

2004 - 2005



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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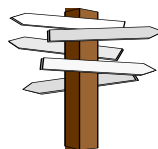
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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Industry Partnership Programme

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) has been successful in gaining funding from the Commonwealth Government's Industry Partnership Programme to develop a full apiary industry strategic plan. This programme is part of the Agriculture Advancing Australia package which also includes other programmes such as FarmBis and Farm Help.

As a person who has spent a lot of time on beekeeping resource issues, I believe that access to our native forests is no longer guaranteed and the industry has to give all governments of Australia our commitment of a sound environmental management plan and, at the same time, provide for our long term sustainability. This must be done through industry's strategic plan.

Every section of the industry will have a responsibility to try to look into the future and give some directions for its future profitability, sustainability and competitiveness in both the local and overseas marketplaces.

Expert consultants who have been employed to assist industry to develop these programmes will need our help to analyse the current and future strengths and weaknesses and where both opportunities and threats may exist. We will need to develop strategies to identify priority areas so that industry can respond to current and future opportunities and challenges.

Unfortunately, our strategic plan under the Industry Partnership Programme will have to be completed by 30th June 2005 and there are a number of workshops planned at Orange, NSW in May from which a draft will be prepared for industry's comment.

Rural Training Programme

Competency standards have now been completed for the apiary industry's rural training package and the next step is to develop an industry training and education programme. Having a rural training programme is very important for the industry's future. I would like to thank and congratulate Mrs Jude Nettleingham and Mrs Jodie Goldsworthy and the rest of the committee for their hard work on some very complex issues.

One other very important committee is the Food Safety and Residue Prevention Committee led by Dr Ben McKee. This committee has performed strongly during the year and I thank them for their efforts.

This is my second year as AHBIC National Chairman and I will be stepping down from the position at the annual general meeting in July, 2005. I would like to thank all committee members that served AHBIC and my thanks go to Mr Ed Planken (Vice Chairman) for his support. I would also like to thank all of the Executive members for their service during the year. A special note of thanks to Mr Stephen Ware, Executive Director of AHBIC, for his hard work and dedication to duty during the past year. Thanks also to Mrs Laurel Pickering for keeping the national office running in a very professional manner.

Greg Roberts – Chairman, Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

B-QUAL AUSTRALIA PTY LIMITED

The last twelve months has seen BQUAL registrations grow to the number of 530 with approximately 100 audited businesses.

There still seems to be misunderstanding about audits with very few willing to have audits until their plants and premises have been upgraded, not realizing that paper work is the main focus of BQUAL.

With newsletters now going out to industry the programme is finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Industry is now starting to see benefits from joining the programme with the help of some packing companies offering price incentives and the BQUAL board would like to thank these companies for their support. Other companies should consider the market advantages that carry through being part of an industry quality assurance programme.

The use of the Logo has been a major topic for the board over several meetings and has had many interpretations, however, the board has decided that to use the logo it must be from BQUAL approved suppliers and packed in BQUAL approved premises with the approval from the board upon written application.

The board with the assistance of Aus-Qual is currently developing a self learning kit which will enable all beekeepers to join the programme without waiting for a workshop in their region. This should fast track the remaining industry people waiting to join.

We are trying to help the smaller sector by creating umbrella groups which will help share the cost of audits.

This year we seen the retirement of two of our founding members and I would like to take this opportunity to thank very much on behalf of the industry, their commitment to the programme through the development stages and of the rolling out stages. Thank you to Jenny Barnes of AQIS and thank you to Marc Higgins. Without their help BQUAL could still be only a name.

Current members on the board are:

Ken Gell - Chairman

Kieren Sunderland

Bill Winner

Barry Pobke

Stephen Ware - Secretary

Administration

Bevan Blacklock - Aus-Qual

I would encourage all beekeepers and packing premises to become part of the BQUAL programme.

Ken Gell - Chairman B-Qual Australia Pty Limited

AUSTRALIAN QUEEN BEE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

The queen bee breeders have had another successful year. This culminated with the opening, at last, of the United States border to Australian Queens. Members who have sent queens to the US have had a wonderful response to their product. A recently article in the American Bee Journal paid testimony to this with glowing reports on the quality of Australian Queens. This market shows great potential for Australian queens.

Small Hive Beetle and Chalkbrood continue to be a problem with access to some export markets. Unfortunately, the Japanese market is still a problem with the Chalkbrood issue. This matter has been taken through to the Australian government with the view of this being voiced when Australia next has a delegation to Japan.

Small Hive Beetle is one area that will concern members as it becomes more prevalent in the environment. Canada, a good steady market for Australian queens for a number of years now, has Small Hive Beetle restrictions. Some reports suggest that Small Hive Beetle will mean extra work for queen breeders as they will need to work their nuc hives on a more regular basis as hives without queens seem to fall victim to this pest quite quickly. Members are awaiting the results of trails being conducted through the HoneyBee Research and Development Committee.

Incursions of Cerana still continue, luckily on a not too frequent basis, and this association needs to put on record our thanks to the wharfies and quarantine staff that have notified and handled these incursions most professionally. Thanks must also go to the beekeepers that assist with sentinel hives and members of the AHBIC response teams throughout Australia as well as the various state departmental officers.

The hurdles that continue to face the queen bee breeding sector are no different to any other production sector within our industry: disease, access to resource and sourcing competent staff.

This issue of staffing hopefully will find many members taking advantage of the new apprentice/ traineeships that will be on offer once the industry competency standards are endorsed. Some members have already taken the initiative and signed up potential new queen breeders through the high school traineeships in the agriculture field with the view to going across to the beekeeping curriculum once this is endorsed.

This association wishes to place on record our sincere thanks to Dr. David Banks for the work he did for our industry. David was instrumental in developing the bee lining program which has been invaluable in incursions. The state response teams was also an initiative of David's as has been his close work with the queen breeding industry through development of protocol's for the export of queens to many countries.

Paula Dewar, National Secretary

FEDERAL COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN APIARISTS' ASSOCIATIONS

FCAAA members have been involved in four AHBIC Board meetings, one in Queensland after the last AGM and three in Melbourne.

Matters that have been dealt with during the year include:

Fire Blight

Fire Blight continues to be a topic with some States working on plans to protect their hives in case Fire Blight should be detected in their State.

Contingency Funds

There have been three successful applications for Contingency Funds this year, one each from AHBIC, Queensland and Tasmania. The two States were for resource matters while the one from AHBIC was for Professor Seawright re nitrofurans.

Promotion Funds

Two applications were made this year, one from Tasmania and one from Victoria. Both were successful.

Apimondia 2007

The new Chairman of Apimondia 2007 Pty Ltd is Mr Terry Ryan.

Locusts

Due to weather conditions, plague locusts have again appeared in Queensland and NSW. Aerial spraying has now ceased but ground spraying is expected to continue. This brings to the fore again that apiarists need to advise the neighbours, as well as the property owners, of where their apiaries are situated.

Small Hive Beetle

This new invader is still causing problems in NSW. However, apparently it is not as great as first feared by industry.

Incursions

The latest incursion of *Apis cerana* in Brisbane makes us realise that this problem is still with us. Fortunately no *Varroa destructor* has been identified on our soil. We must give our thanks to the QDPI and AQIS for their prompt actions.

AHBIC Constitution

Proposed amendments to the AHBIC Constitution have been circulated to the States for discussion and will be voted upon at the AHBIC AGM.

Levy

Problems are still being encountered with raising this levy from 0.8 cents to 1.5 cents per kg. A compromise suggestion has been put forward for two increases over about

three years. The main stumbling block seems to be the decrease in honey prices since it was first proposed.

Research

Continued research results are still being released by RIRDC and are available for downloading, by beekeepers and others interested people, from the RIRDC web site. Our members continue to be advised of these papers.

Ausvetplan

The updated AUSVETPLAN is nearing adoption, if not already adopted. This is a much larger document than the previous one. It is also available for downloading from the web.

AFB National Program

The Victorian document, AFB Smart program, may soon be adopted by industry as a national program with some States making minor amendments to suit their local conditions.

State Resources

Mrs Elwyne Papworth has approached all States seeking information on their resources, and problems, so as to compile a national reference manual that will be available to all States. We look forward to seeing this document.

Harold Ayton, Secretary

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF POLLINATION ASSOCIATIONS

The pollination sector has had another busy year, with enquiries for pollination services from across the country. The ongoing drought has played a significant role in quite a few of the enquiries for managed honey bees.

Enquiries were received from the following states:

Victoria	South Australia	Queensland	Western Australia
Plums Pears Apples Clover seed Oil seed	Oil seed Clover seed Lucerne seed	Citrus Plums Melons	Plums

As reported at last years AGM the almond industry continues to expand at an enormous rate with significant plantings in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

The estimates of managed honey bee colonies needed to service this industry alone with what is presently in the ground and future plantings is in the order of approximately 200,000 colonies. As almonds flower late winter [July-August] it gives beekeepers an opportunity to work their bees at a time of year that generally is an

unproductive for most, and at the same time provide a lucrative cash injection to start the season off.

The issue of the possible importation of apples and pears from New Zealand and the import of the bacterial disease fire blight has subsided at this point in time. The NCPA will keep monitoring the progress of any future developments that may arise.

With continuing expansion of orchard and seed producing enterprises across Australia and the need for managed honey bees to complement these developments the pollination sector has a bright future in front of it.

Craig Scott - President

APIMONDIA 2007 PTY LIMITED

Apimondia 2007 will be a huge showcase conference for the Australian honey industry. Apimondia conferences worldwide attract large numbers of delegates and it is the premium forum for the advances in technology and knowledge for the honeybee industry. The size and complexity of the conference is being well met by the volunteers and members in the Australian honeybee industry.

An international conference by its very nature greatly amplifies international communication and organisation obligations beyond that normally experienced by any domestic conference. Your board and conference organiser are meeting these obligations as they arise.

I must thank my fellow board members for all the support and effort they have put in to making sure Apimondia 2007 will be a success.

Our first objective is the promotion of our industry and Australia at the world conference in Dublin later this year. There will be an Australian night as the first signal of what our conference will be like in Melbourne. I must thank in advance all the volunteers and sponsors who have kindly assisted in making sure that this night will be a success.

As the conference approaches, the workload will increase and we will need greater support from all members of the industry. As this conference will be large and complex its success will depend greatly upon the efforts of volunteers. The industry has shown in the past how it can always come up with the goods and I have no doubt it will do so again.

As this will be a memorable event and display to the world of the Australian honeybee industry I ask everyone to put September 9-14, 2007 in Melbourne in your diary.

Terry Ryan - Chairman

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AHBIC Annual General Meeting and Conference will be held on 11th and 12th July 2005 at The Old Mill Motel, 28 Main Street, Hahndorf, South Australia. This is to be followed by an AHBIC Executive Meeting on Wednesday 13th July 2005. Details of accommodation arrangements are as follows:

Venue: The Old Mill Motel, 28 Main Street, Hahndorf SA
Telephone: 08 8388 7888

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.

Notice of Election of Chairperson – Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

In accordance with the constitution, notice is hereby given that nominations for the position of Chairperson of AHBIC open on Wednesday 28th May 2005 and **close on COB Thursday 9th June 2005**. Candidates are advised of Section 5.2 of the constitution and, in particular:-

A Chairperson of AHBIC shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting as follows:

5.2.1 Nominations of candidates for election as Chairperson of AHBIC:-

- (a) shall be made in writing, signed by one voting delegate and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate.
- (b) each nominee may submit a two hundred (200) word statement.
- (c) the nomination shall be delivered to the Secretary of AHBIC not less than twenty eight days prior to the date fixed for the holding of the Annual General Meeting. All delegates are to be notified of all nominations at least fourteen days prior to the holding of the Annual General Meeting.
- (d) If no nominations are received as required under 5.2.1(a) and 5.2.1(c), nominations shall be taken from the floor at the next Annual General Meeting.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL RESOLUTION TO BE DEBATED DURING THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

TO BE HELD AT HAHNDORF OLD MILL , 28 MAIN STREET, HAHNDORF, SA ON 12TH JULY, 2005 (10:00AM)

In accordance with Section 19 of the Constitution, the Executive Committee of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council has put forward the following resolution which contains amendments to the Constitution.

It is resolved that the AHBIC Constitution be amended in respect of the following Sections:-

3. Definitions:

- 3.1 Add** “Major Contributor” means the contributor who is the largest monetary payer of contributions to the AHBIC budget.

4. **Membership:**
 - 4.1 **Add** 'Major Contributor (MC)'
 - 4.2 **Add** 'MC 1'
 - 4.3 **Add** 'MC One voting delegate'
 - 4.4 **Delete** 'organisations'
Add 'organisations and the major contributor'
 - 4.5 **Delete** 'organisations'
Add 'organisations and the major contributor'
 - 4.7 **Add** 'or the major contributor'
5. **Governance and Management:**
 - 5.5 **Delete** 'seven'
Add 'eight'
Add 'and one nominated by the major contributor'
12. **Voting at Meetings:**
 - 12.3 **Delete** 'fourteen'
Add 'fifteen'
 - 12.7 **Delete** 'organisation'
Add 'organisation or major contributor'
 - 12.8 **Add new point**
'In the event of a tied vote by the Executive Committee or Council a resolution shall be deemed to be lost.'

Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council Inc (AHBIC) and Combined Industry Contributors

1. **Membership**
 - 1.1 **Add** 'Major Contributor (MC)'
 - 1.2 **Add** 'MC one voting delegate'
2. **Governance and Management**
 - 2.7 **Delete** 'six'
Add 'eight'
 - 2.7 **Delete** 'four'
Add 'six'
 - 2.7 **Add** 'two from FCAA and'
 - 2.7 **Delete** 'organisations'
Add 'organisations and major contributor'

STEPHEN WARE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS:

The effect of the above Special Resolution is intended to amend the Constitution of AHBIC to allow the Major Contributor to have an elected representative on both the Executive and the Council with one voting entitlement on each. This is in addition to the existing members. The resolution also clarifies the position in the event of a tied vote where a resolution would be deemed to be defeated.

Note: For a Special Resolution to be passed it must be submitted sixty days prior to a meeting and must be passed by a three quarter majority of those present and entitled to vote.

*Should you require a copy of the Constitution with the above amendments highlighted, please contact the AHBIC office on 02 9221 0911
Email: ahbic@honeybee.org.au*

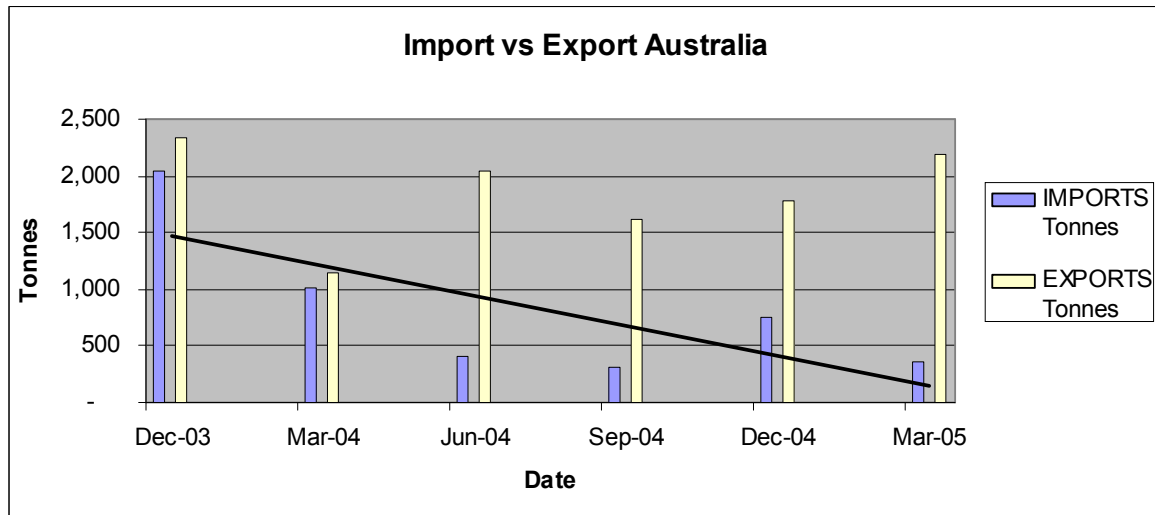
HONEY PACKERS AND MARKETERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

The year 2004/2005 has been both challenging and interesting for packers. Challenges include the shift in production from shortages to surpluses, competitive world honey prices dropping 29%, exchange rates back at all time highs reducing returns or making Australian exported products uncompetitive, increased supermarket demands including pressure for growth in house brand packs and the packers position against Capilano's demand for direct representation (just to name a few.) It has been interesting in that there is strengthening support of the packer's position by other sectors and individuals in industry against a change in the constitution of AHBIC to facilitate the request of a packer to go direct on the executive of AHBIC.

Our association has remained firm from the last AGM of AHBIC (where the motion was soundly defeated) not to see a change in the rules or executive of AHBIC just to facilitate the request of one contributor no matter what the reason is. This is because the basis of the reason of Capilano leaving the HPMMA to go direct is incorrect plus it breaks the spirit and intent of how AHBIC was set up. It also would open the door to other sectors having a legitimate basis for their largest contributors to go direct. Despite HPMMA offering a compromise solution on behalf of the membership to resolve the impasse, Capilano rejected the same earlier this year. Industry should note that the HPMMA changed its rules so the Capilano could have a permanent seat via our association some three years ago and this opportunity is still open to them today. Packers need to sit together and resolve their difference and this issue should stay out of the public and AHBIC arena. Unity among honey packers on common core issues provides a positive voice to industry, regulatory bodies, governments, interested parties and can be achieved despite commercial differences.

Noted summary points for the AHBIC year include:

- For the year 1,817 tonnes of honey came into Australia while exports for the year show 7,634 tonnes was shipped. The following graph shows the downward trend over time for imports against exports.



- Honey prices moved down on the back of increased availability in the domestic market, rapidly decreasing prices internationally and competition. Packers need to remain competitive and viable in order to survive and overall kept prices up as long as possible for producers. Competitive forces of supply & demand affect all industries.
- Supermarkets have over the year placed numerous ongoing demands on packers / suppliers. These include continued changes in QA requirements, transport arrangements, shelf ready trays, pallet bar-coding, performance level requirements along with increasing the minimum case deal demanded on promotions thus impacting on packer's returns. Packers need to implement these changes at an increased cost for often no extra return or saving. Australian honey packers also need to stay competitive against cheaper imports that the supermarket may choose to range against Australian honey. They now see the market very differently than before Australia need to import honey to supplement our shortages. While we can and often do get a premium for our Australian product, the gap if too large may reduce sales or leave us out in the cold. The challenge for packers is not to just find a market to take the honey delivered but find one that provides a healthy return so beekeepers may have a viable business.
- House brands are the focus of the big two supermarkets who collectively control around 70% of mainstream grocery sales. As they aggressively pursue their own brands with better margins, it will be at the expense of packer's brands or margins. Coles alone is looking at having 30% of their business under their own privately packed labels for profit maximisation, however this could ultimately be at the expense of producers.
- The residue issue and stance on having imported honey being to the same standard as our honey will be an ongoing issue. Quality assurance programs both here in Australia and in overseas honey selling countries, will go a long way to solving this issue. Packers will keep working with suppliers to ensure they get QA systems in place so we can have upstream traceability as demanded by our customers.
- Overall the market in domestic honey sales dropped from previous high years however small signs of recovery are starting to appear. Some packers report increased sales against last year while others report similar or below last year results.

- Ongoing interest in medicated honey is occurring in Australia, which is providing opportunities for all who have access to great products like the Jellybush, Jarrah or Manuka honey. However, it is clear that care on claims being made on activity levels need to be taken as differing laboratories will provide differing results on the analysis. We commend the work being done by the Food Safety and Prevention of Residue Committee who are looking at such issues along with honey standards, residues etc.
- The year has seen active television, radio and press advertising occurring in a effort to both encourage sales and brand growth.

Eduard Planken, President

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DISEASE COMMITTEE

Late last year the AHBIC Chairman, Mr Greg Roberts asked for recommendations on what AFB reduction program that would work best in Australia, either the NZ program or the Victorian ABF Smart program. The Victorian AFB Smart program has been selected as the most workable at this stage, and state delegates will need to indicate their states willingness to enter the program.

Under the AFB Smart program beekeepers will become responsible for their own disease situation.

State Reports

- SA** Incident of AFB has risen to 17% of operations
 Incident of EFB low
 No SHB
 Chalk Brood appearing in some susceptible stains.
- TAS** Isolated outbreaks of AFB/EFB, but no greater than normal.
 Chalk Brood has been overcome with management.
 A disease session has been held at the Field Day to promote disease awareness.
- NSW** Unfortunately I am unable to provide accurate figures as they are simply not available. This issue will be addressed at the next State Executive meeting in May 2005.
- At this stage AFB appears down in hive numbers, however there are more beekeepers having outbreaks.
- EFB, Chalk Brood, Sac Brood and Nosema also appear to be at lower levels than previous years. As this season has been more productive from the previous two years, this may have had an influence on the stress levels of hives to be lower.
- Small Hive Beetle (SHB) is visible within the regions from Sydney to Kempsey causing hive loss to be at substantial levels. Having seen several infestations it is quite alarming. There have also been reports of

SHB activity in the Lismore and Tweed areas, with no hive losses at this stage. Areas in the Clarence region thus far seem free of SHB. This might be from the lack of hive movement throughout the area. There is no apparent damage recorded from SHB west of the Great Dividing Range even though beetle presents.

With SHB being high on the agenda beekeepers are reminded to be vigilant with other diseases.

With all the education and knowledge available from the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) and beekeeping associations it is disturbing to hear the misdiagnoses and treatment for diseases. If unsure of suspect disorders contact the relevant departments.

- WA Incident of AFB at about 12% of operations.
Agriculture Dept. no longer monitoring to say exactly, but beekeepers suggest AFB at 1% to 2% with in most operations.
Chalk Brood seems to be a problem when bees are stressed.
No incursions from overseas.
- VIC No report
- QLD In the last 9 months we have added to the list another 17 new cases of AFB. These have been diagnosed through both honey culture tests and brood sampling. This now means that 13.75% of beekeepers on the registration database are AFB infected.
- A few isolated cases of EFB have been reported, most have been in hives returning home from NSW. The majority of the hives are now working spotted gum, so they should clean up reasonably quickly.
- Small hive beetle has been a considerable problem in coastal areas for the last 3 months. Stored supers in honey sheds seem to be prime targets for hungry beetle grubs. Strong hives appear to have Beetles in them with no sign of any larval damage. Weak, queenless hives and drones layers succumb fairly quickly to this pest. With the onset of colder months I feel we might have a short reprieve, to enable us to do some constructive work (installing coldrooms etc) to better manage this pest.
- Chalk brood and sacbrood come and go as usual. I have not heard of any problems in relation to these two diseases.
- Watery brood has been reported on a few occasions in isolated areas.
- NCPA No disease issues to report, however the rapidly expanding almond industry may bring concern to the apiculture industry with large concentrations of bees in small areas.
- AQBBA No report

Barry Pobke - Chair

EDUCATION SUB COMMITTEE

The Education committee met during the year and has now finalised the competency standards for industry.

An address will be made to the annual general meeting of AHBIC to discuss the next steps in the ongoing development of an industry training and education programme. This follows the expected endorsement by ANTA (or its replacement body) of the completed competency standards by 30th June 2005.

I would like to put on record my thanks to Mrs Jude Nettleingham and other members of the committee who contributed to the finalisation of the standards for industry and we look forward to the next steps to be taken.

Jodie Goldsworthy – Chair Industry Reference Group

FOOD SAFETY & RESIDUE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Introduction

The Food Safety and Prevention of Residues Committee (FSPRC) was formulated by AHBIC in late 2003 to assist industry and Government with the technical aspects of food safety and residues in honey while working to assure the future marketability of honey. Since this time, the Committee has effectively worked to establish good working relationships with appropriate Government Departments (eg. NRS, AQIS, FSANZ) aiming to achieve common goals with respect to honey quality and food safety issues.

The Committee has developed an official ‘Code of Conduct’ to govern and clearly identify member’s responsibilities and to provide assurances to the confidentiality of discussions. This Committee has signed these agreements and has functioned very effectively under these guidelines, dealing with a number of commercially sensitive issues in a professional manner, which is a credit to the current Committee members.

National Residue Survey

This years results from the National Residue Survey (NRS) illustrated the supreme quality of Australian honey, with no pesticide, or antibiotic residues detected. The NRS is funded as a result of levies on honey production. FSPRC has established a sustainable budget for this survey based on minimum testing requirements for continued access to European Union markets and minimum administrative costs in NRS. It has been good to see that NRS costs are progressing within budget and that the current budget and operations of NRS will continue as planned in the next financial year.

Australian Honey Standard

The Committee put forward a Honey Standard to industry with the aim to develop a common technical standard that clearly illustrates the high quality of Australian honey. The Standard sets parameters for microbial levels, composition and residue testing detection level expectations. In addition, the Standard was to be used to further develop the current FSANZ Honey Standard, which is extremely brief and does not set specific enforceable parameters to distinguish the differing qualities of honey. The process for changing the FSANZ Standard is lengthy and expensive and it seems FSANZ has little interest in strengthening the current Standard as there a no

major food safety issues evident. FSPRC will continue to investigate the best way to achieve an appropriate Honey Standard for Australia.

AQIS Imported Food Program

The AQIS Imported Food Program continues to test imported honey for the presence of residues such as nitrofurans, chloramphenicol and pesticides. Both AQIS and FSANZ are very happy with the conformance of imported honey and are considering decreasing the current requirements for testing, primarily because in 2004 no failures were reported in 123 tests. The Committee has been presented with a Discussion Paper on the issue from Government and is set to respond with its recommendations as to the continued operations of the AQIS Imported Food Program. We see no need to reduce chloramphenicol or nitrofurans testing requirements, despite the good conformance of imported honey.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

GMOs have increasingly become an issue for Beekeepers and there has been fresh media interest in the issue that has involved industry members. It is high time for industry to develop a position on GMOs and a strategy for dealing with the issue going forward. The Committee has begun a concerted effort to speak with appropriate stakeholders so that they can get a better grasp of the issues and facts. It is clear that media interest will continue and that industry needs to have a standard message. FSPRC sees it as a priority to help AHBIC develop a position on GMOs that will include a strategy for the future and a plan for communication both to Beekeepers, the public and media. FSPRC encourages AHBIC to send the message to Beekeepers not to speak to the media or make comment on GMO crops.

Industry Readiness Plan

AHBIC has recently set up a Crisis Management Committee, which should be congratulated. However, the effectiveness of AHBIC and industry is very much dependent on the available information that is relevant in a crisis. As a consequence, the Committee recently reviewed the AHBIC Readiness Plan and concluded that the document requires updating, including the current range of Press Releases prepared for an emergency situation. FSPRC will endeavour to identify the most feasible manner to further develop the Readiness Plan and have it updated in association with AHBIC.

Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids (PAs)

The primary threat to the marketability of honey worldwide remains the potential presence of PAs, despite their being no health concerns. This issue has received wide ranging press as a result of problems with herbal medicinal remedies containing PAs direct from some plants, as well as negative media attention associated with honey as a result of the efforts of retired CSIRO Scientist John Edgar. Recently, media attention was focussed on honey as a result of an ABC Health Radio Report on PAs in honey featuring John Edgar. As a result, FSANZ released a statement to the public that was widely available, including to many retail and industrial purchasers of honey. The current problem with PAs and honey is a lack of scientific knowledge and available data on the issue. PAs in honey is not a food safety issue but a marketability issue. Industry has responsibly dealt with the issue by ensuring honey containing PAs is appropriately blended to meet FSANZ tolerable daily intake for PAs. FSPRC has recognised the potential of PA levels in some honeys to affect marketability and as a consequence has set about to conduct further research on the topic in consultation with Government.

Conclusions

The Committee lost the services of Marc Higgins this year as a consequence of his move overseas and I wish to thank him again for his input prior to his departure. FSPRC is dealing with a range of complex issues and is functioning professionally and in the best interests of industry and AHBIC. I wish to thank the Committee members who have contributed much to the successful operations of the Committee and hope that we have met the expectations of AHBIC since the formulation of the Committee in late 2003.

Dr Ben McKee, Chair

RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Tendering For Bee Sites

Arising out of the Federal Governments National Competition Policy Legislation, the States conducted a comprehensive review of all Acts and subordinate legislation to remove anti-competitive restrictions that cannot be justified in the public interest. In principal, the review should not restrict competition unless it can be demonstrated that the benefit of the restriction to the community as a whole outweighs the costs and that the objectives of the legislation can only be achieved by restricting competition.

Out of this the New South Wales Rural Lands Protection Board, when RPLB sites were to be renewed, called for tenders for sites from site holders in New South Wales and Victoria.

After discussion with the appropriate Government officers in NSW, the NSWAA found that permits and licenses such as those for short term tenure, were not included when legislation was drafted, however, an over zealous RLPB officer, whose charter was to generate funds for the department, decided to call for tendering for the Apiary industry sites

Because of the nature of the beekeeping industry with traditional and sporadic usage of public lands being geared to seasonal conditions, that industry is reliant on continued access to resource for hive health for honey production and pollination services to horticultural and agricultural crops, which creates value added flow on to the wider community from those services, apiary must have security of tenure for sustainable, economic viability.

NSW has a policy similar to Victoria, in that tendering for bee sites is not industry policy, they are also able to trade sites on sale of business or transfer to family members.

Western Australian beekeepers have been successful in establishing dialog with their Minister for Environment on the issue of tendering, it has been agreed to allow tradeability for bee sites, however, the value of the sites will be reflected in the scale of rents that will apply to the various sites throughout the state.

Permits for sites will be issued on certain land tenures for up to seven years and subject to approval, and will be renewable for a further seven years.

On Conservation lands, permits will be issued for up to five years and on approval be issued for a further five years, apiary site rental will reflect full cost recovery.

Indigenous Land Management Framework.

With Federal Governments disbanding of Australian and Torres Strait Island Council, [ATSIC], the Australian government Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry initiated research to determine what pathways exist for Indigenous involvement in the apiculture industry, within the framework of the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy, [NIFS].

During the NIFS consultation process Indigenous communities stated a desire to examine the opportunities and impediments to establishing wood and non wood product industry groups including apiary. Having limited direct industry interaction, the Department is seeking the assistance of state government authorities, apiarists and industry bodies such as the Australian Honey bee Industry Council.

Initial investigations show that a variety of impediments exist regarding the establishment of commercial apiaries within Indigenous communities. In the long term, with creative approaches, this and many other barriers may be overcome, but a variety of potential business prospects have been identified. It was found that the mirroring of commercial apiaries on Indigenous land appeared difficult, however, ideas under investigation are agreements for usage of Indigenous land by apiarists, operation of hives for crop pollination, boutique honey production and the establishment partnership with existing producers to create value added honey products, access to Indigenous land and commercial pollination practices would require the development of business agreements and contracts.

Recommendation 1 of the Draft NIFS is:-

Establish a specialist Indigenous Forestry Unit [IFU] to act as a focal point for the NIFS. The likely location for the IFU would be within Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, [DAFF] or possibly the National Association of Forest Industries [NAFI] and the position would be for an initial period of three years. The primary functions for the unit during this period could include to:

- * develop a marketing plan to actively promote and communicate the NIFS and encourage stakeholders to become involved
- * establish a comprehensive data base of stakeholders interested in increasing Indigenous involvement in the wood and non wood products forestry industry
- * establish an information bank relevant to the NIFS that would include:-
 - a toolkit for forest resource assessment appropriate to the NIFS objectives
 - a project check list and “how to” guide lines for project development
 - an inventory of Indigenous forest based activities and products including case studies of successful NIFS related initiatives
 - models of successful partnerships, joint venture arrangements and other business arrangements between Indigenous and non Indigenous people that define key ingredients for their success, and can in turn be duplicated; Case studies and models where there is a natural relationship to build on will be of particular importance
- * develop an information plan to ensure a regular flow of relevant information to the data base and the wider community
- * investigate a national coordinated approach to training and project funding by funding providers - relevant Government agencies, industry training and advisory bodies, the Indigenous Land Corporation [ILC] - to achieve the NIFS outcome
- * develop a job placement and mentoring program place trained Indigenous

Australians in wood product and non wood product forestry industry positions

- * promote development of a scholarship and mentoring program to place trained school leavers in both wood and non wood product forestry industry positions
- * promote the inclusion of cross cultural training into forestry industry training programs
- * in consultation with the forestry industry, prepare an educational package about the industry to be delivered in the areas of interest.

The Indigenous Land Management Framework, could be termed “a wish list” for the Indigenous peoples, there is an interest in the “Cape” region of northern Australia, the sugar bag or trigona native bees which nest in tree hollows are stingless, can be managed in boxes, used for pollination and honey production, and are of interest to the native peoples, the sugar bag bee produces the traditional source of honey for Indigenous peoples and falls into the boutique production category.

AHBIC has offered to assist where needed in the future.

The flow on from the Federal Government document is that in the states where Indigenous peoples have made claims over public lands, and in most states there are a number of claims, the states are handing over certain lands, in some instances the Indigenous people will make up the greater part of community management groups, already this practice is well under way in Victoria in the Box-Ironbark Community Consultative Advisory Groups.

Each state has a draft discussion paper for Indigenous management, some are almost completed, Victoria’s is well on the way and the beekeeping industry is now involved. The Victorian Apiarists’ Association Inc. has had a meeting with some of the Indigenous team, Mr Charles Prouse and Ms Mandy Rossetto, driving the Victorian program, which the Victorian government in partnership with Victoria’s Indigenous people. The Victorian Government is proposing to develop an Aboriginal Land and Resource Development Strategy to address the dispossession of the aboriginal land and culture. To promote indigenous involvement in land and natural resource management, increase Indigenous land ownership, provide greater authority for Indigenous people in cultural heritage management, and provide opportunities for Indigenous people around training, economic development and employment authority for Indigenous people in cultural heritage management.

There are two potential sites for handovers in West Australia, one in South Australia, one in Tasmania, the Tiwi Islands in Northern Territory, one in Queensland, one in New South Wales, and, in Victoria the Barmah Forest, which is being considered for National Park status.

The Barmah bush was in the Yorta Yorta Goulburn Murray Rivers Clans claim which was lost in the Supreme Court because it could not be proven that the clans had had continuous association with the area.

During the mediation process at the time of the Claim, I was one of the VAA Executive representing industry at the hearings, we were able to negotiate continued access for beekeepers throughout the bush, beekeepers were asked to respect ‘special places’ belonging to the Yorta Yorta and not destroy the feral hives in the red gum forest. Licensing would remain with the then Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

At the recent Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc./ Indigenous peoples meeting, a copy of that access agreement was provided to the group who felt that it was very likely to be acceptable in this proposed hand over of the Barmah bush to the Indigenous people. Issuing of licenses/permits for wood and non wood products, cattle grazing and beekeeping etc, is expected to remain with DS&E or Parks Vic, whichever it may turn out to be.

Access To State And/Or National Parks

Victoria has a document, "21.5 PL Apiculture [beekeeping] on Public Land," formulated in conjunction with, the then, National Parks, Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Victorian Apiarists' Association in 1995.

This paper has been used on many occasions to retain access to public land for Victoria's beekeepers. It provides for permitted access to National and or State Parks, all sites listed at time of declaration are the amount of sites allowable in the Parks, are renewable and transferable with sale of business or to family on change management.

South Australia

The South Australian Government recognizes the value of the beekeeping industry and its economic importance for the pollination services to high value horticultural crops. It also states that recent research has indicated that well managed commercial honey bee sites can coexist within National Parks and Conservation reserves without causing adverse impacts on natural bio-diversity and ecosystem process, the Government has determined that beekeepers should continue to have controlled use of Parks. This Memorandum of Understanding was signed by South Australia's President, September 9th 2002. Some Parks have a prescribed number of sites, and are renewable yearly.

Tasmania

There exists an understanding that beekeeping on public land is permitted under various land managers, except National Parks. Apiary is permitted in State Parks and Reserves, on Crown Land apiary sites are allocated in consultation with the Land Authority and Industry, and are issued on an annual basis, Apiary sites on public land are mostly in Leatherwood areas.

Forestry Tasmania issue sites in conjunction with Tasmania Beekeepers Association recommendations, there are limits to the amount of hives permitted on sites with an allowable excess of up to 25%. Vacant Leatherwood sites are advertised for expressions of interest, and will be allocated on recommendation from the management committee, declarations must be signed to the effect that current sites are utilized up to 80%.

Sites can be transferred on sale of hives on approval by Forestry Tasmania., sites can be paid for as annual or tri-annual basis, no permits are required to keep bees on private lands in most Municipal areas.

Northern Territory.

Apiary is not permitted in Commonwealth Parks, no access is available to Uluru [Ayers Rock], or Kakadu. Access is denied to State Conservation Parks also, however, beekeepers use the Parks without challenge up to date. There is a strong Green movement in the region who believe there is no place for European honey bees.

Queensland

Apiary is not permitted in National Parks (it ceased in May, 1996) as beekeeping is considered contrary to the management principals of national parks for the following reasons:-

- access to the hives requires vehicular tracks and a clear fire-free area around hives, and creates regular disturbance, and there is concern that managed honey bees cause detrimental effects to the native ecosystem.

Apiary may be permitted in Conservation Parks and Resource Reserves where it is not in conflict with management objectives.

Where a new National park is declared over an area where beekeeping is an established use, beekeeping may be authorised to continue for the duration of the lease or for a maximum of three years, however, apiary will be phased out over the next twenty years or by 2025. Most of Queensland's honey production comes from the south-east forests and western areas. New National Park declarations are cutting further into Queensland's diminishing forest resource.

States Reference Folders

AHBIC has, over time, tried to obtain records of all State Acts, Regulations, Recommendations, Guidelines, Codes of Practice, and other, pertaining to apiary, along with any research papers being used to restrict, through the Precautionary Principal, and other, access to Public Lands in their States. When obtained, the documents will be assembled into a reference folder for each State containing all States information, the folders will be able to be added to as States make amendments to public land management involving apiary.

AHBIC asked me to pursue this long standing request and I wrote to all the States Executive Councils requesting assistance in the gathering of the materials.

I would like to acknowledge the much appreciated assistance and cooperation from the Secretaries and Resource people, [for the supply of the requested information] of Tasmania, South Australia, and Queensland.

New South Wales, Northern Territory and Western Australia are still assembling theirs. Thank you very much for your efforts.

Elwyne Papworth, Chairman.

AHBIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH APRIL 2005

Assets		
Cash on hand – Cheque account	\$11,082.32	
- Premium account	<u>90,369.51</u>	\$101,451.83
 Other Assets		
Term Deposit 50178856	6,260.77	
Term Deposit 50057304	52,584.91	
AMP Diversified Growth Fund	58,277.80	
Rental Bond	7,000.00	
B-Qual Australia Pty Limited	99.00	
Invest Subsidiary – B-Qual	1.00	
Invest Subsidiary – Apimondia 2007	<u>1.00</u>	124,224.48
Fixed Assets		
Furniture and Fixtures at cost	18,150.46	
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-12,028.89</u>	<u>6,121.57</u>
Total Assets		\$231,797.88
 Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors		
Provisions	21,249.00	
Apimondia 2007 Pty Ltd	1.00	
GST Collected	2,561.06	
GST Paid	<u>-492.33</u>	
Total Liabilities		<u>\$23,318.73</u>
 Net Assets		 <u>\$ 208,479.15</u>
 Equity		
Retained Earnings	137,351.86	
Current Year Earnings	<u>71,127.29</u>	
Total Equity		<u>\$208,479.15</u>

AHBIC has two wholly owned subsidiaries – Apimondia 2007 Pty Limited and B-Qual Australia Pty Limited whose financial years end on June 30. They will also be audited at that time. At the time of writing they have no debts and are ongoing commercial concerns

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 2005**

Income		
Combined industry	\$317,460.89	
Interest	4,417.54	
AMP distribution	7,173.46	
Miscellaneous income	10,636.29	
Membership dues	300.00	
Pest/Diseases Fund	9,349.27	
Promotional video income	<u>300.00</u>	
Total Income		<u>\$349,637.45</u>
Expenses		
Annual leave expense	2,407.27	
Annual meeting	14,894.60	
Apimondia 2007	2,590.90	
Audit fees	2,023.75	
Bank charges	325.61	
Consultancy fees		
Couriers	192.93	
Depreciation expense	2528.61	
Directors' sitting fees	909.09	
Electricity	496.72	
Insurance	4,221.92	
Legal fees	839.13	
Long service leave expense	7,126.23	
Loss on sale of fixed assets	1,274.16	
Office supplies and email	1,188.25	
Postage	1,850.46	
Promotion	8,461.37	
Printing and stationery	3,248.63	
Remuneration expenses	111,021.80	
Rent	26,053.02	
Repairs and maintenance	271.82	
Secretarial services	300.00	
Special projects	7,180.92	
Staff amenities	176.31	
Subscriptions	4,897.15	
Superannuation	36,264.00	
Telephone	8,709.69	
Travel	<u>34,104.23</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>\$278,510.16</u>
Operating Profit		<u>\$ 71,127.29</u>

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTORS TO AHBIC

AHBIC THANKS ITS SUPPORTERS

**AB's Honey
Harold Ayton
Beechworth Honey
Bourke, Lindsay
Capilano Honey Limited
Denmar Apiaries
Dewar Apiaries
Gells Honey Maryborough
Honey DownUnder
HL Hoskinson
McDonald, R and E
McPherson, PB and CM
Murley, C and M
Oakley, IJ and PA**

**Palmer, CB, & Co
Papworth, F and E
Pollination Association of WA
Redpaths Beekeeping Supplies
Saxonbee Enterprises
Spring Gully Foods Pty Ltd
Stephens, R
Swan Settlers
Tasmanian Crop Pollination
Tasmanian Honey Company
Taylor, Stan
Warral Apiaries
Weerona Apiaries
Wescobee Limited**

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!**