



Government
of South Australia

The Hon Clare Scriven MLC

Our ref: eA203854
Obj ID: A7144286
Receipt: 22135240

The Hon Dr Nicola Centofanti MLC
Member of the Legislative Council
Parliament House
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Dr Centofanti

Determination under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*

I refer to your application made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* received by the Office of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries on 29 July 2025 requesting access to the following:

“Correspondence including emails, messages, meeting notes, hard copies and records of discussions between the Minister and PIRSA staff relating to Varroa mite”.

Timeframe: 1/08/2025 to 9/09/2025

Accordingly, the following determination has been finalised.

I have located three documents that are captured within the scope of your request.

Determination 1

I have determined that access to the following documents is **granted in part**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
1	Minute from the Chief Executive, PIRSA to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development – dated 13/8/2025 – eA203640	3
2	Minute from the Chief Executive, PIRSA to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development – Noted by the Minister 27/8/2025 – eA203640	5

The information removed from Documents 1 and 2 is pursuant to Clause 6(1) and Clause 7(1)(c) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
Minister for Forest Industries

GPO Box 1671 Adelaide SA 5001
Telephone 08 8226 2931 | Email minister.scriven@sa.gov.au



Information that is not within the scope of your request has been removed from Document 2.

Clause 6(1) states:

“6 - Documents affecting personal affairs

(1) A document is an exempt document if it contains matter the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of any person (living or dead).”

The personal information removed consists of the following:

- Name, email address and identifiable information of the author of correspondence to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
- Name and identifiable information of a third party
- Mobile telephone number of a Departmental officer

It is considered that members of the public can correspond with a Minister without fear that their identities are released.

As a mobile telephone number allows a person, including an officer of an agency, to be contacted outside of business hours and is information that is not ordinarily available to the public, the information is taken to concern the personal affairs of an individual.

Accordingly, it is considered that disclosure of this information would be an unreasonable intrusion into the privacy rights of the individuals concerned.

Clause 7(1)(c) states:

“7 – Documents affecting business affairs

(1) A document is an exempt document –

(c) if it contains matter –

- (i) consisting of information (other than trade secrets or information referred to in paragraph (b)) concerning the business, professional, commercial or financial affairs of any agency or any other person; and*
- (ii) the disclosure of which –*
 - (A) could reasonably be expected to have an adverse effect on those affairs or to prejudice the future supply of such information to the Government or to an agency; and*
 - (B) would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest”*

Pursuant to Clause 7(1)(c), the documents contain information relating to the business affairs of third-party businesses.

In addressing the public interest test requirement for the Clause 7(1)(c) exemption, I have balanced the following factors:

In favour of the public interest:

- Meeting the objects of the Act favouring access to documents.
- Ensuring optimal use of public resources.
- High level of interest in the accountability of public office holders.
- The importance of transparency and openness and the interest that the public has in the decision-making processes of Government.
- High level of media and community interest in this matter.

Contrary to the public interest:

- Protecting the commercial and business interests of third parties.
- The recent age of the information and the ongoing relevance of the matter was considered.
- If third parties cannot be assured of confidentiality by Government with respect to documents relating to their business affairs, this would have the potential to harm business relationships with Government and hamper future dealings with public sector agencies.
- Given the high level of media and community interest in this matter, disclosure of the business affairs of companies involved in the movement of bee hives has the potential to harm those businesses concerned.

Having considered the various factors weighing for and against disclosure, I have determined that disclosure of this information would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Determination 2

I have determined that access to the following documents is **refused**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
1a	Attachment to Document 1 – Draft Letter – eA203640	2

Access to Document 1a is refused pursuant to Clause 9(1) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act which states:

“9—Internal working documents

(1) A document is an exempt document if it contains matter—

(a) that relates to -

- (i) any opinion, advice or recommendation that has been obtained, prepared or recorded; or*
- (ii) any consultation or deliberation that has taken place, in the course of, or for the purpose of, the decision-making functions of the Government, a Minister or an agency; and*

(b) the disclosure of which would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest."

The document consists of a draft letter to a third party.

In addressing the public interest test for the exemption, I have balanced the following factors:

In favour of the public interest:

- Meeting the objects of the Freedom of Information Act favouring access to documents.
- Ensuring optimal use of public resources.
- High level of interest in the accountability of public office holders.
- The importance of transparency and openness and the interest that the public has in the decision-making processes of Government.
- High level of community interest in the topic.

Contrary to the public interest:

- Protecting the commercial and business interests of third parties.
- The recent age of the information and the ongoing relevance of the matter was considered.
- If third parties cannot be assured of confidentiality by Government with respect to documents relating to their business affairs, this would have the potential to harm business relationships with Government and hamper future dealings with public sector agencies.
- Given the high level of media and community interest in this matter, disclosure of the business affairs of companies involved in the movement of bee hives has the potential to harm those businesses concerned.
- The recent age of the information was considered and the continuing relevance of the matters.

Having considered the various factors weighing for and against disclosure, I have determined that disclosure of the document would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

If you are unhappy with this determination you are entitled to exercise your rights of external review with the Ombudsman SA. Alternatively, you can apply to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT). If you wish to seek a review, you must do so within 30 calendar days of receiving this determination.

For more information about seeking a review or appeal, please contact the Ombudsman SA on telephone (08) 8226 8699 or SACAT on 1800 723 767.

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your application, and the documents to which you are given access, will be published in PIRSA's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at

http://dpc.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/20818/PC045-Disclosure-Log-Policy.pdf

If you disagree with publication, please advise the undersigned in writing within fourteen calendar days from the date of this determination.

Should you require further information or clarification with respect to this matter, please contact Ms Francesca Blefari on 8226 2931 or email: Minister.Scriven@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. M. Scriven', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Clare Scriven MLC
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR FOREST INDUSTRIES

10 / 10 / 2025



Minute to
Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
Minister for Forest Industries

Ref: eA203640

For	Noting and Signature
Critical Date	14 August 20205
Subject	Letter from Clause 7(1)(c), Via Clause 7(1)(c)

Synopsis

On 13 August 2025, Clause 7(1)(c), on behalf of Clause 7(1)(c), wrote to you requesting Ministerial exemption under section 33(7) of the *Livestock Act* for Clause 6(1) application to import 480 hives from Queensland. The hives were to be sourced from within 25 km of confirmed varroa mite detections. The Department sought further information to assess the biosecurity risk. Following review, the Chief Inspector of Stock granted an entry permit with additional biosecurity conditions to mitigate the risk of varroa mite incursion into South Australia.

Recommendations

That you:

- Note the brief
NOTED
- Sign the attached letter in response to Clause 7(1)(c) via Clause 7(1)(c)
SIGNED / NOT SIGNED

.....
 Hon Clare Scriven MLC
**Minister for Primary Industries
 and Regional Development**
Minister for Forest Industries
 / / 2025

Ministerial Comments -

Background

- Varroa mite is considered the greatest biosecurity threat to both Australia's honey bee industry (valued at some \$437 million p.a.) and Australia's agricultural and horticultural honey bee pollination dependant industries (where the economic value of honey bee pollination is estimated at some \$14 billion per annum).
- Varroa is established in Australia across multiple jurisdictions including NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT.
- There are no known varroa destructor mite detections in South Australia.
- The SA Varroa Industry advisory Committee (SAVIAC) provided advice from to PIRSA on the anticipated number of hives required for pollination in 2025. Information received from the SAVIAC indicated there would be a shortfall of SA hives available for pollination services this year and numbers continue to drop with SA beekeepers withdrawing from providing these services due to a range of reasons, but mainly centring around hives in poor condition due to drought and not being fit for service. The shortfall is expected to be in the vicinity of 10,000 hives but could change depending on availability of SA hives.
- Entry of bees and bee commodities are subject to Chief Inspector of Stock Permission, with individual applications assessed on a case by case basis.
- Live bees and apiary commodities are permitted from Queensland and Victoria, while only apiary commodities (honey/ wax/ plant and equipment) are permitted from NSW.
- To minimise the biosecurity risk, these movements require approved pre-entry treatment and/ or testing, combined with approved post-entry integrity inspections/ testing, management, documentation, and notification.
- On 22 July 2025 PIRSA received an application from **Clause 6(1)** seeking entry permission for 1540 hives to conduct pollination services within SA. Hives seeking to enter were sourced from multiple locations across QLD.
- On 1 August 2025, the Chief Inspector of Stock approved the entry for 3 consignments of **Clause 6(1)** constituting 1540 hives from 12 locations. It was noted on the permit (Objective reference A7054728 that loads 9, 10, 11 and 12 (totalling 480 Hives) were not permitted at that time.
- Loads 9, 10, 11 and 12 would require individual assessment due to the location and timeframes of the hives were found to be within 25 km of known Varroa mite detections in QLD, which elevated the risk of potential incursion of varroa mite into SA.
- The Department sought additional information to conduct the assessments from **Clause 6(1)**, **Clause 7(1)(c)** representatives and Queensland Department of Primary Industries.

Discussion

- The Department in undertaking their assessment sought the location and timeframes at each location for the past 12 months of the hives that were seeking entry. These locations and timeframe were cross referenced with the confirmed detections locations of varroa mite in QLD.

- The Department utilised the buffered information publicly available from the varroa surveillance maps for QLD and further enquired with QLD DPI inspectors to ascertain the timeline for detection confirmations and accurate GPS locations.
- Each of the nominated loads were found to have existed within 25km of a confirmed varroa mite detection, hence there exists an elevated risk of varroa mite transfer from the confirmed detection site and hives owned and operated by **Clause 6(1)**.
- On 13 August 2025 the CIS provisionally approved the issuing entry permit with conditions outlined, including negative testing results. **Stakeholder / regional impacts, consultation and engagement**
- The Department has been in considerable communication with **Clause 6(1)** and **Clause 7(1)(c)** representatives and the QLD Department of Primary Industries to seek the information to allow an assessment to be made.

Management of key risks

- To allow entry of the hives additional testing and mitigation requirements are being sought by the Chief Inspector of Stock that will the lower the risk profile for a potential Varroa incursion from the entry of these hives

Legislative and/or financial implications

- **Clause 7(1)(c)** have indicated that they stand suffer substantial loss if the hives to support pollination are not permitted entry.

Attachments

- A. Response letter to **Clause 7(1)(c)**



for

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

13/8/2025

CONTACT	Georgie Cornish
POSITION	Executive Director
DIVISION	Biosecurity
MOBILE and LANDLINE	Clause 6(1) / 8429 2743
Cleared by	Con Poulos, Director Animal Biosecurity



Minute to
Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
Minister for Forest Industries

Ref: eA203640

For **Noting and Signature**
Critical Date **14 August 2025**
Subject **Letter from Clause 7(1)(c), Via Clause 7(1)(c)**

Synopsis

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Recommendations

That you:

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Hon Clare Scriven MLC

**Minister for Primary Industries
and Regional Development**

Minister for Forest Industries

27/8 / 2025

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13/8/2025

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MOBILE and LANDLINE	Clause 6(1) / 8429 2743
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Not in Scope



Not in Scope

