

## **SAVEYOURLEATHERWOODHONEY ASSOC. - REPORT APR 2013**

Since our report given to our AGM in October 2012, (see TBA November Newsletter), our activities have been largely driven by the Forest Agreement process.

As the Beekeeping Industry in Tasmania appears to be divided as to whether to support the Agreement or not, we made a separate submission to the members of the Legislative Council, on behalf of both this Association and the Southern Beekeepers, supporting the Agreement, and then a further submission to the Select Committee appointed to consider the Agreement. This was done on the basis that the Agreement provides for the forbidding of timber harvesting in the proposed reserves. Given that these areas cover at least one half of the Leatherwood rich forest in the North, North West and the South of the State, and coupled with the written undertaking by the Government that access to these areas would be kept open for the Beekeepers (and others no doubt), this was seen to be of great benefit to the beekeeping Industry. It would certainly give a substantial degree of resource security in perpetuity, something the beekeepers do not have now.

In the meantime we are continuing the monitoring of the timber harvesting in the Derwent and Huon Districts. Briefing meetings with Forestry Tasmania Planners have occurred and we now have an improved idea as to what coupes are planned for harvesting in the next twelve months. This means knowing where, when, how much, the harvesting method and the account to be taken to deal with leatherwood content. The beekeepers will be meeting shortly to consider this information and assess the impact if any, on their hive sites. If necessary submissions will be made in writing as to dealing with any leatherwood in those coupes. This inevitably involves adjusting coupe boundaries and this is usually a difficult outcome to achieve, but until there is a more prescriptive provision for the retention of all mature leatherwood stands, it is our only avenue of influence. It has been successful in some coupes in the past and is well worth the work involved.

This process (with Forestry Tasmania), is now so much more transparent than it was even 2 years ago. We are however still negotiating a more comprehensive assessment of leatherwood rich forest for each coupe, in each Forest Practises Plan for the Derwent District and are hopeful that this can be implemented in the near future. There is after all, a precedent for this approach in the Huon District which is working well. While it does not guarantee the retention of all mature leatherwood it does give all the effected beekeepers sufficient notice to enable planning, and the making of submissions to Forestry Tasmania to enable negotiations around retention of the leatherwood resource, if this is not already covered in the Plan.

We are now waiting on the outcome of the Forest Agreement legislation vote in the Legislative Council, as are many other Tasmanians.

Bob Davey (President)