

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms Boothby to the Minister for Agribusiness and Aquaculture:

Territory Bees

- 1. Members of the Top End's bee-keeping community are concerned the Apiary Officer has been moved out of the role. Why has it happened?**

DITT records show that there has never been a dedicated Apiary Officer. Support for NT apiarists has been combined with various other duties.

- 2. How many beekeepers are there in the Northern Territory? Please break this figure down to Top End and Central Australia.**

	Darwin Region	Katherine	Tennant Creek	Alice Springs	Total
NT Properties with registered with Beehives	128	20	2	56	222

- 3. How many hives are there in the Territory? Please break this figure down to Top End and Central Australia.**

	Darwin Region	Katherine	Tennant Creek	Alice Springs	Total
Number of registered beehives	732	1086	3	184	2005

- 4. How much did the Apiary Officer's position cost? Please show break up of costs.**

Plant Biosecurity Officer, is a Technical 4 role and has a salary range of \$85,637-\$94,223 and operational costs of \$17,779 per annum.

Support for NT apiarists has been combined with various other duties

- 5. What alternative hive inspection arrangements are in place?**

- Monitoring of sentinel hives
- Maintenance of catchboxes
- Management of wild bee hives in response to community reports

- Floral netting surveillance
- Rainbow bee-eater surveillance
- Awareness and engagement of industry in relation to bee diseases
- Inspections for Plant Health Certificates to facilitate importing and exporting of bees
- Provision of diagnostic services for bees
- Participating in national bee surveillance forums.

6. Growers are concerned hive inspections are going on but not actual testing. Is that correct?

No.

7. When was the last time a position of permanent Apiary Officer was in place in the Territory?

Support for NT apiarists has been combined with various other duties.

8. Who has been doing the inspections since the Apiary Officer was removed?

Current bee surveillance is undertaken by the department and an external contractor, and the Commonwealth DAWE responds to reports of swarms and bee reports around the Darwin port area.

9. How many hive tests were conducted in the Territory between January 2018 and January 2020?

Testing program	Jan 2018 to Jan 2020	Feb 2020 to Sept 2021
National Bee Pest Surveillance Program testing	72	8
Direct submission to Berrimah Plant Laboratories for testing	9	10
American Foulbrood Testing	64	110

Note: Table includes testing for exotic bee pests/diseases only. Sentinel hives have been maintained and checked for overall hive health by an external contractor since 2020.

10. Bee growers are concerned that not testing hives for incursions is exposing the agriculture and horticulture sectors. Is this the case?

No.

11. Is there an estimate of the dollar value generated by bee-keeping in the Territory? If so what is the source of the estimate?

The majority of keepers are non-commercial. The NT does not have a commercial honey industry.

There are four commercial beekeepers in the NT. These keepers are primarily involved in pollination services for industries, such as the melon industry.

12. How much is being spent on bio-security measures this financial year?

The budget for biosecurity and animal welfare in 2021-22 is \$15.034 million.

13. What are those measures?

The department undertakes activities across all elements of the biosecurity spectrum, including plant biosecurity, livestock and animal welfare.

14. How much was spent in 2018-19 and 2019-20 on bio-security in the Territory?

2019-20	ACTUAL (\$)
PERSONNEL	13,482,668
OPERATIONS	4,110,439
TOTAL	17,593,107
2018-19	ACTUAL (\$)
PERSONNEL	14,241,747
OPERATIONS	5,013,853
TOTAL	19,255,600

**It should be noted that these figures include external projects and the national citrus canker and banana freckle eradication programs which have now ceased due to successful eradication of those diseases.*