseas.**

**The future for the honey bee industry in Australia as a supplier of replacement bees to overseas countries is very good. But we must keep out the threats.**

**China has announced that by 2010, it will have 20% of its landmass planted to forest cover. It would be good if Australia also did this to counter global warming, especially if Eucalypts are used.**

**Recently we became aware that the Victorian Government has a policy of no new beesites, yet many areas of public land that have not been used extensively in the past have potential now. Many beesites could be made in the Western District. Manuka Honey comes from the "prickly Teatree" group.**

**In 2005/6 Australia imported from New Zealand \$4,500,000 worth of honey, mostly Manuka with antibiotic activity.**

**In the past this honey was not popular in Australia, but we now need to have access to areas of the Otways and Western Victoria where this shrub grows. The worldwide demand is enormous, and Asians are very interested in its medical abilities.**

**Is Australia so affluent that we can waste the floral resources?**

**What sort of people are we as a nation to deny the world clean unpolluted honey especially Teatree honey that has medical properties.**

**It is only good luck so far that Varroa and Tracheal mites have not infiltrated Australia and we need the government to take greater action in protecting us from Varroa. New Zealand spent \$300,000 per annum to safe guard the South Island and it still crossed the Cook Strait.**

**GEELONG BEEKEEPERS CLUB**

**Secretary**

**John Edmonds**

**President**

**Chris Knox**