# NSW APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC.

**ABN: 89 417 216 326**

INQUIRY INTO THE BIOSECURITY BILL 2012
AND THE
INSPECTOR – GENERAL OF BIOSECURITY BILL 2012

The New South Wales apiarist Association is the largest beekeeping organisation of its kind within Australia. Our association represents approximately 350 commercial beekeepers.

Our association supports the Inquiry into the Biosecurity Bill 2012 and the Inspector-General of Biosecurity Bill 2012 would like to state to this inquiry how vitally important the passage of this bill is to the survival of not only our business but many others dependent on the honeybee for most of their production.

In recent years the Australian beekeeping industry has had to endure a number of serious introduced pest and diseases that have been brought into our environment. These established pests, (e.g. American and European foulbrood, Small Hive beetle, Chalkbrood, Nosema ceranae and more recently the Asian bees in Cairns), can and have affected the strength and productivity of our honey bee colonies. With the movement of hives, as well as the drifting and robbing habit of the honey bees it is difficult to prevent the spread or contain these pest and diseases.

One of our major concerns for our industry is the possible introduction of exotic mites into the Australian environment. Anyone of these pests would have not only catastrophic effects on beekeepers but also on:

- Sixty five percent of agricultural production that depend on pollination.
- Thirty five industries dependent on honeybee pollination for most of their production.
- And the range of other commercial uses of products produced by honeybees, e.g. Honey, beeswax, propolis etc.

How can Australia afford to lose billions of dollars on horticultural and agronomic crops each year due to the lack of legislation and laws that address the biosecurity issues facing our industry?

The uneven resources available to our industry and the lack of experts on bee matters across the country on a state by state basis to deal with the bee biosecurity events is another concern. The lack of these will lead to poor management of any incursions or ill informed responses.

Our association is extremely concerned that in the event of an incursion the state authorities have the power to quarantine beekeeping operations, leading to significant financial loss to those operations. In the event of no eradication response being initiated there is no cost sharing implemented and as such the beekeepers are seriously out of pocket.

The Commonwealth needs to provide the beekeeping industry financial support through the offering of insurance coverage and financial assistance should an exotic mite be introduced into Australia.

Our industry is a key player in the food chain. Without our industry where are we.

The Commonwealth Government needs to support this vital insect/industry against the possible introduction of exotic pests and take a financial responsibility to ensure that the beekeeping industry can survive should an incursion occur.

Our association agrees with the inquiry into the Biosecurity Bills 2012 and the Inspector-General of Biosecurity Bill 2012. We support the fact that these bills recognise that the Quarantine Law of 1908 needs to be at long last streamlined to meet the ever changing issues involving the threats to the Australian environment.

We would like the opportunity to comment on any direct changes concerning the bee industry in the 2012 Biosecurity Bills.

Harold J Saxvik
Vice President
NSW Apiarist Association
18th December 2012