



Australian Honey Bee INDUSTRY COUNCIL

VARROA JACOBSONI ON ASIAN BEES IN TOWNSVILLE

- On 16 and 23 April 2020 the wings of Asian bees were found in the pellets from rainbow bee eater birds in the port area of Townsville. This was part of the routine collection under the National Varroa Mite Eradication Program.
- On 28 April 2020 a nest of Asian bees was found in the port area at Townsville.
- Subsequent DNA determination has shown that it is a new incursion and not related to any other Asian bees previously detected in Queensland.
- The nest was estimated at between 2 and 3 months old. There were 2,850 bees, no drones or drone comb and Varroa mites.
- Formal identification of the mites has been undertaken by CSIRO in Canberra and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Plant Biosecurity Laboratory in Brisbane and *V. jacobsoni* confirmed.
- Testing for slow paralysis virus and deformed wing virus by CSIRO in Canberra gave negative results.
- Continuing surveillance has not shown any more bee wings in bee eater pellets or Asian bees.
- The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) has meet to consider the incursion and has agreed it is feasible to eradicate. Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries are modifying the current Response Plan for approval by the National Management Group (NMG).
- From our industry's perspective it is good it was found so soon. There is no evidence that it has swarmed and it is at the port area where the previous nests have been found.

We thank the staff at Townsville for their swift actions in detecting this nest. Another report will be issued after the next CCEPP meeting.

Trevor Weatherhead AM
Chair
AHBIC Quarantine and Disease Committee