

**Submission
No 1**

**INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE FORESTRY
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

Organisation: NSW Apiarists Association

Date Received: 28 May 2018



NSW APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Submission from the NSW Apiarists Association to the:- The Standing Committee on the State Development Inquiry into the Provisions of the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018.

Key issues

The principal issues that the amended legislation needs to address from the perspective of the NSW Apiarists Association (NSWAA) and interstate commercial beekeepers is the failure of the legislation to

- recognise that commercial beekeeping in NSW forests is a significant co dependant industry alongside timber operations.
- include the voice and expert opinion of commercial beekeepers, the legislation nominates public consultation, however as a co dependant industry the legislation needs to recognise this important stakeholder industry.
- suggest through **Schedule 2 (17)** that *removes the inclusion of bee-keeping and grazing as part of forestry operations that may be authorised and regulated by **integrated forestry operations approvals***. Integrated forestry operations, their drafting and subsequent monitoring cannot exclude beekeeping if the objective of setting minimum thresholds for the permanent protection of threatened species and habitat is to be achieved.

and a need exists to explain how relevant parties will be

- alerted to the process of public consultation where alerts through newspaper publications will be replaced by relevant government websites as detailed in **Schedule 2(8) - (16)**.
- informed of what the regulations and authorisation will be for beekeeping under **Schedule 2 (34)** and the resultant impacts on all previous agreements in respect to apiary sites in public forests.

and for consideration by the appropriate NSW Government agencies to

- consult with and benefit from the value of commercial NSW apiarists as both assessors of forest health and observers of logging practice and forestry operations to aid in achieving ecologically sustainable development outcomes for the benefit of the current and future generations.

and an

- opportunity for the Standing Committee on State Development, with its focus especially on regional development, to be informed of the significant value of commercial apiarists, especially through their role in pollination, to the communities, environment and economy of NSW and the nation as a whole.

Evidence

The importance of apiculture sites is demonstrated through the number of licensed sites held by bee-keepers in NSW regional forests. The May 2009 Draft Report on Progress with Implementation of NSW Regional Forest Agreements identified 2,509 licensed apiculture sites in NSW regional forests.

NSW, in April 2018, had approximately 240,000 hives registered to 815 beekeepers classified as business or commercial beekeepers.

Case studies

The NSWAA acknowledges the significant economic and environmental use and value to their commercial members of NSW Forests that will be covered by the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (NSW). NSW Forests provide licensed apiary sites or the potential for apiary sites, that either directly through the provision of floral resources, or indirectly where the site can provide access to floral resources further afield as honey bees can forage up to 3 kilometres from their hives.

In an environment of declining floral resources access to NSW Forests is essential to enable access to a diverse range of flora that are unique in their capability to be highly productive in terms of nectar and pollen resources for honeybees. This high level of resource production with its diversity allows honeybees to develop strength, vigour and health before and after pollination events.

NSW as the nation's leading apicultural state is ideally located to capitalise on the growth of paid pollination services that has significant benefits to regional economies and the State as a whole. This reality and the growing demand for pollination services is within the responsibility of the Standing Committee on State Development as it considers opportunities for growth and development throughout New South Wales.

It is predicted that demand for pollination services from the almond industry alone will require 270,850 bee hives by 2025 or 113 % of NSW's current total number of hives. This one industry, that is completely dependent on honeybees, achieved a farm gate value of \$ 1 billion in 2015 from 82,000 tonnes of almonds produced. Almonds accounted for a third of Australian horticultural exports and their production comes from NSW's Riverina and from the NSW / Victorian border region of Sunraysia.

This prediction of the number of hives required to service the almond industry in 2025 would not be currently achievable and every one of these predicted hives required will need to have had time exposed to the nectar and pollen resources from flowering native plants and woodlands found in areas such as NSW Forests and the surrounding private and public lands.

Recommendations

That

- the NSWAA has an opportunity to be called to the Inquiries public hearing scheduled for Friday 1 June 2018 to provide input.

- Commercial apiarists to be recognised within the Provisions of the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (NSW) as a co dependant industry.
- Schedule 2 (17) to be modified so that it includes and recognises beekeeping as part of forestry operations that may be authorised and regulated by integrated forestry operations approvals.
- the missed opportunity by the agencies responsible for public and private forests in NSW is remedied by the inclusion of appropriate representatives from the NSWAA in bodies responsible for consultation and policy development.
- That a data base of all co dependant industry contacts is created to allow comprehensive communication of notifications relevant to changes in policies and processes that will now appear on NSW Government agency websites.

Summary

Barriers to access to floral resources is the single greatest threat to the sustainability of the NSW beekeeping industry. NSW commercial apiarists have a vested interest in the maintenance and where possible the further development of our native forests. The concept of ecologically sustainable development is both a reality and a necessity to commercial apiarists. Their need is for the continuation of the great value derived from nectar and pollen resources provided by the unique forest biodiversity available in Australian native forests. Beekeepers cannot countenance current logging practices that result in the creation of sterile monocultures, even with single native species, that is currently occurring. Their requirement is for a fully biodiverse forest reflecting the full range of native species appropriate for the specific environment.

Access to NSW Forests for commercial apiarists is not predicated on a recreational need, it is based on a need to sustain healthy honey bee stocks. Beekeeping has extensive benefits for all of the citizens of NSW and their communities, environment and economy. This requirement cannot be ignored or trivialised but needs to be supported and enhanced. The comments provided in this response heighten the need for a greater degree of communication and consultation from the agencies covered by the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (NSW). The resulting benefits will be a support and benefit to all parties involved with the eventual flow on to the community of NSW from sustainable forests.

Background to respondent organisation.

The NSWAA is responding to the invitation to provide their views to the Standing Committee on State Development Inquiry into the Provisions of the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The NSWAA is aware and supportive of the fact that this response will be made publicly available.

The NSWAA is the peak industry body for NSW commercial apiarists, representing the majority of the State's commercial beekeepers, and has provided over a century of service to its members. NSW apiary industry is characterised by:-

- Being the nation's leader in production of honey and ownership of hives accounting for 40 – 45% of the national honey crop.
- Having approximately 6,887 registered beekeepers accounting for 282,375 registered hives.

- Contributing \$36 million annually to the NSW economy from the value of honey and associated bee products.
- Contributing to \$94 million of national gross value of honey and associated bee products.
- Providing the greatest number of commercial pollination hives nationally that service the 35 agricultural industries dependant on honey bees for their production. On a national basis a conservative economic value of the pollination of agricultural industries is estimated to be in a range of \$4 - \$6 billion, however this contribution continues to be scaled upwards.

Signed by President

Neil Bingley
President NSWAA
28 May 2018

References

Somerville, D. (2015) *Apiary Sites on Public Lands* - A NSW Apiarists Association Position paper.

A Draft Report on Progress with Implementation of the New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements. A report prepared by the NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment and the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as part of the implementation of the NSW Regional Forest Agreements. Resource and Conservation Unit, NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW, Sydney.

NSW DPI - Beekeeper Registration Statistics Report as at : 20 April 2018.