



# State Development and Regional Industries Committee

## The Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

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## About Growcom

Growcom is the peak representative body for the fruit, vegetable and nut growing industries in Queensland, providing a wide range of advocacy, research and industry development services. We represent the second largest and fastest growing agricultural sector in Queensland. And as a state, we deliver approximately one third of all horticultural value of production nationally.

We are the only organisation in Australia to deliver services across the entire horticulture industry to businesses and organisations of all commodities, sizes and regions, as well as to associated industries in the supply chain. We are constantly in contact with growers and other horticultural business operators. As a result, we are well aware of the outlook, expectations and practical needs of our industry.

The organisation was established in 1923 as a statutory body to represent and provide services to the fruit and vegetable growing industry. As a voluntary organisation since 2003, Growcom now has grower members throughout Queensland and across Australia, and works alongside other industry organisations, local producer associations and corporate members.

To provide services and networks to growers, Growcom has over 20 staff located in Brisbane, Bundaberg, the Sunshine Coast, Innisfail, and Toowoomba. We are a member of a number of state and national industry organisations and use these networks to promote our members' interests and to work on issues of common interest.

## Background

The Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 has been referred to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for consideration by 8 April 2022.

The objective of the Bill is to allow beekeeping on certain national parks to continue until 2044 by amending the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, and to give more time for the beekeeping industry to find and set up apiaries outside national parks.

The beekeeping industry produces honey and bees pollinate crops in the horticultural sector. The loss of access to apiaries in national parks would impact these goods and services.

The committee invites written submissions on any aspect of the Bill from interested stakeholders and members of the public. The closing date for lodging written submissions is 12:00pm, 17 March 2022.

This submission is the Growcom response to this invitation.

## Response

Growcom is committed to ensuring all the requisite resources and regulatory conditions are in place to ensure the long term future success and sustainability of the Queensland horticultural sector.

One keystone resource essential to the continued success and expansion of the Queensland horticulture sector, currently worth approximately \$3 billion to the state economy and responsible for over 20,000 jobs in across the regions, is a thriving honey bee industry able to provide pollination services.

Continued access to Queensland National Park apiary sites is a core regulatory condition to secure the future of both the Queensland honey bee and horticulture sectors.

The Queensland Beekeepers Association estimates that in 2020 demand for managed honey bee colonies providing pollination services to some of the states key growing regions and crops amounts to some 67,000 hives.

Access to National Park apiary sites for these same hives provides the ideal nutritional needs to support our growing industry, whilst providing ideal short term stays for our beekeepers to breed strong healthy bees capable of producing world class honey, and providing critical pollination services to the growing Queensland horticultural sector.

**Growcom supports the Bill and the extension of the current access arrangements until 31 December 2044, providing an additional 20-years of access to critical National Park apiary sites for the honey bee industry.**