



**Australian
Honey Bee**
INDUSTRY COUNCIL

The importance of bees

The humble honey bee is responsible for much more than the sweet, sticky, golden drizzle on your toast – in fact, the industry contributes an estimated \$14.2 billion annually to the Australian economy.



1,800
commercial beekeepers
28,000
recreational beekeepers



669K
bee hives in
Australia



20K
tonnes average
honey production
per year (levied
hives only)



65%
of horticultural and
agricultural crops
require honey bees
for pollination



One in three mouthfuls of food we eat relies on honey bees for pollination

Farmers' work with beekeepers to ensure their horticulture and seed crops, such as almond, apple, avocado, blueberry, macadamia, pumpkin, and watermelon, are pollinated and can grow nutritious fruit, vegetables and nuts. Bees are also critical for the pollination of forage crops for stock feed.

Without honey bees, high value crops and livestock would not be able to be produced.

Bees help produce a diverse range of food. For example:

- 140** bees are needed to produce one kilogram of macadamias
- 69** bees help produce one kilogram of almonds
- 18** bees are required to pollinate one kilogram of avocados
- 5** bees help grow one kilogram of pumpkin
- 2** bees are needed for one kilogram of watermelon.

Honey bees are livestock, and need food and water, just like any living thing. Sadly, the 2019-2020 summer bushfires took a heavy toll on the honey bee in Australia, destroying an estimated 15.6 million hectares of native forest, meaning critical nectar and pollen sources for honey bee colonies were lost. Despite these challenging circumstances, Australian beekeepers demonstrated resilience and skill to deliver the nation's pollination needs.

How can you protect Australian honey bees?

- Be mindful when spraying pesticides and insecticides in your backyard that could inadvertently harm bees
- Create a bee-friendly garden by planting bee-attracting flowers, rich in pollen and nectar
- Leave water out on hot days or in times of drought
- Become a 'Friend of AHBIC'
- Always check to make sure your beeswax wrap, or skincare products, have been made using 100% Australian beeswax. Imported bees wax is often adulterated with harmful chemicals and paraffin which is a threat to the health of the industry and a potential risk to your health.

Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) is the national representative body for the honey bee industry. AHBIC works to protect the long-term economic viability, security and prosperity of the sector and promotes the important link between the honey bee and healthy Australians.

AHBIC advocates nationally for its ten member groups who represent individuals and businesses from across the supply chain, including recreational beekeepers.

Become a friend of AHBIC

Bees, and beekeepers, play an invaluable role in producing what the world eats and contributes \$14.2 billion annually to the Australian economy.

Honey bees are at the heart of a healthy Australia, however the industry does have challenges it must manage to grow its prosperity and resilience, protect the health of the species and ensure nutritious foods continue to be produced to nourish communities across the country.

To do this, AHBIC needs the support of people and businesses who also appreciate the importance of the Australian honey bee and highly values the voluntary contributions of its 'Friends of AHBIC' to ensure the organisation can effectively advocate on behalf of the industry.

To become a friend of AHBIC, and make a voluntary contribution, go to www.honeybee.org.au



Did you know?

Beekeepers usually transport their hives at night. This is because bees return to the hive at dusk. If they have to move during the day, beekeepers cover their hives with nets so the bees cannot fly off. The nets are put on before dawn so all the bees are still in the hives.

Sign up to the monthly AHBIC newsletter and receive the latest industry news to your inbox.

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Data sourced from AgriFutures 'The extraordinary honey bee and its impact on food we eat' and 'Size and scope of the Australian honey bee and pollination industry - a snapshot'.