



Indigenous honey trial delivers sweet taste of success with expansion into supply partnership

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A pilot trial of ‘sugarbag’ native bee honey production on North Stradbroke Island between the local Aboriginal community and The Star Entertainment Group (TSEG) has hit the sweet spot with both partners committing to harvesting up to 140 hives on the island, and creating a future supply of authentic and exclusive Indigenous product.

Since November 2017, the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC), representing the island’s Traditional Owners, the Quandamooka People, and TSEG have been trialling an Aboriginal native bee honey production business on the island, traditionally known as ‘Minjerribah’.

As part of the deal, TSEG will be the only company outside of the Quandamooka People that can use the native bee honey – securing 50 per cent of supply for VIP gifts and as a key ingredient across its restaurants and bars.

Both partners joined Australia’s leading native bee expert and former CSIRO entomologist Dr Tim Heard to extract the first honey from the trial’s original nine hives – before splitting some in half to form more hives.

Further, another 12 hives have been installed to take the total number to over 20 – which will continue to double each year as hives are split to form up to 140 hives by around 2022 – ahead of the opening of The Star Gold Coast’s Dorsett hotel and apartments tower, and the transformational Queen’s Wharf Brisbane integrated resort.

QYAC CEO Cameron Costello said the move from an industry-first trial to a sustainable partnership was a result of a strong and mutual commitment to help deliver capacity-building outcomes for the Quandamooka People.

“Right now, we’re enjoying the sweet taste of success with our joint trial enabling us to realise the potential of an Aboriginal native bee honey microfood business here on our beautiful and pristine island,” Mr Costello said.

“We are proud to have The Star’s support and see this trial grow into a long term partnership that will create many economic growth opportunities for our Quandamooka People – especially in jobs and training.

“For example, we’re proud to have our new lead bee keeper in training, Cheyenne Doyle, with us and to also see interest from the next generation of Quandamooka People like Tu Wai McDonald, one of our cultural guides and tourism trainees who is keen to explore a career as a chef.”

The Star Entertainment Group General Manager Tourism, Food and Beverage, Strategy and Partnerships Michael Hodgson said the company was proud to extend the trial to an exclusive supply partnership that will see it used across its existing properties and future South East Queensland (SEQ) world-class developments.

“This exclusive partnership opens up a world of opportunity for us – now and in the future as we expand our footprint in both Brisbane and on the Gold Coast with our Hong Kong-based consortium partners.

“Today, we have 30+ restaurants and bars at our existing Treasury Brisbane and The Star Gold Coast properties.

“By around 2022, our \$3.6 billion Queen’s Wharf Brisbane integrated resort development will have launched 50 new restaurants, cafes, and bars; and our ongoing expansion at The Star Gold Coast will have seen the opening of the Dorsett hotel and apartments tower open, which will also include a range of exciting dining outlets.

“On top of that, we have approval for a further \$2 billion-plus expanded masterplan at The Star Gold Coast, which includes another four towers on the island as well as associated resort facilities, presenting further opportunities.

“As we continue to grow, delivering authentic Queensland experiences for locals and visitors to SEQ will remain a top priority, so having exclusive use of QYAC’s high quality native bee honey will further enable our ability to achieve that.”

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