



THE HONEY BEE AND POLLINATION PROGRAM

Horticulture
Innovation
Australia



RURAL INDUSTRIES
Research & Development Corporation

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY FACT SHEET

Compatibility of management objectives on public lands and beekeeping

Introduction

The Australian beekeeping industry is an important agricultural industry with an estimated gross value of \$88 million (2012-13 estimate). Beekeepers also provide indirect benefits to the broader agricultural economy through the provision of pollination services valued between \$4-6 billion. The true value of beekeeping in maintaining the health and resilience of broader the Australian agricultural economy is therefore significant, extending well beyond its direct economic contribution.

Importance of public lands

Public lands provide important seasonal floral resources for Australia's migrating beekeepers. With one third of Australia's native forests located on public lands, and an additional 40% on crown leased land, access to these areas underpins production for the industry.

Forests and woodlands provide up to 80% of pollen and nectar resources, with between 70-90% of honey production across south east and south west Australia reliant on the flowering tree and understory resources of forested areas, primarily located on public lands. Floristic diversity on public land is not only important for honey production, but also provides a means to build up hives prior to and post pollination.

The continued productivity and viability of the beekeeping industry is therefore contingent upon maintaining flexible and ongoing access to apiary sites located on public lands. This is particularly important in drought periods or following floods or fires, where beekeepers require additional flexibility to find alternative food resources for the survival of their bees.

Area of public lands in Australia and the Australian Capital Territory

Public land is a significant land tenure across Australia's States and Territories. Approximately 63% of Australia's land mass (484,067,824 hectares) is classed as public land.

In the ACT public land accounts for approximately 60% of all land (149,000 hectares).

Importance of migration

In order to optimise production across seasons, it is necessary for beekeepers to migrate hives across landscapes when seeking the most productive sources of pollen and nectar. Hive migration will be planned to coincide with peaks in flowering of key plants, typically occurring over a two to four month period. Production is predominantly from eucalypt, angophora and corymbia tree species, although acacias, banksias and other species are also important. Variability in Australian weather conditions affect budding and flower patterns of flora and consequently pollen and nectar levels, requiring beekeepers to maintain their production through a constant state of migration.

Migration across public land

Migrating hives between different public land tenures can present significant challenges for beekeepers, because each type of tenure will have different management objectives and licencing requirements. Migrating hives interstate is even more complicated because comparable land tenures, such as 'National Park', may not have the same management objectives or licencing requirements in different States, due to differing State/Territory legislation. Ensuring that interstate migration satisfies the relevant state biosecurity procedures and approval requirements is another factor that complicates migration for apiarists.

Figure 1 summarises the public land tenures for each Australian State and Territory.

In pursuing the dynamic floral resources required to maintain honey production, apiarists face an increasingly complex and challenging environment when negotiating access to the range of public land tenures, on which these resources occur. It is therefore important that apiarists have a current knowledge of the policies that affect beekeeping across the Australian States and Territories so that they can plan future migration activities effectively. This factsheet summarises the key public land tenures and associated management objectives in relation to beekeeping for the Australian Capital Territory.

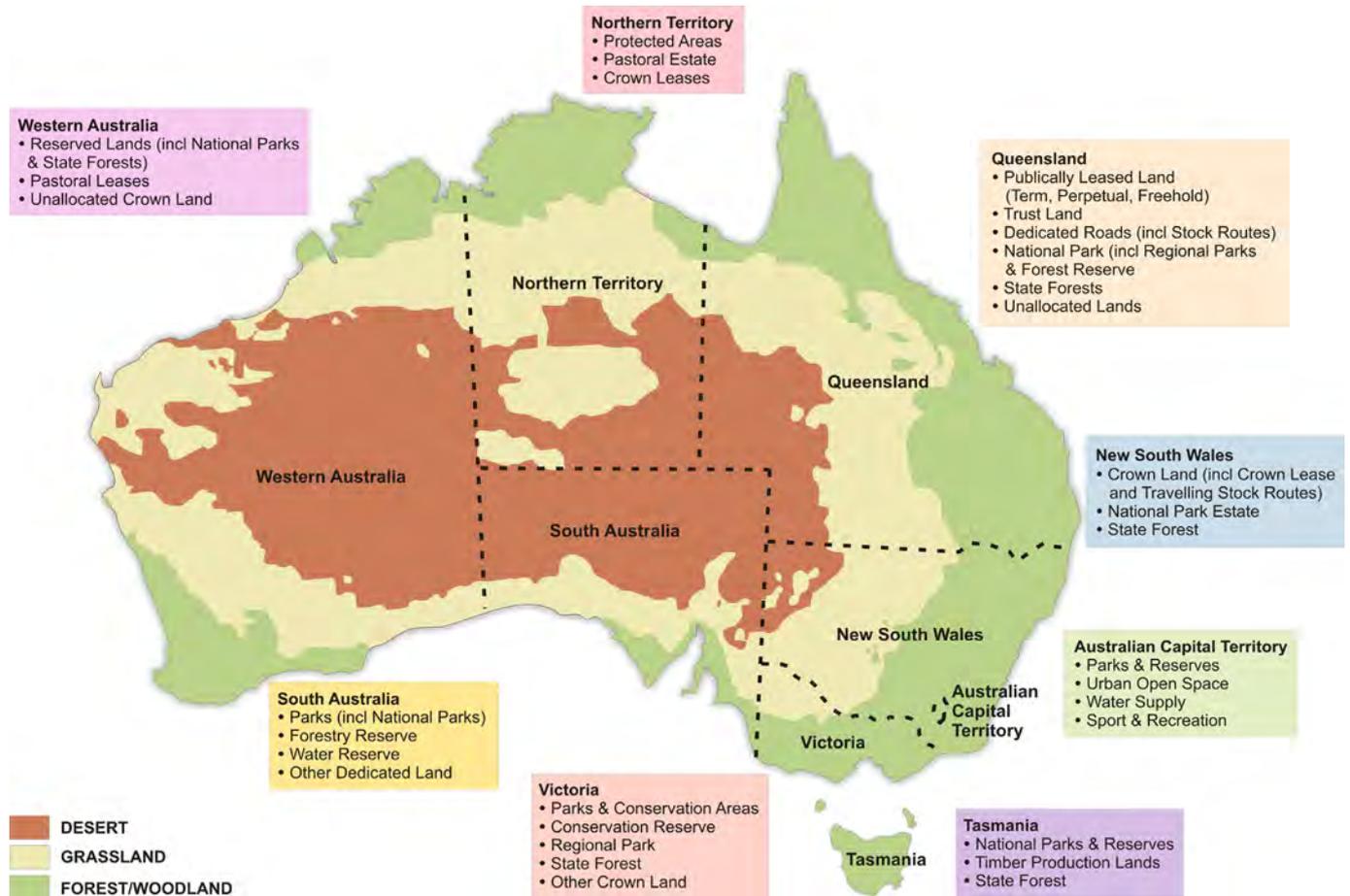


Figure 1: Main public land tenure categories by State/Territory

Beekeeping in Australian Capital Territory

There is no formal commercial beekeeping industry present within the ACT. There is however a presence of recreational beekeepers, who are recognised through the Animal Diseases Act 2005. Beekeepers are not required to be registered with the Territory. The extent of regulation of beekeeping activity on public lands is minimal given the lack of the commercial presence.

The classification of Crown lands within the ACT is reasonably simple as all categories are defined and regulated under the Planning and Development Act 2007. As there is no formal commercial beekeeping industry or regulation in the ACT there are effectively no restrictions on beekeepers who seek to access to public lands. It is unlikely that special provisions that apply to beekeeping activity will be included in the management plans (required under the Planning and Development Act 2007) for various public lands.

The following table identifies the key categories of public lands within ACT. Further detail, including the legislative basis and registration requirements is contained in the project document Compatibility of Management Objectives on Public Lands with Beekeeping prepared by GHD for RIRDC (PRJ-009102).

Australian Capital Territory Beekeeping Policy Documents

Recreational beekeeping in urban areas of the ACT is regulated by the Domestic Animals (Beekeeping) Code of Practice 2014 (No 1) instrument which outlines the duties of owners, carers and keepers of honeybees in residential.

There are no formal policy documents that apply to beekeeping on public lands.



Table 1: **Beekeeping on Australian Capital Territory public lands summary**

Public land category	Land area (hectares)	Beekeeping permitted?	Additional conditions	Regulatory agency
Wilderness area	28,887	Not applicable	Any regulation on beekeeping activity will depend on whether it is addressed in the specific land management plan All activities must align with land management objectives in the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i>	No regulatory agency
National park	82,929			
Nature reserve	18,744			
Special reserve	8,091			
Urban open space	3,908			
Cemetery or burial ground	73			
The protection of water supply	6,378			
Lake	221			
Sports and recreation reserve	93			

Migrating hives into the Australian Capital Territory

There are no restrictions applying to beekeepers seeking to move bees into the ACT from other States or Territories nor to move bees, hives or equipment within the ACT.



Process for accessing public lands

There are no considerations for accessing public lands within the ACT as there is no commercial beekeeping presence, and all recorded beekeeping activity occurs on private land by recreational beekeepers.

Conclusion

The ACT presents a unique case when considering the compatibility of public land management objectives with beekeeping as there is no commercial beekeeping activity in the Territory. Until the development of a commercial beekeeping, it is unlikely that any formal regulations will be developed that apply to beekeeping on public lands within the ACT.



For more detailed information on the role of public land management objectives and beekeeping for the ACT and other States and Territories refer to the project document, [Compatibility of Management Objectives on Public Lands with Beekeeping](#) and other Fact Sheets prepared by GHD for RIRDC (PRJ-009102)

