

Queensland Beekeepers' Association Inc.



Branches at:

Brisbane
Stanley River
Toowoomba
Wide Bay
Warwick

Sub-Branches at:

Sunshine Coast and Far Nth Qld

President: Robert Dewar

Secretary: Elise Whittaker

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30 November 2015

Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

We would like to register our submission to the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 with specific reference to beekeeping being prohibited in National Parks from 1 January 2025; Part 12, Division 2, No. 184.

We have been given the opportunity by Minister Miles to put forward a submission into this matter and have informed Minister Miles' office that we are working towards it and expect to make this submission mid to early next year. We have not been given a deadline for our submission, but would like to add the following to this Amendment Bill.

The object of the Nature Conservation Act is "the conservation of nature while allowing for (c) the social, cultural and commercial use of protected areas in a way consistent with the natural and cultural and other values of the areas." The prohibition of beekeeping in National Parks may have been written into the Nature Conservation Act out of fear they have a detrimental effect on other nectar and pollen eating animals.

The honeybee is a naturally occurring insect and has existed in Queensland for approximately 191 years. There is documented evidence that suggests that the honeybee could in fact have been in Australia before white settlement:

The *Australian Bee Bulletin* of April 1897 says 'In 1897 a Mr George Ashby of Mudgee writing in the South Coast Herald stated....My grandfather (James Ashby) collected no less than two tons of honey within the same number of months in the year 1814, from trees in the bush near Windsor, it is my opinion, Mr Ashby contended, that the common Black Bee was not imported at all but is indigenous to this continent.'

(Boxes to Bar Hives; Beekeeping History of Queensland by T. Weatherhead, p. 7.)

A CSIRO publication, *'A Natural History of Australian Bats: Working the Night Shift'* reports that most eucalypt trees in Australia produce nectar overnight (page 13). This would explain why most other nectar eating animals are nocturnal. Honeybees do not forage at night, meaning they will get the nectar and pollen that is left over after other animals have had their fill.

The total area of all bee sites in National Parks in Queensland is less than 40 hectares. There has never been every site occupied at the same time. This nearly-40 hectares of land is critical to the health of our bee population and a nominal area when considering the nearly 9 million hectares (and promisingly increasing) of protected areas in Queensland.

The federal inquiry; *'More Than Honey: the future of the Australian honey bee and pollination industries'* recommended under 3.73 that "The committee therefore believes that giving beekeepers access to public lands is essential to the future of the honey bee industry and pollination dependent industries". They further recommended (Recommendation 5):

"that the Australian Government, in conjunction with State and Territory governments, establish guidelines for beekeeper access to public lands and leasehold lands, including national parks, with a view to securing the floral resources of the Australian honey bee industry and pollination dependent industries."

The Queensland Beekeepers' Association is happy to have resource reserves throughout National Parks for beekeeping to continue on, similar to the current arrangement in the Conondale Range, which under the Beattie Government the existing apiary sites were changed to 'resource reserves' and were to stay as bee sites after 2025, meaning we could continue to use this land for the health of our bees.

Furthermore, beekeepers are intrinsically concerned about conservation and do not cut down trees or destroy the bush. They add value by keeping roads cleared which is vital in a bushfire situation.

Queensland has an estimated \$1 billion contribution to the Queensland economy, mainly through its pollination efforts. Access to public lands, including National Parks is essential to the health of our honeybee population.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Dewar
President
Queensland Beekeepers' Association

