

B-harmony: engaging for environmental stewardship

B-harmony is an innovative field-based stakeholder engagement tool to support beekeeper resource security. It provides a protocol for constructive engagement between industry, scientists and resource managers in environmental stewardship.

Stakeholder engagement, including meetings, workshops and reports, allow for limited understanding of people's experiences and needs. Misunderstandings can lead to conflict over resource allocation, use and management. Effective engagement can foster collaborative relationships that promote stewardship of healthy, biodiverse ecosystems.

Commercial beekeepers rely on the forests on public lands to sustain bee health for pollination services and to produce honey. However, beekeepers don't manage these resources, and competing interests and management decisions can impact their livelihoods. Beekeepers have experienced the declining health of plant communities caused by human activities and climate change. This resource loss, and reduced accessibility to high-quality forage, has led to resource insecurity, challenges to sustained bee health, and reduced honey production.

B-harmony is a new facilitation process that builds relationships between resource users and managers.

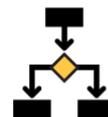
The CRC for Honey Bee Products has developed B-harmony to bring together participants from industry, government and science to co-produce knowledge about beekeeper resource insecurity.



CRC HBP
FOR HONEY BEE PRODUCTS



collaborate



decision support



environmental stewardship





Research to underpin B-harmony was conducted in south-west Western Australia's floristic region with commercial beekeepers operating from apiary sites on public lands. The research focused on the relationship between beekeepers and the state's environmental agencies, which manage public land.

B-harmony is a protocol that bridges ecological knowledge and differing perspectives.

CRC researchers led in-field focus groups to explore environmental challenges at affected locations. Using the B-harmony protocol, facilitated discussions were conducted at locations of importance to help participants increase their knowledge about threats and potential solutions. Participants moved from positions of conflict to imagining opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing.

As well as a protocol for stakeholder engagement, B-harmony gives a voice to the environment. It does this by offering a forum for a diverse group of experts to gather and share knowledge in a way that is inclusive of those from outside the scientific community.

B-harmony is a comprehensive, theory-informed, practical guide for engaging with stakeholders' values and knowledge. The method of engagement suits people motivated by environmental stewardship.

The CRC produced B-harmony in partnership with the beekeeping community. The approach will be helpful wherever natural resource managers seek to involve diverse stakeholder perspectives and knowledge to generate stewardship partnerships with industry and the community.



CRC PhD student, Linda Wilson, using the B-harmony engagement tool she developed to introduce beekeeper resource issues to other stakeholders and managers of the forest.

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