



# NSW APIARISTS' ASSOCIATION INC.

ABN: 89 417 216 326

**Response from the NSW Apiarists Association to:-  
the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) draft Statement of  
Management Intent (SMI) for the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves –  
Public Consultation paper.**

**1. Background to respondent organisation.**

The NSW Apiarists Association (NSWAA) is responding to the request for public comment on the NPWS draft Statement of Management Intent (SMI) for the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves. 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 5,490 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 honeybees 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 the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves to NSW Apiarists**

The importance and value of the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves is well understood by commercial apiarists. It is estimated that this group of reserves has approximately 50 sites leased for apiarists.

The NSWAA acknowledges the significant economic and environmental use and value to their commercial members of the reserves. They provide apiary sites that either, directly through the provision of floral resources on the reserve, or where the site can provide access to floral resources off the reserve as honeybees can forage up to 3 kilometres from their hives.

In an environment of declining floral resources these reserves are 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 honey bees. This high level of resource production with its diversity allows honeybees to develop strength, vigour and health before and after pollination

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**President**

Neil Bingley  
101 Woodfield Road Sutton, NSW 2620  
P: 0428 487 105 E: [beez101@bigpond.net.au](mailto:beez101@bigpond.net.au)

**State Secretary/Treasurer**

2Rivers Pty Ltd  
Roslynn Riggs – Lead Project Officer  
P: 0400 441 346

**Contact Us**

NSW Apiarists' Association Inc  
P O Box 5022, South Tamworth, NSW 2340  
E: [info@nswaa.com.au](mailto:info@nswaa.com.au)

events. Honeybees especially benefit from access to *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*, commonly known as mugga ironbark or red ironbark.

NSW as the nation's leading apicultural state is ideally located to capitalise on the growth of paid pollination services. To meet predicted demand from the almond industry alone will require 270,851 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. This accounted for a third of Australian horticultural exports.

This prediction of hives required to service the almond industry in 2025 would not be currently achievable and every one of these predicted hives required needs to have had time exposed to the nectar and pollen resources from flowering native plants and woodlands that exist within areas such as the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves and the flora on the surrounding private and public lands.

### **3. Issues of Concern to the NSWAA**

The section of the Statement of Management Intent that is most relevant and to which our comments are targeted is Section 6 - Non NPWS activities and infrastructure, pages 44 and 45 in the paper. In particular Section 6.1 - Apiary Sites.

**Existing sites within the *Reintroduction of Locally Extinct Mammals* project area may be relocated in consultation with licence holders.**

That is then encapsulated into Management direction 6 b)

**6b) Existing beekeeping sites will continue to be licensed and managed in accordance with licence conditions and the NPWS beekeeping policy. Existing sites within the *Reintroduction of Locally Extinct Mammals* project area may be relocated in consultation with licence holders.**

It is the understanding of the NSWAA that the option of relocating sites, in the event that such sites are compromised by the *Reintroduction of Locally Extinct Mammals* project, is not possible given all sites in the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves are currently occupied. The potential loss of access to the valuable floral resource of *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*, commonly known as mugga ironbark or red ironbark, is of significant concern.

Site loss from the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves cannot be compensated elsewhere in the reserves or what is logistically possible from other areas in NSW. The loss of beekeeping sites from public lands is currently the most significant issue facing the industry. The industry cannot afford to lose any sites.

In the short term a discussion needs to be undertaken with NPWS on the potential for loss of sites in the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves and the ramifications of such losses to beekeepers. Concurrent with such discussions a need exists to explore the opportunity of coexistence of honeybees with the *Reintroduction of Locally Extinct Mammals* project.

#### **4. Proposal to aid in addressing a potential problem in relocating beekeeping sites away from the *Reintroduction of Locally Extinct Mammals* project areas**

In the short term a discussion on the potential for loss of sites and the ramifications to beekeepers as well as the opportunity of coexistence of honeybees with the *Reintroduction of Locally Extinct Mammals* project needs to be explored.

#### **5. Conclusion**

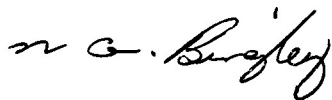
The Pilliga Outwash group of reserves that have vehicular access that are managed by the NPWS are of significant importance to commercial apiarists. These unique State assets that are available to apiarists are highly valued and respectfully cared for by the apiary industry. Commercial beekeeping is an industry that is compatible with the environment and leaves a minimal environmental footprint by beekeepers who identify with and are protective of the natural environment.

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 public lands such as the Pilliga Outwash group of reserves and their surrounds that provide a diversity of floral resources and nectar free from pesticide, insecticide and herbicide impacts is essential. Ongoing access allows the honey bee to build up health and vigour before and after pollination events.

#### **References**

GHD (2017) Framework to assess compatibility of beekeeping on public lands National Framework. Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. Draft Publication.

*Pilliga Outwash Parks Draft Statement of Management Intent*, July 2017. Office of Environment and Heritage.



Signed by President

Neil Bingley 4.08.2017