



NSW APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC.

ABN: 89 417 216 326

**Response from the NSW Apiarists Association to:-
the invitation to provide their views on the report, that details the progress
of the implementation of the NSW RFAs, second and third 5 yearly reviews,
between July 2004 and June 2014**

1. Background to respondent organisation.

The NSW Apiarists Association (NSWAA) is responding to the invitation to provide their views on the on the implementation of the NSW RFAs between 2004 and 2014. 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 and has provided over a century of service to its members. The NSWAA represents a majority of the states commercial beekeepers and the 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 5,500 registered beekeepers accounting for 313,636 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 the economic value of the pollination of agricultural industries is estimated to be in a range of \$4 - \$6 billion.

2. The importance of NSW Forests under the RFAs to NSW Apiarists

The NSWAA acknowledges the significant economic and environmental use and value to their commercial members of NSW Forests under the RFAs. These areas provide licensed apiary sites or the potential for apiary sites, that either directly through the provision of floral resources or 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 in the provision of 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

President

Neil Bingley

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whole. To meet the predicted demand from the almond industry alone will require 270,850 hives by 2025 or 60 % of Australia'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 the value of Australian horticultural exports.

This prediction of the number of hives required to service the almond industry in 2025 under current circumstances would not be achievable. It is important to acknowledge that 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.

3. Comment from interested stakeholders on the contents of this implementation report, NSW Regional Forest Agreements, as part of the second and third five-yearly review of the NSW RFAs.

To provide detailed comment on a report that scans a 10 year operational period from July 2004 to June 2014 that includes 351 pages of text, figures, tables and appendices is not possible. The size and complexity of this report highlights the need for future agreements to abide by agreed reporting milestones, which were to be every 5 years.

A progress report needs to be aware of the audience that it aims to report to. This report would surely meet the needs of the State and Federal Government Departments and the relevant bureaucrats within, however for the broad range of participant stakeholders in the relevant forests of NSW a 351 page document is challenging. Considered thought is needed in how to effectively communicate the outputs and outcomes from future RFAs to these stakeholders and how to gauge the effectiveness of any communication strategy implemented. To leave such reporting for 10 years is not acceptable to the NSWAA.

4. Conclusion

NSW commercial apiarists are significant stakeholders in the forests currently covered by the Regional Forest Agreements. The May 2009 Draft Report on Progress with Implementation of NSW RFAs identified 2,509 licensed apiculture sites. This number and the distribution of the sites across these forest areas highlight the dependence of the apiculture industry on the floral resources. It also highlights to date what has been a missed opportunity by the agencies responsible for the monitoring of the Regional Forest Agreements where the value of the NSW apiarists as both assessors of forest health and observers of logging practice and the broad range of forest uses has gone unnoticed and underutilised.

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 provided by the unique forest biodiversity available in Australian native forests. They cannot countenance the promulgation 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.

NSW Forest licensed sites in NSW are of significant importance to commercial apiarists. These public assets that are available to apiarists in areas where they do not infringe upon recreational and or public amenity are highly valued and respectfully cared for by the apiary industry. Loss of such vital resources cannot be countenanced by the apiary industry.

Pollination by the honey bee is essential to 35 agricultural industries for the majority of their production. To enable this pollination to occur access to NSW Forests and their surrounds with their diversity of floral resources and nectar that is free from pesticide, insecticide and herbicide impacts is essential. This access allows the honey bee to build up health and vigour before and after pollination events.

Commercial apiarists' requirement for access to NSW Forests is not predicated on a recreational need, it is based on a need to sustain healthy honey bee stocks that are gentle on the environment. 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 responsible for adherence to the Regional Forest Agreements. 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.

Signed by President



Neil Bingley

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 EPA 2017, *A report on progress with implementation of the New South Wales Regional Forest Agreements: Second and third five-yearly reviews, July 2004 to June 2014*, NSW Environment Protection Authority, Sydney.