

2006 - 2007



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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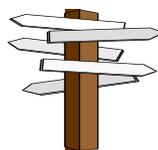
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Inside this issue:

Chairman's Report	2
B-Qual Australia P/L	3
AQBBA Report	4
FCAAA Report	5
NCPA Report	6
HPMAA Report	8
Apimondia 2007	10
AQBGG	11
AHBIC AGM	13
Committee Reports	14
Financial Statements	22
AHBIC Sponsors	24

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Another year has passed with very low honey prices and most beekeepers have finished with an average year of honey production. This next year may be difficult with honey production expected to be down. I would like to thank all the financial contributors for their ongoing support. It is important that we continue this level of contributions to help represent industry on the many issues that are before us.

Industry Partnership Programme

The application for funds to develop a national code of conduct for access to apiary sites on public lands was successful. By now all States have had a meeting to develop a draft which will be presented at State conferences. This will be the first step in developing an Environmental Management System for the bee industry.

Another application was lodged in March this year to the action partnerships grants, for development of course materials for our training programme. Education was one of the priorities that came out of the taking stock and setting directions paper.

Marketing Advice

The marketing plan has now been completed with some very interesting suggestions. Being such a small industry with limited funds it will be difficult to put in place some of these.

At the last executive meeting it was agreed to redevelop the AHBIC website. This will give a more professional image with links to other sites promoting our industry. It was also suggested we look at the idea of developing a marketing toolkit. The toolkit will help to ensure a positive, consistent and correct profile of the industry is used, which professionally promotes the industry to its best advantage. It was recommended that the quaint cottage industry style is left to the amateur honey producers.

Animal Health Australia

A review into the National Sentinel Hive Programme was held during the year. It is hoped that the recommendations from the workshop will be supported by all sectors. Beekeepers included in the programme may now receive some financial support for their participation.

Animal Health Australia has formally advised that a consultant has been appointed to review the emergency animal response agreement. AHBIC will continue in their efforts to have bee diseases/pests included in the agreement.

Para dichlorobenzene (PDB)

As most people would be aware the EU advised that PDB was detected in a Jelly bush and Manuka blend of honey coming from Australia.

Trace back of the contamination found that the Australian product originated from a now deceased beekeeper. Unfortunately his equipment had been sold to various beekeepers.

AHBIC has done some investigation to find that PDB was still being sold in some States for the use of Wax Moth control. AHBIC moved quickly to advise APVMA to have it removed from sale to beekeepers.

Honeybee Linkages workshop

This workshop was held as a result of consultation with Minister McGauran, Max Whitten and AHBIC. The workshop was co-coordinated by Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation in conjunction with AHBIC.

The workshop was attended by many pollination dependant horticultural industries. The danger of Varroa Mite entering Australia was highlighted to these industries and noted that their pollination services may be under threat.

The workshop participants agreed that a group be formed called the “Pollination Industry Network”. This group will continue to progress issues raised from the workshop.

Apimondia 2007

As members of industry would be aware, Apimondia 2007 will be held in Melbourne from 9th to 14th September 2007. I would urge those of you who have not yet committed to attend this important event, to register as soon as possible.

The last time there was an Apimondia Congress in Australia was over thirty years ago and there is not likely to be another in Australia in our lifetime. Already we have doubled the size of ApiExpo and there are more than 730 registered delegates from all over the world. Anyone who has not been to an Apimondia Congress, should not miss this opportunity.

Those who have previously attended an Apimondia Congress should also take the opportunity to attend what should be one of the highlights of the beekeeping year.

I would also like to put on record my thanks to both the organising committee and the local organising committee of Apimondia. A conference this size is never easy to organise and I applaud the efforts made to showcase our industry to the world.

Finally I would like to thank the Executive for their support throughout the year. This was one of the most difficult years with the sad loss of Graeme Matthews so suddenly. Graeme was a dedicated worker for our industry not only at a National level but also in the State of Victoria. I would also like to thank all the committees of AHBIC for their continuous work during the year. Special thanks must also go to our Executive Director Stephen Ware and Laurel Pickering in the office. Their dedication and commitment to AHBIC is a credit to our industry.

Stephen Fewster – Chairman

**B-QUAL AUSTRALIA PTY
LIMITED**

It has been very encouraging over the past twelve months that the industry is starting to realise that the general public is the final user of our produce and that they demand high quality that can be backed by a traceable system that is from the farmer to the shelf.

With the help from packers and the Aus-Qual office we have been able to hold more workshops that have greatly assisted those attending. Special thanks must go out to those who participated.

With the current detection of the chemical commonly known as PDB, it was encouraging to see that a tracing system helped find the source and was then able to find just how much of an issue it could be to beekeepers alike. However, it has slipped through the system, so it does show that if you make things too simple people will take advantage of it but we also must realise we have been encouraging industry to come aboard in joining this program in this early stage.

Since the detection has been made our programme has been stepped up to make sure that these items about chemical usage in the industry will be scrutinised much more than before.

So, just to remind everyone, the industry can only use chemicals that specify bee hive use or similar for inside hive applications. All other chemical usage is prohibited and this is why paper work is important to be record the use of any chemicals so any adverse effect can be traced back if a problem arises and can be corrected.

Two meetings have been held in the past twelve months, both in conjunction with the Food Safety and Residue Prevention Committee and this has proven to be a helpful exercise with B-QUAL knowing some of the issues that are happening. Also, now that we have a new member on the board, Dr Ben McKee, he has kept us informed on issues.

With markets changing it will be necessary that all industry has some sort of quality system in place that is linked to traceability of their produce.

With new parasites on our door step it is only time before we will be using more chemicals than ever so we must have some sort of recording system in now. Preferably it can be BQUAL.

I would like to thank the Aus-Qual board for being so patient with our industry in the slowness of our people to think ahead and think what the actual market place requires, and not what industry wants, to do nothing and let the rest of the world pass it by.

Ken Gell - Chairman B-Qual Australia Pty Limited

AUSTRALIAN QUEEN BEE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

The Association has had another busy year with issues regarding the import conditions that affect the export of live bees – eg small hive beetle. Canada has suspended imports of package bees from eastern states of Australia. Queen bees are still allowed to enter Canada.

Overall, the past year has been a difficult one with continued drought conditions. Queen breeders reported that orders on the domestic market were down on previous years due to the poor honey prices.

The demand for Australian package bees and queen bees in the USA is growing due to the positive feedback from previous years.

Col Wilson - President

FEDERAL COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN APIARISTS' ASSOCIATIONS

Bill Weiss, the previous Vice President of FCAAA, has assumed the position of interim President due to the untimely death of Mr Graeme Matthews. Mr Lindsay Bourke from Tasmania has assumed the interim position of Vice President. These positions will be up for election at the FCAAA Annual General Meeting.

Season

Most states have had to endure continuing drought which has made it difficult to keep hive strength, however some regions and some producers, have produced close to normal production. A lot of beekeepers, however, did not produce much honey and are under financial stress at present. Producers are finding it very difficult to maintain hive strength and numbers going into winter. This will inevitably have ongoing ramifications for spring. Beekeepers in most states have had to travel many extra kilometres just to maintain hives.

Fires

The horrific bushfires in Victoria again destroyed many thousands of hectares of forested lands. Much of this was to be used during the season and is now lost for many years. New South Wales also had large losses of resources from fires, some 150,000 hectares, which will also impact on production for many years.

Promotional Funds

Funds were provided to Victoria and Queensland Associations who were the only states to apply. The review of promotional funds to states has been completed and states may now direct submissions to AHBIC for this funding.

Government Inquiry

The FCAAA intends to prepare a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the future direction of beekeeping. AHBIC, States and, hopefully, as many individual beekeepers as possible will also make submissions to the Inquiry. This is an opportunity for our industry to lift its public profile and portray the importance of the honey bee to modern society. We will never get a better opportunity than the one we have before us.

Organic Honey

Standards are being formulated for a National Standard for Organic Honey. Up till now, domestic sales of organic honey have not been regulated and some honey has been sold under the organic label which may not have been produced to organic standards. The new standards should cut out this practice in the market place. B-Qual is soon to be able to certify organic honey producers for a very reasonable cost and this should facilitate some beekeepers to gain better returns for some of their production.

Bill Weiss – Chairman

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF POLLINATION ASSOCIATIONS

Pollination - What a Year!

It has been a disheartening year for beekeepers. Crops were decimated by frost and then many pollinated crops were written-off because of a lack of water. Many farmers who grew certified seed last year did not even attempt seed crops this year because of the drought. It is a dispiriting sight for beekeepers to find hungry stock grazing on a crop their bees have just finished pollinating.

I have attended many workshops and seminars over the last 12 months, including:

- ◆ The National Animal Health Performance Standards Workshop, Melbourne.
- ◆ Four AHBIC Executive Meetings, Melbourne and Canberra.
- ◆ The Australian Queen Bee Breeding Group Meeting, Canberra.
- ◆ The Animal Health Australia Media Training Workshop, Canberra.
- ◆ An Industry Liaison Officer Training, Workshop, Tocal, NSW.
- ◆ National Management Group Training Workshop, Canberra.
- ◆ Environmental Management Systems Workshop, Launceston.
- ◆ Honeybee Industry Linkage Workshop (two days), Canberra.
- ◆ Biosecurity Awareness Workshop, Launceston.
- ◆ Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Disease Meeting, Canberra.

Of over 40 workshops, meetings and seminars I attended this year, I feel the Honeybee Industry Linkage Workshop held in Canberra during April this year, was the most important event for the Pollination Industry. 75 delegates from all different sectors were in one place to discuss the importance of pollinating services to agriculture. I believe that this indicates the increased recognition of how important our pollinating services are to the whole agricultural sector.

What are the Most Important Issues and Where are We Heading?

There are two main threats to the Honeybee Industry: an incursion of the exotic Varroa mite; and a reduction in access to forests in order to maintain a diverse source of pollen and nectar for hive health.

The Honeybee Industry Linkage Workshop identified a number of problems within the pollinating industry, which reduce its ability to mitigate the risks. In particular, it was agreed that the current response plan to a possible Varroa mite incursion is inadequate and that the Honeybee Industry cannot, and should not, manage the risk alone. This is because the current resources available for research and development into the Honeybee Industry are inadequate.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of our pollinating services, there remains a poor understanding on the role of honeybees in the pollination of crops. The Honeybee Industry, together with agricultural industry representatives, needs to educate growers on the benefits honeybee pollination can provide.

There is a need for more beekeeper professionalism in the provision of pollinating services. This is because some pollinators provide a poor quality service to growers, which reduces the reputation of the industry. It was suggested that the Pollination Industry should adopt *pollination industry standards* and *quality control measures*.

There also needs to be more education within the Honeybee Industry as a whole, particularly in the pollination side. Beekeepers need to understand the intricacies of pollination and be more consistent in their business operations, especially in pricing their services. Growers need to be able to recognise paid pollinating services that are managed well and the additional benefits a honeybee industry can provide over feral bee pollination.

There is an urgent need for beekeepers to unite under a *code of practice* for pollinating practices and a fee structure for all crop pollinations. This is already happening in Tasmania and could easily be adapted for mainland states.

The importance of honeybee pollination to the agricultural sector has been repeatedly reinforced. To survive in this economic climate, beekeepers should adapt according to market demand, diversify and ensure a better return in the future from pollinating services as well as honey production.

Example: Pollinating Services & Honey Production Case Study

Product/Service	Cost/Return
72 tonnes of honey produced @ \$3.20 per kg	\$230,400
Cost of production at \$2.70 @ per kg	\$199,400
Profit	\$31,000
Pollination fees	\$72,000
Total Profit	\$103,000

In this example the total profit figure is split between 69.9% from pollinating services and 30.1% from honey production.

In order to generate an equivalent 69.9% profit solely from honey production, approximately 231.5 tonnes of honey would have to be produced. 69.9% of 231.5

tonnes is 161.8 tonnes. This means that to match the \$72,000 received from pollination fees in the example, an additional 161.8 tonnes of honey would have to be produced.

Demand for pollinating services is rising and I am very optimistic for the future of the Pollination Industry. Let us hope that we have more rain during the winter months and we all have a profitable year.

Lindsay Bourke - President

HONEY PACKERS AND MARKETERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

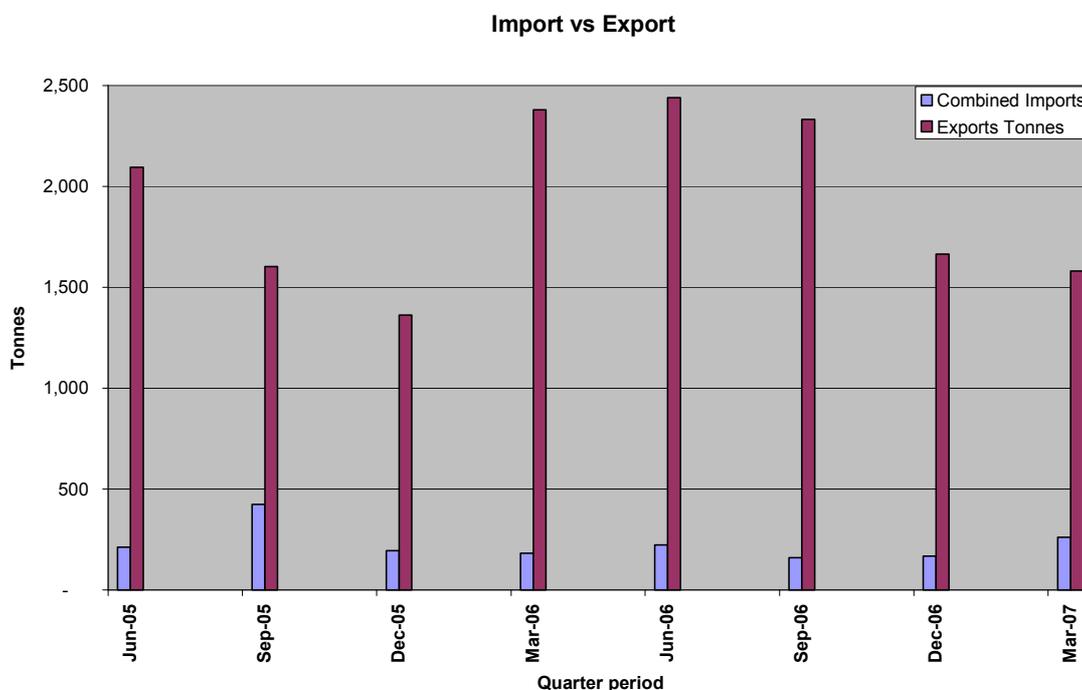
The year 2006/2007 has seen some fundamental changes occur that already has, or will in the future, impact on packers. The year in review has been reported to most in our industry on a quarterly basis via the publishing of my reports in industry magazines and the AHBIC newsletter. What is contained in this report is a summary of events along with any new material to hand that would be of interest. Prime impacts noted are:

1. The first effect over the year for the packing industry has come out of the dramatic honey crop production changes due to the drought. Drought wise, certain honeys became limited or delayed which has a flow on effect to packer blends and the marketing of certain straight lines. Consumers and industrial customers demand consistency in their products and droughts give packers problems in this regard.
2. The next effect is of Australia's weaker export competitiveness on the back of the increasingly higher currency to the USD. Foreign exchange impacts show, that the exchange rate was around 76 cents last year where as today it sits at 83 cents. That has a flow on effect of around \$200 per ton less for bulk honey alone in the last 12 months. This loss has not been offset with increased international honey prices. Equally retail packaged honey export values are also affected negatively.
3. There has been no volume growth in domestic sales via mainstream supermarkets for the last three years with sales flat at just over 9,000 ton (it was around 12,000 ton per year in the year 2000). This is despite heavy promotional support by packers and some pack changes to stimulate sales. Some of the loss not recovered is due to beekeepers going to the public and selling direct. That volume is now estimated at up to 35% of available honey.
4. The changed scene in mainstream supermarkets with increased dominance of House branded products and the reduction of known packer brands is having many ramifications. Low profit margins are now endured by packers and the difference to what retailers return on these products puts out of balance the gap between farm gate values and final retail selling values. Further consolidation of the industry is anticipated. With packers attaining low margins it stifles available funds for innovation and honey promotion in general.
5. The allowing of Australian honey into New Zealand under the new protocol is still in the courts after the NZ honey industry lost the case on the 21st March and then

promptly took the path of the appealing the decision. Long term I believe Australia will export to New Zealand but at average retail prices for general honey there is no real advantage to pursue the market. Only specialty honeys will provide any opportunity from a profit perspective.

6. To be gazetted are the Honey export control orders for products going into the EU, Canada, New Guinea and New Zealand (other countries coming on stream). This means all sales to those countries will be regulated through AQIS as the prescribed authority and packers will need to comply with EU standards for packing plants and traceability. That information is mostly contained in the export orders. Testing costs for checking residues are forever growing and ultimately end up lowering the final prices packers can pay.
7. Quality assurance is further being demanded by the big retailers and customers. Woolworths and Coles who dominate around 74% of the supermarket trade each demand their own system of accreditation and require beekeeper suppliers to packers to be quality assured to be able to supply product in their contracts. That just adds extra unnecessary costs! Most packers have been quietly working with beekeepers for some time on QA but now the insistence is there from the trade to accelerate efforts with beekeepers. One major packer has lead the way by requiring all their beekeeper suppliers to be quality assured or at least have an audit booked by the 31st March 2007 and currently offer a 10 cents per kilo premium for QA honey (once they have a copy of the accreditation certificate on file).

Honey imports to Australia were an area of general concern to Australian beekeeper producers in previous years but as supply in Australia increased so imports decreased. With the poor future crop expectation ahead of us there is no doubt that unless there is sufficient local supply we will again see imports rise (this also will occur if the domestic price rises too far out of balance to what traders can import honey at). The following graph shows the trends over time for imports and our performance in exports.



The last 12 months data shows a total of 814 tonnes of imports against 1,013 tonnes the previous year. Export volume was up on last year. The bulk of the imported honey

was from three sources being New Zealand, Argentina and China (source ABS data 2007) with Manuka from NZ being the major player at 230 ton.

HPMAA members have continued to work to maintain prices paid to beekeepers as high as possible given both local and international pressures. Supply and demand will be the greatest force in moving prices paid at the farm gate; however packers compete against each other in a highly competitive spread category, face supermarket pressures for cheaper prices and need to work against other non members and players in the market. All those forces ultimately impact on honey values paid.

Internationally the bulk honey market has seen an improvement in values attainable with it moving to a USD\$1,650 composite average per tonne, marginally up over last year.

Other points for the AHBIC year include:

- Television, radio and press advertising took place during the year by the major packers to entice sales and attain brand loyalty.
- The HPMAA in conjunction with the FSPRC worked together on microbial honey testing, PDB issues and a range of other food safety items. This FSPRC is proving to be very valuable to industry. People chosen to be on the committee who report to AHBIC need to have a sound understanding of technical requirements on residues, testing and food safety trends both here in Australia and overseas.
- The packing sector continues to reward producers who progress down the QA path and those who pursue organic honey certification. Organics still present a real opportunity and work has progressed with AQIS on the regulated domestic Organic honey standard making it compulsory that any domestically sold honey complies with the organic standard (which is not the current case). To date only Organic exports were required to comply with the organic standard and AQIS is the competent authority to do the certification clearance on each exported consignment.

The HPMAA is pleased to continue to support voluntary funding AHBIC via contributions being made and the association works in a spirit of co-operation and unity within the industry and AHBIC.

Eduard Planken, President

APIMONDIA 2007 PTY LIMITED

The Apimondia World Congress in Melbourne is rapidly approaching. Its importance to the world bee and honey producers as possibly one of the most important congresses ever is rapidly escalating. This is primarily because of the shadow cast on the industry from the sudden emergence of colony collapse disorder in the US first and now elsewhere in the world. This issue will be discussed at the Congress by the leading scientists in their fields and a special roundtable session covering across many scientific disciplines will assess the progress and priorities for research in understanding and combating the spread of the problem.

The scientific talent attending this Apimondia Congress will be the best in the world in this field. Previous Apimondia congresses have demonstrated the technical brain power available to the world honeybee industry and the Melbourne Congress will be at the forefront.

Delegates are coming from around the world and the Apimondia Congress is the best forum for building contacts with fellow members of the industry internationally.

The industry is demonstrating its confidence in the future as Melbourne will have one of the largest ApiExpos ever with exhibitors from around the world, showcasing their latest equipment and products. Our sponsors led by Capilano as the platinum sponsor are all helping to promote this Australian Congress to the world's industry.

The technical tour day in rural Victoria will be a highlight for many delegates and provide an opportunity for Australian beekeepers to compare notes with industry leaders from around the world.

I would like to thank my fellow members of the Organising Committee and the many volunteers who will be assisting at the Congress for the work and help they are putting into making it a successful event.

This Apimondia Congress in Melbourne on 9 - 14 September, 2007 will be the opportunity for all Australian beekeepers to see their industry on a world stage.

Terry Ryan - Chairman

AUSTRALIAN QUEEN BEE BREEDING GROUP

The Chairman of the group is Mr Colin Wilson and the Secretary is Mr Stephen Ware. The members are Mr Laurie Dewar, Dr Ben Oldroyd, Mr Linton Briggs, and Mr Bill Weiss. Mr Bruce White is the co-coordinator. Mr Keith McIlvride stepped down during the year, but has maintained an interest in the program.

The committee has had several phone hookups during the year and a face to face meeting in April prior to the industry's Linkage Workshop. All members were invited to attend with a total of 17 in attendance.

Establishing Stock for the Program

In the autumn of 2006 Mr White approached a number of queen breeder's commercial beekeepers and Linton Briggs who headed up a consortium of beekeepers interested in improving stock.

Drone mother stock was donated to form the foundation of an Italian Closed Population breeding program. The drone mother stock was held by those doing the artificial insemination. Laurie and Paula Dewar, Carl Cooper and Bill Weiss over winter evaluation culled the drone mothers to fifteen lines. Those who donated the drone mothers provided a number of virgin queens from the best breeder or breeders. These virgins were then inseminated with semen from all the fifteen lines in the

program. Those who donated the base lines were given an inseminated queen inseminated by drones from the 15 lines

Evaluation of Stock

The inseminated stock has now been distributed to Mr Wayne Sawdy in Queensland and Mr Neil Bingley in NSW for evaluation. Mr Lindsay Bourke in Tasmania has the fifteen lines but his evaluation will be from open mated queens. Back up stock of all the lines are also being held. Evaluation main criteria will be honey production and docility. Dr Ben Oldroyd and Mr Peter Oxley will be providing the group with genetic guidance and evaluating the data provided by the evaluators.

Opportunity for Industry to Purchase Stock

It has been decided that an on line auction be investigated to sell the evaluated lines. With a print out showing the evaluation and catalogue produced, this would be placed on an electronic system to allow bidding. The auction is likely to take place when the stock has been evaluated - probably the end of January, beginning of February 2008. It was further agreed that AI queens from high performance lines would be sold for a minimum of \$500.00.

Overseas Evaluation

Discussion has taken place concerning the testing of stock in the future in America.

Industry Workshop

It has been decided to hold a workshop hosted by Dr Ben Oldroyd to discuss the results of the program and provide information to industry for 1 ½ days on 5th and 6th April 2008 at Sydney University

Possible Extra Funding

Mr Linton Briggs indicated he believed there may be additional funding from the Federal Government to assist the program

Black Program

Dr Ben Oldroyd and Mr Peter Oxley have agreed to ensure the stock used in the Caucasian and Carniolan program is true to race. There is a belief many are intermixed and very few pure breeds exist in Australia. This offer of DNA work will be very interesting. Depending on the results, a decision will be made relating to the start of a black program.

Future Directions

Variations to the program will occur next year following a suggestion by Mr Laurie Dewar this will maintain the genetics but reduce the costs.

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting will be held in July at the time of the AHBIC annual conference in Melbourne.

As coordinator I would like to thank everyone involved - those who supplied the genetic from the best stock they owned, drones mothers and virgin queens. The huge efforts put in by Paula and Laurie Dewar, Carl Cooper and Bill Weiss doing the artificial insemination and those willing to do the evaluation have been appreciated.

Bruce White - Coordinator

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AHBIC Annual General Meeting and Conference will be held on 9th and 10th July 2007 at The Quality Hotel Melbourne Airport, 265 Mickleham Road, Tullamarine, Victoria. This is to be followed by an AHBIC Executive Meeting in the afternoon of 10th July. Details of accommodation arrangements are as follows:

**Venue: Quality Hotel Melbourne Airport (4 star)
265 Mickleham Road, Tullamarine**

Accommodation is available at \$120 per night per room (single or double) or \$162 per night per room for a spa room. Some family rooms are also available with queen bed and two singles for \$156 per night. Please make your own bookings by calling **03 9338 3222 and quote Beekeepers Conference** to obtain the discounted prices quoted above.

Other Accommodation Options.

Airport Motel and Convention Centre
33 Ardlie Street, Attwood (4 star)

Telephone 03 9333 2200

Airport Village Caravan Park
Cnr Ardlie Street and Mickleham Road, Attwood
Motel Formula 1
Caldwell Drive, Melbourne Airport (2 star)

Telephone 03 9333 1619

Telephone 03 8336 1811

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 23rd May 2007 and **close on COB Friday 8th June 2007**. 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.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DISEASE COMMITTEE

Disease Control - Australia Stands Alone

Varroa destructor - We Don't Need it!

Australia is the only country in the world that does not have the debilitating pest *Varroa destructor*. Light infections of *Varroa* are sometimes hard to detect and it is thought that *Varroa* is spread mainly on beekeepers' clothes. The mite jumps from bee to bee, similar to a flea.

Varroa originates from Japan and Korea but has spread around the world. The North Island of New Zealand has been infested since 2000 but in 2006 the disease jumped Cooks Strait to arrive in Nelson, making the South Island the latest casualty. Dr Mark Goodman admitted that by the time beekeepers detected *Varroa* in their sentinel hives it was too late, the mite was established in the general bee population.

The only good thing that has come out of the New Zealand infestation is that we have learnt how NOT to do it. Having vast numbers of 'commercial' sentinel hives is not the way to go. It was proven that '*Early Detection*' was far too late.

Australian beekeepers are faced with an urgent decision - to fully endorse the bait hive program to run alongside the sentinel hive program. If New Zealand had had bait hives they may have had a chance of stopping *Varroa destructor* before it got into the sentinel hives.

There are 37 sentinel hives established throughout Australia with Tasmania hosting the pilot sentinel hive program. The Apiary Liaison Committee believes that the bait hive program should supersede, or at least value-add, the sentinel hive program. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, by the time an exotic disease is detected in a sentinel hive there is a high chance that it has already spread wider afield (as was the case in New Zealand). Secondly, an invading bee colony is more likely to establish itself at a new site, that's why Bait Hives complete with a Pheromone Bait is vital for our defence.

If *Varroa* gets established in Australia or Tasmania (this is one time I will admit that Tasmania is set apart from mainland Australia) it will devastate our horticultural industry to say nothing of our beekeeping industry.

Common sense tells anyone who knows a little about honeybees and *Varroa destructor* habits, that a bait hive program **must be** started immediately. Benefits of a bait hive program have been proven elsewhere. Bait hives are usually placed at ports-of-entry where for invading bees the first port of call (pardon the pun) is an empty hive with pheromone bait. This hive acts as a big attraction for an invading swarm.

Vigilance from everyone in the near vicinity of a bait hive is needed so that early detection of bee activity is reported immediately to an apiary officer. The swarm can then be promptly frozen and sent to a laboratory for analysing. This happened recently at the Burnie Port in Tasmania.

Biological Control of the Wax Moth

The bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT) has been used as a natural insecticide in agriculture for a number of years, especially in the USA. BT produces a protein which is toxic to the digestive system of the target insects.

Bacillus thuringiensis offers a highly effective protection against the wax moth. The Vita product B 401 (also known as 'Certan') is a concentrated solution of BT, which offers up to 100% efficacy.

I first brought this to the AHBIC Board in February 2006. It has taken a while for a new way of controlling the wax moth to be considered in Australia. Due to PDB, *Bacillus thuringiensis* is now getting fast-tracked to be registered in Australia for all Beekeepers to use. (Thanks to Mr Ed Planken.)

Colony Collapse Disease

This is a disorder affecting bee colonies in the United States and has the potential to devastate the apiary industry. 'Colony Collapse Disorder' is causing bees to leave their hives in numbers which affect honey product and pollination. Exactly what the disease is remains unknown and is still being investigated, but it may be some kind of fungus.

A foreign microsporidium fungus known to affect Asian bees was identified as a probable cause of the significant mortality rate of bee colonies in the U.S. The entry of untreated honey to feed bees is a pathway by which such pathogenic parasites can infect bee colonies.

Training

Some of the training I undertook this year for my disease portfolio included:

- ◆ The National Animal Health Performance Standards Workshop, Melbourne.
- ◆ The Animal Health Australia Media Training Workshop, Canberra.
- ◆ Industry Liaison Officer Training, Workshop, Tocal, NSW.
- ◆ National Management Group Training Workshop, Canberra.
- ◆ Biosecurity Awareness Workshop, Launceston.
- ◆ Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Disease Meeting, Canberra.

Lindsay Bourke - Chair

EDUCATION SUB COMMITTEE

The most important development in education this year was the establishment of the competency standards. This provides a pathway now for members of industry to undertake traineeships/apprenticeships. The Education Committee now is looking forward to government support to enable course materials to be developed which can

then be made available to recognised training organisations so as to deliver education modules to the wider industry. The government's in-principle agreement to our request for funding is a welcome outcome and one for which industry is thankful.

Finally, I would like to thank those members of industry and the Education Committee who participated in the development of the competency standards. This is a major step forward for our industry and firmly puts the apiary industry under the auspices of the national education training framework.

Paula Dewar

FOOD SAFETY & RESIDUE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

AQIS Imported Food Program

The AQIS Imported Food Program continues to test imported honey for the presence of residues and no issues have been reported.

AHBIC Readiness Plan

The Victorian Department of Primary Industries (Russell Goodman – Apicultural Officer) is assisting in the update of the Readiness Plan with the FSPRC. The Plan update will address issues such as National and State Readiness and Response Teams, quality assurance (including residues), food safety, bee stings, biosecurity, communication and public relations and industry/govt contacts. Russell is working on this project over time and the Committee is happy with the progress.

AQIS Export Control Act

FSPRC has been working with AQIS on the development of a separate Honey Order under the Export Control Act to provide greater regulation of exports. The EU Directives are very descriptive of importing country requirements and as a consequence industry decided in February 2006 to fully regulate a separate Honey Order under the Australian Export Control Act to fully prescribe honey exports. These legislated Honey Orders will apply when exporting to countries requiring Certification (EU, Canada, PNG, Brazil & NZ) and are deemed necessary to ensure continued access.

Industry and Government have set the implementation plan as follows:

1. AQIS are preparing to make legislative changes required at present.
2. Compliance by Packers and Exporters is required as soon as these changes are confirmed to the Honey Orders.
3. Compliance by the Beekeeper Production sector is required by Jan 2011.

The Export Control Act Honey Orders have been drafted by AQIS, reviewed by FSPRC and recently distributed to Industry for comment. Limited comments have been received at this stage and AQIS is encouraging industry to make any comments or submissions as soon as possible.

Domestic Residue Status

Following a detection overseas, it became apparent that PDB residues were persisting in a small proportion of honey as a consequence of beekeeper historical use for wax moth control. The residue is at very low levels and poses no food safety risk.

However, to legitimise its presence as industry works to overcome the issue an Extraneous Residue Limit (ERL) under the Food Standards Code has been applied for. It should be noted, that PDB is not registered for use in beekeeping and the ERL only covers residues that are apparent as a consequence of historical use. It is anticipated that the ERL will be in place for 3-5 years.

Organic Honey

Mr Laurie Dewar has been assisting the Committee by reviewing current Organic Standards as follows:

- Review national and international organic standards for honey production and seek industry comment on current requirements;
- Present recommendations to the Food Safety & Prevention of Residue Committee on proposed changes to the National Standard (Ed 3.2, Oct 05) in the best interests of industry;
- Present strategy to achieve the agreed changes to the National Standard;
- Consider organic honey production and small hive beetle control;
- Consider the recognition of other quality programs (eg. BQUAL) as part of an organic certification process.

Mr Dewar is making recommendations to the Committee for the benefit of Industry that are being pursued.

Pyrrrolizidine Alkaloids (PAs) Project

An analytical method for the detection of PAs in honey has been developed as a mechanism for industry to conduct further research on PAs. At this stage, the limited Salvation Jane production seasons has limited the progress of this project in-conjunction with research to ensure the accuracy of PA

I wish to thank the members of the Committee for their ongoing work and support.

Dr Ben McKee, Chair

RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Environment Management Systems. EMS.

This is a term you will be hearing a lot of in the future, it is a Federally funded initiative through the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council. Progress on the formation of a draft document is under way, meetings have been in the states to assess each states Codes of Practice, if any and or guidelines for beekeepers us of public land, the Chairman of this work is Dr Doug Somerville. Dept of Agriculture NSW. While the state by state meetings are very useful, I am greatly concerned that it would appear that Doug does not appear to be looking at one of the most important documents that industry as a whole, in many states, has used to maintain access to public land for many many years, a document which as late as 2005, has been reviewed and up dated, the AHBIC document, "Honey Bees in Australian Conserved Forests". With such a valuable industry document, I would have expected that it should have been used as a base to build other guidelines around, using each states

own recognized management criteria for public land use, and or Codes of Practice., it is early days yet.

Parks and Protected Areas

August 2-3. 2006, I attended a two day Parks and Protected areas management Congress in Canberra. As the National Resource chairman, I was interested in how the beekeeping industry was going to be treated with parks representatives from around Australia in one room. The first speaker was Senator Andrew Bartlett, chairman of the Senate inquiry committee into the management of Parks and Reserves, both land and marine.

Some of the terms of reference for the inquiry included the possibility of parks privatisation with partnership management , the use of managed fire breaks for fire prevention, making decisions through pure research and including the use of the precautionary principal for multi purpose usage, user pays, invasive species management, and should access and use be wrapped-up and access refused, and of course, indigenous recognition.

By the end of the presentation, wearing a large name tag which identified me as representing the Australian Honey Bee Industry, I was feeling much like a leg of lamb in a den of lions.

The following speaker was a young man called Atticus Fleming, from the Australian Wild Life Conservation Council, the Federal Governments architect/writer of Environmental Law.

His opening salvo was, there is no place in the Australian environment for introduced species, fauna or flora, he was against ecotourism, but “all for” Land for Wild Life. In 2004-05 the poor chap had \$75ml provided to invest in the purchase of future wild life reserves, management, research, establishing sanctuary’s, endangered species research, breeding and release of endangered species and public education. He advocated the fencing of lands purchased with minimal access by public, [gazetted areas under supervision only].

The lunch break came, I disappeared for a short time, on return a lady came up to and told me she new me, we’d meet when the at the Yorta Yorta Native title claim hearings in Shepparton Vic. in 1989, she was one of the indigenous people Victoria had negotiated with and secured beekeeper access to the lands under claim should the claim be up held by the courts, her name was Lois Peeler now chair of the Aboriginal Tourism Council in Canberra.

Others introduced themselves read my name tag, eventually I asked what their policy was on Apiary on public lands, surprise, surprise, no one had any issue with bees at all. Half way through the second day, it was very evident that parks managers wanted integrated managers, [European and indigenous persons], particularly in the central Australian and Territory regions, with a flow-on into most other management areas in the states.

One major hurdle was that the indigenous persons were not used to specific area management criteria, not used to female managers giving orders, and working set hours, [reliability in the field].

The need for more funding to manage parks and for the governments to increase the National estate throughout the country was evident. At the end of day two I got on the plane, and wondered about the last two days, but was reasonably settled that beekeeping as far as those managers were concerned was safe for now.

Bush Fires.

Everyone is aware that this season has been horrendous for industry, not only in Victoria but also in NSW, the Pilliga Scrub fires [Iron Bark] took out 273 sites or in old terms 273 square miles of beekeeping country, again a large area of the Ngarkat N-Park in South Australia [Banksia Heath Lands] has been burnt, and site loss numbers throughout Victoria are still being totalled. The North-East and Gippsland having the greatest site losses, depending on who reports the figures, around 1ml hectares burnt, site loss numbers are still being assessed, an estimate of around 120 – 150 sites could be lost over all in Victoria this season.

***South Australia's Ngarkat Park**

This area, has had a number of "grid" type fuel reduction burns, for fire management this season. Since 1982 the south-eastern corner of the Park has had three major fires, no apiary activity has taken place in that area since then, regrowth is mostly, now woody weeds, rather than the Banksia ornate, which has, over the years, been an excellent winter hive build-up area in preparation for Almond pollination and the season ahead.

Canberra Workshop

At the recent industry workshop held in Canberra, it was encouraging to hear that the Horticulture and Agriculture groups present pledged to unit with the Apiary industry, recognizing the need for managed bees in the they growing of better marketable food.

Elwyne Papworth, Chair

QUARANTINE COMMITTEE

I have taken over the Quarantine Committee Chair from the late Graeme Mathews who had a passion about quarantine. I worked with Graeme, Paula Dewar and Bruce White for two days in 2006 during the National Animal Health Performance Standards and Threats to our Honeybee Industry Workshop. Graeme contributed enthusiastically throughout the workshop, particularly on *Emergency Preparedness and Response*.

Sentinel Hives

There are 37 sentinel hive locations throughout Australia of which 25 have been tested this year:

<i>No. of Sentinel Hives Tested</i>	<i>State</i>
9	Queensland
5	New South Wales
4	Tasmania
4	Western Australia
3	Victoria
0	South Australia

In addition to these, five sentinel log-hive sites for *Apis cerana* have been tested in the Northern Territory.

From 1 July 2008, the National Sentinel Hive Program will be managed by Animal Health Australia and this will run until 30 June 2011. It will be known as the Animal Health Australia National Sentinel Hive (AHA NSH) Program.

We are very grateful to those beekeepers who are looking after sentinel hives and regularly sending in tests. AHA recognises the work our beekeepers do looking after the sentinel hives and in their proposed budget they are allocating a few hundred dollars per hive for services rendered.

Varroa mites are listed as a *Category 2 Disease* under AHA's Cost Agreement, which means that the financial contribution is split 80% from the government and 20% from industry. The proposed 20% industry contribution is split equally between the Australian Honeybee Industry Council and the horticulture industries represented by Plant Health Australia.

Apis cerana

Seagoing vessels are considered to present a significant opportunity for the transportation to Australia of exotic bees (and their associated parasites) either in superstructures, containers, equipment, or in vessel holds. *Apis cerana*, *Apis dorsata*, and *Apis scutellata* have all been detected in recent years on ships destined for Australia or in overseas port areas. These incidents confirm the potential for incursions by exotic honeybee pests via ocean-going vessels that enter Australian ports.

***Apis cerana* – Here Now!**

Apis cerana was discovered in Cairns on Friday, 4 May 2007. They were coming out of a small opening in an aluminium mast on a ketch. They were hard to get at, so the entrance was blocked and a small number of bees were collected. The hive was destroyed with petrol. The small sample of *Apis cerana* was sent to Dr Dennis Anderson and he had them by Wednesday, 9 May 2007.

On 8 May 2007 the National Co-ordinator of the National Sentinel Hive Program, Mr Ian East, sent Bayvarol strips and sticky mats to the local apiary inspector, Mr Jack Shields from the Queensland Department of Primary Industry (QDPI). These will be placed in the 23 registered beekeepers' hives located in the vicinity. Mr Shields and others from QDPI are searching the area for any swarms that may have dispersed from the boat's mast.

Black Bee Quarantine

Apis mellifera mellifera

In 2002 the Tarraleah Black Bee Reserve was declared by Tasmania's Chief Veterinary Officer Dr R M Andrewartha. The reserve is approximately 61,500 hectares, in size and at the time Dr Andrewartha said:

“No honey bees (Apis mellifera) other than those of the kind known as Black Bees (Apis mellifera mellifera) shall be moved into the protected area. A person failing to comply with a requirement of the Animal Health Act 1995 may be guilty of an offence and liable to prosecution.”

Forestry Tasmania harvested two coupes in the Black Bee Reserve in 2005/2006 with a further two coupes in 2006/2007. On average 150 ha will be harvested and regrown each year.

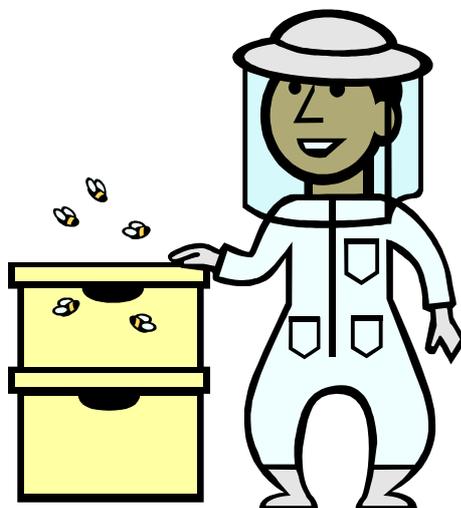
Bee Tree protection

Forestry Tasmania has contacted the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association regarding the protection of suitable bee nesting trees as part of the selective harvesting process. Mr Leigh Slater, who is registered for Black Bees in the area, is going to assist in the identification of Black Bee nesting trees.

Bumble Bees

Bumble Bees (*Bombus terrestris*) are still quarantined in Tasmania despite other states' green house tomato growers wanting to establish them on the mainland.

Lindsay Bourke - Chair



AHBIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH APRIL 2007

Assets		
Cash on hand – Cheque account	\$-89,891.41	
- Premium account	<u>145,766.00</u>	\$55,874.59
 Other Assets		
Term Deposit 50178856	6,759.91	
Term Deposit 50057304	58,664.04	
AMP Diversified Growth Fund	84,442.34	
Rental Bond	7,000.00	
Apimondia 2007 Pty Ltd	10,000.00	
B-Qual Australia Pty Limited	99.00	
Invest Subsidiary – B-Qual	1.00	
Invest Subsidiary – Apimondia 2007	<u>1.00</u>	166,967.29
Fixed Assets		
Furniture and Fixtures at cost	20,436.82	
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-5,617.08</u>	<u>14,819.74</u>
Total Assets		<u>\$237,661.62</u>
 Current Liabilities		
Provisions	18,202.00	
Apimondia 2007 Pty Ltd	1.00	
GST Collected	3,832.88	
GST Paid	<u>-13,204.15</u>	
Total Liabilities		<u>\$8,831.73</u>
 Net Assets		 <u>\$ 228,829.89</u>
 Equity		
Retained Earnings	217,830.37	
Current Year Earnings	<u>10,999.52</u>	
Total Equity		<u>\$228,829.89</u>

The above financial statements are subject to the final audit which has not been completed at the time of publication.

AHBIC has two wholly owned subsidiaries – Apimondia 2007 Pty Limited and B-Qual Australia Pty Limited whose financial years end on June 30. At the time of writing they have no outstanding debts and are ongoing commercial concerns. The Australian Queen Bee Breeding Group (AQBBG) was also established last year. It is a membership body for which the initial funding has been provided by AHBIC but will act as an independent organisation in the support of industry objectives.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 2007**

Income		
Combined industry	\$364,050.01	
Industry Partnerships Program	70,000.00	
Interest	10,209.67	
AMP distribution	10,357.45	
Miscellaneous income	12,954.57	
Membership dues	318.18	
Video and honey book income	<u>10,557.00</u>	
Total Income		<u>\$478,446.88</u>
Expenses		
Annual leave expense	-4,099.00	
Annual meeting	17,539.48	
Apimondia 2007	6,369.80	
AQBBG	24,545.45	
Audit fees	2,033.70	
Bank charges	336.80	
Consultancy fees	38,950.00	
Couriers	306.65	
Depreciation expense	1,894.06	
Directors' sitting fees	2,454.54	
Electricity	518.99	
Honey book reprint	13,534.62	
Insurance	4,004.71	
Legal fees	471.91	
Long service leave expense	1,844.00	
Loss on sale of fixed assets	509.13	
Office supplies and email	821.22	
Postage	3,616.28	
Printing and stationery	2,824.26	
Promotion	5,454.54	
Remuneration expenses	121,611.05	
Rent	27,063.62	
Repairs	1,134.68	
Special projects	86,303.83	
Staff amenities	104.23	
Subscriptions	3,661.05	
Superannuation	37,500.00	
Telephone	12,401.89	
Travel	<u>53,735.87</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>\$467,447.36</u>
Operating Profit		<u>\$ 10,999.52</u>

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTORS TO AHBIC

AHBIC THANKS ITS SUPPORTERS

**AB's Honey
Beechworth Honey
Bees Neez Apiaries
Bourke, Lindsay
Blue Hills Honey
Capilano Honey Limited
Chiltern Honey Farm
Crop Pollination Assoc WA
Dewar Apiaries
Gells Honey
Honey DownUnder**

**Niklaus, A and G
Papworth, F and E
Saxonbee Enterprises
Spring Gully Foods Pty Ltd
Stephens, R
Tasmanian Crop Pollination
Tasmanian Honey Company
Weerona Apiaries
Wescobee Limited
Wilson, Colin**

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!**

