



Media Release

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EUROPEAN WASP FORUM CALLS FOR MORE RESEARCH AND FUNDING

A forum held in the State's north last Thursday resolved that more research is needed to determine the economic and biodiversity impact of European Wasps in Tasmania.

The forum at the University of Tasmania, Newnham Campus, was organised by NRM North and wine industry representatives.

The forum aimed to explore new ways to manage the pests and was organised in response to concerns about European Wasp numbers in Tasmania and the impact the wasps are having on some crops.

NRM North Regional Landcare Facilitator, Adrian James, said a number of specialists outlined what Tasmania knew about wasps to date and where the state should be concentrating its efforts in terms of management.

"There was a consensus that we need more research into what impact the wasps are having on the economy and biodiversity in Tasmania.

"At the moment, we don't have a dollar figure on the damage they are causing but what we do know is that it is quite significant." Mr James said.

The Manager of the Three Wishes Vineyard in the Tamar Valley, Peter Wish-Wilson, said the wasps posed a serious threat to vineyards and other agricultural, recreational and tourism enterprises.

"The truth is these pests were introduced to Tasmania 50 years ago and we know so little about them, including why we seem to have had such a big growth in their numbers in recent years.

"Myself and other wine growers were all but wiped out this year thanks to these nasty pests, it's an additional risk to wine growing in Tasmania that we have to learn to manage more effectively, and it's clear we can't do this on our own.

"It's not just the wine industry, the wasps are also a threat to other fruit growers, bee keepers and a constant danger to bush walkers, tourists, restaurants and schools.

"I think we are also just beginning to learn about risks to Tasmanian biodiversity, especially native insect life. We need to secure some funding to do more research and try to work our way forward." Mr Wish-Wilson said.

There was also support at the forum for more funding to establish a Tasmanian wasp hotline and more community support and education on the problem.

Ends

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