

## MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER NOTICE – VARROA MITE (VARROA DESTRUCTOR) AND CARRIERS

Pursuant to section 124 of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act), I make the following movement control order.

### 1. Why this movement control order is being made and what it is intended to achieve.

This movement control order is being made to assist in preventing the entry of *Varroa destructor* (varroa mite) into Queensland, on the basis that:

- On 30 August 2023, Agriculture Victoria announced that beekeepers currently within the Varroa Surveillance Emergency Zones will be able to move their hives and equipment under a permit issued in accordance with the current Victorian Control Area Order."

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/varroa-mite-of-honey-bees/varroa-mite-current-situation>

- Beehives are currently permitted back into the State of Queensland without a biosecurity instrument permit (BIP) from a State or Territory where varroa mite has not been detected. However such movements present a biosecurity risk due to their proximity to adjacent areas States or Territories which have varroa mite.
- Varroa mite has been detected in New South Wales but is not yet known to present in Victoria. The purpose of this movement control order is to manage that indirect risk to Queensland.
- Recent detections in New South Wales have led to a 25-kilometre surveillance zone (SEZ) being placed around infested premises. There is also a 10-kilometre eradication emergency zone (EEZ). Whilst Victoria does not yet have any detections, movement controls are in place for bee operations in the north of Victoria due to proximity to the Euston and Balranald outbreaks in New South Wales. Some of the areas of those zones spill over into the Victoria and potentially affect substantial almond pollination services in the Sunraysia region. The maps of the relevant EEZ and SEZ areas in Victoria relating to the Euston and Balranald outbreaks (the relevant Victorian areas) can be found at:  
<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/varroa-mite-of-honey-bees/varroa-mite-current-situation>.
- Queensland beekeepers have approximately 12 000 hives providing pollination services in the SEZ within Victoria. It is necessary to restrict movement and potential spread of the mite into Queensland. Due to proximity to infected premises, and the stage of the pollination leading to swarming and intermingling of bees, there is a foreseeable risk that detections may occur in hives that are intended for movement from Victoria into Queensland for future pollination activities.
- The Movement Control Order will apply to beekeepers who have had carriers in the surveillance Emergency Zone at any time, since 1 July 2023.

In this context, I consider it necessary to make this movement control order to restrict the movement of varroa mite and its carriers into Queensland, as I am satisfied, on reasonable grounds, that varroa mite poses a biosecurity risk of enough seriousness, and the risk of entry, establishment and spread is high enough to justify the making of the order.

### 2. Details of the controlled biosecurity matter and carriers to which the movement control order relates.

The movement control order applies to *Varroa destructor* (varroa mite) and all known carriers, as detailed below.

*Controlled biosecurity matter (varroa mite)*

The varroa mite is an external parasite of adult honeybees, and drone and worker bee brood. Varroa mite feeds and reproduces on larvae and pupae, causing malformation and weakening of honey bees as well as

transmitting numerous viruses. Heavy varroa mite infestations can build up in 3 – 4 years and cause scattered brood, crippled and crawling honeybees, a reduction in honey bee population, supersedure of queen bees and ultimately colony breakdown and death of the hive.

Adult female varroa mites are oval, flat, red-brown and around 1.1 mm long and 1.5 mm wide. They can be seen with the naked eye. Varroa mites complete their life cycle in honey bee brood and can be observed in both drone and worker bee brood. Examining the brood involves uncapping brood to check for the dark mites in the cell and against the pearly white bodies of the developing brood. They can also be observed between the sclerites and between the head and thorax on adult worker bees and drones. Varroa mite is considered one of the most serious pests of honey bees worldwide. Australia is the only continent to remain free of varroa mite. No effective natural enemies of varroa mite are reported in the scientific or technical literature from anywhere in the world, limiting the potential for biological control. Eradication from infested hives is not possible, though chemical, biotechnical and biological control methods mitigate the impacts.

Establishment of this pest in Queensland is highly likely to have a significant impact on the honey bee industry and plant industries dependant on honey bee pollination.

#### *Carriers (varroa mite carriers)*

Varroa mite can be spread on any of the following carriers: a bee; a swarm, nest or hive of bees; an apiary appliance; or an apiary product.

- (a) Bee, meaning European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) or Asian honey bee (*Apis cerana*) of any life stage, including a dead bee.
- (b) Swarm, meaning a group of bees, either European honey bee or Asian Honey bee, that has left a hive or a nest with a queen bee to start a new colony.
- (c) Nest meaning a natural shelter for bees and includes the bees, either European honey bee or Asian Honey bee, i.e. a feral nest, including abandoned nests.
- (d) Hive meaning a used receptacle for housing living bees.
- (e) Apiary appliance means any apparatus or equipment, fitting, implement or utensil that has been used for beekeeping or processing, handling, or storing an apiary product, including (without limitation) used beekeeping personal protective equipment
- (f) Apiary product means bee collected pollen, bee comb, comb sections, cut comb, honey dew, propolis, queen candy, beeswax, royal jelly and honey.

In this context, the movement control order applies to all the above carriers.

### **3. The area to which the movement control order relates.**

This movement control order relates to the entire State of Queensland.

### **4. The prohibitions and restrictions that must be complied with by persons to whom this movement control order applies:**

- (a) A person within the area to which the movement control order relates must notify an inspector appointed under the Act without undue delay, about:

- (i) the presence of varroa mite

**or**

- (ii) if the person reasonably suspects the presence of varroa mite, the suspected presence of varroa mite.

(b) A person must not move any of the carriers listed in section 2 of this movement control order into Queensland unless:

- (i) the carrier has not been in the relevant Victorian areas at any time since 1 July 2023, or
- (ii) the carrier is processed honey or processed beeswax; or
- (iii) the carrier is a new and unused Apiary appliance.

(Note: definitions below include important information around when these exceptions apply).

(c) A person within the area to which the movement control order relates must allow an inspector appointed under the Act or a person under the direction of an inspector appointed under the Act to:

- (i) inspect, examine, film or test any carrier listed in section 2 of this movement control order; or
- (ii) treat or destroy any carrier listed in section 2 of this movement control order; or
- (iii) clean or disinfect any place, including any structure or thing at a place; or
- (iv) take any carrier listed in section 2 of this movement control order for inspection, testing, treatment, or destruction.

***For the purposes of this movement control order:***

- (a) **relevant Victoria areas** means areas that have been identified as being in the Surveillance Emergency Zone (SEZ) or 25 km from an infested premises since 1 July 2023 or has been published in this map: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/priority-pest-insects-and-mites/varroa-mite-of-honey-bees/varroa-mite-current-situation> as it appears on the date of the publication of this notice.
- (b) **processed honey** means honey that has been extracted, filtered, or strained or settled to remove wax cappings and dead bees, and decanted into a *clean container movement system* in a facility and in a manner that excludes bees
- (c) **a clean container movement system** means there is no external contamination with an apiary product (including honey and beeswax) to the outside of the container, or any outer protective framing, or pallets and the containers are transported in a manner that excludes bees
- (d) **processed beeswax** means beeswax that has undergone melting, filtering (to remove bees, brood and debris) and rendering treatment and is packed into clean containers and packaged in a facility and in a manner that excludes bees
- (e) **a new and unused Apiary appliance** means any apparatus or equipment, fitting, implement or utensil that remain in original packaging and have not been in contact with bees, or in contact with apiary products and packaged in a facility and in a manner that excludes bees

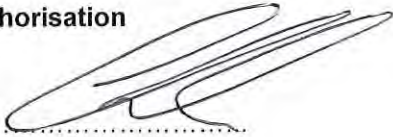
**Period of the order**

The movement control order is effective immediately, from when it is published and will stay in effect for 3 months unless earlier revoked.

**5. Revocation of previous movement control order**

Nil.

**6. Authorisation**



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30-8-23

Signed

Date of Authorisation

Chris Sarra  
Director-General  
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries