Visit to New Zealand by the House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources, Australia
23–28 July 2017

Background
Every year, the New Zealand and Australian Parliaments each select a committee to visit its parliamentary counterpart, either as part of an inquiry they are undertaking or in relation to a current item of business. The topic chosen is to be relevant to trans-Tasman relations.

This year, the Australian House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources was selected for the select committee exchange visit to New Zealand. The committee was represented by four members of Parliament, led by the Chair, Rick Wilson MP.

A programme was constructed for the committee delegation on the basis of its expressed interests:

- Biosecurity of Australian honey bees; the New Zealand experience with Varroa mite. Collaborative relationships between Australian and New Zealand biosecurity programmes.
- New Zealand’s approach to country of origin food labelling.
- Water use efficiency in agriculture; support for irrigation improvement programmes. (The Committee is currently conducting an inquiry into water efficiency in Australian agriculture.)
- Agricultural innovation, marketing and trade.

Rt Hon David Carter MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives, meeting with the Australian delegation: Dr John McVeigh MP, Rowan Ramsey MP, Rick Wilson MP and Chair of the House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources, and Justine Keay MP, Deputy Chair
Meetings within Parliament

The delegation met New Zealand members of Parliament from various political parties. The programme included meetings with the Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter; the Minister for Primary Production, Hon Nathan Guy; members of the Primary Production Committee chaired by Ian McKelvie MP; and members of the New Zealand–Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group.

These meetings all covered the topics of interest for the committee, with the meeting with the Primary Production Committee members going into some detail.

The committee was introduced to the House and observed Question Time.

Rt Hon David Carter hosted a reception for the committee, which was attended by Primary Production Committee members as well as members of the New Zealand–Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group, including the Chairperson, Chris Bishop MP.

Meetings outside Parliament

With a visit to Massey University in Palmerston North; the Fonterra Pahiatua site, which produces a range of dairy products, notably whole milk powder; Hawke’s Bay to visit Arataki Honey Ltd and discuss the company’s response to control the Varroa mite as well as meet with Irrigation New Zealand and other leading agri-business leaders; and Auckland to meet with Fonterra, Villa Maria Winery and the Ports of Auckland, the delegation was well briefed across all their topics of interest.

In addition the delegation met with senior level representatives from AsureQuality and Plant & Food Research to learn more about what they do; AsureQuality provides “food safety and biosecurity services” as a State-owned enterprise, and Crown Research Institute Plant & Food Research provides “research and innovation to ensure sustainable growth of plant and marine-based food industries”.

The delegation was hosted to a reception by the Australian High Commission, which lent its support to the delegation throughout the visit.

The Australian Delegation welcome at Fonterra, Auckland and on a site visit at the Ports of Auckland
Conclusion

The programme allowed the delegation to take part in a series of well-informed discussions and site visits relevant to the committee’s recent and current work.

The visit enabled the delegation to cover important inquiry topics with New Zealand’s Primary Production Committee members, the Minister for Primary Industries, New Zealand academics, and the farming and business sectors.

Australia is New Zealand’s largest primary sector export destination and New Zealand’s largest source of imported primary sector products. Two-way trade in primary sector products is valued at $6.6 billion in 2016.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity to share information of mutual benefit.
Programme

Sunday 23 July

Arrival into Wellington

Monday 24 July

Visit to Massey University: Vice-Chancellor Jan Thomas, Director International Relations Michael O’Shaughnessy, and Professors, including Professor Claire Massey, Director of Agri-food Business, and Dr James Millner, Senior Lecturer in Agronomy
Visit to Fonterra Pahiatua, hosted by Glenn Broughton, Operations Manager
Reception hosted by the Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Peter Woolcott

Tuesday 25 July

Tour of Zealandia, urban eco-sanctuary
Meeting with Rt Hon David Carter MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives
Visit to He Tohu Exhibition
Meeting with Hon Nathan Guy, Minister for Primary Industries
Lunch with members of the New Zealand–Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group hosted by co-Chairperson of the Group, Denise Roche MP
Introduction to the House of Representatives and observation of Question Time
Tour of Parliament
Meeting with members of the New Zealand Primary Production Committee chaired by Ian McKelvie MP and including Hon Chester Borrows MP, Steffan Browning MP, Hon Damien O’Connor MP, Richard Prosser MP, Eugenie Sage MP, Hon Scott Simpson MP, and Rino Tirikatene MP
Reception hosted by Rt Hon David Carter, Speaker of the House of Representatives
Dinner with Ian McKelvie MP, Hon Damien O’Connor MP and Dr Harry van Enckevort, Chief Science Officer, AsureQuality

Wednesday 26 July

Meeting with Ministry for Primary Industries, chaired by Roger Smith, Deputy Director-General, Operations
Flight to Napier
Lunch joined by Hugh Ritchie, Deputy Chair, Irrigation New Zealand and visit to his farm, Drumpeel Farm, Otane
Presentation and tour of Arataki Honey
Presentation, Andrew Curtis, Chief Executive, Irrigation New Zealand
Dinner at Mission Estate Winery with Mike Petersen, New Zealand Special Agricultural Trade Envoy; Peter Holley, CEO of Mission Estate; Bruce Wills, Chair, Apiculture New Zealand; Lesley Wilson, President of Hawke’s Bay Fruitgrowers’ Association; Andrew Curtis, Chief Executive, and Hugh Ritchie, Deputy Chair, Irrigation New Zealand
Thursday 27 July

Flight to Auckland
Presentation and lunch at Fonterra hosted by Philip Turner, Director Global Stakeholders Affairs with Christine Van Asten, and visit to the Digital Command Centre
Visit to Plant & Food Research, hosted by Chief Executive Peter Landon-Lane and Dr Gavin Ross, General Manager, Business Development

Friday 28 July

Visit to Ports of Auckland, hosted by James Reed, Team-Manager-North, Ports and Offshore Programmes
Visit to Villa Maria Winery, hosted by Fabian Yukich, Executive Director and joined by John Brand, Senior Trade Commissioner, Austrade and Consul General, Australian Consulate-General, Auckland
Departures to Australia (and on Saturday 29 July)
Delegation

Rick Wilson MP
Liberal Party
MP for O’Connor, Western Australia

- Chair: Primary Produce Committee; House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources
- Member: Indigenous Affairs Committee; Communications and Arts Committee; Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment

Justine Keay MP
Australian Labor Party
MP for Braddon, Tasmania

- Member: Primary Produce Committee; House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources; Public Works Committee
- Has worked in television (six years) in Western Australia and the UK

Rowan Ramsey MP
Liberal Party, Government Whip
MP for Grey, South Australia

- Member: House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources; Appropriations and Administration Committee; Joint Standing Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Committee; Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Parliamentary Library; House Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralization.
- Past Chair Agriculture and Industry Committee
Dr John McVeigh MP
Liberal Party
MP for Groom, Queensland

- Member: House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources Committee; Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources Committee; Joint Standing Public Accounts and Audit Committee; Joint Standing Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee; House Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralization
- Previous Queensland State Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 2012–2015

Delegation Secretary: Anthony Overs