

2002 - 2003



Australian Honey

Australia's Liquid Gold

WELCOME

Welcome to the Annual Report of the AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL (AHBIC).
The objective of this report is to:

- Keep the industry better informed of what your Executive is doing.
- Allow the industry an opportunity to seek information from AHBIC on matters of general interest.
- Provide a communication avenue to enable a sharing of ideas and information.

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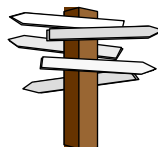
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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On behalf of industry I would like to take this opportunity to thank industry members for their support over the past twelve months. It has been a busy time for industry. The weather conditions have had a severe impact on production – bushfire and drought played havoc with the supply of honey to many beekeepers. On top of this, we have had the added problem of the discovery of the small hive beetle in Australia. This has resulted in a large number of meetings and time being spent by the AHBIC Executive to develop, in consultation with government, a management plan following the decision to declare the pest endemic. It was never an easy decision to have this beetle declared endemic and those beekeepers who are still critical of the decision should be aware of the sleepless nights and the concerns of other members of industry. The decision was only made when it was firmly established by all forms of scientific and other evidence that it would not be feasible to eradicate the pest. The focus of AHBIC now is on managing this pest now it has been declared endemic and, unlike past diseases in the industry, we are working to ensure that beekeepers are not the only ones saddled with the problem and government regulatory authorities wash their hands and walk away from a very serious problem.

The small hive beetle has also impacted on market access arrangements for the export of queen bees and live bees out of Australia. Your industry organisation has spent time working with Biosecurity Australia to open these trading channels once again. We have also continued to pursue the perennial problems of access of honey to New Zealand and continued access for Australia honey on proper and just terms to Fiji. It has been a long time coming but we and AQIS are now more encouraged than ever that the queen bee market of the United States will be open to Australian producers.

The import of honey from China and other places continues to be a sore point with many producers. Regrettably, at a time when supply is so low it has become necessary for some packers to import honey. It is to be hoped that we return to regular seasons and the need for imports will dry up. In respect of imports, AHBIC has been successful in ensuring that all imported honey is now tested for chloramphenicol. We are also working with the government to draw up new procedures for the import of honey and its testing. It is time there was a level playing field between imports and exports and your peak body continues to work to achieve this end.

As many in industry will know, I have decided to not seek re-election as Chairperson of AHBIC for the coming year. This in no way reflects disenchantment with the industry or with AHBIC. It is simply a reflection of my own personal business interests and in the interests of my long suffering family. I would put on public record my thanks to my wife Diane and family for their patience as being AHBIC Chairman involves an enormous amount of time. I would like to also thank my fellow members of the AHBIC board who have continued to support me and have contributed to the workings of AHBIC. I would like to thank the AHBIC staff, Stephen and Laurel, for their ongoing support during the year.

In terms of our industry's history, AHBIC has only been in existence for a small number of years but I can assure industry members that it is making a valuable and vital contribution to the well being and prosperity of this great industry. I wish my successor well and thank you, the industry members, for the privilege of serving you for the last couple of years.

Ray Phillips – Chairman Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

ANIMAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA

Over the past twelve months Animal Health Australia has been working closely with the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council on a number of fronts, not the least of which has been a focus on the small hive beetle and its longer term implications for the Australian honey bee industry and the wider national animal health system.

Animal Health Australia is a not for profit public company established by government and the livestock industries, including the AHBIC, to ensure that Australia's national animal health system delivers competitive advantage for Australia's livestock industries.

With the ratification of the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement in 2002 the focus of much activity has been ensuring that all signatories to the Deed have the necessary mechanisms in place to ensure they are as prepared as possible for an exotic disease incursion. To this end the AHBIC have been at the forefront in terms of ensuring they have the plans, the people and the mechanisms behind them to be in a position to act as quickly as possible.

Well before the current small hive beetle incursion the AHBIC actively progressed its preparedness efforts in ways that included

- Finalisation of the Australian honey bee industry bio-security plan
- Participation in the competency based Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness Training Program - the industry now has 17 Infected Bee Site Supervisors, 6 trained Industry Leaders for a National Management Group (NMG) Role and 2 trained Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Disease (CCEAD) technical representatives.
- Taking a lead initiative to finalise revisions of the current *'Bee Disease Pest'* AUSVETPLAN manual
- Strategic input into the development of plans for Animal Health Australia's core programs and activities
- Commitment to the *Version 2 Performance Standards for the National Animal Health System*, a benchmark set of agreed performance measures designed to improve the animal health system
- Participation in the national Protect Australian Livestock Campaign
- Driving the bee industry perspective in coordinating a national approach for small hive beetle, following the CCEAD and SHB NMG decision that the incursion was not eradicable, given its spread from NSW to QLD and its apparent spread to a high percentage of feral hives.
- The resulting Small Hive Beetle Steering Committee has worked tirelessly with Animal Health Australia to develop and refine the elements of a national management plan, including priority research issues and in doing so has worked with entities such as Plant Health Australia, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry Australia to resolve required funding to deliver the program.

According to Animal Health Australia's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ralph Hood, the AHBIC's commitment to ensuring the industry is in the best position it can be in terms of preparedness has provided an example to both industry and government alike, citing the recent establishment by the AHBIC of a Honey Bee Disease

Contingency Fund as tangible evidence of their commitment with the fund set to generate around \$100,000 a year for combating future exotic disease incursions.

Further information on the activities of Animal Health Australia and the AHBIC's involvement can be obtained from www.aahc.com.au

BIOSECURITY

The major incident for the past year was the small hive beetle outbreak which significantly affected exports of live bees. Biosecurity Australia was closely involved in liaison with overseas authorities regarding measures to ensure exported consignments of honeybees would not harbour small hive beetle. Whilst Biosecurity Australia put forward its own recommended measures to overseas authorities, the ultimate decision on health requirements rests with the importing authorities, *not* Australia. Our recommendations were that:

- Packages: Must come from apiaries at least 25 km from any location where small hive beetle is known to occur.
- Queens in cages: There is no need for restrictions provided they are hand picked.
- Comb honey and pollen: Must be frozen at a temperature of at least -12°C for at least 24 hrs.

The reaction of overseas authorities varied from country to country. The UK, which constituted only a minor market, suspended imports of live honeybees. Biosecurity Australia has not attempted to negotiate this decision.

Canada, a major market for both packages and queens, placed a temporary suspension on imports. The responsible agency, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, was very cooperative in communicating with us but did not accept our recommendations with respect to queens in cages. They ultimately imposed a 25 km exclusion zone for both packages and queens.

Korea was another major market, mostly for packaged bees. Korea suspended imports for both queens and packages and sent a delegation to Australia in late February 2003 to look into the outbreak and our controls. After the delegation returned to Korea, the Korean government decided to maintain the suspension on live bees indefinitely. However they do appear willing to discuss the possibility of arranging conditions for export of queens. Biosecurity Australia will be following up on this possibility soon.

Japan is a medium sized market for live bees. Initially, they informed us that the small hive beetle was not of quarantine significance to Japan so we could continue to use existing conditions, which we did. Early in May 2003, Japan advised that they would suspend imports and send a delegation to Australia in late May to look into the situation. At the time of writing, we are making arrangements to show this delegation around when they arrive.

Several Middle East countries constitute a smaller but still significant portion of our exports for live bees. None of these countries responded to our letter of advice about small hive beetle. We are now examining the requirements of these countries to establish whether we can export bees. Biosecurity Australia is anxious to ensure that import authorities in these countries are satisfied with the measures proposed to ensure consignments are free of small hive beetle.

In the EU, France was a medium sized market for Australian bees. However, the French authorities have informed Biosecurity Australia that they are proposing a ban on imports of live bees from countries affected by small hive beetle and Kashmir bee virus. Biosecurity Australia is negotiating with the French authorities over this decision but there does not seem to be any indication yet that they will change the proposal.

The USA would be a potential market for Australian honeybees but it does not yet have any conditions for importation. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the US Department of Agriculture has published a proposed rule covering the conditions under which import of bees could be permitted and has asked for comments. If the present momentum on this proposal continues, it is possible that the USA will later this year institute conditions which Australia could meet.

Pat Boland
Biosecurity Australia

B-QUAL AUSTRALIA PTY LIMITED

B-Qual has now trained around 600 beekeepers and packers in respect of B-Qual and its Approved Supplier Programme. It is a timely reminder that we remember that B-Qual was developed because industry required:

- a quality system owned and developed by the honey bee industry
- a system to meet both domestic and international requirements and demands
- a response to changing food regulations
- a response to changed European requirements

B-Qual is a low cost easy to use system for individual beekeepers and packers. It works to ensure compliance with government, world export and buyer demands.

Now that a large number of beekeepers have completed the initial workshop, it is important that auditing of premises and B-Qual documentation take place. In respect of State FarmBis funding, individuals and businesses have twelve months to complete their B-Qual training or they are required to attend a further B-Qual workshop.

The response to B-Qual by government regulatory authorities, industry and our customers has been overwhelming. It is pleasing to report that during the year the B-Qual board continued to further refine the development of B-Qual. In the coming twelve months we will see a renewed emphasis on the completion of the programme for those who have commenced their training by attending B-Qual workshops and there will be additional opportunities for others to attend workshops if they have not already done so.

B-Qual continues to progress and is an important part of industry's commitment to excellence as well as being an important marketing initiative which will continue to ensure access to overseas markets whilst providing an element of protection from

imported honey. I commend it to the industry and would put on record my thanks to my fellow members of the B-Qual board for their assistance during my term as Chairman.

Ken Gell - Chairman B-Qual Australia Pty Limited

AQBBA REPORT

The main problem for members this past year has been the incursion of the small hive beetle. Queen bee breeders have been seriously affected. There have been some members caught up in the original quarantine and there has been the loss of exports markets for live bees plus the loss or extra unasked for work for the local market.

We are making every effort to try to gain back some of the live bee export markets. Within Australia, we hope that there will be a change to the Victorian requirements for this next season and that South Australia will look at their requirements for the prior approval. Measures were imposed by the relevant Departments that, I am assured, were not asked for by the particular State Association. It makes our job of trying to win back export markets harder when there are these variations within Australia.

On a positive note, the AQBBA has been pleased to see the price of honey go up and maintain at the present level. This will help our customers within Australia and, with the world price staying up, will help to create demand from overseas.

There continues to be a bigger demand for queen bees in Australia and overseas than there are queens available. At the same time, the number of queen bee breeders in Australia is shrinking. We are not sure how this imbalance can be addressed as many people who think queen bee breeding is a breeze and try it suddenly find that it was not as easy as they first thought.

The New South Wales Department of Agriculture has conducted a couple of courses on queen bee breeding but, to date, none of the participants have come through to the commercial ranks.

The AQBBA continue to encourage members and non-members to support the AHBIC through voluntary contributions.

The AQBBA recognises the work done by the members of the AHBIC executive board for the whole of the Australian Beekeeping industry.

Trevor Weatherhead
PRESIDENT

Paula Dewar
SECRETARY

NCPA REPORT

What a difference twelve months can make. The demand for professional pollination services is greatly affected by many factors and those of us involved in this aspect of diversification of our business, are well aware that the weather and prevailing environment are two of the most critical. Hence demand Australia wide continues to vary greatly from region to region. Those regions that are proactive and pursue the development of beekeeper skills and greater levels of awareness amongst growers,

grower organisations and seed companies, are more able to meet the sustained demand and cope with expansion increases. The varying weather conditions has had an adverse affect on demand in some regions, thus income levels have varied. Per hive returns vary from stable to increased.

With the advent of meaningful wholesale honey prices there is the struggle between what a pollinator needs to charge versus what a grower is prepared to pay. Some will argue that is it the farmer's problem – pay what we demand or go without. Is this reality? Or do we have an obligation in the overall scheme of things to find a level that is acceptable to both parties. Obviously there needs to be some balance for I can recall not too long ago when a significant portion of some beekeepers' incomes came from providing pollination services because honey production had not been all that good. Another consideration is the question which is being asked in some quarters – given that we rely heavily on natural resources and demand their preservation and a continuing right of access, (and rightly so) don't we as an industry have some obligation to support agriculture and horticulture?

During the year RIRDC produced a document, "Valuing Pollination Services" having been asked to update previous publications, the idea being that a current 'credible' and an authoritative reference would be helpful in stating the overall value of pollination services to the nation in dollar terms. Given that the document is an academic exercise we are yet to form a response to it. With some more thought and a clear mind it should be in the hand of the Executive Directors hands by the time you read this report.

Communication across the board continues to be a concern. Many decisions appear to be made in isolation by a nameless few. Conversely there are some people who, having gained access to information, continue to wring the neck of the chook to obtain more and more detail on the issue even though the responsibility for the decision making lays elsewhere.

It is critical for the well being of the **whole industry** that the AHBIC structure be allowed, indeed, made to work. Pursuing parochial interests and the clinging to perceptions of exclusivity or the right to decide what is best, has brought many a good organisation to its knees. Don't let it happen to our industry.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all those who have assisted me during my term as the National Council of Pollination Associations' delegate to the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council and wish each and everyone a fruitful and fulfilling future.

Des Wilmott
Delegate

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AHBIC Annual General Meeting and Conference will be held on 14th and 15th July 2003 in Queanbeyan at the Comfort Inn Airport, 573 Yass Road, Queanbeyan NSW 2620. This is to be followed by an AHBIC Executive Meeting on Wednesday 16th July 2003. Details of accommodation arrangements are as follows:

Venue:	Comfort Inn Airport	57-73 Yass Road, Queanbeyan NSW 2620
	Telephone:	02 6297 7877
	Facsimile:	02 6299 2411

Delegates should make their own travel and accommodation bookings direct and delegates are provided with this information early so that they can obtain the best airfares.

HONEY PACKERS AND MARKETERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

My first year as President has been very interesting and challenging. As stated in my first letter to members dated 30th June 2002 my aims were to bring unity to the Association, introduce new members, conclude the writing of the Strategic Plan and to review the Constitution.

I am pleased to report some success on these fronts but further work is required which presents a challenge for anyone taking up the position of President. Regular meetings of members, at least 2 a year and open discussion around the table will be a positive step towards progress of the Association.

Newsletter

This has been a major step forward for the HPMAA for circulating news to members and to others who are interested in the Australian Honey Industry. The wider the circulation the better, hopefully bringing new membership, increased Industry awareness and support for AHBIC. As President I have received many positive phone calls regarding the newsletter. Quite a few newsletters have been sent out to interested persons outside the HPMAA. My thanks to Lindsay Callaway, our Secretary, for a job well done.

Strategic Plan

Very little interest has been shown and very few comments received. Members need to either participate or put the issue to rest.

Constitution

Thanks to Eddie Planken for his update. The constitution will now be finalised at the Annual General Meeting.

International Honey Exporters Organisation IHEO

Eddie has again showed his willingness to undertake this task. His efforts enable IHEO to be maintained to the benefit of industry members throughout Australia. The Australian Honey Board began this Association with John Wells as Secretary. With World Trading in Honey today it is essential for Australia to be a member, and take an **active** part in IHEO. Thank you Eddie for a job well done.

Prevention of Residue in Honey Symposium- Celle Germany October 2002

It was fortunate that Eddie Planken and Ben McKee attended. Upon their return Both gave valuable reports, which were widely distributed through the Australian Industry sectors including the HPMAA. Australia should maintain its presence at like minded gatherings, and have input into discussion held on matters affecting Australian Honey.

HPMAA Annual Meeting- June 2002 Melbourne

Legal advice has confirmed the legality of this meeting and was assured by Lewis Saunders, Solicitors Deloraine that the meeting was legal. Therefore it is necessary to move on.

Committee Meetings

No full committee meetings were held during the year but many phone calls were made to each member on all matters concerning the HPMAA. My personal thanks to Warren Taylor for representing the HPMAA on the Beekeeping Industry Consultative Committee (BICC), he also helped me on other relevant subjects.

Jodie Goldsworthy (Vice President) attended the AHBIC meeting in Perth WA taking an active part in discussion on behalf of our Association. Jodie has been appointed a member of the Regional Womens' Advisory Council, to the Deputy Prime Minister the Hon John Anderson and we are fortunate to have such a capable person representing the Industry. Thank you Jodie on behalf of us all as your input will be of great benefit to Industry participants.

My thanks to Marc Higgins our Treasurer who has been able to assist me on many matters including B.Qual which has had its share of problems. Ken Gell is Chairman and with continuing input from Eddie Planken and Marc Higgins, I believe good progress is now being made. It is essential for B.Qual to be up and running as soon as possible. Audits should be in progress and accreditation under way as a whole season has elapsed. Despite the initial workshops being well attended, has the industry achieved follow through?

My sincere thanks to Lindsay Callaway for the professional way he has carried out the many jobs and problems on which I have requested his action. A Secretary's job these days is not an easy one and he should not be the recipient of criticism, which should rightly be given to the President.

Lindsay has the well being of the HPMAA at heart, which is for all packers large and small to combine, to make the Association successful and a major player in the Australian Beekeeping Industry. Thank you Lindsay for your cooperation and job well done, your assistance has been invaluable to me.

Chinese Honey

My thanks to Roger Masters for drawing my attention to the importing of Chinese Honey. The memorandum from the National Honey Packers & Dealers Association USA – regarding Ultra-Filtered honey, required action. Your assistance, with Stephen Ware, AHBIC, in composing a letter to relevant Government bodies and appropriate supermarket personnel was of great assistance to me and hopefully the industry. This letter containing technical points is more effective when dealing with Government bodies. I have spent over 40 years personally seeking assistance for Commercial Beekeeping with very little acknowledgement.

Roger Masters has also given me an assurance that Capilano will give preference to Australian beekeepers when buying honey and will pay the levy on all honey whether it be Australian or imported.

Membership

I am concerned about the small number of packers willing to join the HPMAA due to the conditions of membership. An Association with a membership of 5 or 6 will not represent the Australian Packing Industry when talking to Government. A much larger membership will certainly give more weight to any proposals we may put forward. In Tasmania I am the only packer willing to join the HPMAA which is some similar

thing in other States. To help overcome this situation I propose that Associate members can move, second motions and take part in discussions at all meetings of HPMAA and be entitled to be on Sub Committees and committees. Associate members can take Office, but not that of President or Vice President. Do you agree or do you want a closed shop? Will there be enough members to continue the affairs of the HPMAA? It is essential that our organisation continues its contribution to "AHBIC". If we had more members we would ensure a secure financial base for the Peak Body.

Ian Stephens
PRESIDENT

Lindsay Callaway
SECRETARY

A SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES

During the year, AHBIC has been involved in a large number of issues as well as the ongoing work of providing information to industry. It has been a difficult year both for industry and your national body. During the year the following issues have been addressed: -

- AHBIC has worked to develop a management plan for the small hive beetle and has participated in government and industry debrief. Outcomes of the debrief include corrective action points and these will be released shortly.
- Continued market access discussions with USA re queen bees has been progressed. Potentially this market could open in the next couple of months.
- Negotiated the implementation of the AHA levy and HBRDC queen bee levy as per previous AHBIC resolutions.
- Pursued market access arrangements with Fiji and New Zealand. Although these negotiations have been tedious, access to overseas markets brings immediate benefits to beekeepers and packers.
- Sought new testing arrangements on imported honey. All imported honey is now being tested for chloramphenicol and other residues
- Sought and commenced the development of competency standards for industry. This issue has been ongoing. At last, progress appears to be forthcoming.
- Continued industry government dialogue on disease pest management. Membership of Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia continues to bring frustration as well as potential rewards.
- Achieved changes to AHA cost sharing agreement. A further review to be held during the year should assist industry to tackle the outstanding issues identified as a result of the small hive beetle incursion.

- Continued to progress B -Qual Australia programme. This will, in the longer term, assist industry in respect of both biosecurity and food safety.

AHBC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30TH APRIL 2003

Assets

Cash on hand – Cheque account	\$6,799.42	
- Premium account	<u>78,906.36</u>	\$85,705.78

Other Assets

Term Deposit 50178856	5,883.85	
Term Deposit 50057304	115,923.61	
AMP Diversified Growth Fund	44,847.69	
Rental Bond	7,000.00	
B-Qual Australia Pty Limited	<u>100.00</u>	173,755.15

Fixed Assets

Furniture and Fixtures at cost	21,752.66	
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-15,601.96</u>	<u>6,150.70</u>
Total Assets		\$265,611.63

Current Liabilities

Provisions	9,095.88	
GST Collected	1,333.72	
GST Paid	<u>-777.58</u>	
Total Liabilities		<u>\$9,652.02</u>

Net Assets

\$ 255,959.61

Equity

Retained Earnings	305,084.56	
Current Year Earnings	<u>-49,124.95</u>	
Total Equity		<u>\$255,959.61</u>

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 2003**

Income

Combined industry	\$247,509.40
Interest	8,546.43
Miscellaneous income	718.18
Membership dues	180.00
Promotional video income	292.50

Total Income

\$257,246.51

Expenses

Annual leave expense	-9370.50
Annual meeting	18,340.60
Apimondia 2005	3,403.26
Audit fees	2,015.40
B-Qual Australia Pty Limited	252.73
Bank charges	393.59
Cleaning	290.80
Consultancy fees	2,700.00
Couriers	57.22
Depreciation expense	3,936.36
Directors' sitting fees	1,936.35
Electricity	115.63
Filing fees	213.00
Industry Resource Conference	13,679.82
Insurance	3,412.39
Legal fees	8,260.00
Loss on AMP investment	4,259.96
Office supplies and email	1,191.15
Postage	3,107.02
Printing and stationery	8,591.68
Removal expenses	4,542.73
Remuneration expenses	102,163.76
Rent	25,469.84
Repairs and maintenance	1,558.14
Secretarial services	1,330.00
Staff amenities	220.27
Subscriptions	6,286.14
Superannuation	51,467.00
Telephone	12,706.44
Travel	33,840.68

Total Expenses

\$306,371.46

Operating Loss

\$(49,124.95)

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTORS TO AHBIC

AHBIC THANKS ITS SUPPORTERS

AB's Honey	Leabrook– Spring Gully Pickles P/L
Australian Rain Forest Honey	R & E McDonald
Australian Honey Bee Improvement Programn	PB & CM McPherson
Australian Queen Bee Exporters	IJ & PA Oakley
<i>Australian Sungold Queen Bees</i>	RC & DJ Phillips Pty Ltd
Harold Ayton	Pollination Association of WA
Beechworth Honey	QueenBee-Ann Apiaries
Beeline Queens	R. Stephens
Boyd, Andrew and Margeurite	Redpath's Beekeeping Supplies
Bradbury, GN and DJ	Swan Settlers
Bush Honey	Superbee Honey Factory
Capilano Honey Limited	Stephen Targett
CE Mills	Tasmanian Crop Pollination Association
Chiltern Honey Farm	Tasmanian Honey Compy
Crescent Honey	T & M Weatherhead
Crop Pollination Association Inc	Walkabout Apiaries
Dewar Apiaries	Warral Apiaries
Honey DownUnder	Weerona Apiaries
HL Hoskinson	Wescobee Limited
<i>Hunter Valley Apiaries</i>	Wolsinkel, Aris
<i>Koonoomoo Apiaries</i>	

AHBIC acknowledges the **beekeeper suppliers** who contribute via their packer and queen bee supplier to AHBIC. We also urge beekeepers to support those packers/queen bee breeders who contribute to AHBIC.

**Does your honey buyer's or queen bee supplier's
name appear on this list?
If not, then ask 'why not?'**

**SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT
YOUR INDUSTRY!**