

Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Mr Mark Shelton MP
Member for Lyons

27 August 2026

Email: HAProcedure@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Shelton *Mark,*

In Parliament on 13 August 2026, you asked the following question on behalf of your constituents:

Many constituents in my electorate of Lyons, including beekeepers, farmers and gardeners, have raised the concerns about the spread of varroa mite on mainland Australia and the potential threat it poses to Tasmania. Healthy bee populations are critical to our agricultural sector and productivity of many crops grown across the state. With varroa mite now established on the mainland, what is the Government doing to protect Tasmania from this pest and are we prepared to respond if varroa mite is detected here?

Firstly, thank you for the question on behalf of your constituent. Tasmania remains free of varroa mite, and we are continuing to strengthen our measures to keep it that way. This Government is strengthening preparedness and awareness through delivery of the Tasmanian Varroa Mite Action Plan 2024-2034, including enhanced communications and targeted engagement on the Geelong-Devonport pathway

Our approach is focused on preventing the pest from reaching Tasmania and ensuring we have early detection measures in place. Biosecurity Tasmania is working with stakeholders to ensure our border activities are robust and support early detection. This includes:

- Increased surveillance of interstate shipping pathways and inspection of high-risk pathways (vehicles, caravans, machinery and freight) at ports such as Devonport;
- Trained detector dogs and x-ray screening at airports, postal and freight centres to detect bee products and queen bees;
- Regular training of contractors screening outgoing travellers in Geelong; and
- Delivering port surveillance activities at Tasmania's four key ports plus King and Flinders Islands.

I am also advised that Biosecurity Tasmania worked with commercial airlines and Spirit of Tasmania vessels to update messaging regarding bee products being prohibited entry into Tasmania;

Importantly, Tasmania also has port surveillance, including sentinel and guard hives, to provide early warning of any incursion. These measures are in place at our key Tasmanian ports, including Devonport.

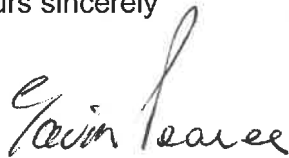
Strict import restrictions on bees, hive products and equipment are also in place under a General Biosecurity Direction under the *Biosecurity Act 2019*. Further, a draft Import Risk Analysis is currently open for public consultation until 16 September, and I would encourage your constituents to review the analysis and provide their feedback to help inform the measures we put in place to manage the risk of varroa entering Tasmania. The link to the consultation page is:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/plant-biosecurity/biosecurity-tasmania-import-risk-analysis-assessment-processes/varroa-mite-import-risk-analysis-consultation>

We will continue to monitor the situation on the mainland closely and adjust our preparedness and surveillance activities as the risk evolves.

Thank you again for raising this matter on behalf of your constituents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gavin Pearce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'G'.

Hon Gavin Pearce MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water