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Preference will be given to letters
of 150 words or fewer.

I also think that the media should stop being complicit in allowing this 5 per cent fallacy to be propagated and should call the proponents out on this proposal to increase GST tax collections from you and me by 50 per cent.

JOHN CORBIN
Ambleside

Bumble bees are our friends

BUMBLE bees are one of Tasmania's assets not being utilised. What a waste.

Bumble bees are a particularly good pollinator of tomato plants in hot houses, which are totally unsuited to normal bee pollination services.

When and if we get the Varroa mite in our beehives in Tasmania, we will be even more dependent on bumble bees for pollination services. They should be very useful for pollination of pumpkins, cucumbers, raspberries and blueberries in our gardens.

I am very surprised that bumble bees were put on the exotic pest listing in the first place – something that should never have happened.

When I was in Europe some 11 years ago, I took particular note of the bees in town gardens. I saw none on the flowers – only bumble bees were available for pollination. The only bees I saw were hives in a canola paddock.

As a professional beekeeper I can only agree with the fruit grower that it is plain crazy to outlaw the bumble bee, a bee which is truly our friend.

Disease risks for beehives usually comes from other beehives or beekeepers that are not educated sufficiently to manage their hives in a competent way.

About 16 years ago, I looked at breeding bumble bees and spent a day with a bumble bee researcher at the Tasmanian Museum and examined bumble bee nests and went to the extent of designing bumble bee Nuc boxes to get them started. However, no response from the tomato growers' secretary stopped me going further with the project.

Breeding bumble bees for pollination purposes is a wise use of our resources, very suited to particular crops and is an indoor factory-type job. No research needs to be done as all the information is sitting on a shelf somewhere. Please, all politicians, have a law passed to get it off the pest list.

LOUIE van der WOUDE,
professional beekeeper
Penguin