

Proposal:

To seek a permit/dispensation on the status of the Bumble Bee (BB), due to restrictions under Part 303GN S1(b) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* the possession of illegally imported specimens and the progeny of such specimens is prohibited.

The BB should be removed from the “key threatening process” status, as recommended to the government by the TSSC. REF 1

Purpose:

To raise BB's, using stock endemic to Tas., specifically for pollination of horticultural crops within Tas.

Reasons:

BB's are far more effective at pollination, than human efforts, resulting in a substantial yield increase and quality, on greenhouse crops, stone fruit and berries. This can happen at a much lower cost than manual pollination (currently the practice in greenhouse crops).

Other Benefits:

- Growers wanting to adopt BB's for pollination, must do so using a complete Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system. This is because some pesticides can be harmful to BB's and therefore cannot be used. This approach is more sustainable, and helps provide safe food to consumers. REF2
- With impending incursion of both Asian Bee and Varroa Mite, there is a very real threat to Australia's multi-billion dollar fruit and nut crops. It would be a responsible approach to look carefully at pollination alternatives to ensure ongoing viability of field grown Australian fruit and nut crops. REF 3
- Growers who are able to access BB's for pollination, would be on a competitive footing with producers overseas, all of whom enjoy the significant economic benefits of BB pollination.

Apprehensions?

Published work by Hingston, would appear to be quite damning. However close inspection of the Hingston reports evidence many shortcomings and inaccuracies. In fact later studies have entirely contradicted Hingston's findings. REF 4

The pollination and distribution of weeds over the Tasmanian countryside postulated by Hingston has not been evident. While BB's may be detected in Tasmanian bushland, the BB's preference is for exotic plant

species, mostly found in urban gardens, and which include the exotic commercial fruit and nut crops. REF 4

The BB and the Honey Bee have co-existed in Tasmania for more than 20 years, with no adverse effect to the honey bee industry. Clean stock of honey bees are exported from Tasmania to other parts of the world.
REF 5

In fact, Bee Keepers can see the benefits of BB's, and are willing to work with the Horticulture Industry, on an alternative pollination service
REF 6

The Bottom Line:

BB's are now endemic to Tas, and the fact is there has been **no demonstrated** negative impact. There has been **no** effort to eradicate BB's because of this (certainly unlike the fox programme).

Regardless of any act or legislation, since the early 90's BB's have become a part of the Tasmanian landscape and no person or organisation has come forward with **evidence** of any environmental devastation, let alone environmental effect.

The rearing of hives using Tasmanian stock, will not alter or contribute to any alleged environmental impact from the existing endemic BB population. Any potential impact would be dwarfed by the impact of the much larger honey bee population. BB's are certainly not a disease threat to the honey bee, or any other bee. REF 7

There are many sections within the Tasmanian community, that would benefit from the use of the now endemic BB's for pollination. REF 8
REF 9

References

- REF 1 <https://www.environment.gov.au/node/14575>
- REF 2 The Use of Bumblebees as pollinators in UK crops Dr Job Jacobson
- REF 3 <http://www.rirdc.gov.au/news/2012/06/25/research-confirms-potentially-devastating-effects-of-varroa-mite-on-aussie-bees>

- REF 4 **Do exotic bumblebees and honeybees compete with native flower-visiting insects in Tasmania?**
D. Goulson*, J.C. Stout and A.R. Kells
- REF 5 Disease free bees make global impact
- REF 6 Beekeeper newspaper article
- REF 7 Dr Barry Donovan NZ
- REF 8 Letter of support DED
- FER 9 Letter of support Costa Berries