

Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2025

Human Rights Certificate

Prepared in accordance with Part 3 of the *Human Rights Act 2019*

In accordance with section 41 of the *Human Rights Act 2019* (HR Act), I, Anthony Perrett MP, Minister for Primary Industries, provide this human rights certificate with respect to the *Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2025* made under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (Biosecurity Act).

In my opinion, the *Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2025* (Amendment Regulation), as tabled in the Legislative Assembly, is compatible with the human rights protected by the *Human Rights Act 2019*. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview of the Subordinate Legislation

Minor amendments are required to declare that *Varroa destructor* is restricted matter category 2 for the purpose of the Biosecurity Act; and to remove the varroa mite biosecurity zone regulatory provisions.

Background

Varroa destructor is a species of varroa mite that impact bees, recreational and commercial beekeepers and pollination industries. Varroa mites can spread both endemic and exotic viruses by infecting European honey bees, which then share resources with native bees.

In February 2024, the National Management Group, made up of representatives from the Federal Government, state and territory departments and executives from relevant peak industry bodies and Plant Health Australia, endorsed the National Varroa Mite Transition to Management Plan (the Plan), which incorporates the Transition to Management of *Varroa destructor*, since the eradication of *Varroa destructor* is considered not technically feasible. The Plan established the National Varroa Mite Management Program to coordinate the transition to management, rather than eradication, nationally. Queensland has been collaborating with other jurisdictions to transition to the management of the pest. *Varroa destructor* remains on the national list of notifiable diseases of bees.

On 27 June 2025, *Varroa destructor* was declared to no longer be prohibited matter by the *Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Amendment Regulation 2025*. Its presence in Queensland meant it no longer met the criteria for prohibited matter. A biosecurity zone restricting the movement of all species of varroa mite including *Varroa destructor* remains in place.

The unexpectedly rapid spread of *Varroa destructor* in Queensland since the pest was first detected in early 2025 requires a more effective long-term regulatory strategy. This includes removal of permit requirements that are no longer appropriate.

Declaring that *Varroa destructor* is restricted matter, category 2

Biosecurity Queensland has determined that *Varroa destructor* should be listed as restricted matter category 2. Under a category 2 listing, a person managing one or more hives will be required to notify an authorised officer of the presence of *Varroa destructor* and apply measures to reduce, control or contain the pest. These are existing requirements applied by the varroa mite biosecurity zone.

Declaring that *Varroa destructor* is restricted matter category 2 will effectively retain the relevant requirements of notification of the varroa mite biosecurity zone.

As *Varroa destructor* is not yet detected in Central, North and Far Northern Queensland, declaring the pest as Category 2 is appropriate for the risk this pest presents.

Removing the varroa mite biosecurity zone regulatory provisions

The varroa mite biosecurity zone was intended to prevent *Varroa destructor* from entering Queensland from other Australian states. Given that *Varroa destructor* is now rapidly becoming established in Queensland, the varroa mite biosecurity zone is no longer required.

Removal of the varroa mite biosecurity zone will facilitate movement of varroa mite carriers into Queensland from infested jurisdictions without the need to apply for a permit, thus minimising the regulatory burden on businesses and government. Queensland beekeepers access southern markets for pollination and honey flows and then return into Queensland from infested jurisdictions.

Notification requirements that are currently part of the biosecurity zone provisions will be preserved, because the same notification requirements exist for restricted matter category 2 (see above).

Existing biosecurity measures as part of a beekeeper's general biosecurity obligation will remain, such as submission of test results on the Bee123 app. As part of the transition to management rather than eradication, Biosecurity Queensland is increasing education for beekeepers and pollination-reliant industries on best management practices.

Human Rights Issues

Human rights relevant to the subordinate legislation (Part 2, Division 2 and 3 HR Act)

The Amendment Regulation has been considered with regard to the HR Act, and it has been determined that no human rights are engaged by the Amendment Regulation.

No new requirements will be imposed by these amendments, given that the notification requirements for restricted matter category 2 are the same as the notification requirements currently imposed by the varroa mite biosecurity zone.

The overall effect of the amendments will be to remove the requirement to apply for a permit when moving varroa mite carriers into Queensland from other jurisdictions with varroa mite detections. Therefore the amendments will not increase the regulatory burden.

Conclusion

I consider that the *Biosecurity (Varroa Mite) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2025* is compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* because it does not limit human rights.

ANTHONY PERRETT MP
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

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