



TASMANIAN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION INC.

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Mr S Scott
Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000
Via email: pac@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Scott

We appreciate the opportunity to provide a submission to the review of the **TT-Line Spirits Project**, as outlined in your letter dated 13 December 2024.

We note the specific term of reference as follows:

'... opportunities to support the Tasmanian tourism industry and Tasmanian producers until the new ships are in service, and to maximise the benefits once they are ...'

Tasmanian beekeepers produce a wide range of iconic bee products, including honey, mead, and beeswax. They also deliver essential pollination services to the state's vitally important horticulture and agriculture sectors. It is estimated that the farm gate value of the industry is around \$20 million pa.

As well as honey products and pollination services, our industry also plays an important part in the state's burgeoning tourism industry.

The efficient operation of the TT-Line Spirits is integral for the continued growth of all these activities.

Having said that, our interests are generally no different to those of any other agricultural production sector – and others will no doubt have provided detailed commentary about challenges and opportunities.

Our key concern with respect to the operation of the ships is in ensuring that biosecurity risks are always accorded the highest priority.

Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) is regarded as the world's worst pest of honeybees. Until recently, Australia was the last country in the world free of this pest. However, in 2024, varroa mites were detected in hives in Victoria, NSW, and Queensland. The national response has now moved from eradication to Transition to Management phase, which means that it is accepted that varroa is in Australia to stay.

The potential for spread of varroa mite from the mainland poses an imminent (and existential) threat to the Tasmanian economy and environment.

If varroa were to enter and establish in Tasmania, the impacts would be significant to commercial beekeepers, recreational beekeepers, pollination-dependent horticultural and agricultural industries, exports of honey and bee related products, and home gardeners.

Tasmania has robust detection systems in place through border inspections and post border surveillance. However, as the threat levels change over time, these activities will also need to evolve.

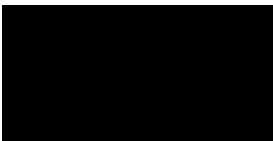
The risk posed by the potential spread of varroa mite is one such evolving threat. It means all possible entry points and vectors need to be constantly monitored, and every facet of the state's biosecurity regime needs to be.

We therefore stress the need for the TT-Line to closely consider biosecurity policies and procedures in all aspects of operation. Particular attention needs to be paid to passengers and vehicles boarding the ships in Victoria to ensure potential risk creators are not transported across Bass Strait.

TT-Line must be aware of the risk this pest poses and enforce compliance with the state government Tasmania's Action Plan for Varroa Mite 2024-2034.

We look forward to any opportunity to work with the TT-Line operators and other agencies to ensure that this devastating pest does not arrive in Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Davis
Secretary

5 March 2024