



Media release

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Bee biosecurity aware these school holidays

Travellers are reminded not to bring honey or bee products into Western Australia to help safeguard the State's honey bees from pest and disease threats.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has issued the reminder following the recent detection of Varroa mite (*Varroa destructor*) in bee hives in New South Wales.

WA beekeepers are also encouraged to be alert for signs of varroa mite and other exotic pests, and ensure they are registered with the department.

DPIRD chief plant biosecurity officer Sonya Broughton said WA's bee industry was free from many pests and diseases found elsewhere in the world.

"WA has strict import conditions in place for honey bees, bee products, hives and associated equipment," Dr Broughton said.

"Travellers from interstate are not permitted to bring bee products including honey into WA. All bee products must be declared to a Quarantine Inspector upon arrival at a road or airport checkpoint or disposed of prior."

In response to the NSW detection, DPIRD is increasing general bee surveillance.

"The department has sentinel hives at strategic locations which are regularly inspected," Dr Broughton said. "We will also increase surveillance of commercial apiaries.

"We encourage beekeepers, on a warm day, to undertake mite surveillance on their hives using a recognised technique like sugar shake, alcohol washing or drone uncapping."

More information on these mite detection methods can be found on the [BeeAware website](#).

It is important that all beekeepers, including hobbyist, are registered with DPIRD.

At registration, beekeepers are issued with a unique brand identifier that must be applied to each of their hives.

Any beekeepers not yet registered are urged to do so by visiting the [DPIRD website](#) or contact the Brands Office (Bunbury) by phone 1300 926 547 or email Brands.Bunbury@dpiird.wa.gov.au.

Varroa mite is a serious, exotic parasite of adult European honeybees and their brood. It weakens and kills honeybee colonies and can also transmit honeybee viruses.

The mite occurs in beekeeping countries throughout the world but is not established in Australia.

Any suspect cases of Varroa mite should be reported by calling the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881.

More information on Varroa mite is available at www.agric.wa.gov.au/bees/varroa-mite-biosecurity-alert

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