

SAVEYOURLEATHERWOODHONEY ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

FORESTRY TASMANIA AND SAVEYOURLEATHERWOODHONEY ASSOCIATION (ON BEHALF OF THE SOUTHERN BEEKEEPERS), HAVE BEGUN NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF A COMMUNITY FOREST AGREEMENT FOCUSED ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE LEATHERWOOD RESOURCE IN THE HUON DISTRICT OF TASMANIA'S STATE FOREST.

THIS AREA OF MORE THAN 400000HA KNOWN AS THE "SOUTHERN FOREST", ONCE CONTAINED MORE LEATHERWOOD RESOURCE THAN NOW REMAINS IN ALL OF THE STATE FOREST IN SOUTHERN TASMANIA. NOTWITHSTANDING THIS, LEATHERWOOD IS STILL SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT AND CURRENTLY SUPPORTS IN EXCESS OF 1300 HIVES. MOST OF THE HIVES ARE USED FOR POLLINATION OF FRUIT, VEGETABLE AND SEED CROPS IN THE SOUTH OF TASMANIA. THESE HIVES NOW RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON THE REMAINING ACCESSABLE LEATHERWOOD IN THE DISTRICT. THERE IS NOW, SIMPLY, NO WHERE ELSE TO GO.

FINANCIAL MODELLING ACCEPTED BY THE PARTIES IN THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE WEDGE AGREEMENT, SHOW THAT FOR EVERY AREA OF STATE FOREST SUPPORTING 45 HIVES WHICH IS CLEARFELLED AND BURNT, THE LOSS TO THE TASMANIAN ECONOMY IS IN EXCESS OF \$1.2M **ANNUALLY. MOST OF THIS IS THE LOSS TO POLLINATION SERVICES WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE PRODUCTION OF MOST OF OUR FOOD.**

THE CATALYST FOR THE HISTORIC COMMUNITY FOREST AGREEMENT IN THE WEDGE BLOCK OF THE DERWENT DISTRICT (WEDGE AGREEMENT), WAS THIS FINANCIAL INFORMATION, COUPLED WITH THE REALISATION THAT HONEY BEE POLLINATION OF FOOD CROPS WAS CRITICAL TO THE PRODUCTION OF MORE THAN 50% OF THE FOOD WE EAT.

THE WEDGE AGREEMENT CREATED A LEATHERWOOD PROTECTION REGIME ENCOMPASSING SOME 10500HA ADJACENT TO LAKE GORDON. THE AGREEMENT IS ALREADY HAVING A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND PRESERVATION OF COMMERCIAL LEATHERWOOD STANDS IN THAT BLOCK.

THE MINISTER ADMINISTERING THE DPIWE AT THE TIME, DAVID LLEWELLYN, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ENCOURAGING THIS POSITIVE RESULT AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW, (IN WRITING), THAT SIMILAR BUT NOT NECESSARILY IDENTICAL AGREEMENTS, SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED FOR THOSE OF THE 5 FOREST DISTRICTS IN TASMANIA WHICH CONTAIN STANDS OF COMMERCIAL LEATHERWOOD TREES. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE NEW MINISTER WILL HAVE THE SAME VISION AND FORESIGHT (AND PERHAPS NOT A LITTLE COURAGE).

WHILE THE NEGOTIATIONS RELATING TO THE HUON DISTRICT HAVE ONLY JUST BEGUN, THERE NOW EXISTS FOR THAT DISTRICT AN APIARY RESOURCE ASSESSMENT PROVISION IN EVERY FOREST PRACTICES PLAN (FPP). THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

THE INCLUSION OF THIS PROVISION AND THE AVAILABILITY OF EACH FPP FOR US TO INSPECT, HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME ENABLED US TO ACCURATELY MONITOR THE THREAT TO LEATHERWOOD IN THE DISTRICT, HAVE AN EARLY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND MAKE SUBMISSIONS FOR LEATHERWOOD PRESERVATION ON A COUPE BY COUPE BASIS.

THE NEXT STAGE OF THIS PROCESS IS TO HAVE THE RELEVANT BEEKEEPERS, WITH OUR ASSISTANCE, INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS **BEFORE** THE FPP IS FINALISED AND APPROVED.

WHILE THE WEDGE AGREEMENT TOOK SOME 21/2 YEARS TO NEGOTIATE, WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF THAT PROCESS AND IF THE GOOD WILL SHOWN BY FORESTRY TASMANIA CONTINUES, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WILL CONCLUDE INSIDE 12 MONTHS.

IN THE MEANTIME FORESTRY TASMANIA HAS INDICATED THAT THE PRESERVATION OF MATURE LEATHERWOOD TREES WILL BE A PRIORITY IN EACH OF THE COUPES SCHEDULED FOR HARVESTING. THE SOUTHERN BEEKEEPERS WITH THE HELP OF THIS ASSOCIATION, WILL BE MONITORING THIS PROCESS CLOSELY.