



16 March 2022

Committee Secretary
State Development and Regional Industries Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

By Email: sdric@parliament.qld.gov.au
c.c.: environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au
agriculture@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Re: Submission to consideration of Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

The Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) would like to express its strong support for the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The Bill, if passed will continue for a further 20 years the current access arrangements to Queensland National Park apiary sites for the bee keeping industry which are due to expire on 31 December 2024.

The AFGC is the national body representing Australia's \$115B per year food and beverage manufacturing sector, employing some 242,000 nationally, and 47,000 in Queensland. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the food and grocery manufacturing sector being recognised as an essential industry, as international supply chains became compromised. And it has subsequently led to calls for the sector to become more resilient to withstand future shocks to the economy, and indeed, to become more export focussed to help contribute to Australia's economic recovery following the pandemic.

The resilience of food and grocery manufacturing relies in part on the continued success of the bee keeping industry. The AFGC understands that by conservative estimates, some 2/3 of Australia's food crops rely on the pollination services of professional apiarists and the bees under their care. The Bill, if passed, will provide Queensland beekeepers with the certainty they require that natural resources in National Parks will continue to be available to their bees for an extended period. Not only is this critical for the health of the bees, but it will give beekeepers confidence to continue to invest in their industry to maintain, and indeed improve the pollination services relied upon by other agricultural sectors, and their customers.

The AFGC appreciates the tremendous national assets Queensland National Parks represent. The AFGC, therefore, strongly supports their conservation and the careful consideration of any activities which exploit their natural resources. It is appropriate that approved activities are periodically assessed to ensure the health of the National Parks is maintained, and their utilisation results in real benefits for the wider community with negligible impacts on the wellbeing of the parks. The current consultations on the Bill provide the opportunity for that assessment to be carried and the AFGC is confident the assessment will support the passage of the Bill.

The AFGC also appreciates the high priority placed on the protection of National Parks by the Queensland Government. We urge you, therefore, to support the passing of the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 providing the Queensland bee keeping industry access to Queensland's National Parks until the end of 2044.

The AFGC can provide further information of importance of beekeeping to the food and beverage manufacturing sector if required.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Geoffrey Annison'.

Geoffrey Annison
Deputy Chief Executive