



Healthy forests, healthy bees, healthy people

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Peter McDonald, Chair of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) said, 'Despite reports in The Guardian, the beekeeping industry wishes to work collaboratively with the forestry industry and state governments to ensure access to resources in state forests. ALL values and uses of the forests need to be recognised throughout Australia.

'We intend to educate members of various state governments that access to multi age and mixed species in well managed forests is vital for both honey production and bee health before the pollination season, which varies from crop to crop, where bees are essential for productive crops and food security.

'The beekeeping industry is open to discussion about ways to improve the management of forests for the benefit of all forest uses, including both forestry and beekeeping.

'Policy makers need to understand that about 70 per cent of our honey is produced from native eucalypts in our forests.

'The beekeeping industry appreciates being able to use current forestry infrastructure such as roads to access beekeeping sites.

'We support the comments made by Minister Littleproud in response to the misrepresentation by The Guardian and understand he has re-iterated the importance of the beekeeping industry being a part of the Regional Forest Agreement process. All values and uses need to be recognised in perpetuity through the RFA process.

'If you want a glimpse of the disaster that awaits our beekeeping industry and Australia's food security as a consequence, we only have to look at Queensland which is facing the potential loss of about 1,180 bee sites by 2024 as a result of excluding our legitimate forest use. This number will be far greater with further planned forestry conversion into National Parks.

Poor access and massive fuel loads to feed wildfires are unfortunately the hallmarks of unmanaged forests and none of these issues are conducive to healthy beekeeping.

'Well managed multi-use forests involving forestry, beekeeping, and recreation will always deliver the best conservation, economic and social outcomes', said Peter.

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