



Date: 10th July 2021

FOREST REVIEW MUST CONSIDER HONEY INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY

WA beekeepers are world leaders in producing table and medicinal honeys and pollen, with much of it produced from the amazing Jarrah, Karri and Marri forests of our South-West.

Our industry today comprises of about 4000 beekeepers with 48,600 hives, including 157 commercial beekeepers who manage more than 50 hives each. Our commercial hives total 32,500. Honey, wax and pollen production totals between \$30 million to \$50 million each year. In 2019 WA honey exports topped \$8.1 million.

In addition, the value of pollination by our bees of commercial food crops and agriculture is estimated to be more than \$1 billion a year.

With the announcement by the Government of the launch of a community survey on native forests subject to the Forest Management Plan, I want to urge everyone interested in the future of our forests to make their views known.

Traditionally, the FMP has been heavily weighted to the native forest logging industry with inadequate consideration given to the value of other sustainable forest industries, such as beekeeping, tourism and recreation.

Our beekeepers are heavily reliant on mature forests to sustain strong, healthy bee colonies capable of producing honey and performing pollination services year-round. Young and immature vegetation does not produce adequate pollen or nectar, the two critical foods for bee survival.

With 90 percent of the South-West global diversity hotspot areas having been already cleared, and the remaining forests being fragmented by current logging activities, our beekeepers are increasingly reliant on remnant pockets of mature forests for honey production and bee health.

It is imperative that the remaining mature forests we still have are protected from logging.

Declining rainfall, climate change, fires (wild and controlled), and disease are also severely limiting honey production in these forests.

Resource security is the biggest challenge facing our industry. Too much of our honey producing forests have already been degraded, especially by logging.

Acknowledging the need for timber supply in WA, BICWA would like to see this achieved through a 100% transition out of native forest logging into plantations and farm forestry, providing flow on benefits to things like erosion control, salinity and shelterbelts for livestock.

A new management plan for our South-West forests is required every 10 years under the Conservation and Land Management Plan 1984, with the current plan due to expire in 2023.

BICWA, the unified representative body for the bee and honey industry in WA, is pleased that Environment and Climate Action Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson has opened up the consultation phase this early in the process.

This is a once in a generation opportunity for the 4000 registered beekeepers, as well as all lovers of honey, and agricultural industries dependent on bee pollination, to ensure the Government is made aware of the importance of the honey industry and the socio-economic benefits of stopping logging in remaining mature forests.

We must get the settings right for forest management for the next decade.

BICWA has the expertise and energy to contribute to the development of the next FMP and we look forward to being involved throughout the process.

But first, please make your views known in the community survey, which is open until August 1. You will find it at <https://wabsi.mysocialpinpoint.com.au/wa-forests>

Do it for the bees.