



Honey Bee Industry Emergency Roundtable

Decision Makers Forum Decisions and Comments

State Governments

Name	Q1: 1. Provide immediate Varroa treatment cost support	Q3: 2. Deliver a nationally coordinated industry resilience suppo...	Q5: 4. Temporarily waive public land site fees	Q7: 6. Maintain and expand VDO and BBO functions	Q9: 7. Develop region-specific integrated pest management guidance.
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	WA contributed to the Varroa mite response including T2M; T2M is considered the pathway to living with the pest. Post T2M there is no National cost sharing arrangement available for recovery .	Multiple programs delivering business support exist already and could be used for this purpose.	This is not within the remit of DPIRD in WA, we can take this question to the relevant agency (DBCA)	WA no longer has a VDO, however we maintain our BBO team within DPIRD, and local WA industry has secured funding to support DO functions	We agree with this in principle subject to availability of resources and expertise
	Disagree	Agree in-principle	Disagree	Agree in-principle	Agree in-principle
VICTORIA	Victoria does not support providing immediate financial treatment support, given the investment (of \$3.2m) in the Varroa Transition Program and current work on an industry action plan for chemical use.	Victoria has already made significant investments to support industry resilience and transition to Varroa management. We are committed to working with other jurisdictions and to support a collaborative and complementary approach.	Victoria does not support waiving public land apiary site fees, as the support would not be equitable across industry. More equitable support is already being provided through the Victorian two-year hive registration fee waiver.	Note that further extensions past current program activity to 30 June 2027 is contingent on future Government Budget decisions.	This is already being undertaken.
	Disagree	Agree in-principle	Disagree	Agree in-principle	Agree

Name	Q1: 1. Provide immediate Varroa treatment cost support	Q3: 2. Deliver a nationally coordinated industry resilience suppo...	Q5: 4. Temporarily waive public land site fees	Q7: 6. Maintain and expand VDO and BBO functions	Q9: 7. Develop region-specific integrated pest management guidance.
NSW	Disagree NSW contributed \$58.4 million to the varroa response and transition to management. NSW recently announced an additional \$9.5 million for continued support including biosecurity extension, new research and development on varroa management and pollination, new education and training programs and additional resources for beekeeper compliance.	: Agree – NSW DPIRD will deliver a beekeeper business resilience stream through the FBRP. We will work with industry to determine the scale of investment towards training, coaching, mental health services and ensure it is fit for purpose. make the most of the farm resilience program (and have appropriate deliverers)	Disagree – proposed waiver would result in highly inequitable benefit skewed to a small number of beekeepers. 5% of commercial beekeepers would get 76% of the benefit. 69% of commercial beekeepers would get no benefit.	Agree in-principle – NSW DPIRD has expanded its BBO team to June 2027. NSW have had BBO resources in place prior to Varroa and have since doubled our BBO team to provide ongoing support.	Agree in-principle – NSW DPIRD currently provides region specific treatment advice through the BBO network and region-specific guidance was developed through T2M. NSW DPIRD will continue to participate in efforts at national coordination.
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree in-principle	Agree in-principle
TASMANIA	• Tasmania currently is Varroa mite free. • If an incursion happens in Tasmania and the decision is that eradication will not occur, then efforts will be directed into building resilience. A rebate style program could be considered.	•Free financial counselling advice is available through the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS). Funding support also available through the Future Drought Fund Farm Business Resilience Package (FBR).	Tasmania acknowledges the intent of the action. Prior to providing any agreement (in principle or otherwise), requires further internal consideration and resourcing advice. Significant reforms to apiary licences have recently reduced costs to apiarists.	Recognise the need for practical initial field support but unable to commit without further analysis of internal cost and resourcing. Tasmania supports a collaborative approach with stakeholders to respond to an establishment event.	• Tasmania agrees with the intent behind the action and broadly agrees with the role noting the existing BBO structure nationally which would facilitate this outcome. Tasmania has concerns about the additional pressure on BBO's to deliver this action.
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree in-principle	Agree

Name	Q1: 1. Provide immediate Varroa treatment cost support	Q3: 2. Deliver a nationally coordinated industry resilience suppo...	Q5: 4. Temporarily waive public land site fees	Q7: 6. Maintain and expand VDO and BBO functions	Q9: 7. Develop region-specific integrated pest management guidance.
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	SA has already invested additional funds into this action so we agree to the extent that we have already committed	SA provides mental health support through FAB mentors and Free business planning support is available through Rural Financial Counsellors. We understand that similar services are already available interstate. We can commit to the extent of that existing	We can't commit to this at this stage. SA has undertaken to develop a Blueprint to support the industry and improved access to sites has been identified as a priority to follow up. If that can actually occur and/or how will be part of that Blueprints dev	SA has already committed to this and has extended VDOs through for the current FY.	SA Varroa Development Officers already provide a service that is region-specific. We agree in principle but think it can be delivered through 6 above.
	Agree in-principle	Agree in-principle	Agree in-principle	Agree	Agree in-principle
QUEENSLAND	Queensland does not support this action as currently framed around immediate treatment costs. Qld has provided direct treatment support and our view is that any future treatment assistance should sit within a broader integrated pest management approach.	Queensland already has work underway to strengthen the financial and business resilience of beekeepers affected by varroa through RFCS and QRIDA sustainability loans. The priority is making support easier to find and use. make it easier for current support to work not creating another layer,	We recognise this action could provide some immediate cost relief to beekeepers. We will be progressing this action with our state public land managers. We note approvals will need to come from outside DPI so further work is required.	Qld strongly supports practical, field-based supports for beekeepers. BBO contract extension for 5 years is underway. Qld has just appointed a principle biosecurity officer - bees as a part of a commitment to enduring bee biosecurity services.	Qld already has work underway to develop regionally relevant integrated pest management approaches for varroa. Qld has invested \$500k supporting region-specific Community Bee Innovation grants. Qld supports a national working group to coordinate this work.
	Disagree	Agree	Agree in-principle	Agree in-principle	Agree

NORTHERN TERRITORY	NT has no varroa mite	Delivered through partner organisations such as NT farmers and Rural Financial counselling.	Not relevant to the NT	NT does not receive external funding for Bee Biosecurity, however one position within the Plant Biosecurity team is currently allocated to bee biosecurity.	NT has developed a Bee Biosecurity Action Plan which covers all regions in the NT. This can be further developed with the support of relevant industry partners.
	Disagree	Agree in-principle	Disagree	Agree	Agree

Commonwealth

Name	Q1: 3. Establish fit-for-purpose recovery finance for viable comm...	Q3: 10. Fast-track imported honey testing, authenticity and label...
COMMONWEALTH	Noted. Commercial beekeeping businesses can already seek to access RIC loans. Further industry discussion will be required to understand any particular barriers to access. Changes to RIC loan settings are ultimately a matter for the Australian Government.	Agree in-principle While the department supports strengthening our capability to detect adulterated honey, we need to complete the necessary scientific, technical and regulatory work to ensure any future regulatory measures are robust and defensible.

Research & Development Corporations

Name	Q1: 9. Develop a national honey bee and pollination workforce ca...	Q3: 11. Endorse immediate Varroa research and innovation priorit...
RDC - Hort Innovations	Agree AF to lead, Hort to support	Agree in-principle Industries within Hort Innovation have undertaken extensive consultation to prioritise where they want to invest for 5 years. Pollination and Bee health is mentioned in pollination dependant, but this would need individual feedback
RDC - AgriFutures Australia	Agree AgriFutures leading and Hort supporting. RFQ imminent. About 12 months from start to finish.	Agree in-principle AgriFutures Australia has just approved a 5yr RD&E Plan for the Honey Bee industry (involving extensive industry consultation), outlining 5 key priorities, which broadly align with the Varroa research & innovation priorities listed.

AHBIC

Name	Q1: 5. Convene a National Varroa Treatment Coordination Group	Q3: 8. Establish national pollination supply-and-demand forecasti...
AHBIC	Agree AHBIC are supportive to coordinate this group with the relevant jurisdictions and parties.	Agree AHBIC will coordinate meetings with pollination dependent industries to determine the most appropriate pathway forward. In these meetings we will determine whether a project or coordination role is more suitable. This will depend on available data.

Honey Bee Industry Emergency Roundtable

Decision Makers Forum Pre-read Paper

Prepared for	National Emergency Honey Bee Industry Roundtable - Decision Makers Forum
Prepared by	Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC)
Reviewed by	Queensland Biosecurity, AHBIC board, MosaicLab facilitators
Date	July 2026
Status	Pre-read paper - not a final policy position

Acknowledgement

This paper builds on collaboration between Biosecurity Queensland - Department of Primary Industries and the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC). Funding was provided by the Queensland Government. The technical workshop was facilitated by MosaicLab.

Purpose

This paper supports the Decision Makers Forum by providing the issue background, summarising how the consolidated action list was developed, and identifying the decisions and commitments now required from governments, industry bodies and research and development partners.

Scope note

This document is action-oriented. It does not represent a final government or industry policy position. The consolidated actions require testing against legislative authority, funding pathways, implementation feasibility, jurisdictional responsibility and organisational decision-making processes.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	5
Purpose.....	5
Scope note.....	5
Table of Contents	6
1. Purpose of the Decision Makers Forum.....	7
2. Decision-maker(s) Snapshot.....	7
3. Issues background: why intervention is needed	8
3.1 Varroa has shifted from incursion to structural industry risk	8
3.2 Impacts on commercial beekeeping capacity	8
3.3 Impacts on pollination-dependent industries.....	8
3.4 Why this meets the threshold for intervention	9
4. How we arrived here	9
5. Decision-maker action and commitments sought	11
6. Forum process and expectations	11
7. Consolidated action list for decision-makers	12
1 Provide immediate Varroa treatment cost support	12
2 Deliver a nationally coordinated industry resilience support package.....	12
3 Establish fit-for-purpose recovery finance for viable commercial beekeeping businesses	12
4 Temporarily waive public land site fees	13
5 Convene a National Varroa Treatment Coordination Group	13
6 Maintain and expand VDO and BBO functions	13
7 Develop region-specific integrated pest management guidance	13
8 Establish national pollination supply-and-demand forecasting	14
9 Develop a national honey bee and pollination workforce capability action plan	14
10 Fast-track imported honey testing, authenticity and labelling reforms.....	14
11 Endorse immediate Varroa research and innovation priorities	14
8. Next Steps Post Forum	15
Appendix A. Technical workshop action list tested with participants.....	16
Appendix B. Technical workshop feedback on actions not carried forward as standalone items.....	18
Appendix C. Messages for the decision makers.....	19
Appendix C. Evidence base and references.....	21

1. Purpose of the Decision Makers Forum

The Decision Makers Forum is being convened to move from technical discussion to an agreed implementation pathway. The forum will consider the consolidated actions arising from the 30 June technical workshop and seek commitments from the organisations identified as lead owners or key supporting partners.

The forum is not intended to reopen the full technical workshop or renegotiate the allocation of lead responsibility. It is intended to confirm whether decision-makers agree, agree in-principle or disagree with the specific actions relevant to their organisation, and to identify any approval pathway, constraint or next step required to progress implementation.

***Primary outcome sought:** a clear decision record showing each organisation's position against the consolidated actions, with confirmed owners, constraints, implementation contacts and immediate next steps.*

2. Decision-maker(s) Snapshot

***Case for intervention:** Pollination markets may adjust over time, but government stewardship is needed address coordination, information and capability failures before commercial pollination capacity is lost.*

Australia is managing a combined biosecurity, agricultural production and market transition problem. Varroa destructor has moved from an eradication response into endemic management, while the early detection of treatment-resistant mite populations has materially increased the cost, labour and complexity of keeping commercial honey bee colonies alive and pollination-ready.

The issue now at hand for decision makers is whether governments, industry-bodies, research and development partners are prepared to act collectively to preserve commercial beekeeping capacity, and protect national pollination security, a shared service across Australia, during **the transition to endemic** management.

The issue is no longer confined to beekeeping. Honey bee pollination is a critical agricultural input that supports food production, regional economies and export supply chains. AgriFutures Australia has estimated that crops worth approximately \$12.9 billion are at least partially reliant on honey bee pollination, with an estimated \$4.6 billion in economic contribution attributable to honey bee pollination.

The current spread of Varroa across NSW, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia overlaps with the majority of Australia's registered hive capacity. AHBIC's 2025 national registration compilation indicates that NSW, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia collectively account for approximately 88% of registered hives. This concentration means impacts in affected jurisdictions can quickly become a national pollination constraint.

The case for intervention is where action addresses market, coordination and information failures – which requires a collective response. Commercial beekeepers are carrying the direct costs of varroa management, while the benefits of pollination are felt across food production, regional economies, consumers and export supply chains. Without coordinated, and collective action, Australia risks a disorderly loss of commercial beekeeping capacity before treatment systems, market signals, regulatory setting and longer-terms resilience pathways mature.

The 30 June technical workshop tested a broad technical action list. The highest priority themes were treatment access and permit coordination, immediate industry stabilisation, extension and beekeeper capability, and pollination security. This paper consolidates those workshop outputs into a smaller set of decision-ready actions for commitment by nominated organisations.

The new information generated through this process is the prioritisation of issues, the consolidation of a broad technical action list into a smaller set of decision-ready actions, the identification of proposed lead and supporting organisations, and the clarification of which actions require immediate commitment, further approval pathways or longer-term consideration.

Decision-makers are being asked to confirm whether their organisation agrees, agrees in-principle, or disagrees with the actions relevant to their responsibilities. Where an organisation agrees in-principle or disagrees, the forum will seek to record the specific constraint, approval pathway or further information required.

The intended outcome of the forum is a clear decision record and implementation pathway, including agreed owners, constraints, next steps, implementation contacts and a process for reporting progress back to industry and governments.

3. Issues background: why intervention is needed

3.1 Varroa has shifted from incursion to structural industry risk

Australia's honey bee and pollination system is entering a critical structural transition period. The establishment of Varroa has shifted from a contained biosecurity incursion to an endemic management challenge. The detection of treatment-resistant Varroa has escalated the risk profile because beekeepers can no longer assume that key synthetic treatment options will provide effective control under all field conditions.

Effective Varroa management now depends on a more complex combination of monitoring, rotation of legally available treatments, non-synthetic and organic treatments, integrated pest management practices, field evidence, regional guidance and rapid detection of treatment failure. This transition is occurring while commercial beekeepers are already managing low honey prices, high input costs, labour constraints, variable seasons and biosecurity compliance obligations.

The current spread across NSW, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia is nationally significant because those jurisdictions contain most of the registered hive base and much of the pollination logistics capacity required for major crop pollination events.

3.2 Impacts on commercial beekeeping capacity

The impacts on commercial beekeepers are severe and uneven. NSW registration data shows a 35% decline in registered commercial beekeepers since the shift from eradication to management in 2023. AHBIC's 2026 industry pulse survey identified low confidence and significant exit risk, including commercial respondents in NSW and Queensland considering leaving the industry within the next 12-24 months.

The economic shock is driven by direct colony losses, treatment failures, increased monitoring requirements, higher treatment costs, increased labour, supplementary feeding, hive recovery costs and the need to maintain pollination-ready colonies under greater biological pressure. Operators are being asked to preserve a national agricultural input while carrying costs that the current market does not yet fully return.

The risk is broader than hive numbers alone. Australia risks losing skilled operators, pollination logistics capability, queen breeding capacity, regional business infrastructure and hard-won knowledge that cannot be rebuilt quickly. Once commercial beekeepers exit, the market may not be able to restore capacity in time to meet seasonal pollination demand.

3.3 Impacts on pollination-dependent industries

The Pollination Security Status Report 2026 identifies Varroa as the most immediate and significant threat to Australia's pollination security because of its likely impact on both feral and managed honey bee populations.

The report models potential shortages in commercial hive supply during peak demand periods, including a possible shortage of approximately 290,000 hives under a severe scenario across NSW, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia during the August peak pollination period once Varroa is established.

Australia has historically benefited from feral honey bees as an unpriced background pollination service. International experience suggests Varroa will wipe-out the feral honey bee populations. The loss of this free pollination safety net is expected to increase reliance on managed commercial pollination before the market has fully priced the cost of maintaining the hive base.

Reduced pollination capacity is unlikely to present as a single catastrophic failure. More likely impacts include higher pollination prices, reduced hive strength, more variable crop yields, reduced harvest quality, lower pack-out rates, supply volatility and higher production costs. These impacts may flow through to regional economies, consumers and export markets.

3.4 Why this meets the threshold for intervention

The current situation meets multiple criteria for targeted intervention. The case is strongest where intervention corrects market, coordination and information failures rather than permanently replacing market signals.

Failure / risk	Implication for decision-makers
Public benefit and private cost mismatch	Commercial beekeepers carry the direct cost of Varroa management, while the benefits of pollination flow across food production, regional economies and consumers.
Loss of an unpriced ecosystem service	The decline of feral honey bee pollination will increase demand for managed pollination before the market has fully priced or planned for that demand.
Coordination failure	Treatment access, permits, movement conditions, surveillance, extension and support mechanisms are split across jurisdictions and organisations.
Information failure	Poor visibility of hive strength, treatment resistance, colony losses, feral bee decline and pollination demand constrains timely investment and planning.
Capability failure risk	Commercial beekeeping capacity, skilled labour, queen supply, logistics and pollination relationships cannot be quickly rebuilt once lost.

The aim is to prevent a disorderly loss of commercial pollination capacity before treatment systems, market signals, regulatory settings and longer-term resilience pathways mature.

4. How we arrived here

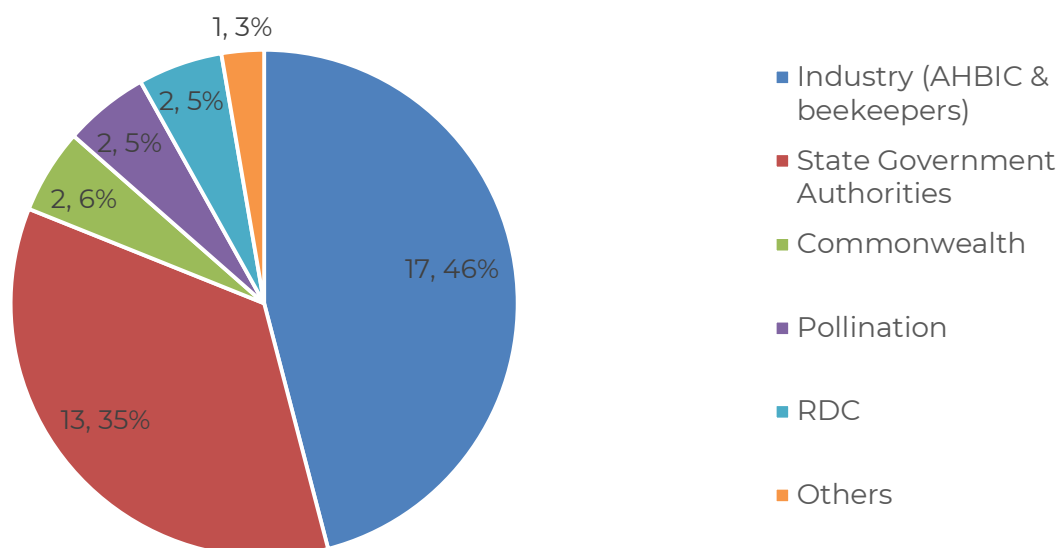
The consolidated action list has been developed through a staged process that began with a broad technical evidence base and has now been refined into a smaller set of decision-ready actions.

Step	What occurred
Technical pre-read	A shared pre-read paper was circulated to technical workshop participants. It set out the background, impacts, market failure argument and an initial long list of proposed actions gathered from industry.
Technical workshop	A technical workshop was held on 30 June 2026 to test the problem framing and refine proposed actions with government, industry, research and technical participants.
Participant feedback and voting	Participants voted on the original action themes, commented on proposed owners, timing, achievability, risks and dependencies, and identified actions that should be merged, reframed or deprioritised.
Consolidation	AHBIC has consolidated the material into a smaller set of decision-ready actions, retaining high-priority themes and merging or dropping actions that were lower priority, duplicated elsewhere, not immediately achievable, or better suited to longer-term strategy pathways.

Step	What occurred
Decision Makers Forum	This forum is the next step. It seeks agreement, agreement in-principle or disagreement from nominated lead and support organisations on the actions relevant to their responsibilities.

Technical Workshop Participants

Workshop Participants by Role



Source: MosaicLab technical workshop “what was said report”

Workshop theme prioritisation

Rank	Original technical workshop theme	Votes
1	4.2 Treatment access, APVMA pathways and supply chain security	26
2	4.1 Immediate industry stabilisation and financial support	17
3	4.4 Extension, advisory support and beekeeper capability	15
4	4.5 Pollination security and market development	13
5	4.6 Workforce, skills and business capability	11
6	4.8 Honey market integrity and imported product	10
7	4.7 Research, development and innovation	8
8	4.9 Floral resource access, movement and operational logistics	4
9	4.3 National resistance surveillance, diagnostics and transparent reporting	4

The highest priority themes were treatment access and permit coordination, immediate industry stabilisation, extension and beekeeper capability, and pollination security. Lower-priority themes were either absorbed into these actions or moved to longer-term strategy pathways where appropriate.

5. Decision-maker action and commitments sought

The consolidated action list has been developed from the technical workshop process, subsequent prioritisation, and refinement of the feedback provided by participants. The actions have been consolidated to focus on matters requiring senior-level agreement, direction or commitment.

For each action, a proposed lead owner has been identified based on the nature of the action, existing responsibilities, jurisdictional authority, regulatory role or funding pathway. The Decision Makers Forum is not intended to reopen the technical workshop discussion or reallocate lead responsibility. Its purpose is to confirm whether nominated organisations agree, agree in-principle, or disagree with the actions relevant to their organisation.

Decision-makers will be asked to respond to the actions where their organisation is identified as a lead owner. For each relevant action, decision-makers should be prepared to indicate one of the following positions:

Response	Meaning
Agree	The organisation supports the action and accepts the nominated role, noting that implementation details, resourcing and timing will be progressed through the agreed follow-up process.
Agree in-principle	The organisation supports the intent of the action but requires further internal consideration, approval, resourcing advice, legal review or ministerial/governance direction before confirming its final commitment.
Disagree	The organisation does not support the action or cannot accept the nominated role. The reason should be clearly stated, including any legislative, policy, funding, jurisdictional or operational constraint.

Where a decision-maker agrees in-principle or disagrees, the forum will seek to record the specific constraint, approval pathway or further information required. This is to ensure the action can either progress, be escalated through the appropriate decision pathway, or be reconsidered through the implementation process.

The intent is to leave the forum with a clear record of:

- which actions have in-principle or confirmed support;
- which organisations accept their nominated role;
- what constraints or approval pathways need to be addressed;
- what immediate next steps are required; and
- how progress will be reported back to industry and governments.

The proposed lead owners have been assigned through the technical workshop refinement process and are presented for commitment, not renegotiation.

6. Forum process and expectations

The Decision Makers Forum will be a focused commitment-setting meeting. It will not revisit the full technical discussion or reconsider all actions tested through the workshop. That work has already occurred through the technical roundtable process.

The meeting will be facilitated to work through the consolidated action list and confirm decision-maker positions against the actions relevant to their organisation.

Participants are asked to come prepared to:

1. confirm whether their organisation agrees, agrees in-principle, or disagrees with the relevant nominated actions;
2. identify any internal approval, funding, legislative, policy or governance pathway required before a final commitment can be confirmed;
3. nominate the appropriate implementation contact for follow-up; and
4. agree to a practical reporting process so progress is visible after the forum.

To keep the meeting focused and productive, discussion will be directed to the decision-maker representatives. Observers may attend to support their organisation's representative but will not be expected to participate in the facilitated decision process unless invited by the facilitator.

The desired outcome is a decision record that captures each organisation's position against the consolidated actions and establishes a clear implementation pathway. The forum should conclude with an agreed next-step process, including responsible contacts, immediate follow-up tasks and timing for reporting progress.

7. Consolidated action list for decision-makers

The following consolidated actions are presented for decision-maker response. Each action includes the nominated lead owner, supporting partners, timing, risks and the decision required from the forum.

1. Provide immediate Varroa treatment cost support

Lead owner	State Governments
Action	Provide immediate Varroa treatment cost support
Supporting information for decision-makers	Establish bulk purchasing, distribution, voucher or rebate mechanisms for legally available Varroa treatments. Treatment costs have increased due to synthetic miticide resistance and the need to use more expensive or labour-intensive products. This should be framed as a pollination-capacity protection measure, not a general business subsidy.
Timing	Immediate
Risks and dependencies	Product availability, permit conditions, equitable eligibility criteria and alignment across jurisdictions.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

2. Deliver a nationally coordinated industry resilience support package

Lead owner	State Governments
Action	Industry resilience support package.
Supporting information for decision-makers	Nationally coordinated business financial management and mental health support delivered through trusted partners. This must deliver fit-for-purpose programs targeted beekeepers.
Supporting partners	AHBIC, state associations, Rural Financial Counselling Service, rural assistance agencies
Timing	Immediate
Risks and dependencies	Uptake will depend on trusted delivery partners and clear communication that support is practical, confidential and commercially relevant. Current offerings from states have poor up-take due to not being targeted.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

3. Establish fit-for-purpose recovery finance for viable commercial beekeeping businesses

Lead owner	Commonwealth Government
Action	Establish fit-for-purpose recovery finance for viable commercial beekeeping businesses
Supporting information for decision-makers	Provide concessional loans or government-backed recovery loans for viable commercial beekeeping businesses facing Varroa-related cash-flow shocks. Existing RIC facilities need to be reviewed or amended where secured lending requirements are not fit for current industry circumstances.
Supporting partners	Rural Investment Corporation, state governments, AHBIC, state associations
Timing	Immediate
Risks and dependencies	Existing loan settings may do not meet beekeeper needs; finance must be accessible quickly enough to preserve commercial hive capacity.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

4. Temporarily waive public land site fees

Lead owner	State Government
Action	Temporarily waive public land apiary site fees
Supporting information for decision-makers	Provide immediate cash-flow relief to commercial beekeepers by waiving, rebating or deferring fees charged for apiary sites on public land for a defined period. This would reduce operating costs at a time when beekeepers are absorbing increased Varroa treatment, labour and hive recovery costs. The measure should apply where state governments charge apiary site, permit or licence fees for public land access, while maintaining normal biosecurity, site management and compliance obligations.
Timing	Immediate
Risks and dependencies	Jurisdictional differences in public land tenure and fee structures; need to ensure fee relief does not alter biosecurity, environmental or site-use obligations.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

5. Convene a National Varroa Treatment Coordination Group

Lead owner	AHBIC, with affected jurisdictions
Action	Convene a National Varroa Treatment Coordination Group
Supporting information for decision-makers	Establish a standing industry-jurisdiction technical group involving ag/vet chemical specialists from each jurisdiction to coordinate treatment-access work nationally. The group should identify and prioritise permit amendments, resolve label and permit inconsistencies, improve jurisdictional coordination, scan global treatment options, and accelerate lawful new product access pathways where evidence supports action. The group should maintain a live issues register so decision-makers and industry can see what work is occurring, who owns each issue and what the next step is.
Supporting partners	DAFF, state ag/vet chemical specialists, NSW DPIRD/DPIRD, Biosecurity Queensland, Agriculture Victoria, PIRSA, permit holders, treatment suppliers
Timing	Immediate
Risks and dependencies	APVMA capacity, legislated timeframes, data availability, permit-holder willingness, jurisdictional consistency and ability to maintain momentum.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

6. Maintain and expand VDO and BBO functions

Lead owner	State governments
Action	Maintain and expand Varroa Development Officer and Bee Biosecurity Officer functions. Commit to continued practical field support for beekeepers as they transition-to-management.
Supporting information for decision-makers	Varroa Development Officers and Bee Biosecurity Officers are critical to adoption, surveillance, reporting, treatment confidence, biosecurity practice and consistent industry communication.
Supporting partners	AHBIC, Plant Health Australia, state associations
Timing	Immediate
Risks and dependencies	Funding continuity, role clarity, nationally consistent messaging and retention of skilled personnel.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

7. Develop region-specific integrated pest management guidance

Lead owner	State governments
Action	Develop region-specific integrated pest management guidance
Supporting information for decision-makers	Through jurisdictional apiary extension staff and a collaborative national working group, develop practical IPM guidance for different production regions and operating systems. The process should identify knowledge gaps, field research priorities and locally relevant treatment constraints.
Supporting partners	Commercial beekeepers, VDOs, BBOs, AHBIC, researchers, state associations
Timing	Immediate to short term
Risks and dependencies	Guidance must keep pace with resistance, permit changes and field realities; inconsistent advice across jurisdictions would reduce confidence.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

8. Establish national pollination supply-and-demand forecasting

Lead owner	AHBIC
Action	National pollination supply-and-demand forecasting
Supporting information for decision-makers	Establish an annual national forecasting process that assesses pollination supply, demand and risk before each major pollination season and crop. The process should identify likely hive shortages, regional constraints, biosecurity issues, transport pressures and priority planning needs.
Supporting partners	Australian Pollination Strategy, Hort Innovation, AgriFutures, crop bodies, state governments, pollination brokers
Timing	Immediate
Risks and dependencies	Risk of scope creep or dominance by larger crop sectors; process must remain nationally balanced and focused on system-level pollination security.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

9. Develop a national honey bee and pollination workforce capability action plan

Lead owner	RDCs
Action	Develop a national honey bee and pollination workforce capability and capacity action plan
Supporting information for decision-makers	Develop a practical workforce plan that identifies current labour and skills constraints, existing workforce pathways, short-term workforce gaps and actions required to maintain commercial beekeeping and pollination service capacity. The plan should consider skilled and semi-skilled labour, training pathways,[JL4.1][CS4.2] business capability and succession risk.
Supporting partners	AHBIC, AgriFutures, Hort Innovation, Jobs and Skills Australia, state governments, RTOs, state associations
Timing	Immediate to short term
Risks and dependencies	Plan must focus on implementable actions rather than becoming a broad strategy with no delivery pathway.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

10. Fast-track imported honey testing, authenticity and labelling reforms

Lead owner	Commonwealth Government
Action	Fast-track work on imported honey border and post-border testing and authenticity.
Supporting information for decision-makers	Accelerate the current work on improving the Imported Food Inspection Scheme for honey at the border and post-border testing for authenticity. AHBIC has been working with DAFF to modernise imported honey testing methods and resolving border integrity issues. Fast-tracking this work may reduce unfair competition from cheap or adulterated imports, improve farmgate returns and strengthen beekeeper business viability.
Supporting partners	DAFF, food regulators, National Measurement Institute, AHBIC, honey packers, retailers, state associations
Timing	Immediate to short term
Risks and dependencies	Testing methodology, regulatory thresholds, trade sensitivity, enforcement capacity and time required for policy reform.
Decision required	Agree, agree in-principle or disagree

11. Endorse immediate Varroa research and innovation priorities

Lead owner	RDCs
Action	To NOTE immediate Varroa research and innovation priorities
Supporting information for decision-makers	Note and prioritise immediate R&D needs that directly support future pollination capacity, including: - National Honey Bee Breeding to support a long-term varroa resistance and viral tolerance breeding program. - Review and prioritise novel miticides/new control tools to enable dedicated research and screening programs to occur to strengthen the long-term - Field research protocols into current treatment efficacy under Australian conditions, including resistance, reinvasion pressure, continuous brood cycles and northern climate constraints

	- Support industry in creating a 'research hub' which clearly maps national research initiatives that involve honey bees to create greater clarity about what work is being done.
Supporting partners	AHBIC, state governments, universities, queen breeders, commercial beekeepers, treatment suppliers
Timing	Short term
Risks and dependencies	Risk of diluting funding through another broad strategy; investment should be targeted to urgent applied priorities and linked to clear delivery pathways.
Decision required	Agree to NOTE or Disagree

8. Next Steps Post Forum

Following the forum, AHBIC and Biosecurity Queensland will convert the decision record into a working implementation register. The register will record each action, decision-maker response, lead owner, supporting partners, constraints, next step, implementation contact and reporting timeframe.

The register will be circulated to nominated decision-maker representatives and implementation contacts for confirmation shortly after the forum. Progress should then be reported back to industry and government stakeholders on a fixed schedule to demonstrate visible action and maintain confidence.

Post-forum step	Purpose	Suggested owner	Timing
Finalise decision record	Capture agree / agree in-principle / disagree positions and recorded constraints.	AHBIC and Biosecurity Queensland	Within 5 business days
Confirm implementation contacts	Identify the officer or team responsible for follow-up on each action.	Each nominated lead/support organisation	Within 10 business days
Develop action register	Convert decisions into a live register with owners, next steps and dependencies.	AHBIC and Biosecurity Queensland	Within 2 weeks
Follow-up	To track progress of decision implementation and conversion of in-principle agreements to implementation.	AHBIC	Monthly
Report progress	Provide a DG/Ceo/Sec score card to ensure accountability	Agreed owners	6 Months

In addition to the registrar, an industry facing report outlining the process and outcomes from the roundtable meetings will be produced and disseminated to stakeholders. This will provide transparency to industry around how the final list of actions was derived and any reasoning for non-progression of action items.

Appendix A. Technical workshop action list tested with participants

The following table summarises the broader action list tested through the technical workshop. The consolidated decision-maker actions in Section 7 merge, narrow or defer several items to keep the forum focused on the highest-priority and most actionable commitments.

Original technical workshop theme	Action tested
4.1 Industry stabilisation	Emergency support package for commercial beekeepers providing or capable of providing pollination services.
4.1 Industry stabilisation	Treatment cost support through bulk purchasing or subsidised supply of legally available treatments.
4.1 Industry stabilisation	Support for Varroa management equipment, PPE and consumables.
4.1 Industry stabilisation	Subsidised access to rapid virus testing for beekeepers and queen breeders.
4.1 Industry stabilisation	Supplementary feeding, hive sterilisation, freight and hive replacement support where linked to resistant Varroa and disease pressure.
4.1 Industry stabilisation	Concessional or government-backed recovery loans for viable businesses facing cash-flow shocks.
4.1 Industry stabilisation	Business resilience, financial management and mental health support through trusted channels.
4.2 Treatment access	APVMA-industry-jurisdiction technical pathway meeting to identify permit amendments, label inconsistencies and new product pathways.
4.2 Treatment access	Review emergency use permits for dosage, frequency, temperature constraints, brood conditions and practical use.
4.2 Treatment access	Fast-track lawful access pathways for existing global Varroa treatments where residue, safety and efficacy requirements can be met.
4.2 Treatment access	Establish applied field trial pathways for regional treatment regimes under Australian conditions.
4.2 Treatment access	Develop a national Varroa treatment supply chain plan.
4.2 Treatment access	Map international developments including RNAi technologies and assess regulatory and commercial pathways.
4.3 Surveillance and diagnostics	Establish coordinated national miticide resistance surveillance using agreed sampling protocols and rapid reporting.
4.3 Surveillance and diagnostics	Increase laboratory capacity and turnaround times for resistance and virus confirmation.
4.3 Surveillance and diagnostics	Develop a national resistance map or dashboard providing actionable regional risk intelligence.
4.3 Surveillance and diagnostics	Encourage post-treatment monitoring and reporting of suspected treatment failure.
4.4 Extension and capability	Maintain and expand VDO and BBO functions beyond transition-to-management funding.
4.4 Extension and capability	Support non-government technical applied extension through trusted industry bodies and universities.
4.4 Extension and capability	Develop region-specific IPM guidance for northern, subtropical, temperate and migratory systems.
4.4 Extension and capability	Rapid technical bulletins following resistance detections, permit changes or treatment failures.
4.4 Extension and capability	Peer-to-peer learning networks using experienced commercial beekeepers and biosecurity champions.
4.4 Extension and capability	Grower-facing guidance on protecting bee health during pollination.
4.5 Pollination security	National pollination supply-and-demand forecasting before major pollination seasons.
4.5 Pollination security	Annual pollination risk statement for major pollination-dependent industries.
4.5 Pollination security	Pollination contract improvements reflecting hive quality, biosecurity risk, treatment cost, logistics and grower responsibilities.
4.5 Pollination security	Peak pollination contingency planning including crop demand, hive movement logistics and shortage protocols.
4.5 Pollination security	Encourage pollination-dependent industries to co-invest in beekeeper capacity, surveillance, treatment access, research and extension.
4.6 Workforce and skills	National honey bee and pollination workforce strategy.
4.6 Workforce and skills	Review skilled and semi-skilled migration pathways including PALM scheme suitability and shortage lists.
4.6 Workforce and skills	Beekeeper training and traineeship pathways focused on commercial operations, pollination logistics and Varroa IPM.
4.6 Workforce and skills	Business coaching, succession planning and productivity tools for commercial beekeepers.
4.7 R&D and innovation	Coordinated national Varroa and pollination resilience R&D framework.
4.7 R&D and innovation	Long-term Varroa tolerance breeding program.
4.7 R&D and innovation	Dedicated research and screening program for experimental and novel miticides.
4.7 R&D and innovation	Applied field research into treatment efficacy under Australian conditions.
4.7 R&D and innovation	Virus surveillance and research on Varroa-vectored disease and colony health interactions.
4.8 Honey market integrity	Imported honey border and post-border testing, authenticity and labelling reforms.

Original technical workshop theme	Action tested
4.8 Honey market integrity	Residue, provenance and quality assurance systems for Australian honey.
4.8 Honey market integrity	Assessment of whether current market settings undermine domestic pollination capacity by reducing beekeeper viability.
4.9 Resource access	Movement condition harmonisation and risk-based zoning protocols.
4.9 Resource access	National floral resource access policy framework.
4.9 Resource access	Identify critical pre-pollination build-up and recovery landscapes.
4.10 Governance	Action register with named owners, deliverables, dependencies, funding pathway and timeframe.
4.10 Governance	Decision Makers Forum to secure commitments from governments, RDCs, crop industries and AHBIC.
4.10 Governance	Progress reporting to industry on a fixed schedule.

Appendix B. Technical workshop feedback on actions not carried forward as standalone items

The technical workshop feedback did not discard all lower-priority items. In many cases, actions were merged into broader decision-ready actions, redirected to existing programs, or deferred to longer-term strategy pathways. The table below records the rationale for the main items not carried forward as standalone actions.

Item not carried forward as standalone	Treatment in consolidated list	Workshop feedback / rationale
Treatment equipment, freight, feeding and virus testing	Merged into immediate stabilisation, diagnostics and research actions.	Participants supported practical support but recommended merging overlapping cost items into one time-limited stabilisation package. Virus testing should be targeted where it informs treatment failure, hive recovery, queen breeding or R&D.
Permit reviews, label issues and global treatment pathways	Merged into the National Varroa Treatment Coordination Group.	Workshop feedback highlighted fragmented jurisdictional processes and the need for ag/vet chemical specialists from each jurisdiction to meet regularly, maintain visibility of work underway and prioritise permit amendments.
Treatment supply chain plan and RNAi/global technology mapping	Merged into treatment coordination and R&D priorities.	These items were lower priority as standalone actions. Product supply should be monitored through the treatment coordination process, while global scanning and RNAi should sit within an innovation and screening program.
National resistance map/dashboard	Not carried forward as a standalone action.	Feedback raised concerns about cost, privacy, data sharing, accuracy and the risk of an out-of-date map. Faster laboratory turnaround and practical intelligence for beekeepers were considered more useful than a national dashboard at this stage.
Standalone resistance surveillance theme	Absorbed into treatment coordination, diagnostics and extension.	The theme received low overall priority. However, participants supported faster confirmation of resistance and better linkage between testing results and field performance.
Rapid bulletins, peer networks and grower-facing guidance	Merged into extension and pollination market-development actions.	Participants supported these activities but saw them as implementation mechanisms for VDO/BBO, state extension and crop-body engagement rather than separate decision-maker asks.
Pollination risk statements, contract reform, contingency planning and co-investment	Merged into national pollination supply-and-demand forecasting.	The immediate priority is a practical forecasting process. Contract, grower-responsibility and co-investment work can follow once supply, demand and risk are visible.
Maintaining Varroa-free jurisdictions as a clean-hive source	Not carried forward as a decision forum action.	This item received low support and was considered difficult to implement nationally. Varroa-free jurisdictions have distinct biosecurity interests and responsibilities.
Migration pathways, training and labour-saving technology	Merged into the workforce capability action plan.	Participants supported workforce action but cautioned against multiple isolated workload initiatives. A single practical plan should cover labour, training, chemical-use skills, hosting capacity, business capability and productivity tools.
New 10-year R&D framework	Not carried forward as a standalone new strategy.	Participants warned against duplicating existing R&D strategies. The preferred approach is to fund and coordinate around existing plans while endorsing urgent priorities such as miticide screening, field efficacy work and breeding.
Standalone floral resource and movement actions	Deferred to longer-term strategy and jurisdictional pathways.	The theme received lower overall priority. Movement harmonisation was considered difficult where states have different pest status and risk appetite. Floral access remains important through AHBIC and Australian Pollination Strategy work.
Separate governance or taskforce action	Embedded into the decision forum process and action register.	Participants wanted clear accountability, but the consolidated document avoids creating another

Item not carried forward as standalone	Treatment in consolidated list	Workshop feedback / rationale
		governance layer unless owners agree it is needed. Each action should leave the forum with a named owner, next step and reporting mechanism.

Appendix C. Messages for the decision makers

Actions only land if people understand why they matter. At the close of the technical workshop participants were asked to name the things the decision makers most needed to hear at the decision makers forum. The ideas, captured below, provide the sentiment in the room.

Theme	Messages
Food security is at risk and Australia now rides on the bee's back	"Australian food security starts with a healthy Apiary Industry" We are at the forefront of food security and supply across Australia; from human food to animal fodder. Food security needs pollination security Australia now rides on the bee's back, no longer the sheep's back
Beekeepers carry the cost of managing this pest; the country carries the benefit of a secure food supply. Left to the market alone, that gap won't close	This is urgent and the impacts include beekeepers, agriculture and the broader community.
There is a narrow window for national coordination	The complexity and potential consequences faced by Australians require urgent national coordination and investment - we have an opportunity now to mitigate a crisis. We are in an unprecedented situation, impacts are far-reaching, and beekeepers desperately need national support.
Australia's varroa problem won't follow the overseas playbook	Australia's varroa experience is likely to differ significantly from that of other countries because miticide-resistant varroa populations have been detected soon after the mite's arrival. As a result, international experiences may not be a reliable guide to the Australian context, and management approaches will need to account for the early emergence of treatment resistance. • We need more treatments that are cheap and effective
Breeding program development needs to be maintained and the window is now	Breeding needs time. Start now because it will take time to see the results. • Work has already started in key areas such as breeding. Need to sustain and grow this effort to meet future industry demands

Theme	Messages
Cut the red tape on treatment access	Own-use oxalic acid to be available
Skills built over generations are disappearing daily	We are losing vital skills built over generations on a daily basis. Need to find a way to stem the flow · irreplicable (short term) capacity and capability loss which will impede hive build up capacity
Funding and support is needed quickly	Need for more and ongoing funding in the sector, particularly in bee technical roles

Appendix C. Evidence base and references

- Agriculture Victoria. (2026). Miticide resistance in Varroa mites. Victorian Government.
- Australian Honey Bee Industry Council. (2025-2030). AHBIC Strategic Plan 2025-2030.
- Australian Honey Bee Industry Council. (2026). Australian Beekeeping Industry Survey Snapshot, May 2026.
- Clarke, M. and Le Feuvre, D. (2024). Size and scope of the Australian honey bee and pollination industry: An updated snapshot for 2023. AgriFutures Australia.
- Gillespie, R., Clarke, M. and Frost, E. (2024). Value of honey bee pollination to the Australian economy. AgriFutures Australia.
- National Varroa Mite Management Program. (2026). Approved chemical control options and program materials.
- NSW Apiarists' Association Inc. (2026a). Brief: Honey Bee Industry - Industry Crisis. 17 June 2026.
- NSW Apiarists' Association Inc. (2026b). Brief: Honey Bee and Pollination Industry Research Priorities. May 2026.
- Oldroyd, B., Barron, A. and Lannin England, D. (2024). Varroa destructor Research Strategy 2024-2027. AgriFutures Australia.
- Queensland Government. (2026). Varroa mite detections and management information. Business Queensland.
- RaboResearch. (2025). How varroa mites might impact Australian pollinators. Rabobank.
- Ruadh Consulting and ViroEpiVet. (unpublished). Literature Review: Impact of Varroa mite on pollination and Australia's national food security. AgriFutures Australia project PRO-021555.
- Ruadh Consulting and ViroEpiVet. (unpublished). Draft Final Report: Impact of Varroa mite on pollination and Australia's national food security. AgriFutures Australia project PRO-021555.
- When Bee Foundation. (2026). Pollination Security Status Report 2026. Australian Pollination Strategy.