

**Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2007

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question no:** BA 01

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Australia

**Topic:** Eminent Scientists Group

**Hansard page:** 78 (14/02/07)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

But let us agree that if there is four on the panel and one bloke says, 'I think the rest of you are wrong for all of these reasons,' then for the greater good the rest of Australia ought to know his reasons. Otherwise, why be on the damn panel?

**Mr Cahill** - I am not disagreeing with you.

**Senator Heffernan** - Can we get that nailed down somewhere?

**Mr Cahill** - The procedural arrangements, the way in which the eminent scientists go about their task, is a matter for the eminent scientists group.

**Senator Heffernan** - Could someone give us some advice to the effect that that would be possible without getting that person the sack or feeling that it is a waste of time in the process?

**Mr Cahill** - We will convey that to the eminent scientists group.

**Answer:**

A letter was sent to the Eminent Scientists Group on 12 March 2007 advising the group of the issues raised by the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee, regarding the importance of members being able to freely express any dissenting views they may have on the science concerning an import risk analysis.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question no:** BA 02

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Australia

**Topic:** Import Risk Analysis for Bee Semen

**Hansard page:** 95 (14/2/07)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

We had better ring the contact and find out whether it is as you suspect or in the expectation that there will be an approval of or an IRA for bee semen.

**Answer:**

An officer from Biosecurity Australia contacted a representative from Western Australian Hygienic Bees and was able to confirm that the Hygienic bee semen to which Minister McGauran referred in his media release of 25 January 2007, was to be imported into Western Australia from Eastern Australian states and not from outside of Australia.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

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**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question no:** BA 03

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Australia

**Topic:** Bee Semen

**Hansard page:** 95 (14/2/07)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

How long has this process been going on bee semen? Perhaps on notice you can tell us what the issues are with the importation of that product.

**Answer:**

The import risk analysis (IRA) of honey bee semen commenced in June 2002. In March 2006 Biosecurity Australia issued a policy memorandum to stakeholders outlining the key pest and disease issues associated with the importation of honey bee semen.

**[BA 03 attachment]**