



Tasmanian Beekeepers' Association Inc.

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SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE ASIAN HONEY BEE INCURSION.

The Tasmanian Beekeepers Association Inc. is the peak body representing beekeepers in Tasmania.

If *Apis cerena* is not eradicated from mainland Australia, it will have a devastating effect on the honey production and horticultural industries when it becomes established here. *Apis cerena* is known to out compete the European honeybee and therefore presents a number of challenges to commercial beekeepers, including yield reductions due to robbing as well as direct competition for the available nectar resource. Also of concern is the impact that *Apis cerena* will have in terms of pest and disease proliferation. Any such impact would undoubtedly require a chemical solution, which not only increases the cost of production for beekeepers, but has negative impacts on Tasmania's clean, green image and makes it difficult to gain entry into some export markets, in particular the high value European Union market.

In 2010 there were 157 beekeepers with 17,427 hives registered in Tasmania (David White, DPIPW^E). This includes a number of significant businesses which employ over 30 people in the honey production, value adding and export sectors. Tasmania's unique leatherwood honey is an iconic Tasmanian product. Its status as such has been recognised by the International Slow Food Movement based in Milan, which has listed leatherwood honey in its Ark of Taste; a register of culturally significant foods worthy of protection.

Nationally, the horticultural industry requires an increase in pollination services of around 30% over the next 5 years in order to sustain itself, and the achievement of this goal is highly dependent on the ability of beekeepers to run viable businesses. Over the past few years in Tasmania, significant investment has been made in the production of cabbage, carrot, cauliflower and clover seed, as well as in apricot, blueberry and cherry farming. All of these activities depend on healthy European honeybee populations for pollination.

The value of the beekeeping industry to the Tasmanian economy exceeds \$200m, comprising \$5m to \$6m in honey products and payment for services, salaries and equipment and the balance in pollination services (DPIPWE, 2003).

Tasmania has an emerging active (i.e medicinal) honey and value added products sector, which will be greatly affected if hive numbers and honey production decline.

ⁱ Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment.

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Maxine Ewington
Secretary