



Save Your Leatherwood Honey Inc.

FEBRUARY 2007 NEWSLETTER

THE LAST 6 MONTHS HAVE SEEN A LOT OF ACTIVITY BY YOUR EXECUTIVE. I WILL OUTLINE THE EVENTS NUMERICALLY.

1. The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on the 17th July 2006. The agenda consisted of presentation of the President's report, the presentation of the annual accounts and their approval, (subject to a subsequent audit) and the election of officers.

Immediately following the Annual General Meeting a Special General Meeting was held to consider amendments to the constitution. These amendments dealt with –

- simplifying the process of applying for membership
- providing for the annual subscription to be payable no later than 4 weeks after the Annual General Meeting
- changing the financial year to run 1st July to the 30th June in each year.

A copy of the above minutes are enclosed.

1. The auditors report was not available at the Annual General Meeting. A Special General meeting was called for the 19th November 2006 at which the audited accounts were approved for lodgement with the annual return at the office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. That lodgement has taken place.
2. On the 10th September 2006 your President and Vice President travelled to the Upper Florentine, with the Leatherwood Publicity Caravan and other material, to attend the rally organised by the Derwent Forest Alliance. The leatherwood issue was well advertised and a lot of publicity material was distributed and a lot of questions answered.
3. On the 21st of September 2006 your President and Vice President attended the annual briefing meeting between Forestry Tasmania and the Southern Beekeepers held in Hobart. This meeting dealt largely with resource issues, the uncertainty surrounding the existence of any alternative resource areas and the next years harvesting plan.
4. Subsequent to the meeting with Forestry Tasmania, the Southern Beekeepers and this association made a submission to Forestry Tasmania for a moratorium on the harvesting of 24 coupes on the current harvesting plan and previously identified as potentially leatherwood rich, to allow an audit to be carried out. We also requested a further 35 coupes be deferred from future harvesting plans for the same reason. This request has been refused on the basis that the quota of sawlog required to be produced each year under the Regional Forest Agreement

results in the timber in these coupes will be required to help meet that quota. Forestry Tasmania advise that the present voluntary guidelines will be complied with as far as possible when harvesting those coupes. In the past adherence to the guidelines has rarely happened. Forestry Tasmania claim to always follow the guidelines closely. The experience of the beekeepers is that is not the case.

5. In October 2006 your President and Vice President were invited to take part in a research program being run by the University of Melbourne. The subject matter dealt with community attitudes to forestry operations in State Forest. The invitation was accepted. Although the leatherwood issue was not the focus of the research, it offered an excellent opportunity to enlighten the researchers and anyone else who has future access to the research material, as to the effect clearfell harvesting has on the leatherwood resource. We are hopeful that the resource issue will score more than just a casual mention. The research Paper is due to be published in the near future.
6. On the 23rd October 2006 we wrote to Dr Bruce Felmingham asking for his assistance as Professor of Economics at the Tasmanian University, in evaluating the current value of the beekeeping industry, and the leatherwood resource in particular, to the Tasmanian economy.
7. Dr Felmingham has previously published an article in the Sunday Tasmanian on this issue and the leatherwood resource in particular. We are waiting for a reply.
8. On the 28th November 2006 your President and Vice President took part in the “Exploring Tasmanian Futures” conference which dealt with water, food and forests. The venue was the Law School at the University of Tasmania. We presented 2 papers, copies of which are available on the Futures Tasmania website. During the conference we were interviewed by ABC TV and the interview was shown on TV that night. It was after that interview that Forestry Tasmania claimed, also on TV, that beekeepers did not require leatherwood, feeding their bees on sugar syrup would do just as well. We responded to that blatant inaccuracy with a press release, rebutting the content of the statement.
9. Late in November 2006 your president and Vice president briefed the Greens Party (Mr Tim Morris MHA), on the leatherwood issue and provided him with all our promotional material. This process was to encourage enquiry and action at the Parliamentary level.
10. On the 22nd of November 2006 Mr Morris addressed the House of assembly on environmental matters and moved a motion that the House recognise among other things, the value of the leatherwood resource to the State of Tasmania, and the need to set aside commercial stands of leatherwood and to amend the Forest Practices Code so that all stands of leatherwood trees in State Forest were protected.
11. Extensive correspondence has occurred between the Association, The Premier and Forestry Tasmania on the issue of both the resource and the need to amend the Forest Practises Code. The Premier’s position is that in view of the “ thousands of Ha of leatherwood rich forest in the Huon District alone, the future of the beekeeping industry in Tasmania in “assured “. We have asked the Premier to disclose the source of the information as it is clearly incorrect.

We have had no reply to date to that request. We have also asked Forestry Tasmania to identify the resource referred to by the premier. Again we have had no reply, but are pressing for a response. The position of the leatherwood resource in the South of Tasmania is quite the opposite to the claim by the Premier. **There is now less leatherwood resource in the whole of the South of Tasmania than previously existed in the Huon district alone.**

12. The premier has however acknowledged that the Apiary Working Group set up by the Forests and Forest Industries Council, of which the Beekeepers are members, along with Forestry Tasmania, is currently reviewing the provisions of the Guidelines for beekeeping in State Forest.
13. This acknowledgement has occurred, we believe, as a result of the Association's pressure through correspondence and the media and the Greens motion in the Parliament, to have the Government support an amendment to the Forest practices Code, that is to have provisions inserted for an enforceable protocol for timber harvesting in coupes where commercial stands of leatherwood exist.
14. Correspondence with Forestry Tasmania recognises that provisions for a Leatherwood protocol/arrangement in the Forest Practises Code are being negotiated with the intention of reaching a successful conclusion. It seems that the main issue will be whether the Beekeeper's preferred version, (strong and appealable to a third party), or the version favoured by Forestry Tasmania, (largely voluntary with no appeal provisions), are adopted. These negotiations are continuing and being carried on for the beekeepers by the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association representatives on the Apiary Working group.
15. The promised aerial flyovers of the Southern State Forest areas, promised for January and to enable previously unidentified areas of State forest rich in leatherwood, did not eventuate due to a lack of available helicopters. This was a significant disappointed as it is this kind of resource audit which allows for a degree of advanced planning.
16. Late last year, Coupe AR034C, in the Arve Valley, became the focus of media attention, partly because of a protest on the ground by members of the Huon Environmental Centre and their supporters, and partly because of our representations over its rich leatherwood rich content.
17. Forestry Tasmania had informally advised involved beekeepers with hives in the area, that it was not due to be harvested. During 2006 the coupe was set up for clearfell harvesting using cable harvesting. This was in accordance with the 1st year forest harvesting plan but contrary to Forestry Tasmania's verbal advice to beekeepers working in the area. After making strong representations the beekeepers were advised that the coupe harvesting boundaries would be revised to take account of the main leatherwood content of the coupe, with further ground based selective harvesting to take place in the future. Subsequent inspections of the coupe, carried out with the cooperation of Forestry Tasmania, reveal that the leatherwood resource in the coupe has been substantially preserved.

18. Forestry Tasmania has advised in writing that this approach to harvesting is being implemented in all coupes where leatherwood rich content has been identified. If this indeed can be achieved then this will be a very positive outcome for the beekeepers and more importantly for the pollination industry.
19. We are currently reviewing the harvesting plans for 3 more leatherwood rich coupes, WE038A, WE044A and WR015F. These coupes will be inspected to establish that the resource is substantially retained.
20. Forestry Tasmania has invited the Southern Beekeepers to consult with the local Forestry Officer whenever the issue of the harvesting of a leatherwood rich coupe arises. However this process is by no means adequate to monitor all coupes due for harvesting. We are few in number and have to earn a living while this is continuing. However there have been some very positive outcomes during the past 12 months, which we will try to encourage into the future and publicise where necessary.
21. In January 2007 we briefed Mr Wil Hodgman MHA and Mr Jeremy Rockliffe MHA of the Liberal Party, on the leatherwood resource issue, again to keep up as much pressure as possible at the parliamentary level. We were well received, given ample opportunity to elaborate on the resource issue and left no doubt in their minds as to the seriousness of the matter. It remains to be seen what influence the Liberal Party can have on the matter.
22. Also in January 2007 we wrote to Mr Peter Cundall, (ABC gardening GURU), asking if he would consent to becoming our Patron. We are waiting for a reply.
23. In February 2007 we assisted in the preparation of material for a documentary being prepared by a Victorian based photographer/journalist, dealing with beekeeping in State Forest.
24. While progress is slow on the implementation of leatherwood friendly, legally enforceable constraints on timber harvesting, there seems to be no doubt that the issue of the resource importance and its past and current destruction, is now well publicised and accepted as fact. Perhaps it is this publicity, targeted at all relevant players, (the Government, Forestry Tasmania and the public), which has resulted in a more cooperative, inclusive relationship developing between the Beekeepers and Forestry Tasmania. We hope it may be a little more than just reaction to publicity.
25. We are certainly taking nothing for granted and vigilance will be necessary, perhaps on a permanent basis.

**IF ANYONE IS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH MONITORING,
REVIEWING HARVESTING PLANS, TRANSPORT TO REMOTE
LOCATIONS, MAIL OUT WORK ETC PLEASE CONTACT YOUR
PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY, INITIALLY BY EMAIL,
SAVEYOURLEATHERWOODHONEY@DODO.COM**

26. Finally, as part of our publicity campaign we have had several interviews on TV news and radio current affairs programs, during which the leatherwood issue, the status of discussions with Forestry Tasmania, our submissions to the Premier and the proposed amendments to the Forest Practises Code, have been discussed /publicised.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Bob Davey (President).