Strategic Industry Workshop:
Improving floral resource access for beekeepers

by Michael Clarke
January 2020
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AgriFutures Australia No 19/054
AgriFutures Australia Project No PRJ-011631
Foreword

Public land access is important for commercial beekeepers in all Australian states. It provides much of the Australian honey crop but perhaps more importantly it provides a safe haven for short-stay migratory and managed honey bees that allows them to be ‘conditioned’ and strengthened prior to completing crop pollination.

Floral resource access on public land underpins essential pollination services that support both Australian agriculture and the nation’s food security. Pollination services will be even more important in the future with the United Nations forecasting a seventy percent increase in the demand for food in a short thirty years’ time.

Over time, changes in the tenure of public land and public land management practices have decreased both beekeeper access to essential floral resources and the quality of the remaining resource. Consequently, floral resource access has been identified as the industry’s number one priority by the peak industry body, the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC).

In response to this priority, AgriFutures™ Honey Bee and Pollination Program worked with AHBIC to design a solutions-focussed workshop with clear deliverables that were to be of equal value to commercial beekeepers and policy makers. The resultant workshop report outlines strategic actions, opportunities and potential policy changes required for improving floral resource access.

Key policy changes required include a nationally consistent approach that recognises best practice in Tasmania and Victoria, increased security of tenure for beekeepers, land management that is sympathetic to apiculture (i.e. management of harvest volume including immature trees). Greater use of ‘cool burns’ that are less destructive to the resource was also proposed. The Gippsland Forest Apiary Plan provides a model for long term resource security for beekeepers and certainty for the pollination and food security services they provide.

A program to support transformational policy change has been developed.

This report is an addition to AgriFutures Australia’s diverse range of over 2,000 research publications and it forms part of our Honey Bee & Pollination Program, which aims to support research, development and extension that will secure a productive, sustainable and more profitable Australian beekeeping industry and ensure the pollination of Australia’s horticultural and agricultural crops.

Most of AgriFutures Australia’s publications are available for viewing, free downloading or purchasing online at agrifutures.com.au. Purchases can also be made by phoning 1300 634 313.

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General Manager, Research
AgriFutures Australia
About the Author

Michael Clarke is an experienced agricultural economist. Michael has prepared honey bee industry impact assessments for Regional Forest Agreements in NSW, honey bee research, development and extension (R&D) plans for AgriFutures Australia, policy documents on American Foulbrood for NSW Department of Primary Industries, reviewed honey bee export policies for the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and assisted with preparation of the business case and regulatory impact statement for an increase in the honey bee biosecurity levy. Additional information on Michael is available at www.AgEconPlus.com.au.

Acknowledgments

The author of this report, Michael Clarke would like to thank:

Peter Barnes, Queensland Beekeepers Association
Neil Bingley, NSW Apiarists Association
Lindsay Bourke, President, Tasmanian Beekeepers Association
Tim Burfitt, Workshop Facilitation, Tim Burfitt Consulting
Ian Cane, Chair, AHBIC Resource Access Committee
Stephen Cunial, President, NSW Apiarists Association
Robert Dewar, President, Queensland Beekeepers Association
Maxine Ewington, Secretary, Tasmanian Beekeepers Association
Ben Hooker, South Australian Apiarists Association
Danny Le Feuvre, South Australian Apiarists Association
David Leyland, Bee Industry Council of Western Australia
Leilani Leyland, Bee Industry Council of Western Australia
Jo Martin, State Secretary, Queensland Beekeepers Association
Peter McDonald, Chair, AHBIC
Annelies McGaw, Manager, Research, AgriFutures Australia
Sarah Paradice, Chief Executive Officer, AHBIC
Clinton Ruge, Queensland Beekeepers Association
Doug Somerville, Chair, AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program Advisory Panel
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<td>AFPA</td>
<td>Australian Forest Products Association</td>
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<td>AHBIC</td>
<td>Australian Honey Bee Industry Council</td>
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<td>BICC</td>
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<td>BICWA</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
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<td>Forestry Stewardship Council</td>
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<td>GFAP</td>
<td>Gippsland Forestry Apiary Plan</td>
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<td>Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in NSW</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>RFA</td>
<td>Regional Forestry Agreement</td>
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<td>SEQFA</td>
<td>South East Queensland Forest Agreement</td>
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Executive summary

Floral resource access on public land underpins the essential pollination services provided by commercial beekeepers. Pollination services support both Australian agriculture and food security. Over time, changes in the tenure of public land and public land management practices have decreased both beekeeper access to essential floral resources and the quality of the remaining resource.

The AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program previously funded floral resource access projects, but none has made substantial headway in addressing the issues. With this project AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program sought a solutions-focussed workshop that would put strategy in place to support long-term resource access and the viability of the honey bee industry.

This document reports the outcomes of an Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) workshop with state beekeeping bodies aimed at improving floral resource access for beekeepers. The report identified strategic actions, opportunities and potential policy changes required for improving floral resource access. It aims to arm AHBIC and state beekeeping bodies with the knowledge required to develop a strategic approach to beekeeper access to public lands, provide policy analysis that is relevant to state government policy makers and key recommendations for AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program to inform its research priorities.

Aims and objectives

AHBIC and the AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program Advisory Panel required a workshop and final report that would address:

- The current situation and issues regarding floral resource access, on a state-by-state basis
- The impact of identified issues on the beekeeping industry e.g. controlled burns, timber harvesting
- Copies of workshop presentations (reproduced in Chapter 2 of the workshop report) and relevant supporting documents e.g. government policies (provided as links embedded in the workshop report)
- A summary of workshop discussions that have been incorporated into the statement of best practice, transformational policy making and strategic actions
- A summary of relevant past research looking at beekeeper access to floral resources on public lands
- A strategic direction for AHBIC and the state beekeeping bodies to pursue in relation to addressing access to public lands
- Government policy changes that may be required and identification of appropriate channels for progressing these changes
- Strategic research, development and extension (RD&E) questions that could be funded and managed through AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program.
Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of this report will be Australian commercial beekeepers. A plan has been developed with change priorities and suggestions for tools to support transformational policy making. Roll out of the plan will assist with the process of moving current floral resource access policy to best practice and securing the long-term viability of the industry.

Methods used

Prior to the improving floral resource access workshop, the consultant reviewed relevant literature and collaborated with the Chair of the AHBIC Resource Access Committee to prepare and distribute a questionnaire to each of the state beekeeping bodies. Questions focussed on the importance of public land to beekeepers in each state, terms and conditions associated with public land use, the security of access, key policy documents, the policy making process and changes required. Presentation slides were prepared for each state, were modified following state beekeeping body feedback and were presented to a workshop held over two days in Launceston. The workshop addressed state of play in each state, transformational policy making, attributes of resource access policy best practice and the content of an overarching strategic plan. A draft report was prepared following the workshop and finalised after consideration of state beekeeping bodies, AHBIC and AgriFutures Australia comments.

Results and key findings

Current situation regarding floral resource access

At the present time Tasmania and Victoria are closest to floral resource access best practice for commercial beekeepers and provide a framework from which national policy can be developed. State government policy in Tasmania and Victoria actively encourages expansion of the honey bee industry on public lands to meet both current and future crop pollination and food security requirements. Replication of these policy settings is required nationally and industry has a strong need to better secure current access and increase access across all tenure types. The industry maintains that where the placement of short-term managed and migratory honey bees cannot be shown to interfere with other conserved land values, beekeepers should have access to the natural resource i.e. national parks, wilderness and world heritage areas.

Past research – beekeeper access to floral resources on public lands

In reviewing the issue of honey bees in conserved areas it is important to draw a distinction between short-stay migratory and managed honey bees and the impact of unmanaged naturalised honey bees that have been present in most Australian forests since the 1860s. Managed honey bee occupancy in public forests is sporadic (often years apart) and occurs when the potential for floral abundance is at its peak. There is a paucity of evidence to show that at this time, managed honey bees have an impact on the reproductive success of native flora and fauna (Paton, 1996, AHBIC, 2005). Other impacts studied without demonstrating an adverse impact on conserved lands include a reduction in the availability of nectar for native nectar feeders, inefficient pollination of native flora, hybridisation of native plants, long term decline in native pollinators, competition for nest sites and the spread of pathogens/weeds (AHBIC, 2005). Likewise, public risk and conflicting usage, damage to roads and consistency with other industries can all be managed in multi-value forests.
Government policy changes required

The workshop identified a range of changes required to state government policies to shift current practice to best practice management of public lands. Changes relate to both access to the resource and the quality of the resource where access is provided.

Nationally, the highest and most immediate priority is change to the Queensland (QLD) Nature Conservation Act 1992 which stipulates the termination of all apiary sites on land managed by the QLD Parks & Wildlife Service by 31 December 2024. The QLD beekeeping industry draws 80% of its production from public land sites and 1,180 of its 6,539 sites are located in areas transferred from forestry to national park. The transfer of sites with the same tenure in both Tasmania and Victoria has occurred without sterilisation of their apiary values.

Consequently, the Australian commercial beekeeping industry seeks a nationally consistent approach to public land management where apiary values are recognised and protected in both the legislation and in land management practices. In Tasmania and Victoria, policy includes statements on the importance of managed honey bees for crop pollination and food security. These statements should be replicated in all relevant state legislation nationwide.

All relevant state legislation should be modified to change its current onus on exclusion of short-stay migratory and managed honey bees to one of inclusion of honey bees where adverse impacts have not been demonstrated. This approach is consistent with Tasmanian and Victorian approaches and is also consistent with the need to pollinate additional food crops and support the forecast increase in demand for food over the next thirty years.

At the current time, most states lack policies that provide resource security for beekeepers. Beekeepers rely on permits that provide no compensation when the floral resource is degraded by timber harvest or controlled burn. Apiary permits may be terminated at short notice. Permits do not provide property rights in the same way that a business or individual with a water licence or an oyster production licence in a national park is protected.

Honey bee industry representatives from all Australian states identified the need to improve land management practices on public lands. Intensive harvesting at the local level and harvesting prior to maturity has diminished the floral resource and consequently the honey produced and honey bee ‘conditioning’ qualities of remaining public land apiary sites. Less frequent harvesting of native timber would result in more productive bees for pollination. Less frequent harvesting may also have implication for the nation’s carbon sequestration objectives. Forestry trials with an economic analysis of the results may support a change to current policy.

All states were adamant that current policies pertaining to controlled burns on the public land estate are destructive to apiary values and are inconsistent with best practice ecological outcomes. Recent work by Professor Kingsley Dixon, Curtin University and others show current controlled burn policies are impoverishing both the flora and fauna of protected areas. Much better are less frequent ‘cool burns’ executed in a mosaic pattern by Traditional Owners. Consequently, there may be opportunity for public land managers, beekeepers and Traditional Owners to come together to improve the ecology and honey production potential of public land.

Industry representatives from Victoria who attended the AHBIC workshop advocated for Special Management Zones – areas within the public land estate dedicated to apiary production. Special Management Zones, currently limited to the Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement area, provide long term resource access security for beekeepers and certainty for the pollination and food security services

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1 It is noted that other stakeholders including the IFR Forest Fire Management Committee will have alternative views on what constitutes best practice for ecological management.
they provide. Special Management Zones are required for the balance of Victoria and all other Australian states. Action is required to secure Special Management Zones while there is a high level of empathy for beekeepers and the services they provide.

**Transformational policy making**

Professionals with experience in contributing to the policy change processes presented to the workshop and the collective thoughts of all present on what does and doesn’t work in relation to policy making were contributed and collated. Broad strategy included timing – now is the time to act when the community and hence politicians have empathy for honey bees and the pollination services they provide. Forest industries are also looking to secure their ‘social licence’ and work cooperatively with beekeepers. Be aware of the need to offer solutions – make it easy for a Minister to adopt your position. Market the industry to the community and form alliances with co-dependent horticultural industries. Avoid commissioning new scientific studies – conclusions will be disputed, establish a government industry forum to ensure ongoing dialogue and use the media to profile both your industry and the merits of your case. The body of the workshop report also includes detail of the mechanics of success including support materials, securing and executing meetings with key decision makers and how to follow up and persist post meeting.

**A strategic direction for AHBIC**

AHBIC committed to the revamping of its Resource Access Committee at the workshop. A set of strategic directions for AHBIC were also agreed. Key strategies included policy alignment with the National Farmers Federation, industry statistics and a glossy position brochure for use in Ministerial meetings, the creation of a resource library on the AHBIC website, development and execution of a social media strategy, creation of educational resources and leadership and media training for beekeepers.

**RD&E questions**

Strategic RD&E questions that could be funded and managed through AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program were identified at the workshop and included security of tenure research, the applicability of ‘cool burning’ to forest management for apiary, co-existence research, comparative analysis of returns from timber and apiculture and the update of a key scientific report.

**Implications for relevant stakeholders**

The workshop has shown that public land in each Australian state is essential for honey production and the provision of pollination services. Access to public resources and the quality of the remaining resources for which beekeeper access is available has been eroded over the last 25 years. There are inconsistencies in policy between states and a shift from current to best practice would secure the ongoing pollination of Australian crops. A plan has been detailed for beekeepers to pursue policy change. State governments and in particular, their Ministers for the Environment are critical to a favourable outcome.
Recommendations

The workshop recommended a national overarching approach to the pursuit of transformational policy change along with specific priorities for each state. The workshop report will inform AHBIC activities and will be relevant to state government policy making and AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program research priorities.

Recommendations for priority projects arising from the workshop include:

1. AHBIC development of a public lands access policy document using the current workshop report as a foundation
2. AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program give consideration to funding a position paper on controlled burning and its impact on beekeeping
3. AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program give consideration to funding a research project to clarify the legal status of public land sites i.e. what rights are attached to a permit, an authority, a licence and a lease.
Introduction

This report was prepared for the AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program. AgriFutures Australia required a contractor to organise and facilitate a national workshop and write a report that identified strategic actions, opportunities and potential policy changes required for improving floral resource access for the beekeeping industry.

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) was the lead contractor on this project and Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Paradice, managed the project. Workshop facilitation was provided by Tim Burfitt Consulting and the workshop report was prepared by AgEconPlus.

Project background

Improved floral resource access, particularly on public lands, is the number one priority issue identified in the AHBIC Strategic Plan 2018-2023 (AHBIC, 2018). To review, discuss and determine a strategic way forward with the issue, AHBIC proposed a national workshop.

The role of AgriFutures Australia was to assist AHBIC in addressing the issue from a research, development and extension (RD&E) perspective. AgriFutures Australia thus required clear deliverables and outputs from a solutions-focussed workshop that was to inform industry decision-making and strategic action. Both AgriFutures Australia and AHBIC acknowledged that the various state beekeeping organisations must have ownership of, and provide input to the workshop, to ensure it has real impact and provided a clear pathway forward.

The AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program has previously funded floral resource projects, but none has made substantial headway in addressing the issue. The AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program Advisory Panel determined that a workshop was the next step needed to:

- Assemble relevant information
- Review and document the status of floral resource access in each state
- Identify ongoing issues
- Develop a nation-wide network of industry representatives
- Foster leadership that will be required to effectively improve floral resource access.

The workshop was timely given that it actioned a key issue in the new AHBIC Strategic Plan and coincided with the development of a new RD&E Plan for the AgriFutures™ Honey Bee and Pollination Program.

Study approach

The project was delivered through the discharge of the following tasks:

1. Collaboration with Ian Cane, Chair, AHBIC Resource Access Committee to design an appropriate resource access questionnaire and gain support from six state apiary associations for its completion prior to the resource access workshop

2. Review relevant literature including current and past research on beekeepers and public lands (e.g. Paton, 1996, AHBIC 2005)

3. Work with state apiary associations to compile relevant information on floral resource access on public lands
4. Prepare six industry association presentations for the workshop, review and finalise them with representatives from each state

5. Meet with workshop facilitator Tim Burfitt 24 June 2019 and design an effective workshop agenda that will meet AHBIC/ AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program objectives

6. Attend a facilitated two day Improving Floral Resource Access for Beekeepers Workshop contributing content and keeping a record of the meeting. Workshop agenda, attendees and attendee expectations are included as Appendix 1, 2 and 3 of this report

7. Prepare draft and final workshop reports. The final report included consideration of comment provided by state beekeeping bodies, AHBIC and AgriFutures Australia.
Current situation and issues regarding floral resource access

This chapter provides a state-based assessment of the current status of beekeeper access to floral resources. It includes overview information, the terms and conditions associated with public lands use, a review of the security of access, key policy documents, the policy making process and changes needed. A one page summary of policy status across six state jurisdictions is provided at the end of the chapter.

Victoria

Data to complete this analysis was prepared by Ian Cane, AHBIC and provided to the executive of the Victorian Apiarists Association (VAA) for review.

Overview

- Victorian industry consists of 233 beekeepers controlling 16% of Australia’s commercial hives (AHBIC, November 2018).
- Public lands constitute 4,000 sites and account for more than 70% of industry’s total resource.
- Demand for paid pollination services and industry hive numbers have increased since 2012 and the Victorian Government has responded by increasing the number of bee sites on public land.
- Beekeeper access is provided to all public lands i.e. state forest, flora and fauna reserves, national park and state parks. Since 2013, one policy has covered all public land. The policy is ‘tenure blind’.

Terms and conditions of use

- Transfer of apiary sites to other beekeepers is permitted with payment of a fee to Government.
- Public land apiary sites cannot be sold by beekeepers to other beekeepers for a profit.
- There are no ‘sunset’ clauses in place on sites that will eventually see the site closed.
- Tenure is offered by the Victorian Government for 1 to 10 years selectable by the beekeeper at renewal time.
- Fees are set on a cost recovery basis bearing in mind community benefit derived from the industry.
- Annual fee increase reflects changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Resource security

- Gippsland Forestry Apiary Plan (GFAP) 2004 – provides explicit recognition of the importance of the honey bee industry in land management planning. The GFAP includes apiary site mapping and the recognition of site importance. This same process is now needed for the whole of Victoria and for every Australian state.
- Land management issues in priority order are: (1) timber harvest that is not sympathetic to apiculture – volume and age of timber harvested in state forests requires review (2) controlled burns that are too hot and kill native flora, and (3) inadequate funding for site access track maintenance.
- State-wide, access tracks are maintained by Government but maintenance is under-funded.

Key policy documents

- Victoria has had a single public land beekeeping policy since 2013.
- Beekeeping policy is developed by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Parks Victoria, the VAA and the Victorian Farmers Federation through a working group process. The working group was both collaborative and productive.
- Public land forestry and beekeeping policy enjoys a bipartisan approach in Victoria.
Policy objectives are to (1) encourage apiculture on public land, (2) maximise coexistence between forest use activities (3) provide efficient administration (4) ensure an appropriate financial return to the State.

The Victorian Public Land Apiary Policy is available at:  

Supporting procedures are available at:  

Policy making
- Ministers for the Environment and Agriculture are the key stakeholder for decision making.
- The VAA has been successful by marketing the industry and its value to the state’s economy.
- There is an AHBIC public land policy document (AHBIC 2005) on the impact of honey bees in Australian conserved forests and this is a very useful industry resource (‘Honey Bees in Australian Conserved Forests – A Policy Document’)  
- Policy makers are under informed in regard to the importance of honey bees.
- Key tools needed by the industry in order to contribute to policy making include industry fact sheets, glossy overarching information on healthy forests, bees and people and generic presentations and videos.

Changes required
- Special Management Zone status is required for all public land sites (like the GFAP).
- Bee friendly forest management – harvesting strategies and ‘cool’ controlled burns.
- Access track maintenance.
- Update and expand AHBIC 2005 ‘Honey Bees in Australian Conserved Forests – A Policy Document’.
Tasmania

Data to complete this analysis was provided by Maxine Ewington, Secretary and Lindsay Bourke, President, Tasmanian Beekeepers Association (TBA).

Overview

- The Tasmanian industry consists of 46 beekeepers controlling 4% of Australia’s commercial hives (AHBIC, November 2018).
- Public lands constitute 2,000 sites and account for 90% of industry’s total resource.
- Public policy is geared toward apiary development and the identification of new public land sites.
- Beekeeper access is provided to all public land except World Heritage Areas. Beekeeping in World Heritage Areas is limited by both policy and access roads and tracks.
- Beekeepers have lost access to sites on forestry land when it has been converted to World Heritage Area. Industry would like to regain these resources.

Terms and conditions of use

- Transfer of sites to other beekeepers is not permitted. However, transfer is permitted with the sale of a beekeepers business to another beekeeper.
- Public land apiary sites cannot be sold by beekeepers to other beekeepers for a profit.
- There are no ‘sunset’ clauses in place on sites that will eventually see the site closed.
- Tenure is offered by the Tasmanian Government for 10 years and fees are paid annually.
- Fees are set to recover cost and increased annually with the CPI.

Resource security

- Tasmanian beekeepers have a good working relationship with Sustainable Timbers Tasmania (STT) – a Tasmanian Government Business Enterprise (previously Forestry Tasmania, a Tasmanian Government department).
- In May 2019, STT agreed to retain all leatherwood on forestry land, including leatherwood in timber production zones. Leatherwood is an important nectar source for Tasmanian honey production. The offer was made as part of STT’s initiative to secure Forestry Stewardship Council certification. If requested by beekeepers, STT will delay timber harvest until after a leatherwood flowering event. STT have prepared and released relevant policy Planning Guidelines for Apiary Values, 2019. The document is not currently available on the internet.
- Land management issues in priority order have been: (1) harvests in state forests that are not sympathetic to apiculture (i.e. intensive harvesting at the local area and harvesting of trees that are not mature) resulting in the loss of leatherwood and Manuka trees (2) controlled burns that also damage leatherwood and Manuka.
- State-wide site access tracks are maintained when the land management agency wishes to use them. Otherwise, the beekeeper carries out maintenance with permission from the land manager.

Key policy documents

- Tasmanian Apiary Management Guidelines for Public Land, revised April 2019.
- The guidelines were developed by the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association and endorsed by STT.
- The purpose of the policy is to provide a consistent and fair procedure for the allocation and management of apiary sites on public land administered by STT, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS – responsible for Reserve Land & Crown Land) and other subscribing agencies.
- A northern and a southern committee make decisions about site allocation and beekeepers are represented on these committees, landowners (government agencies) may complete site random audits, beekeepers must comply with general terms and conditions of use. The policy encourages identification and use of new apiary sites.
- Guidelines are available at: https://www.southerntasbeekeepers.org.au/hive-site-allocation-committee/
Policy making

- Minister for Resources and the Minister for Primary Industry are key decision makers in Tasmania.
- Successful policy change has occurred as a result of regular meetings with STT.
- In 2019 the Tasmanian Government released the Bee Industry Futures Report. The report pledges assistance for the industry and explicitly recognises the link between public land access and pollination. The Tasmanian Government has indicated it will assist the industry to identify additional leatherwood resource in conserved areas.
- More needs to be done to communicate the importance of honey bees for food security and the need for public land access to government policy makers.

Changes required

- Avoid forestry clear felling and burning which sterilises the land and stops leatherwood regrowth.
- Access to areas that were previously part of the forestry estate and are now World Heritage Area.
South Australia

Data to complete this analysis was provided by Danny Le Feuvre and Ben Hooper, South Australian Apriarists Association (SAAA).

Overview

- SA industry consists of 188 beekeepers controlling 12% of Australia’s commercial hives (AHBIC, November 2018).
- Three main bodies manage sites on public land – SA Water, Forestry SA and the Department of Environment and Water (DEW). In total there are 194 active public land sites – Table 1.
- DEW has the most sites but sites are only made available in a few national parks.
- Public land sites make a small but important contribution to the SA beekeeping industry.
- General reduction in access to areas was exacerbated by bushfires in 2014 – devastated areas of Ngarkat and the Wirrabara/Beetaloo area resulting in suspension of many beekeeping sites.
- As a result of the bushfires 33% of SA public land sites are suspended and 18% are vacant. Not all vacant sites are considered by industry to be viable.

Table 1: Breakdown of honey bee sites on public land in South Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Suspended</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
<th>Total sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA Water</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry SA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEW</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>194</strong></td>
<td><strong>129</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
<td><strong>395</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SAAA

Terms and conditions of use

- Transfer of sites from one beekeeper to another is not permitted i.e. if a beekeeper buys an existing business sites cannot be transferred as part of the business’s goodwill.
- Public land apiary sites cannot be sold by beekeepers to other beekeepers for a profit.
- There are no ‘sunset’ clauses in place on sites that will eventually see the site closed.
- No longer term tenure is available and sites must be renewed each year.
- Fees are set using a cost recovery model developed and implemented by each SA agency.

Resource security

- The SA Government does not have a policy on resource security for beekeepers.
- Land management issues in priority order are: (1) controlled burning is a major issue - not done in consultation with beekeepers and often burns get out of control. (2) Access to additional sites on public land. Timber harvesting and mining are not major issues in SA.
- Access tracks are not maintained by SA agencies and beekeepers spend significant dollars on their upkeep especially in Ngarkat. Other beekeepers may ‘freeride’ on a beekeeper who spends on track maintenance.

Key policy documents

- The SA Government does not have a public land beekeeping policy and the absence of a policy is the single largest issue for the industry.
- The only policy document is a MOU with SA Water and this is relatively insignificant given SA Water’s small share of total public land apiary sites.
- An interagency taskforce had been formed to develop policy (see below) and a workshop report from a taskforce meeting has been produced. There is no copy of this document on the internet.
Policy making

- SAAA was working with both the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for the Environment. SAAA has support from the Horticultural Coalition including almonds.
- SAAA is not opposed in its efforts to develop policy for beekeeper access to public lands but there does not appear to be an appetite within the departments for resolution of the issue.
- An interagency taskforce to address floral resource access on public lands was formed. Subsequently a change of government occurred, enthusiasm was lost and the taskforce disbanded.
- SAAA has subsequently lobbied the Ministers to take action but to date has been unsuccessful.
- SAAA has used the media to promote their industry via good news stories and highlighting of key issues.
- Tools: A credible document that establishes the economic value of bee sites would be invaluable for progressing the issue with SA Ministers. SAAA has attempted this exercise but it needs completing by a credible entity. Other than the SAAA attempt, there is no information available on the economic contribution of the industry.
- Tools: a national strategic plan and a document that shows the status of floral resource access policy in other Australian states and the extent to which SA lags best practice.

Changes required

- SA needs a bee friendly whole of state public land access policy.
Western Australia

Data to complete this analysis was provided by Leilani Leyland, Bee Industry Council of Western Australia (BICWA). BICWA represents all sectors of the industry in Western Australia (WA) including WA Apiarists Association (WAAS), WA Beekeepers Association (WABA) and WA Farmers. Leilani circulated the questionnaire widely and the following summary is a composite of multiple responses including David Leyland, WAF, Stephen Fewster, WAF, Afon Edwards, WABA and Michael Bellman, WA Farmers.

Overview

- The WA industry consists of 167 beekeepers controlling 6% of Australia’s commercial hives (AHBIC, November 2018).
- Public lands constitute around 3,200 sites (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) website) and account for nearly 80% of industry’s total resource.
- Beekeeper access is provided to all public lands i.e. state forest, national park and travelling stock routes (TSRs).
- Some apiary sites on leased public land are not renewed at the lessee’s request (cattle stations).
- Access to wilderness areas and national parks is limited with beekeepers allowed to place hives on private property adjoining national parks. Most national parks have unmanaged bees in them which makes this non-access policy somewhat redundant.
- Beekeepers don’t have access to Phillips River National Park (NP) and are being excluded from Drovers Cave NP, Frank Hann NP and the DBCA has a policy of “no new sites in areas that do not have a history of beekeeping”.

Terms and conditions of use

- Transfer of sites to other beekeepers is permitted. Sites change hands at market prices. Some argue prices are inflated and do not recognise the risk of a policy change and loss of access.
- Public land apiary sites can be sold by beekeepers to other beekeepers or members of the public for a profit. Some WA beekeepers are concerned that if sites increase in value, government will attempt to impose a resource rent tax.
- It has been indicated to beekeepers that some sites on native title claims may not be renewed when the lease expires.
- Current Forest Management Plans allow government to close sites and change zoning without compensation. A beekeeper may have been waiting for a honey flow for 20 years and come away with nothing (e.g. Karri).
- Sites are renewed on both an annual and on a multiple year basis.
- Fees are set for partial cost recovery, there are two fee tiers – a higher fee is charged for the South West and a lower fee is charged for the Remote Zones.

Resource security

- There are no policies in place in WA providing floral resource security to beekeepers.
- Beekeepers have no recourse on clearing, prescribed burns or timber operations on areas adjacent to their sites.
- Land management issues in priority order are: (1) harvests that are not sympathetic to apiculture (volume and age of timber taken) (2) controlled burns that are not based on science (3) loss of sites due to mining leases e.g. Alcoa clear more than 1,000 ha/year of high value Jarrah forest (4) loss of sites as a result of native title claims plus cost of preparing beekeeping industry response to claims is cost prohibitive (5) floral yield adversely affected by climate change.
- Research completed by Professor Kingsley Dixon, Curtin University and others shows that current controlled burning practices are not based on appropriate science and are resulting in significant flora (e.g. banksia, heather and boronia) and fauna (e.g. possum, antechinus, reptile and small bird) loss (www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJAMjGH2yF8&t=53s).
• There is no maintenance of site access tracks and since the cessation of logging in some areas, tracks have become water eroded and overgrown. Beekeepers apply to clear and maintain tracks but lack the resources for an effective response.

**Key policy documents**
• WA has a single set of Apiary General conditions which cover public land beekeeping on all tenures. These conditions are pro forestry, beekeeping is a lower order priority.
• There is a policy in place to decentralise apiary site responsibility to shires (local government reserves), water management corps, etc. Beekeepers must now negotiate directly with these agencies.
• Key policy documents include “Policy Statement 41” Department of Conservation and Land Management. Beekeepers must comply with Apiary Site permit conditions (~140 individual conditions); hold a public liability policy for at least $10m, and sign a declaration that no legal action claims can be pursued against the Department.

**Policy making**
• The WA Minister for the Environment is reportedly opposed to beekeeping in the public estate and will not meet with industry. Some DBCA District Officers will not agree to postpone burns when a eucalypt flowering is imminent even when requested by industry. The Forest Produce Commission and various forest industry groups are reported as currently anti-beekeeping.
• The Minister for Fire and Emergency is a key stakeholder in WA given the urgent need for change in the way controlled burning policy is practiced.
• The Minister for Agriculture and the group Forests for Life are pro beekeeping on public land.
• John Karasinski (2018) report on honey bee pollinator value is an important resource for industry.
• Industry policy making initiatives have included letters of advice on the importance of the industry, attempted meetings with both state and Australian Government Ministers. The industry has met with senior public servants but without progress on the key issues.
• Policy makers know little about the beekeeping industry, the industry is considered insignificant and does not have the voting power to influence government.
• Feedback received by AHBIC from the Minister and WA policy makers is that there are too many beekeeping organisations in WA and policy messages and priorities are unclear and conflicting. Feedback included a request for amalgamation.

**Changes required**
• Beekeeper conservation zones like those developed in the Gippsland area of Victoria are required for the exclusive use of beekeepers.
• A nationally consistent approach to access is appropriate.
• Federal Government laying down some clear guidelines for states and native title to improve access and security of tenure and the ability to use apiary sites as security for business development.
• Better access and conditions.
• Acknowledgement of the importance of our small industry with a big impact.
• Amalgamation of WA beekeeping groups to provide a single clear voice to government.
Queensland

Data to complete this analysis was provided by Jo Martin, Secretary and Robert Dewar, President, Queensland Beekeepers Association Inc. (QBA). Input was also provided by Peter Barnes, QBA and AHBIC Executive.

Overview

- Queensland industry consists of 320 beekeepers controlling 16% of Australia’s commercial hives (AHBIC, November 2018).
- Public lands constitute 6,539 sites and account for 80% of the industry’s floral resource.
- Post 2024 there is likely to be an ongoing program of conversion of State Forest to National Park with the further loss of apiary sites.
- Beekeeping activities will continue under State Forest tenure and Conservation Park tenure.

Table 2: Breakdown of honey bee sites on public land in Queensland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Park</td>
<td>All sites terminated in 2024</td>
<td>1,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Forest</td>
<td>Sites may become National Park and lost to beekeeping</td>
<td>4,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Plantation (Hancock Plantations)</td>
<td>No current threat</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6,539</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: QBA

Terms and conditions of use

- Apiary sites can be bought and sold or transferred beekeeper to beekeeper.
- Apiary sites are considered to be a business asset i.e. goodwill in the beekeeper’s business.
- National Park sites are the only apiary sites in Queensland with a ‘sunset’ clause attached.
- Site permits for National Parks, State Forests and Hancock Plantations can range from a 6 month permit to a 5-year permit.

Resource security

- Land management issues in priority order are: (1) change in policy with respect to apiary sites in National Parks post 31 December 2024 (2) vegetation management that is sympathetic to apiculture (3) controlled burns that are too hot and kill native flora (4) inadequate access track management and maintenance (5) native title claims on forest resources.
- Access tracks are poorly maintained. Beekeepers need to liaise with the QLD Parks and Wildlife Service to reach agreement on what maintenance can be completed on access tracks.

Key policy documents


Policy making

- QBA maintains that there was no consultation with industry through the Bee Industry Consultative Committee (BICC) prior to the introduction of the Act. QBA has been actively pursued change to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 since the Act was first proposed in the early 1990s.
Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries and the Environment and Science are relevant to the administration of the Nature Conservation Act 1992. The current Minister for Environment and Science (Hon. Lee Anne Enoch) and current Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries (Hon. Mark Furner) are open to continued discussions about the future of beekeeping in National Parks. Resistance to beekeeping in National Parks has, over time, been received from the National Parks Association of QLD and the QLD Conservation Society.

To manage consultation the QLD Government approved the establishment of the BICC in 1990. The BICC’s role is to provide a forum for industry and government to liaise on policy issues. The BICC meets twice per year and in 2019 is chaired by a beekeeper.

Following the passing of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 into law, the QBA sought changes to the legislation and were advised that because of the ‘Cardinal Principle’ (honey bees are exotics) and the ‘Precautionary Principle’ (they may cause harm), beekeeping would not be permitted in QLD National Parks. In the 1990s, research was completed on the effects of managed, migratory honey bees within conserved environments and no firm conclusions were reached about their ecological impacts during abundant flowering events (Seeman 1994 and Paton, 1996).

In the mid-1990s, QBE was involved in attempting to retain sites in State Forests whose tenure was being changed to National Park. According to the QBA, agreement was reached in 1994 and access was to be retained by beekeepers. This agreement was reflected in the Protected Area Policy Manual 1997 (no copy found online). Despite the agreement to provide continued access to historical beekeeping sites, ongoing access was not included in the South East Queensland Forest Agreement (SEQFA) 1999.

The QLD Government submission to the Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Future of the Australian Honey Bee Industry (2007) noted that ‘Beekeeping is inconsistent with the management principles of National Park tenure. However, the Nature Conservation Act 1992 was amended in 2004 to allow beekeeping to continue to 2024 on SEQFA and Wet Tropics land being transferred from Forest Reserve to National Park or National Park (recovery) tenure. This amendment provided for the continuation of existing apiary sites for beekeepers while alternative resources were found for the industry by 2024’. At this time, the QLD Government proposed increased access to private forest resources to make up the shortfall in floral resource and this was something beekeepers would need to negotiate for themselves.

In late 2017, QBA organised a bus trip for BICC delegates and departmental representatives. The trip visited National Park apiary sites and a beekeepers’ honey sheds. Both activities were designed to increase policy maker awareness of the industry.

QBA has also filmed a series of short videos that will be used promote the industry and the need for continued access to resource. The videos specifically highlight the need for access to floral resource and the role that access plays in the pollination of horticultural produce grown in Queensland.

Most recently the QLD Department of Environment and Science (DES) has agreed to undertake a scientific review of the ecological impacts of beekeeping. The review was completed by Professor Ben Oldroyd and Dr. Nadine Chapman of the University of Sydney. A copy of the review was requested from both QLD Parks and Wildlife Service and the Minister for the Environment in June 2019. No copies were received.

Simultaneously, the QLD Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) has offered to complete an evaluation of the economic contribution of the honey bee industry to QLD, providing an in-depth valuation of not only the honey production value but the economic
contribution to the horticultural sector of the QLD agricultural industry. In May 2019 work was underway on this study and the study was being completed by DAF economist George Antony.

- Following on from the ‘More than honey: the future of the Australian honey bee and pollination industries’ (report prepared by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in 2008) the QLD Government has recognised the value that the honey bee industry contributes to the state economy. Currently the QLD Government values the industry at somewhere between $900 million and $1 billion per annum (QBA, pers. comm., May 2019).


**Changes required**

- Research that explains the importance of different vegetation classes across the state and its importance to the viability of beekeeping.
- The QBA believes AHBIC should instigate a public awareness campaign to educate consumers about the needs of healthy bee colonies and the role honey bees play in the production of food.
New South Wales

Data to complete this analysis was provided by Neil Bingley, NSW Apiarists Association (NSWAA).

**Overview**
- The NSW industry consists of 823 beekeepers controlling 46% of Australia’s commercial hives (AHBIC, November 2018).
- Public lands constitute 8,500 sites and account for approximately 45% of industry’s total resource.
- Beekeeper access is permitted in State Forest, LLS reserves and only in national parks where the site was held prior to it becoming a NP i.e. no new sites.

**Table 3:** Breakdown of honey bee sites on public land in NSW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Total sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Forests</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Land Services (LLS)</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NSWAA

- In 2019 State Forests have indicated that an additional 2,000 sites may be made available in their estate. Beekeepers indicate that these are likely to be low quality sites.

**Terms and conditions of use**
- Transfer of sites to other beekeepers permitted but only to other family members or on sale of the business.
- Public land apiary sites cannot be sold by beekeepers to other beekeepers for a profit.
- There are no ‘sunset’ clauses in place on sites that will eventually see the site closed.
- Tenure is offered by the NSW Government for a 5 year term, paid annually. No discount is offered by the NSW Government for the full 5 year payment.
- Fees were set in 2017 through a government Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) process and are adjusted annually for CPI.

**Resource security**
- Sites in State Forest and existing national parks are secured with permits. Permits are not licenses and may be cancelled at short notice.
- Land management issues in priority order are: (1) harvest programs in state forests that are not sympathetic to apiculture – volume and age of trees taken (2) controlled burns (3) no new national park sites.
- Access tracks are not maintained and some tracks are left impassable after logging. Set down sites left unusable without hours of remedial work.

**Key policy documents**
- NSW is transitioning to a single policy on all public land tenure. The new policy may have some agency specific conditions.
- Policy will feature (1) a fair and transparent allocation system based on EOI that rewards beekeeper best management practice, (2) a standard annual fee across all apiary sites (3) a standard 5 year permit with renewal subject to compliance and usage (4) a single point of contact for all dealings with the NSW Government. [https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/bees/compliance/policy-framework](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/bees/compliance/policy-framework)

**Policy making**
- Ministers for Agriculture and the Environment are the key stakeholders for policy making.
5 years of negotiation have resulted in removal of the threat of auctions and tendering for sites. NSW now has expressions of interest (EOIs) for recently vacant sites and ‘first in first served’ for long term vacant sites. Long term renewability is available for sites held prior to the policy change.

- NSWAA is slowly educating politicians about the industry and the importance of floral resource access.

**Changes required**

- National framework to allow beekeeping in all suitable public land tenures in each state.
- Access to sites across the National Parks estate.

**Summary of current status resource access**

A summary of current access status and policies by state is provided in Table 4.
### Table 4: Current beekeeper access to floral resources and relevant policy detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Tasmania</th>
<th>South Australia</th>
<th>Western Australia</th>
<th>Queensland</th>
<th>NSW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of public land</td>
<td>4,000 sites, more than 70% production.</td>
<td>2,000 sites, more than 90% production.</td>
<td>Only 400 sites but important contribution.</td>
<td>3,200 sites, 80% of production.</td>
<td>6,500 sites and 80% of production.</td>
<td>8,500 sites, 45% of production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Yes, state forest, TSR and national parks. Govt is pro-apiary development.</td>
<td>Yes, all tenures except some wilderness. Govt is pro-apiary development.</td>
<td>Limited access to national parks.</td>
<td>Limited access to national parks. DBCA decentralising role to other agencies.</td>
<td>1,200 sites in NP will be lost December 2024. Forest sites may become NP and also lost.</td>
<td>State forest, LLS and national parks that were state forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer sites to another beekeeper</td>
<td>Yes, with fee payment. No, but can transfer with sale of business.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Only family members or sale of the business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of sites for profit</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, and sale is at market price/profit.</td>
<td>Yes, considered goodwill in beekeeper’s business.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset clauses on sites</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maybe= Native title, Forest plan or NP zoning</td>
<td>Yes, 1,200 sites will be lost Dec 2014.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal period</td>
<td>1 to 10 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Annual, multi-year</td>
<td>6 months to 5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees</td>
<td>Cost recovery</td>
<td>Cost recovery</td>
<td>Cost recovery</td>
<td>Part cost recovery</td>
<td>Cost recovery</td>
<td>Cost recovery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Past research – beekeeper access to floral resources on public lands

A comprehensive review of scientific knowledge pertaining to the impact of beekeeper access to floral resources was completed by Professor Ben Oldroyd and Dr. Nadine Chapman, University of Sydney for the Queensland National Parks Service in May 2019. This document is now the most up-to-date review of science pertaining to the impact of managed honey bees on conserved areas. As a consequence, this chapter touches lightly on the topic in order to provide both topic headings and context for recommended policy changes.

Overarching considerations

In reviewing this issue it is critically important to draw a distinction between short-stay migratory and managed honey bees and the impact of unmanaged naturalised honey bees that have been present in most Australian forests since the 1860s. Managed honey bee occupancy in public forests is sporadic (often years apart) and occurs when the potential for floral abundance is at its peak. There is a paucity of evidence to show that at this time, managed honey bees have an impact on the reproductive success of native flora and fauna (AHBIC, 2005).

Seeman (1994) in a major revision of what was then the accepted position, concluded that not enough evidence exists to reject the null hypothesis that “managed hives have little or no long term impact on the environment”. On the contrary, Seeman concluded that most of the available data suggests that any possible effects a migratory commercial apiary may be temporary in nature.

Paton (1996) in a landmark assessment of the impact of honey bees on native populations found that honey bees produced both positive and negative effects on native plants and animals. Honey bees can enhance the seed production of a number of native plants whose native pollinators have declined substantially due to a variety of factors. Paton (1996) also showed that unmanaged honey bees can reduce the seed production of other native plants and compete with honeyeaters for nectar. These varying effects on the native environment show that it is important to quantify the impact of any introduced species before management decisions are made and that impacts will be site specific.

AHBIC (2005) has previously published a summary of the possible adverse environmental effects of honey bees and notes the limited scientific evidence for each these. There are also additional claims around the presence of commercial bees and beekeepers in public lands.

Scientific arguments made for excluding beekeepers from public lands

Reduction in the available nectar for native nectar feeders

There is limited published work available that is relevant to the question of honey bees competing with native nectar feeders for resources. Available work often fails to distinguish between managed migratory honey bees and self-sustaining unmanaged (feral) honey bees. Research is carried out in areas where nectar resources are limiting and commercially managed honey bees are usually moved to sites where there are prospects for a super abundance of nectar. Such periods of abundance occur sporadically in native forests, may be several years apart and provide long breaks when managed honey bees are not present in the forest. At least one study has shown there is no difference in the size of native bee or bee eating fauna populations in areas where there are honey bees and a super abundance of nectar (Pyke et al 1993).
Hybridisation of native plants

There is some limited evidence in the literature to support honey bee hybridisation of native plants. However, in the main, honey bees when placed in a forested environment identify the most abundant and highest value nectar and demonstrate a high level of fidelity to this source. Where foraging honey bees incur trips to a range of plant species, cross pollination may occur but this is also characteristic of the more than 3,000 species of native bees, native birds and other agents that populate conserved areas in Australia. Australian native forests, especially eucalypt forests, show a high degree of hybridisation in mature environments that predate the introduction of honey bees to this country.

Long term decline in native pollinators

There is no conclusive evidence that native pollinators are adversely affected by the short term presence of commercially managed honey bees. It can be shown that when resources are limiting, honey bees can temporarily reduce the population size of some native species. This does not necessarily mean a permanent decline, or a reduction in reproductive success. Native fauna species have evolved to cope with population perturbations due to natural dynamic forces such as drought, fire and flood. In any case, managed honey bees are migrated to avoid limiting nectar conditions because not to do so would result in a loss of apiary viability. In addition, in most nectar consuming fauna reproduction is critically geared to native plants that flower annually (usually spring/early summer) and not to the occasionally abundant eucalypt nectar flows.

Competition for nesting sites

Conserved forest areas that have not been harvested, offer an abundance of nesting sites for native mammals, native birds and native insects. In regrowth areas where sites are limited there may be competition for mammal and bird nesting hollows. In addition, managed honey bees, wherever they may be located in the spring of each year, are usually controlled to minimise swarming to conserve the hive population and maximise the potential for paid pollination services and honey production. Genetic improvement of stock through selection against swarming has greatly improved this facet of spring management. Unmanaged honey bees are self-sustaining in the conserved land environment and will occupy nesting sites regardless of the presence or absence of managed honey bees.

Spread of plant pathogens and weeds

Beekeeper vehicles operating in remote conserved areas have the potential to introduce soil borne pathogens and weed seeds. With this said, beekeepers are heavily reliant on sound biosecurity practice for the survival of their own businesses (i.e. pest and disease management) and are sympathetic to the need for similar practices in conserved areas. Where beekeepers are not already aware of their responsibilities in relation to conserved land management they are easily educated or excluded through the revoking of public land apiary site permissions.

Policy arguments made for excluding beekeepers from public lands

Public risk and conflicted usage

It has been suggested that because honey bees sting people and a small number of people have an anaphylactic reaction to honey bee stings, a public risk situation is created when commercial apiaries are placed in conserved forests that are utilised by the general public. The presence of honey bees may also scare the public and prevent them from enjoying what is foremost a public resource. However, these arguments fail to recognise that public land apiary sites are remote from areas used by the public (e.g. picnic areas, walking tracks), that honey bees are not aggressive when foraging and that honey bees are only prone to stinging when their hives are under attack.
Damage to roads

Some land managers argue that because commercial beekeepers migrate their colonies using trucks, they could cause damage to forest roads. It is not in a beekeepers interest to make a road less easy to use and beekeepers in many states invest their own funds in maintaining tracks for site access. Furthermore, beekeeper maintained access tracks provide a land management benefit – assisting land managers to access the estate and control weeds, pest animals and bushfires.

Consistency with other industries

Some people contend, because apiarists depend on the availability of bee sites in conserved areas for income and livelihood, it may be inconsistent for land managers to allow apiculture to continue while excluding other industries, such as timber harvesting, grazing or mining. It is noted from the review of scientific literature presented that apiculture cannot be shown to be damaging to native plants, something other industries cannot claim. The need to extend the ‘consistency philosophy’ to encompass apiculture is therefore somewhat mitigated. The importance of forming partnerships with these other industries, especially timber production, is noted and the industry does not wish to make too much of the differences in each industry’s environmental footprint.

Workshop recommendations

Statement of resource access best practice

Public land access is important for commercial beekeepers in all Australian states. Its importance will only increase over time in line with increased demand for food forecast by the United Nations to be seventy percent higher than current levels in thirty years’ time. The Australian honey bee industry accepts this challenge and will work with the National Farmers Federation (NFF) to deliver its target of increasing the value of Australian agriculture from $60 billion to $100 billion by 2030 (www.nff.org.au/get/6175.pdf).

Floral resource access best practice is considered from the perspective of commercial beekeepers bearing in mind that industry has a strong ethos and desire to excel around its corporate, social and environmental responsibilities.

Access status

At the present time Tasmania and Victoria are closest to floral resource access best practice and provide a framework from which national policy can be developed. State government policy in Tasmania and Victoria actively encourages expansion of the honey bee industry on public lands to meet both current and future crop pollination and food security requirements. Replication of these policy settings is required nationally and industry has a strong need to better secure current access and increase access across all tenure types. The industry maintains that where the placement of short-term managed and migratory honey bees cannot be shown to interfere with other conserved land values, beekeepers should have access to the natural resource i.e. national parks, wilderness and world heritage areas.

Transfer of sites to another beekeeper

The workshop supported the transfer of public land apiary sites from one beekeeper to another including the payment of a nominal administration fee to the land management agency based on cost recovery. Transfer of sites recognises the essential nature of public land apiary sites to the viability of beekeeper businesses, the need to acquire sites to expand a business and the creation of a capital asset against which the beekeeper can borrow to finance business expansion. Best practice will incorporate the transfer of apiary sites between beekeepers for a profit and a more secure tenure for public land sites - a lease that describes property rights rather than a permit which is easily revoked without compensation. Beekeepers
noted the need for caution about escalating site values and the danger of providing incentives for a resource rent tax.

**Security of tenure**

The Gippsland Forest Apiary Plan (DSE, 2004) demonstrates security of tenure best practice. The plan establishes Special Management Zones for apiary in the Regional Forestry Agreement (RFA) area and these zones are gazetted for the exclusive use of beekeepers in perpetuity. Special Management Zones for apiary now need to be developed for all other Victorian public lands and for all other Australian states.

Security of tenure and improved resource access is also enhanced by working with forestry operators. In Tasmania, STT has agreed to retain leatherwood inside its harvest areas in order to meet criteria laid down by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC). FSC recognises that the timber harvested through their certification has been done in a way that respects and encourages other forest uses such as beekeeping. FSC certification provides a marketing advantage to products that carry the Council’s logo.

A permit is not a licence. Licences provide legal security and entitlement to a resource. Permits can be revoked at short notice without compensation. Licences to pump water, access a fishing resource or to produce oysters in a national park have secure property rights. By way of contrast, apiary permits are easily revoked and the resource can be degraded through timber harvest and controlled burn without compensation. Research is required to explore the legal status of current apiary tenures and, if necessary, design a process to change tenures to a licence (NB: Victoria currently issues licences). A licence would be in perpetuity, tradeable, a capital asset that could be used to secure business finance. Current fees would be converted to an annual administration charge. There is some urgency in investigating this change so that beekeepers are able to capitalise on increasing site values associated with the production of high value honeys and the increase in managed bee numbers that will be required to meet future pollination/food supply needs. A shift toward licences is consistent with best practice policy.

**Sunset clauses**

There should be no sunset clauses on public land apiary sites. Sunset clauses create uncertainty and are a disincentive to invest, produce honey and deliver pollination services. Sunset clauses on apiary sites diminish the value of a beekeeper’s business. Where apiary site permits are revoked or degraded to achieve other land management goals, offsetting sites of similar quality should be provided. Industry policy is that there should be no net loss of apiary sites on public land. Working to amend the QLD Government’s sunset clause on apiary sites in national parks is the industry’s highest natural resource management priority.

**Renewal period**

A range of renewal period options are required by beekeepers and should range from a short 6 months to more than 10 years. Short renewal periods are appropriate for highly ephemeral areas where flora may bloom for a short period and not be available again to beekeepers for a generation. Current permit holders should have the first right of refusal on permits at renewal time. Naturally permit allocation needs to be managed to ensure a small number of beekeepers do not dominate the resource.

**Fees**

Fees should be determined on a transparent cost recovery basis. Fees should be set at a modest level that recognises the honey bee industry’s contribution to pollination and food security. Fee relief is required if an apiary site is harvested or burnt and cannot be replaced with a site of equal value. Fees should be waived until the site is once again productive.
Access tracks

The maintenance of public land access tracks emerged as a major policy issue in all states. Fees are being paid for sites that are left impassable by logging trucks and beekeepers have been forced to spend their own time and money to repair tracks and gain access to sites. The workshop proposed that an equitable sharing of responsibility, recognising the contribution access tracks make to weed management and firefighting, is for land management agencies to take responsibility for main routes while beekeepers assist with spur tracks.

Land management

Management of apiary site land has major implications for the usefulness of an apiary site. Over harvesting of native timber and harvesting prior to maturity diminishes the floral resource. Controlled burns that are too hot scorch flower buds causing them to drop. Controlled burns that get out of control destroy the tree canopy. Best practice land management calls for equitable coexistence, recognition of Traditional Owner knowledge in relation to ‘cool burns’ and the opportunity to make additional contributions to carbon sequestration.

Government policy changes required

The workshop identified a range of changes required to state government policies to shift current practice to best practice management of public lands. Changes relate to both access to the resource and the quality of the resource where access is provided.

QLD Nature Conservation Act 1992

Nationally, the highest and most immediate priority is change to the QLD Nature Conservation Act 1992 which stipulates the termination of all apiary sites on land managed by the QLD Parks & Wildlife Service by 31 December 2024. The QLD beekeeping industry draws 80% of its production from public land sites and 1,180 of its 6,539 sites are located in areas transferred from forestry to national park. The transfer of sites with the same tenure in both Tasmania and Victoria has occurred without sterilisation of their apiary values.

Nationally consistent policy recognising the importance of beekeeping

Consequently, the Australian commercial beekeeping industry seeks a nationally consistent approach to public land management where apiary values are recognised and protected in both the legislation and in land management practices. In Tasmania and Victoria, policy includes statements on the importance of managed honey bees for crop pollination and food security. These statements should be replicated in all relevant state legislation.

Access to all tenure types

All relevant state legislation should be modified to change its current onus on exclusion of short-stay migratory and managed honey bees to one of inclusion of honey bees where adverse impacts have not been demonstrated. This approach is consistent with Tasmanian and Victorian policy and is also consistent with the need to pollinate additional food crops and support the forecast increase in demand for food over the next thirty years.

More secure tenure

At the current time, most states lack policies that provide resource security for beekeepers. Beekeepers rely on permits that provide no compensation when the floral resource is degraded by timber harvest or controlled burn. Apiary permits may be terminated at short notice. Permits do not provide property rights in the same way that a business or individual with a water licence or an oyster production licence in a national park is protected.
Improve land management practices

Beekeepers from all Australian states identified the need to improve land management practices on public lands. Over harvesting of native forests and harvesting prior to maturity has diminished the floral resource and consequently the honey produced and honey bee ‘conditioning’ qualities of remaining public land apiary sites. Less frequent harvesting of native timber would result in more productive bees for pollination. It may also have implications for the nation’s carbon sequestration objectives. Forestry trials with an economic analysis of the results may support a change to current policy.

Beekeepers from all states were adamant that current policies pertaining to controlled burns on the public land estate are highly destructive to apiary values and are inconsistent with best practice ecological outcomes. Recent work by Professor Kingsley Dixon Curtin University and others show current controlled burn policies are impoverishing both the flora and fauna of protected areas (www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJAMiGH2vF8&t=53s)². Much better are less frequent ‘cool burns’ executed in a mosaic pattern by Traditional Owners. Consequently, there may be opportunity for public land managers, beekeepers and Traditional Owners to come together to improve the ecology and honey production potential of public land.

Special management zones for apiary

Industry representatives from Victoria who attended the AHBIC workshop advocated for Special Management Zones – areas within the public land estate dedicated to apiary production. Special Management Zones, currently limited to the East Gippsland Forest Management Area, provide long term resource access security for beekeepers and certainty for the pollination and food security services they provide. Special Management Zones are required for the balance of Victoria and all other Australian states. Action is required to secure Special Management Zones while there is a high level of empathy for beekeepers and the services they provide.

Transformational policy making

The following insights into effective policy making were offered at the workshop:

Broader strategy

- Timing – now is the time to act. The community and hence politicians have an empathy for honey bees and the pollination services they provide that just wasn’t there in the mid-1990s when RFAs were being prepared. Beekeepers must capitalise on that empathy with transformational policy change while the sentiment lasts. In addition forestry is looking at ways to improve their social purpose providing a platform for forestry and beekeeping to work more collaboratively for the benefit of both industries
- Solution focus – approach decision makers and policy makers with a workable solution to the change you seek. Show that the solution can be accommodated within existing frameworks and that there are few, if any, who will be disadvantaged by the change
- Market the industry – demonstrate the link between healthy forests, healthy bees and healthy people. Have a small number of strong consistent messages e.g. ‘no leatherwood, no pollination’
- Form alliances with industries that rely on a strong commercial honey bee industry to deliver pollination services. In each state there will be key horticultural industries (e.g. Tasmania is seed production, Victoria is almonds, and QLD is macadamia and avocado). Draft letters of

² It is noted that other stakeholders including the IFR Forest Fire Management Committee will have alternative views on what constitutes best practice for ecological management
support from these allied industries and provide them to the relevant industry association for finalisation, letterhead and signature

- Accentuate the positive aspects of managed honey bee access (pollination, food security, economic contribution, presence of unmanaged hives in most conserved areas since 1860s) rather than being drawn into arguments about scientific evidence

- Scientific studies will not produce a definitive answer on honey bee impact in conserved lands but are an effective delaying tactic for land managers and conservationists (who will argue the point on design, the need for repetition, the inability to draw general conclusions from a specific study, ongoing need for precautionary principle, etc.). However, industry should make use of existing scientific research that supports their case

- Establish a government – industry forum to facilitate regular dialogue on floral resource access. Regular meetings provide an incentive to deliver solutions or at least progress toward desired outcomes

- Use the media judiciously. Government has previously dealt with the issue of honey bee access to public land through the RFA process in the 1990s and will see little to be gained from restarting old policy battles between industry and conservation. However, if the issue is high profile and presented in a positive light (e.g. pollination, food security, economic contribution) government may see merit in assisting beekeepers

- Changes in policy that favours an industry often have their origin in lobbying completed by a paid, registered lobbyist. Often lobbyists are former politicians who have direct access to decision makers. Paid lobbyists may be expensive and their cost may be outside the scope of budget for state beekeeping bodies

- A possible alternative to paid lobbyists is lots of ‘footwork’ by industry leaders mixed with targeted public relations (PR). Targeted PR might include regular release of good news stories. Industry proposals to establish a Marketing levy (through the National Honey Levy) may have a role in funding PR and associated communication activities in the future.

The mechanics of success

The following material is based on a presentation made by Tim Burfitt, Tim Burfitt Consulting and experienced NSW Department of Primary Industries Intensive Livestock Industries Manager. In Tim’s experience the following is appropriate:

- Post a clear well-supported statement of your policy goal on a relevant website where it can be easily accessed. Provide succinct and well referenced supporting evidence and ‘myth bust’ as many land manager and conservationist concerns as you are able

- The website should include a press statement on each issue from the organisation’s spokesperson; a fact sheet in plain English providing a concise summary of the issue and what the organisation wishes to achieve; appropriate research and scientific papers relevant to each issue; links to relevant research papers and the websites of other organisations e.g. NSWAA linked to AHBIC. A short glossy brochure for distribution at meetings is also appropriate

- Prepare a communication plan that supports/underpins your organisation’s strategic plan. The communication plan will have a number of components with the objective of informing all interested parties of who the organisation is; what is the business of the organisation; who they represent; what are the current and long term issues that they focus on; what the organisation’s current position is on each issue; and what are the outcomes they wish to achieve

- It is important to remember that in many states the state government Departments of Primary Industries have few seasoned, experienced well-informed professional staff available to call on to provide expert briefings – they will require support so have the well-researched, credible information available for them
• Understand who the relevant decision maker is – which ministry, is the change you require a ministerial decision or does a change rest with a public servant who has a particular point of view. Beware of the decision-making hierarchy and the possible need to circumvent a public servant and speak directly with the Minister

• Decide whether there is value in meeting with a Local Member. In most instances the relevant decision maker will be the Minister for the Environment with a relevant secondary role for the Minister for Agriculture

• Create a paper trail requesting a meeting with the relevant decision maker – through a formal letter. If no reply is received then repeat the process. Inform the decision maker of the names, roles and background of each of the industry people attending the meeting. Include a photograph to give your organisation a point of difference. A small gift of a jar of honey may also help create a point of difference. The objective is to make the meeting as easy as possible for the decision maker and their staff

• Research your target audience – the Minister, Chief of Staff and relevant aids – their background and know their names before any meeting. Be as well informed as possible on your issue, do your homework and rehearse. Prepare a page of information – an industry position statement that can be left with the decision maker. Nominate a leader on the issue, the spokesperson and bring the team in on areas of relevant expertise

• With the issue focus on solutions and emphasise what industry is willing to do, be professional and objective at all times. Wear a suit – you are professionals in your own right, champions of your vital industry and politicians and their aids need to view you in that light

• On the conclusion of the meeting reiterate what was agreed to. Within 24 hours, send a letter of thanks and summarise the agreements / commitments made during your meeting

• If Ministers fail to engage with you take the issue to the media or siege their electoral office and or parliament house.

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**National Advocacy in the Forestry Industry**

*Observations by Sarah Paradice of her time with Institute of Foresters in Australia and working with the Australian Forestry Products Association (AFPA)*

Quarterly industry meetings and a dinner are hosted by AFPA. All of industry comes together at these forums. Forums include AFPA members and invited stakeholders. Competitiveness and differences of opinion are left at the door. Stakeholders come together in good spirit for the benefit of the industry. Stakeholders discuss and agree key messages for AFPA to deliver. Invited guest speakers including politicians, scientists and government officials attend the meetings and dinner. AFPA Chair and CEO present at the meetings and dinner and reinforce key messages to the government officials present.

AFPA follows up by meeting with Australian Government officials and politicians. AFPA stays connected with industry and vice versa, neither party acts alone. AFPA produces media releases, succinct glossy brochures and Youtube videos which are widely distributed on an up-to-date website. Industry shares AFPA media which reinforces the united voice/key messages. Communication and language are collaborative and non-combative.

Politicians constantly commented that forestry is a delight to work with – they get a united message which is easier to act in terms of policy formulation.
tools required for policy amendment

The workshop suggested that consideration be given to the following tools, in approximate priority order:

• Policy statement – importance of access to public lands and priorities for change
• Website – policy statements, relevant documents, frequently asked questions/myth busters
• Glossy brochure – for use in meetings with Ministers and other decision makers
• Industry statistics/honey bee insights – one pager for inclusion with brochure
• Credible economic analysis that shows the economic contribution of an apiary site – up to $180k
• Educational resources for school children – hard copy and available on the website
• Youtube videos – showing how public land resources are used responsibly by beekeepers
• Generic presentations – forests, pollination, food security
• Package for communication the ‘More than Honey, 2008’ Parliament of Australia recommendations
• Update AHBIC 2005 ‘Honey Bees in Australian Conserved Forests – A Policy Document’
• Document comparisons between states showing where individual jurisdictions can improve management
• Social media campaign with frequent posts
• Post the economic value report prepared by Karasinski (2018) on the AHBIC website
• Complete field trips with policy makers – include forests and honey processing plants.

Stakeholders relevant to policy making effort

Key stakeholders relevant to policy making were identified by the workshop as being:

• State Minister for the Environment – key decision maker
• State Minister for Agriculture – useful source of support, likely to be sympathetic to beekeeping
• Ministerial advisors are critical conduits to the Minister. However, care required with advisors who are in a position to filter messages before they get through to their Ministers. Advisors may have sympathies that are not consistent with favourable outcomes for beekeepers and may be part of networks that are more aligned to conservation
• Key stakeholder for forming alliances and creating joint positions include other forest users and honey bee dependent industries e.g. timber, horticulture, traditional owners and the public.

National network of industry representatives

AHBIC has a long standing Resource Access Committee whose function is to improve beekeeper access to public land floral resources. The knowledgeable Chair of the Committee meets with, and provides advice to, state beekeeping member bodies on an ad hoc basis. The Chair’s activities have been constrained by a lack of AHBIC funds.

A more structured approach to leadership and assistance was proposed by the AHBIC Chair at the workshop. Restructuring of the Resource Access Committee will include:

• Terms of reference for the committee
• Refinement of resource access tools and priorities developed at the workshop
• Preparation of a simple ‘fit for purpose’ communication plan
• Setting and reporting progress against time bound and measurable key performance indicators.

The committee requires representation from all states given that improved resource access is relevant to all jurisdictions and those states approaching best practice (Tasmania and Victoria) have much to offer. Furthermore, it is suggested that a formalised committee consider representation from a co-dependent industry and a person that can bring an independent perspective to the committee’s deliberations.
Responsibility for progressing a national network of industry representatives rests with the AHBIC Chair and the current Chair of the AHBIC Resource Access Committee.

**Overarching strategic plan – priorities and tools**

The workshop developed an overarching strategic plan for AHBIC and the state beekeeping bodies to pursue in relation to addressing access to public lands. The plan is relatively modest and recognises resources available to the organisations. The plan is presented Table 5.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Priority/tool</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy alignment with NFF</td>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>Chair AHBIC</td>
<td>No cash cost</td>
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</table>
| • Prepare and circulate a jointly agreed statement from AHBIC and NFF on the importance of growing the apiary industry to meet the pollination demands of wider agriculture through to 2030  
• Reference UN statement on future food demand and NFF goal on increasing the value of Australian agriculture to $100 billion by 2030 (suggested wording included in this document) |  | Chair Resource Committee  
Communications specialist | |
| Industry statistics/honey bee industry insights (RD&E project) | Short term | CEO AHBIC                        | Small cost for design and printing (~$2k) |
| • Reliable information required for industry analysis and policy making purposes  
• One pager for all states to use and deliver consistent messaging  
• Clear ‘info-graphic’ style suggested  
• Will allow consistent messages to be communicated across states  
• Provides industry reps with confidence in message and the fact they have broader industry support  
• Data to be drawn from credible sources including DPIs and scientific reports |  | Communications specialist | |
| Glossy position brochure on access to public lands | Short to medium term | CEO AHBIC                        | Modest cost (~$10k) |
| • A statement of industry’s position using materials sourced from this document  
• A nationally consistent set of facts and issues for communication/policy making purposes  
• Highlighting the importance of honey bees to food production and food security  
• Key messages will include: access to public lands, competition for floral resources, loss of floral resource, impact of changing climate, impact of pesticide use, biosecurity pest and disease threats |  | Communications specialist | |
| Library on the AHBIC website | Short to medium term | CEO AHBIC                        | No cash cost                     |
| • Divided into members only and public areas  
• Members only section to address policy making strategy and priority (shared submissions prepared by one state that will be relevant to other jurisdictions)  
• Public information aimed at education and informing  
• PDF versions of resources such as AHBIC Natural Resource Policy 2005, David Patton research, letters of support from pollination dependent industries  
• AHBIC CEO making progress with this resource |  | | |
| Social media strategy | Short to medium term | Chair AHBIC  
CEO AHBIC  
Wheen Bee Foundation | Modest cost – but annual commitment |
| • Part of a broader AHBIC communication strategy  
• Social media committee of AHBIC may be required  
• National approach necessary for consistency |  |  | |
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<th>Priority/tool</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Support from Wheen Bee Foundation may be possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual bee site economic modelling (RD&amp;E project)</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>AgriFutures, Danny Le Feuvre, Lindsay Bourke</td>
<td>Major cost (~$25k)</td>
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<td>- Value to economy rather than the individual beekeeper generated from a single bee site</td>
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<td>- Measured as addition to gross value of production and employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Roughly estimated in the workshop at $180,000 for a single site in Tasmania (Lindsay Bourke)</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>CEO AHBIC, Kondinin Group</td>
<td>Modest cost (~$5k)</td>
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<td>- Preliminary research has been completed in WA by the CRC for Honey Bee Products</td>
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<td>- To be completed by economist with AgriFutures Australia support</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>AgriFutures, Doug Somerville</td>
<td>Modest cost (~$10k)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education resources</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Review the large number of resources available for school education purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- If the Kondinin Group work-boot on honey bees is the most appropriate, have it updated</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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<tr>
<td>- It is understood that only a minor update is required</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Current version could be placed on the AHBIC website as an interim measure</td>
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<tr>
<td>- May be potential to have this tool funded with a government education grant</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership and media training (RD&amp;E project)</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>AgriFutures, Doug Somerville</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Either short course or part of integrated Certificate III program (Certificate IV Governance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ensure this is part of a wider industry capacity building initiative that AgriFutures Australia is currently considering</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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<td>- Goal is to provide state bodies with capacity in presenting to ministers, their advisors and the media</td>
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<td>- Continuous investment required</td>
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Strategic RD&E questions

Strategic RD&E questions that could be funded and managed through AgriFutures™ Honey Bee and Pollination Program were identified at the workshop and included:

Security of tenure research
- Examination of the current legal status of permits across jurisdictions
- Determination of current property rights compared to other users of the public estate
- Compare with water licences, fisheries licences and oyster production licences in national parks
- Examine the scope available to issue beekeepers comparable rights to other natural resource users
- Consider any state government arguments for resisting the change
- Develop an understanding of the positive impact on beekeeper business values
- Complete the analysis on a state by state basis and identify best practice policy noting that Victoria already issues licences for apiary sites.

Applicability of ‘cool burning’ to forest management for apiary
- Complete case studies on the impact on beekeepers and flora/fauna of current ‘hot’ controlled burns in heath, manuka and eucalypt forest
- Contrast ‘hot’ fire outcomes to ‘cool’ fires favoured by Traditional Owners
- Work with Traditional Owners, forestry sector, Forest and Wood Products Australia (RDC with access to funding), CRC for Bushfire Research and others to trial a shift to ‘cool’ fires
- Project would be coordinated by AHBIC and would engage land managers in each state
- Project may provide employment opportunities for Traditional Owners
- Project should draw on extensive literature assembled by Professor Kingsley Dixon, Curtin University (www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJAMjGH2yF8&t=53s) and should require little new primary research.

Co-existence research – new models for maximising timber and beekeeper returns
- Learn from, and communicate the results of, trials undertaken in Victoria by government agencies and the VAA that show timber industry can harvest timber resource while maintaining a viable resource for honey bees – equitable co-existence (key Contact Ian Cane, AHBIC)
- New research would examine the long term economic benefits of management for joint beekeeper/timber industry returns compared to only generating returns for the timber industry
- Current trial known as Equitable Co-Existence Timber Harvesting Prescriptions.

Comparative analysis of returns from timber compared to apiculture
- Analysis of long term returns from apiculture possibly including other less tangible values
- Less tangible values might include carbon sequestration, water supply and ecological benefits.

Individual bee site economic modelling
- Value to economy rather than the individual beekeeper generated from a single bee site
- Measured as addition to gross value of production and employment
- Roughly estimated in the workshop at $180,000 for a single site in Tasmania (Lindsay Bourke)
- Preliminary research has been completed in WA by the CRC for Honey Bee Products.

Industry statistics/honey bee industry insights
- Reliable information required for industry analysis and policy making purposes
- One pager for all states to use and deliver consistent messaging
- Clear ‘info-graphic’ style suggested
- Will allow consistent messages to be communicated across states
- Provides industry reps with confidence in message and the fact they have broader industry support
- Data to be drawn from credible sources including DPIs and scientific reports.
Leadership and media training

- Either short course or part of integrated Certificate III program (Certificate IV Governance)
- Goal is to provide state bodies with capacity in presenting to ministers, their advisors and the media
- Continuous investment by AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program was suggested by the workshop.

Update of ‘honey bees in Australian conserved forests’ (AHBIC, 2005)

- AHBIC 2005 provides a concise and authoritative review of the literature and a debunk of reasons why managed honey bees should be excluded from public lands
- AHBIC 2005 relies on a literature review that is now 14 years old. A more credible document could be produced from the updated literature
- Dr. Ben Oldroyd, University of Sydney would be the ideal researcher for the update project.

Scope to increase access to private floral resources

- The current project has addressed access to public lands
- Future research should address issues that would facilitate additional access to private forested land
- What scope/how would beekeepers increase the number of private forestry apiary sites?
- NB: private forestry was the QLD Government’s answer to phase out of national park sites.

Conclusions

Floral resource access is critically important to commercial beekeepers in all Australia states. While some states approach best practice in their policy settings, significant change in state government policy is required. Improved beekeeper access to floral resources is critical if the industry is to remain viable and deliver the pollination services and food security needed for the future.
References


AHBIC (2018) AHBIC Strategic Plan 2018-2023 – A Plan for a “NEW” ABHIC

AHBIC (November 2018) AHBIC Monthly News, November 2018

Department of Sustainability and Environment (2004) Gippsland Forest Apiary Plan


Seeman, O (1994). The University of Queensland. The Impact of Managed Honeybees on Native Australian Animals and Plants.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Workshop agenda

Forum venue: Launceston – Grand Chancellor, 29 Cameron Street

Date and time: Sunday 30 June 2019–8:15am for cup of tea prior to opening at 8:30am. Workshop scheduled to finish 12:30pm Monday 1 July 2019

Purpose of Workshop:
1. Review state agency policy with respect to honey bee sites on public land
2. Collaborate to determine best practice
3. Formulate actions, responsibilities and R&D needed to shift current to best practice
4. Investigate a ‘tool kit’ to support state beekeeping bodies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>SUNDAY, 30 JUNE</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:15am</td>
<td>Tea and coffee on arrival</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30am</td>
<td>Opening, welcome and introductions – Peter McDonald, Chair AHBIC</td>
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<td>8:40am</td>
<td>Workshop purpose and what will success look like – Tim Burfitt, Workshop Facilitator</td>
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<td>8:45am</td>
<td>State of Play – Resource Access Victoria (Ian Cane, VAA – 8 slides)</td>
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<td>Importance of public land to Victorian beekeepers</td>
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<td>Current access to public land</td>
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<td>Terms and conditions of use</td>
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<td>Resource security</td>
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<td>Land management issues</td>
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<td>Key policy documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy making and beekeeper influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questions from the workshop floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15am to 10:15 am</td>
<td>State of Play – Resource Access South Australia (Danny Le Feuvre, SAAA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State of Play – Resource Access Western Australia (Stephen Fewster, BICWA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15am to 10:45am</td>
<td>MORNING TEA BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45am to 12:15pm</td>
<td>State of Play – Resource Access NSW (Neil Bingley, NSWAA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State of Play – Resource Access Queensland (Peter Barnes, QBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State of Play – Resource Access Tasmania (Lindsay Bourke, Tasmanian Beekeepers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15pm to 1:15pm</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Agenda</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **1:15pm to 2:00pm** | Transformational Policy Making (Michael, Sarah, Tim and workshop discussion)  
What approaches are most successful in shaping natural resource policy  
How does a small industry gain traction  
What “tools” needed (science, economics, communications plans, etc.)  
Questions from the workshop floor |
| **2:00pm to 3:00pm** | What is Resource Access Best Practice?  
Small Group Work (2 tables X 8 people, “butchers paper” exercise)  
Terms and conditions of use  
Resource security  
Land management  
Beekeeper participation in decision making |
| **3:00pm to 3:30pm** | AFTERNOON TEA BREAK |
| **3:30pm to 4:00pm** | Report Back on “Small Group Work”  
Table 1: this is best practice  
Table 2: this is best practice |
| **4:00pm** | Close, Thanks and Preview of Day 2  
Agenda/ambitions for Day 2  
Day 2 start time  
Dinner arrangements |

**MONDAY, 1 JULY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>8:15am</strong></td>
<td>Tea and coffee on arrival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **8:30am to 9:00am** | Day 1 recap  
Tim Burfitt, Workshop Facilitator  
These are the critical elements of best practice (1 slide)  
Brief discussion |
| **9:00am to 10:00am** | Strategic Plan – How Do We Shift from Current to Best Practice?  
Small Group Work (2 tables X 8 people, “butchers paper” exercise)  
What are the policy/change priorities  
What consistency is there in policy/change between states  
Do we need a national approach or is it now up to the states  
How do we best gain access to decision makers  
What tools do we need to show decision makers  
How will these tools be developed  
What AgriFutures™ Honey Bee & Pollination Program RD&E is needed  
Is there value in AHBIC keeping a research/policy website  
How do we foster leadership in natural resource access?  
Need for a national network of industry representation? |
| **10:00am to 10:30am** | MORNING TEA BREAK |
| **10:30am to 11:30am** | Strategic Plan – How Do We Shift from Current to Best Practice?  
Small Group Work (CONTINUED) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11:30am to 12:00noon | Report Back on “Small Group Work”  
Table 1: this is the strategic plan  
Table 2: this is the strategic plan                                                                 |
| 12:00noon to 12:15pm | Close, Thanks and Next Steps for Current Project  
Peter McDonald, Chair AHBIC  
Dates for delivery of project report  
Opportunity for stakeholder feedback on draft project report |

**Appendix 2: Workshop attendees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neil Bingley</td>
<td>NSWAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Burfitt</td>
<td>Tim Burfitt Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Cunial</td>
<td>NSWAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Cane</td>
<td>VAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert McDonald</td>
<td>VAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Hooper</td>
<td>SAAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny Le Feuvre</td>
<td>SAAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay Bourke</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Barnes</td>
<td>QBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Fewster</td>
<td>WAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Leyland</td>
<td>WAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leilani Leyland</td>
<td>WAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter McDonald</td>
<td>AHBIC Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Paradice</td>
<td>AHBIC CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aris Petratos</td>
<td>VAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod Pavey</td>
<td>WAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton Ruge</td>
<td>QBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Somerville</td>
<td>AgriFuturesTM Honey Bee &amp; Pollination Program Advisory Panel Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Clarke</td>
<td>AgEconPlus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Workshop expectations

The following expectations for the workshop were identified at the beginning of day one and scored following workshop completion (1 = poor result, 2 = acceptable, and 3 = exceeded expectation).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Informed on what other States are doing in relation to Resource Access.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Setting a research question on “Impacts on beekeeping viability of either a growth or reduction in sites on public lands”.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Understanding the Best approaches to Government on Access to Resources.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Development of a national united approach to the Resource Access issue.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gaining information provided on tools / information / research that have aided Government and others to provide Access to Resources.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Being clear on Priorities for policy change by State.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sufficient support for an AHBIC National Natural Resource Policy Committee</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Identification of Research and Development questions.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Development of or commencement of a Strategy to aid in accessing more Government land for beekeeping</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Identifying ways of better informing Government and their personnel on the needs of the honeybee industry, especially resource access.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Review of the term “feral” for honeybees.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Obtaining clear directions on what would aid in both maintaining and growing access to public land.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Considering and developing Guidelines on what is effective political contact in relation to Access to Resources on Public Land.</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Research into Prescribed burning agreed on as a research question.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Development of a plan to communicate and support each State in respect to Access to Resources.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Development of A “National Best Practice for Apiary Site Use”.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Suggestions on how to gain sites in World Heritage Areas.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Discussion of Ideas for Site Allocation Systems.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Setting a Goal to increase access by 25 %.</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Agreement on a research question into establishing national economic figures for each site in relation to pollination.</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Understanding as delegates the importance of meeting as a unified body to develop key messages to sell to politicians / Govt and other industries.</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Understanding the importance of identifying common goals and then collaborative communication to allow closer working relationships with e.g.: - other Forest Users.</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Developing a communication plan to aid in communication and policy making.</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Development of a continuity plan for 5 to 10 years.</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Development of stronger networks within States and back to AHBIC.</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. A plan to gain access to decision makers at all levels with a voice that will be heard.</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategic Industry Workshop:
Improving floral resource access for beekeepers

by Michael Clarke
Month 2016

AgriFutures Australia No 19/054
AgriFutures Australia Project No PRJ-011631
ISBN: 978-1-76053-064-8

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