



Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc.

## **Border entry requirements for all beekeepers participating in the Victorian Almond Pollination.**

**Sent From: QBA State Secretary, Jo Martin – 13/07/2020**

Dear Members,

As you will be aware, the past few weeks have seen many changes issued through the multiple Queensland Health Directives from the Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young.

The QBA Management Committee have worked tirelessly to ensure our members needs and requirements are fulfilled during these times of uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past few weeks, QBA has been regularly meeting with Senior Department officials from the Queensland Government and the Agricultural Coordination Group to ensure our Queensland based beekeepers can continue to do what they do best.

As an organisation, we have made a number of requests to the Queensland Government in order for our industry to qualify for an exemption (within current requirements) to continue cross border operations without the need to undertake a mandatory 14-day quarantine period. Today we are happy to inform you we have received confirmation and approval in writing of our request. This request is specifically targeted at beekeepers travelling to Victoria however, it does encompass all commercial beekeepers who may be managing honey bee hives currently situated in NSW.

From Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 12.00pm all commercial beekeepers undertaking work outside of Queensland are now eligible for 'Transport and Logistics' based exemption on the Queensland Border Declaration pass. Please note, this exemption applies to commercial beekeepers only, particularly those currently working outside of the state. In order to qualify for this exemption, all beekeeping businesses must have a Queensland Workplace Health Plan in place and lodged with the Department of Health. Those smaller scale hobby operations will need to apply for the regular category 'G' permit.

It is also important to understand, this exemption applies only to the re-entry across the Queensland border. A separate border pass will be required for the NSW/VIC border. We will provide a link to the online portal for both border permit systems (QLD & NSW) in attachments to this email communication. Please refer to attachment ***COVID-19 State by State requirements for beekeepers.***

Due to the imminent nature of the impending almond pollination season, a working group has been created which currently encompasses all stakeholders and state government agencies to ensure this seasons pollination event can operate seamlessly whilst mitigating the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Industry stakeholders within the working group include, AHBIC, QBA, NSWAA, SAA, Almond Board of Australia, DAF (ACG), DTMR (ACG), QLD Police (ACG), NSW Police, NSW RTA, NSW

DPI and Agriculture Victoria. We want to reassure our members we have the best minds working to ensure both operations on the ground and border logistics are as well prepared as possible to manage this mass migration.

The above mentioned group is currently working through a number of matters and will be meeting again later this week. Already we have been able to confirm that the two most commonly used access points (Robinvale and Tooleybuc bridges) will be open for beekeepers to transit through to the almond growing locations. A list of instructions and contact numbers will be distributed later this week for those contracted to almond orchards in Victoria.

We must stress that the common goal of this group is to limit time spent within Victoria whilst delivering and migrating honey bees from the area and minimise the interactions of beekeepers, pollination agents, growers and any Agriculture Victoria staff whilst on the ground. There is an expectation that once the hives are delivered beekeepers quickly make their way back across the VIC/NSW border with no exceptions to stopping for fuel or food. Subsequently, once the pollination event has completed it is also expected that beekeepers spend minimum time loading hives to migrate them out of the region.

With the growing concern from the constant outbreaks of COVID-19 from within Victoria (mostly contained to the Greater Melbourne area) and recent outbreaks in the Western Sydney area (Casula) it is critical beekeepers ensure they have completed all documentation and permits required to continue to work in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

We must stress that this is an evolving situation, if the events of the past few weeks are anything to go by, what requirements were in place today may well change with little notice tomorrow. It is crucial all beekeepers stay well informed of the constant changes; we strongly recommend beekeepers regularly check their emails a few times a day in order to stay well informed. The QBA will endeavour to continue to provide updates to our members as they come to hand.

Attached to this email please find the communication sent to the QBA from the Queensland Government State Health Emergency Coordination Centre (SHECC) as a PDF titled ***SHECC Communication to QBA Members***. It details the specific approval and consent for Queensland based beekeepers to be recognised as 'eligible' for a Freight and Logistic Border Declaration Exemption. Included within this information is an example of how the permit is to be completed. The images within the document are a slightly pixelated so I have gone to the trouble of producing an 'example permit' to make your lives a little easier.

It is important to remember the Queensland Border declaration passes are only valid for 7 days from the date of issue, NSW border permits will be valid for 14 days from the date of issue. All passes and permits once expired will no longer be accepted, beekeepers will need to find a means of generating a new pass/permit and be able to produce the new permit on arrival at the border control points.

We are still seeking clarification from both Queensland and NSW authorities to confirm if digital copies of the above permits will be accepted at border check points. As soon as this matter is clear we will communicate the decision to members.

In previous emails we have also communicated the compliance documents for all beekeepers working in a commercial operation. Please note that these requirements have not changed however, should you intend on travelling to Victoria you will be required to complete additional compliance measures and closely follow protocols within the current Queensland Health Directive (No8).

I have gone to the additional effort of compiling a check list with specific emphasis on State by State requirements. This checklist is also attached to this email and can be found under the PDF link **COVID-19 State by State requirements for beekeepers**. Please note the information in this check list was current as at the 13/07/2020, 5pm. It should be expected that changes could be made at any time to the compliance requirements, because of this, we plan to treat this document as a 'living' document, changes to requirements will be marked in red.

We are actively encouraging those members who have concerns or queries to contact QBA State Secretary Jo Martin as a matter of priority, I am only too happy to provide assistance at this complicated time. We are well aware our regular updates and COVID-19 information may not reach every commercial beekeeper in Queensland, because of this, now more than ever is a great time to promote the benefits of being a member of our organisation. Individuals wishing to apply for membership to the QBA are encouraged to contact our State Secretary for more information.

Whilst the COVID-19 situation in Queensland appears to be under control (for the time being), we want to remind all members to continue to actively practicing social distancing and hygienic practices, especially to those on the road. Stay safe and stay healthy.



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