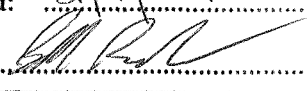


Submission No:	75
Date Received:	2/7/07
Secretary:	

## The Future Development of the Australian Honeybee Industry

An inquiry by The House of Representatives Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee.

To: The Secretary  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission by: David Clifford

Date July 1, 2007

This submission is to highlight the needs of the Honeybee Industry on Kangaroo Island. We are virtually not recognized by government agencies and the state apiary peak body as far as biosecurity and services go.

The possible incursion of the varroa mite, (*varroa destructor*) into Australia highlights the need for a much more secure biosecurity safety net for Kangaroo Island

### 1. The current and future prospects of the industry.

The Island enjoys the privilege of having a pristine environment where we are able to produce high quality honey and with the advantage of having the pure Ligurian Honeybee, makes our honey highly sought after.

Kangaroo Island was proclaimed as a bee sanctuary in 1885 to protect the Ligurian Honeybee for the future needs of the industry. Future prospects would be to utilize this asset and export bees and queens to a huge market worldwide.

### 2. Its role in agriculture and forestry.

The role we play in agriculture is pollination of crops and this potentially could become an added income for beekeepers, but currently there are insufficient hives (about 2000) to pollinate all the canola that is grown on the island.

The KI apiary industry relies mainly on native forest for its resource.

The industry needs to have access to conserved areas (currently restricted) to help preserve the gene pool of the Ligurian bee for future generations

### 3 Biosecurity Issues

Biosecurity is the most important issue we face here on KI and currently the island is free of the major bee diseases affecting mainland hives, but as we have a very inadequate biosecurity program, this could change in the short term.

Increasing numbers of tourists are coming to the island and there is an ever increasing danger of an introduction of a disease that could devastate this genetic resource through a discarded honey container from the mainland.

#### **4 Trade Issues**

There is an issue with trade and that is exporting to Western Australia, as the disease status for Kangaroo Island is better than WA but the two states still will not allow one way trade, as a protocol has to be established to allow this to happen.

PIRSA appears to be experiencing difficulty in forming a protocol for this. Our honey is highly sought after as a regional food, but WA visitors cannot take it home.

#### **5 The impact of land management and bushfires**

More than a third of Kangaroo Island is under native vegetation, either in National Parks or private land, and with large areas there is often lightning strikes in inaccessible areas and are often not contained before fire does a lot of devastation to large areas of resource for the industry.

In 1958 a large bushfire did so much damage that the government bee farm (in Flinders Chase) had to be closed down.

Similar events could also cause major disruption to the industry here.

Fire management is of major importance on KI.

Management of conserved areas involving restricting or banning honeybees access, is a limiting factor in preserving the gene pool of the Ligurian bee.

#### **6. The research and development needs of the industry**

There is a need for research on the therapeutic properties of Kangaroo Island honey and in particular the unique properties of propolis collected by bees here.

It would also be an advantage to do research into genetic improvement of the Ligurian honeybee by selection of stock with superior production and quietness.

There are research facilities on the island that could be utilized.

#### **7. Existing Industry and Government work that has been undertaken for the honeybee industry**

At present there is no work being undertaken by Government or Industry on Kangaroo Island. There is some work being done at Sydney University

Any enquiries relating to this submission, please contact:

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