

## **AN EARLY CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR TASMANIAN BEEKEEPERS**

As previously reported we have been heavily involved in negotiations between the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association and Forestry Tasmania, for the creation of a beekeeping reserve in the Derwent District of the Southern Forest. This process began over 2 years ago, and has resulted in a Community Forest Agreement being entered by the two parties, which creates a substantial apiary reserve, limits for the foreseeable future any timber harvesting and preserves all commercial leatherwood trees in the area affected.

The reserve, (Special Management Zone), comprises an area of 10500 ha around Lake Gordon, (the Wedge Block). The limitation on timber harvesting allows only small areas of the State Forest to be clearfelled where Leatherwood exists. In the area containing the main stands of leatherwood no more than 25ha of timber harvesting is permitted each year. These areas have been calculated to allow all destroyed Leatherwood stands to regenerate over a rotation period of 80 years. Apart from the limitation on timber harvesting where Leatherwood exists, there is to be a “no burn” practise implemented in the limited areas where harvesting is allowed, to give the Leatherwood resource the maximum opportunity to regenerate over the rotation period.

This Agreement covers the last substantial stands of accessible commercial Leatherwood in the South of the State. With proper monitoring and compliance, beekeeping and pollination in the South of Tasmania are now able to continue into the foreseeable future, at least at their present levels. However, anticipated increases in pollination requirements as required will not be met, unless more of the resource is located and made accessible to the beekeepers.

This Association, while itself not being a party to the Community Forest Agreement, has been active as broker and chief negotiator on behalf of the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association.

The mapping of the Commercial Leatherwood stands in the Reserve is continuing and is to be continually upgraded as soon as previously unknown Leatherwood is located by either the Beekeepers or Forestry Tasmania planners. This process has commenced and significant areas have already been located and added to the plan for protection this year. As soon as the plan is amended a copy of the same is made available to the Beekeepers for information and approval. The Plan is posted on Forestry Tasmania`s website and forms part of the compulsory assessment process which must occur before the production of each Timber Harvesting Plan.

The Beekeepers will continue to be responsible for monitoring the harvesting activities, that is, compliance with the Agreement. The Agreement provides for regular meetings between the parties to upgrade the resource maps, discuss the operation of the Agreement and be briefed on the likely coupes to be harvested, all before the final Timber Harvesting Plans are prepared and approved. It also includes a dispute resolution procedure including a provision for independent Arbitration.

Now that the Agreement is in place, it is for the Beekeepers to carry out the ongoing monitoring of its implementation. This Association will only become involved again, if a breach of the Agreement occurs and cannot be resolved by negotiation or arbitration.

We are now turning our attention to the entire Huon District and the Florentine and Tyenna Blocks in the Derwent District, where there still remain some significant stands of the Leatherwood resource. The 3 year plans for these areas have now been received and are being reviewed by the Beekeepers involved. After the review process has taken place, it is intended to again commence negotiations with Forestry Tasmania, with a view to reaching agreement to preserve the Leatherwood in those areas.

All of the above is intended to ensure that the Southern Beekeepers have a secure, and hopefully expanding, resource sufficient to sustain their operations in the South, and most importantly, permit the continuation of pollination services to farmers, horticulturalists and seed growers. **The reaching of the Agreement for the Wedge Block is a significant step towards this necessary resource security.**

The relevant Minister, David Llewellyn MHA, has been supportive and instrumental in this result. We thank him for that.

We particularly thank all our members, the media and other supporters, for their help and support which has been, and will continue to be critical to the ongoing success of our work.

Bob Davey (President).

□