

SAVEYOURLEATHERWOODHONEY ASSOCIATION

Report to the TBA newsletter Dec 2016

As a result of the previously reported Government decision to bring forward the wood harvesting in 300000Ha of State Forest, previously made subject to a moratorium, the Association agreed to be involved in preparing a summary of issues/submissions to the Minister for Forests Guy Barnett to be used at a meeting arranged by the TBA President Lindsay Bourke.

The meeting was set up to explain to the minister the importance of the Beekeeping and Pollination Industries to Tasmania`s economy and in particular its food supply.

The meeting took place with Lindsay Bourke, Peter Norris and Bob Davey attending on behalf of the Industry.

The Minister was left in no doubt as to the issues. He promised to set up a meeting early in the new year between representatives of the land managers and beekeepers to consider all the issues raised with him.

The meeting with the Minister was preceded by an article on behalf of the TBA published in the newspapers arguing for the retention of the leatherwood resource and its importance to not only our honey supply but more importantly to pollination services which deliver most of our Tasmanian grown food supply. There was little doubt that the Minister was aware of the article and the interest it aroused in the public arena.

Also we have now received the 3 year wood harvesting plans published by Forestry Tasmania. A committee drawn from our Association is bringing the same up to date with the names of beekeepers holding licenses in the State Forest . This to enable us to alert the affected beekeepers of the plans` affects and arrange meetings to identify harvesting coupes which may further destroy the leatherwood resource.

Future action will depend on the outcome of those meetings. Forestry Tasmania have refused to disclose the names of affected beekeepers on the grounds that it would be a breach of confidentiality.

The Wilderness World Heritage Management Plan has now been completed and published and is available on line from the DPIWE website. We are commencing work to identify if the Plan takes account of the access and site allocation flexibility critical to the industry having the capacity to expand to accommodate the pollination requirements of the agricultural, horticultural and seed growing industries. This flexibility was specifically recognised by Minister Matthew Groom in December 2016 where he advised that the beekeepers` requirements would be addressed.

The new draft Guidelines for beekeeping in State Forest drawn by this Association to replace those drawn by Forestry Tasmania in 2000 have been reviewed by Forestry Tasmania and they have responded with their own version which we are now reviewing . We will report to the TBA on this when we have finished the review.

You will recall that the original Guidelines were those which Forestry Tasmania said they were unable to follow because of Government wood harvesting quotas and their planners` inability to identify leatherwood in State Forest. Whatever we may think of these reasons it was decided to advance the matter by drawing our own preferred version of the Guidelines and submit them for negotiation and agreement.

Finally, a final draft of the proposed amendments to the Forest Practises Code drawn to provide for the protection of the leatherwood resource when drawing Forest Practises Plans and have that protection enshrined in law is being drawn. The first draft was circulated to the TBA Executive members for comment. As there has been no comment we are proceeding with the final draft. This is a substantial undertaking and will take some weeks if not months to complete.

FOOTNOTE.

The new Saveyourleatherwood Association office holders and executive elected at the Annual General Meeting in September 2016 comprises the following:

President - Robin Davey, Vice President - Andrew Edwards, Secretary - Eric Cave, Treasurer - Jill Davey, General Committee - Debra Quartararo, Hedley Hoskinson, Laurie Cowan, Natalie Wright , Katherine Kirk.