Government of South Australia
Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Our ref: CORP F2026/000147
Receipt No: 23830808

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19 August 2026

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* which was received by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) on 20 July 2026, seeking access to the following:

> *"A copy of the minutes from the SA Varroa Industry Advisory Committee - meeting 24, held on 18/02/2026. These minutes had previously been refused as they had not been endorsed at the time of application in May 2026. A copy is now requested, assuming that six-months on, they have been endorsed."*
>
> Timeframe: 18/02/2026 to 20/07/2026

Accordingly, the following determination has been finalised.

I have located one document that is captured within the scope of your request.

Determination

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

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
1	SA Varroa Industry Advisory Committee Minutes – Meeting 24 – 18/2/2026	5

The information removed from the above document is pursuant to Clause 6(1) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act which 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 information removed consists of the names of members of an Advisory Committee and other individuals.

Consent has not been provided to disclose the names of the individuals and, accordingly, there would be an expectation that their personal information would not be released in this way.

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

Right of Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with this determination, you are entitled to exercise your right of review and appeal as outlined in the attached documentation Making a Freedom of Information Application | State Records of South Australia (archives.sa.gov.au), by completing the "FOI Application Form for Internal Review of a Determination" and returning the completed form to:

Freedom of Information Principal Officer
Department of Primary Industries and Regions
GPO Box 1671
ADELAIDE SA 5001

or via email PIRSA.FOI@sa.gov.au

FOI Disclosure Log

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 Lisa Farley, Senior Freedom of Information Advisor on 8429 0422 or email PIRSA.FOI@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Griffiths
Accredited Freedom of Information Officer
DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS

Doc 1

SA Varroa Industry Advisory Committee Minutes

Meeting 24

Wednesday 18th February2026 1.30pm

Teams; 11WM 21.19

Attendees: Clause 6(1) – Chair, Clause 6(1) – PIRSA, Clause 6(1) – CVO PIRSA, Clause 6(1) – PIRSA, Clause 6(1) – PIRSA, Clause 6(1) – PIRSA, Clause 6(1) - SAAA, Clause 6(1) – SAAA, Clause 6(1) – BSSA, Clause 6(1) – BSSA, Clause 6(1) – PIR, Clause 6(1) – AHBIC, Clause 6(1) – PIRSA Minute Taker

Apologies :Clause 6(1) – AHBIC, Clause 6(1) – PIR, Clause 6(1) – CIR, Clause 6(1)

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chair invited everyone to introduce themselves around the room.

2. Minutes of the Meeting 23

Endorsed

- Can bees come in from NSW? With the new rules NSW are allowed
- **endorsed.**

3. Action items – as per Action List.

As per the action register are on the agenda

4. Varroa Update

As of 17 Feb 2026
• 25 apiaries with confirmed detections,
• 8 awaiting SARDI confirmation, have been confirmed by apiary staff
• 21 individual beekeepers with detections
• Most reports are low mite numbers in washes, hence picking up early
• Acaricides (Bayvarol) are being provided to beekeepers once they are near threshold, acknowledging that threshold will drop to 5+ mites in 300 bee wash (autumn / winter / spring threshold) in approx. 2 ½ weeks (1 March 2026).

• Although spread across a wide geographic area, still only low numbers of beekeepers involved and low mite numbers being initially detected, which bodes well for early implementation of management actions.
• Cape Jervis sentinel hives are being monitored on a 4-week cycle, with nil detections to date.

Synthetic pyrethroid resistance of Varroa in northern NSW and SE QLD

NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has confirmed 16/02 the first case of Varroa mite pyrethroid resistance in the state and says best practice mite management is now more important than ever. Laboratory testing at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) identified a known genetic mutation, L925I, which causes pyrethroid resistance in Varroa mites.
There are two approved pyrethroid miticide active ingredients available in Australia, flumethrin and tau-fluvalinate (sold as Bayvarol and Apistan).
As with all treatments, beekeepers are reminded to check mite loads 2-3 weeks after treatments have been added and when removed so you can monitor treatment efficacy and the risk of pyrethroid resistant mites in your apiaries.
Distribution of resistant mites is likely to be isolated to a small area at this stage and bee biosecurity officers are surveying Varroa mites across NSW to get a better idea of the distribution of resistant mites.
At present this does not pose a direct issue to SA but if beekeepers observe low effectiveness of treatments, we ask them to contact the PIRSA Apiary Unit via pirsa.beebiosecurity@sa.gov.au. We will assist in investigating and testing to identify the cause.
NSW DPIRD Media release DPIRD advises pyrethroid resistant Varroa management
AHBIC Biosecurity Update https://honeybee.org.au/ahbic-industry-biosecurity-update-resistantmites/

Additional suite of acaricides

• Additional storage in place in prep for delivery
• Aluen Cap - pre-ordered not expected until April 2026
• Apistan, Apivar, Api Guard – ordered, eta from late Feb to late March, ex NZ.

These acaricides will be offered to registered beekeepers to enable tailoring to their individual programs and extending the treatment options (allow treatment rotations)

Apiary Unit -staffing

• National Response program which encompassed both the eradication and T2M phases, ceased on 6 Feb 2026. The Coordinator and VDO roles were funded through a cost share arrangement under this response. Clause 6(1) , undertaking the coordinator role, concluded his contract with PIRSA, while Clause 6(1) was offered the VDO role, but decided to not to continue instead focusing on his own native flower business and other pursuits.
• PIRSA has committed to continue supporting 2x VDO to 30 June 2026 and seeking funding to continue these roles until 30 June 2027. Clause 6(1) is continuing as VDO, while the other VDO is being recruited.
• Commonwealth is looking to commit to 5yr funding for the National Bee Biosecurity Program, this program provides part funding for the BBO role. PIRSA will seek matching industry support via the Apiary Industry Fund, with short fall for full FTE being supported by PIRSA
• PIRSA is seeking SA Govt budgetary commitment for further apiary support to 2030, to aid in processing of permits, registration/ general enquiries, and logistical support for VDO/BBO and surveillance periods.
• Clause 6(1) , Varroa Program Manager role ceases end of Feb 2026, currently also the acting apiary program manager role, and will officially take on the role from 1 March 2026.

Comms & Engagement
• All varroa related events are available at Eventbrite, Department of Primary Industries and Regions, this includes monthly webinars and in person events.
• Biosecurity Notices are being distributed monthly and also both past and current notice are placed on the PIRSA website for access
• Hive inspection results continue to be provided for inclusion on the Varroa Surveillance heat map
• Permits
• Permits for movement into SA continue to remain in place for varroa +ve jurisdictions for live bees including Queens, apiary plant and equipment, hive components and apiary commodities,
• During 2025 to date, 69 permits have been considered for approval which includes approval for the entry of over 11,000 Queens from varroa +ve jurisdictions.
• PIRSA have implemented the change to queen permits as recommended by SAAA.
• SAVAIC will meet on 18 Feb to discuss entry requirements for the 2026 pollination period.

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Questions –
Queen stocks, not surprising the number. But, believe not that successful, mainly due to the drought and nutritional factor, but we would like it noted that Government is required to support the Bee industry.

Varroa Programs

- January 26 – 72 individual engagements across the state reaching over 370 individual beekeepers
- February, we're continuing with our monthly webinars. Monthly webinars reaching across the state to be keepers that we can't get to in person. The webinars are averaging between 60 to 120 per month. Bimonthly updates also continue.
- We are going to continue with management plan webinars, in conjunction with face-to-face events. We currently are attending detection zones making sure we are reaching community. Supplying additional support on monitoring techniques.
- We have several group workshops scheduled with beekeepers for practical demonstrations, making sure they are comfortable with their monitoring and available for questions

FeedbackQuestions – (SAVIAC):

No questions and answers at the end.
What is the plan on managing resistant to synthetics?

Answer – (PIRSA)– only a small amount in NSW & southern Qld, we understand that is it is an issue and this is why we are looking at different chemicals, these chemicals are not 100% effective, this is why we are saying best bee practises is the best and educations & communication.

Beekeepers are looking at the most cost-effective treatments, which is homemade, unfortunately it doesn't matter how much try and educate beekeepers will continue to do their own thing and suffer the consequences.
Apiary is a small team that needs to be acknowledged for what they are achieving, and we remain flexible and if we need to pivot we will. We are very aware of the resistance and what that might mean coming into the future, but like Clause 6(1) tried to articulate is, that's the best tools now. If we start putting out confusing messages we are going to start seeing those home brews pop up everywhere. Now is not the time, we urge you to remain confident that we will be flexible.

PIRSA not in a position to authorise the use of unauthorised unapproved products. What we can is provide information on the approved products and there is multiple that are already approved in Australia and for the use in South Australia. This is also they need to use the authorised chemical as per the instructions on the Labels.
Webinars & engagement must include resistance is possible and that the use of authorise products is all that can/should be used.
APMVA is the only group that can authorise any chemicals for use.

Question –(SAVIAC)– What is the current Beekeepers with Varroa's threshold for Mite Treatment.

Answer – (PIRSA) - The 25 large companies involved are still too early in determining their own economic thresholds for mite treatment. Most are currently following best-practice thresholds: 9+ mites at present, 5 mites going into winter/spring. Some beekeepers want to lower these thresholds, but this is based more on opinion than data. Work is underway to investigate their operations more deeply to determine optimal thresholds for each business. Understand why those thresholds make sense biologically and economically. Strong emphasis on IPM first. We are educating with Australia's best practises.

Cross-Border Movement of Hives – Next Steps

Given we have a transition to management plan in place, what is the regulatory environment going forward. Given that due to environmental factor the spread of Varroa in SA has been a lot slower than NSW & Qld and because of this maintain permit regulations, until a clearer picture emerges going forward. Qld & NSW are at endemic stages,

Questions – (SAVIAC) How are we going to be able to cope with the number of hives required for pollination? How are Almond grower's going to be able to pollinate this season without hives? Hives are extremely limited in bring them in with the current threshold. What is the Almond industry looking for 5/6 hives per hectare with at least 8 frames.
Answer - SAVIAC members agreed to policy of for live bees including Queens, apiary plant and equipment, hive components and apiary commodities that have seasonal thresholds of mites from varroa positive jurisdictions and that are under management for varroa.
PIRSA to go away and work on policy advice to Minister, policy documents (Gazette etc.) to be circulated to SAVIAC, with the best interest for Beekeepers and Industry. The policy needs to cover the movement of both Hives & Queens.

Health certificates are going to remain part of the policy.

ACTION: Offline PIRSA to work on policy documents gazette notice and minute to Minister for policy approval for easier movement of Hives & Queens, still to include Health certificate and Permit. PIRSA noted timeframes and election pending.

Business Continuity

Chair worked a on paper with limited figures as an exercise to look at the future with Varroa.
Feral Bees will decline in 2 to 3 years.
Reduction of Commercial Beekeeper by up to 50% in the future.
Locals will lose Fruit trees and vegetables gardens.
Currently use 8100 hives for horticultural crops and if it's 50% pollinated by feral bees, they will need 16300, so an extra 8000.
1000 vegetable and seed producers currently use 2100 hives, which are likely to go up to 4300 hives.
Lucerne and legumes also require hives.
Overall, there will need to be approximately 160000 hives in the future, this shows that in the future business continuity. There needs to be discussion National. This is about Industry development

Action Clause 6(1) to liaise with Clause 6(1) with figures and supply paper for next meeting. Clause 6(1) to send Clause 6(1) Figures from State departments on their registered commercial recreational beekeeper numbers and hive numbers.

Other Diseases

This is a boarder conversation to be had with Plant Health Team in PIRSA.
Suggested a workshop between beekeepers / industry / PIRSA to have a discussion possibly involving other divisions of PIRSA.

Action: Clause 6(1) to work out who should be involved in a discussion regarding Other Pests.

Blueprint Update

PIRSA teams are close to putting out a tender for an independent person to come in and write up the Blueprint – Clause 6(1) group are handling.

Jurisdictional updates.

Qld has high levels of Varroa – Resistance in NSW is linked to Qld beekeeper. NSW widespread Varroa. It has spread to lower Peninsula in Victoria. No Varroa in Tas, WA lower levels of honey but no Varroa. There is a report coming out for the public shortly, with all the data coming from the BBO's. It is important to distinguish between Registered Beekeepers and Business and the number of Colonies that are actually available in that state.

Meeting closed

Meeting closed at 4.05pm