

AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC

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***APIS CERANA* IN TOWNSVILLE – NO.1**

Further to advice previously sent out to member bodies, the following has been approved for circulation to all industry members:-

- An Asian honey (*Apis cerana*) bee hive has been found at the port in Townsville, Queensland. Scientific analysis of the bees has confirmed that two varroa mites (*Varroa jacobsoni*) were present on two of the bees.
- The single hive was found within the hollow metal support of a container stand which has been in a storage yard close to the port for at least two years.
- Biosecurity staff from the Australian Government removed the hive and sent it for further diagnostic testing and analysis. A total of around 5000 bees were collected and removed from the site.
- A bee industry expert has been consulted and, after inspecting the hive, was able to advise that it is likely that it is possible that the hive had been there for up to two years.
- A check of the surrounding area has found no further Asian honey bees or their hives. Traps and sentinel hives that are already in place around the port as part of the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program have not collected any exotic bees or mite pests over the past two years.
- Testing will be done to see if these bees have any relationship to the Asian honey bee that is already present in areas of Far North Queensland, or bees that were associated with previous detections at the Townsville port – with the last detection having occurred in 2014.
- While Asian honey bees are established in areas of Far North Queensland, varroa mites are not known to be present in that population.
- The national Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests met on Friday 1 July 2016 to confirm the identification of the pests, and discuss the required response activities for *Varroa jacobsoni*. It has previously been determined that Asian honey bees cannot be eradicated from Australia, so response activities are only focused on the varroa mites.
- Australia has well established arrangements in place for responding to exotic pests, such as varroa. This is a nationally significant pest that will see all efforts put in place to prevent it from establishing in Australia.

Further information will be published as it comes to hand.

The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests is due to meet again this week.

Trevor Weatherhead
Executive Director
4 July, 2016