

SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

- Donald Gordon Keith

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I am making this submission as a member of the Queensland Beekeepers' Association who was involved in discussions with the Qld. Government that resulted in the original extension of twenty years for apiary sites in new national parks.

I am still keenly involved in nature conservation, as also the Qld Beekeepers' Association (QBA) has been since its inception in 1886.

European honey bees are exotic, the first arrivals to Australian shores in 1822. The bees thrived and through natural reproduction, swarming and human intervention, (honey, mead and medicinal use of hive products being part of European culture for millennia), they quickly occupied all areas of suitable vegetation with permanent water resource.

Many apiaries were established in Australia by hiving colonies from hollow trees etc. The process of hiving colonies from hollow trees often formed part of the agenda for early beekeeping field days.

It is understandable that concern about competition exists because the European honey bee is exotic. However, this has not been shown to be detrimental in scientific experiments that measured results of commercial apicultural situations for the following reasons.

- Australian native flora flower irregularly in response to seasonal conditions e.g. rain at the time of the year bud growth occurs.
- Because of this the apiary industry is highly migratory.
- Eucalypts, the major native flora, almost never flower well two years in a row and also could be any number of years between good flowerings.
- Commercial apiaries are usually only in a location whilst a good flowering is occurring, usually for six weeks to three months, and usually years between occupation of the same apiary sites.
- When a species has had a good flowering there is a super abundance of nectar and pollen.
- Science has shown in situations where commercial honey bees are present during good flowering, the endemic species of fauna also have a higher rate of reproduction than in non-flowering years. There is food to spare.

When this issue was discussed about twenty years ago, government suggested assisting the apiary industry to find alternative resources.

This has not been possible - apiarists have sourced resources wherever they exist in the far reaches of the state, and have been doing so wherever transport is and was available for over a century.

The industry is small in terms of gross value of production but has a major effect, valued at many billions of dollars, through providing the means of fertility for a great many horticultural and agricultural crops through cross pollination. *Maintenance of a viable beekeeping industry to ensure adequate crop pollination is essential and requires access to adequate native floral resources to maintain apiary strength and beekeeping economics.*

A review of research by Owen Seeman 1994 "The Impact of Managed Honey Bees on Native Australian Animals and Plants", Department of Entomology, Qld. University, underpins the above statements and can provide further information.

Donald Keith AM

Past President and Life Member of the QBA

Past President of Federal Council of Australian Apiarists Associations

Past Chairman of the Qld Beekeeping Industry Consultative Committee

Past Chairman of the Board of Directors of Capilano Honey Limited