

## VAA Industry Liaison Officer Report 1/9/23

Members, as from 1.00 pm the 30<sup>th</sup> of August a new permit system was approved for the removal of beehives from the Victoria SEZ at the Euston and Balranald varroa IPs [infected premise] in NSW. Permits can be applied for online on the Ag-Vic web site under Bees then Varroa for Victoria or NSW DPI for bees in NSW. There are various permits to suit your situation. There are strict requirements with these permits which must be adhered to, to give us the best chance of tracking these hives. In today's incident briefing it was noted that 89 permits were issued Wednesday night for the Victorian part of the SEZ [purple zone]. This is a good indication that beekeepers are going to do the right thing by their fellow beekeepers.

Wednesday, both I and John Van Weeghel received several calls from frustrated members. There were two themes, 1) we were not doing enough to get the hives free to move off the almonds and 2) we were only looking after the larger commercial beekeepers and we should be putting restrictions on their movements. Firstly, let me say that neither of these suggestions are correct as we as an organization are here to represent all beekeepers, big or small, recreational, or commercial.

Having said that after 25+ years' experience of pollinating almonds, the most critical time is the end of pollination as the bees tend to rob other hives furiously, creating a possible disaster. There is no possibility to inspect the hives either for the same reason. So, the hives must be shifted and considering that there are 44,000 hives, moving them to a quarantine area is not possible. In consultation with AHBIC and other Government agencies the decision was made to release the hives under permit to their next job. We stand by that decision.

The other concern was that it took too long to get a decision and organize the permits. This is unfounded as there are processes and planning to set up an incident response initially which takes time. NSW got their permits organized sooner but they already had the processes operating in other parts of the state, so naturally they were going to be better prepared. As of this morning no decision has been made about the fate of the hives in the new Red Zones in NSW. These areas contain 30,000 hives with only a small number of hives at the IP's

Beekeepers in Victoria are required to support the permit system and alcohol wash the hives on arrival at their next jobs and report the finding to BeeMax. The VAA decision at this stage is to support the continued eradication of Varroa. We all need to work together if we have any hope of being successful.

Regards Phil McPherson,  
Industry Liaison Officer