

AUSTRALIAN HONEY BEE INDUSTRY COUNCIL INC

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APIS CERANA AND VARROA JACOBSONI IN TOWNSVILLE – NO. 17

In the two and half months since I last reported there have been no Asian bees found in Townsville.

Under the Response Plan the eradication phase of the program ended on 28 February and we now move into the proof of freedom stage. It is anticipated that the proof of freedom stage will last for three (3) years unless there are more findings of Asian bees and *Varroa jacobsoni*.

In February I spent a day in Townsville talking with the leaders of the eradication response. I was pleased with the discussions I had. Now the proof of freedom stage has been started there will be a reduction in the staffing numbers. Key members of the eradication program will be retained.

Thank you to the industry volunteers who went to Townsville to help out. Your input, particularly in showing the local beekeepers how to carry out sugar shakes, alcohol washes and drone uncapping, were very much appreciated by the local beekeepers. This testing forms an important part of the proof of freedom stage.

One of the staff who will moving onto another job is Roger Winton. Roger came in as the local controller when the Asian bees and *V. jacobsoni* were first found. I found Roger very easy to work with. So thank you Roger for your work. Best of luck in your new job.

So at this stage I will not be putting out any more information bulletins unless there is a change in the situation in Townsville.

Trevor Weatherhead
Executive Director
2 March, 2017