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Trees and bees look to a bright future

UNITING in their desire to see the continued sustainable management of WA forests, the Forest Industries Federation of WA (FIFWA) and Bee Industry Council of WA (BICWA) have presented a joint policy statement to Environment Minister Stephen Dawson.

Representatives from FIFWA and BICWA today met with the Minister's Senior Policy Advisors, collaborating to outline the shared values and ongoing coexistence between the two industries, and proposing further access opportunities for beekeepers within timber harvesting sites.

Both industries share concerns for future resource security.

Currently, the sustainable timber industry contributes \$1.4 billion to the WA economy and creates around 6000 full-time jobs, while the honey industry represents 3500 registered beekeepers and has a farm gate value of about \$50 million, with WA exporting \$8.1 million worth of natural honey in 2019.

FIFWA Executive Director Melissa Haslam said the shared concern related to the potential future conversion of native forest to reserve or national park, which would exclude both industries from operating within them.

"Our two industries have co-existed for centuries and both share in producing renewable resources from WA forests," Mrs Haslam said.

"We also both recognise the significance of our multiple-use State forests. However, with 62 per cent of total South West native forest in the form of a reserve, only 851,000 hectares is available for sustainable timber harvesting and honey production.

"We are concerned that if that area is further reduced, our industries will be disadvantaged.

"We have also proposed looking at a system where beekeepers would be able use approved timber harvesting log landings as apiary sites, to expand their current catchment."

BICWA Chairperson Brendon Fewster stressed the importance for beekeepers to access native forests and bushland.

"The honeybee is the most frequent floral visitor worldwide and pollination is seen as an essential ecological survival function," Mr Fewster said.

"Without pollinators, the human race and all of earth's terrestrial ecosystems would not survive.

"In regard to Food Security, the pollination services for the avocado, apple and almond industry in WA are estimated to be worth \$1.1 billion.

"The pollination provided to native forest and bushland is invaluable for generations to come."

Photo:

Hives in a Jarrah forest in WA's South West.

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About FIFWA

Forest Industries Federation WA (FIFWA) has been representing the interests of the Western Australian timber industry since 1895. The industry is a key driver of economic activity and jobs in Western Australia, contributing \$1.4 billion to the WA economy and creating about 6000 jobs in WA, with more than 90% of those in regional areas. The industry employs careful and comprehensive management policies to ensure WA's forests are sustainably managed. Less than 1% of the total forest area is harvested annually. In 2001 WA became the first state to abolish harvesting old-growth forests.

About BICWA

Established in 2015, the Bee Industry Council of Western Australia Ltd (BICWA) represents all facets of the beekeeping sector and provides a united voice for several beekeeper groups and its 3500 registered beekeepers with a farm gate value of approximately \$50M and natural honey export value of \$8.1M in 2019.