

## Media Release from the NSW Apiarists' Association, 21 Jan 2016

### AUSTRALIAN HONEYS ARE HEALTHY

In response to the recent widespread media coverage of an international scientific study (Griffin et al. 2015) that found Australian honeys contained naturally-occurring pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs), and in support of the [media statement](#) from the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) on 21 Jan 2016:

- There is no evidence that consumption of Australian honeys causes human harm. In fact numerous other recent scientific studies have demonstrated likely health benefits associated with Australian honey, including antibiotic activity, anti-fungal activity, prebiotic activity and inhibitory activity against viruses such as influenza. Far from being considered a carcinogen, honey is even sometimes used to help manage side-effects of cancer treatments.
- A soon-to-be-published report from the Rural Industries Research & Development Council will show that in terms of chemical contamination, Australian honey is some of the cleanest and purest in the world.
- The naturally-occurring substance (PA) detected in Australian honeys in the study by Griffin et al. (2015) is introduced into the honey when bees forage on flowers of noxious introduced weeds such as Paterson's Curse.
- All Australian honey samples tested by Griffin et al. (2015) were produced before 2012, some even before 2008. Since then the proportion of bees foraging on Paterson's Curse in Australia has dropped significantly as efforts to control this noxious introduced weed have become more and more successful. By late 2015 it has been estimated that less than 0.001% of the commercial Australian honey crop involved nectar or pollen from Paterson's Curse.
- 70-80% of Australian/NSW honey is produced by bees foraging on native flowering plants such as eucalypts. Eucalypts do not produce PAs.
- All of this adds even more weight to why Australian beekeepers need better access to good native floral resources.
- Honey in NSW is produced in compliance with Australian standards and recommendations.
- The Australian and international standards for food PA content are currently under review by experts. It should be noted that according to Griffin et al. (2015) even most European-produced honeys don't meet the current European guidelines for PA content.

#### For further details please contact:

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