

Why do beekeepers need to be registered?

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It is important for any one keeping bees in New South Wales to be registered for the following reasons:

Statutory requirement

By law, it is a requirement for any one keeping honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) in New South Wales to be registered as a beekeeper with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

The *Apiaries Act* 1985:

- regulates the keeping of bees in NSW,
- requires and provides for the registration of beekeepers,
- helps prevent the introduction of certain diseases and pests which affect bees and apiaries,
- helps control and eradicate diseases and pests in apiaries in NSW.

The need for disease and pest control

The Act, while providing for and requiring all beekeepers to be registered, basically revolves around disease control. There are a number of serious pests and diseases of honey bees that have the potential to decimate the Australian apiary industry, as has occurred in many other countries.

The apiary industry plays an important part in the state's economy, through honey and wax production, the export of queens and package bees, and pollination services to the horticulture and cropping industries. The Australian honeybee industry produces honey and other bee products for domestic consumption and export, through apiculture of

Apis mellifera. The industry has an estimated GVP of A\$80 million. In addition, the annual benefit of apiculture to general agriculture through plant pollination in Australia is estimated to range from A\$4 to 6 billion.

(Reference: Future Surveillance Needs for Honeybee Biosecurity - Denis Anderson, Simon Barry, David Cook, Rob Duthie, David Clifford, published 2.8.2010 – Rural Industry research and Development Cooperation - <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/items/10-107>)

Alerting registered beekeepers to disease or pest outbreaks

When a disease or pest outbreak occurs in any particular area, registered beekeepers can be alerted so they can take the necessary precautions to eliminate any potential outbreak in their own apiaries.

Disease or pest tracing

When diseases or pests are detected in an apiary, a trace back can be conducted to locate the source of the contamination. If the source is located it can then be eradicated.

A trace forward can help assess what other hives may have been in contact with the infected bees.

Market access

Some markets require a system in place to ensure that the authorities can declare that products sent for export meet export requirements. A bee registration system allows a disease history check to be conducted on registered beekeepers.

Ownership of hives

The owner of beehives can be traced using the bee registration system. Beekeepers are required to display their registered number on the external wall of the brood boxes.

Good identification allows departmental Regulatory Officers to locate owners of beehive material to trace disease outbreaks. In emergencies such as fire or when aerial spraying occurs, good identification of beehive material helps authorities to contact the owners without delay.

Beekeepers are encouraged to display their registration number on all hive components and not just the brood box. This is common practice within the industry and helps to deter theft of beehive materials and assists in the recovery of stolen materials.

The requirement to be registered and to correctly identify beehives provides a traceability system consistent with the National Livestock Identification System.

Movement of beekeepers out of or into the apiary industry

Registration is required to be renewed every two years. This is partly due to the movement of beekeepers in and out of the industry. Ownership of hives can be traced using the registration system.

How to register

Registration is made by completing and returning an Application for Registration as a Beekeeper form with the required payment. Application forms can be obtained from:

Department of Primary Industries,

PO Box 108,

Gloucester, NSW 2422,

Phone (02) 6558 1707 or from

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/116972/application-for-registration-as-beekeeper.pdf

For further information about beekeeping

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/honey-bees

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