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*Friends of Fraser Incorporated*

# NEWSLETTER

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Dear member, welcome to our second newsletter.

In the six months since the first one your committee has been quite busy. Issues associated with Fraser Island seem never ending. It seems a new one or an old one revamped raises its head daily.

#### **Dingoes:**

Unfortunately, the draconian measures introduced by Parks have not worked in all cases. As recently as Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2002, a dingo accosted an adult woman on the beach in the Orchid Beach area. Later the same dingo was one of a group that brought down a foal/yearling within the Orchid Beach Township. There is not much unusual about the latter as dingoes always saw the brumbies as part of their food chain.

What is concerning is that now they seem to add humans to that food chain.

It is clear that they are hungry and in spite of the protestation of Parks 'experts' that the animals are always skinny, the ones that are doing the attacking are not just skinny they are emaciated.

Frankly, I have never seen the Fraser Island dingoes so skinny as they are at the moment. To the average visitor it is plain that the animals are very hungry. I do not agree with hand feeding them but the old way of leaving scraps out for them and giving them access to fish scraps and other 'rubbish' would satiate their hunger and keep them away from people. From all the folk I have spoken to all have indicated that the sudden removal of the dingo's food source has changed their attitude.

The 'expert' the Government obtained from the Northern Territory was only on Fraser Island for four days and became an instant authority on 'our' dingoes.

Once again Parks will not take notice of long-term visitors, workers or residents all of whom have lived with the dingoes for many years. Yes, human life is paramount but there is a simple answer to the problem, if only locals could be consulted and their opinions respected.

#### **Roads:**

With the extreme dry weather being experienced on Fraser Island as elsewhere, the tracks on the island have deteriorated to an alarming state.

The closing of many tracks forcing traffic to use fewer roads has acerbated this.

Added to this is the fact that Parks have allowed more and bigger buses to frequent more tracks. Most of these buses have unsuitable tyres and have them inflated for hard road standard, probably so that they can race along the beach at breakneck speed as some do.

Then, Parks decide that the delving carried out by Forestry and the loggers is not the way to go, so a grader, suitable for hard gravel surfaces is employed. The result, the roads are being dug down through the root mat and when it does rain heavily they become rivers or at least creeks that scour and erode.

Altogether it is a very sad position. Once again senior Parks Officers with all the qualifications in the world will not come down from their ivory towers and consult experienced people some of whom they employ.

#### **Rubbish:**

Hervey Bay City and Maryborough City have been given a bill of about \$760,000 for rubbish removal from the island.

One resident has estimated that if the account is valid, Parks believes that the residents on the island generate about 93% of all the rubbish collected.

Evidently Parks believes that the local authorities are responsible for the removal of rubbish even though it was not them that made the decision to remove all the rubbish to the mainland.... This, in spite of the visitor access fee collected by Parks. One wonders what that money is used for? The fact that even if visiting for only one day the fee is the same as that for a month must mean a giant profit for Parks.

Whilst the rubbish dumps as they existed were unsightly, if they had been relocated there would have been a more acceptable acceptance of them.....and that could have meant food for the dingoes!!

**Camping:**

It was great to see so many camps on the foreshore during the September school holidays. There was hardly a site vacant and some new sites were invented.

The weather was good and many families obviously took the chance to enjoy a traditional Fraser Island holiday.

We must watch with care the moves of the Park's management on this issue. Noises have been made about canceling all beach camping and forcing people to camp in designated parks. I have some sympathy for the proposal when it is directed at the big back packer groups who seem to camp just anywhere with little organization and one suspects little hygiene. The same cannot be said of family groups and I'd hate to see beach camping banned. Since Parks charge an exorbitant amount per person per night I believe the beach camping should stay and some facilities ought to be provided from the camping fees levied.

**Lobby:**

Members are urged to visit their State and Federal Members of Parliament and a Senator, so as to voice their concerns over management practices on Fraser Island.

Issues you could discuss include:

**FINANCE:**

What happens to the access fee and camping fee?

**REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT PLAN:** The existing plan was supposed to be reviewed via public consultation in 1999. It is suspected that it is being reviewed by Departmental Officials and we will be given a fait accompli..... QUESTION THIS CLOSELY!!

**ROAD CLOSURES:**

Request an Environmental Impact Statement to support the road closures.

**DINGO MANAGEMENT:**

What is it? Parks have supposedly undertaken a survey on food being eaten by dingoes on Fraser Island. Question the methodology of this survey who is undertaking it?

What are their qualifications?

To whom will they report and when?

When will the report be made public?

**TOURIST PERMITS:**

Who has Tourist Permits?

How are they granted?

What is the criteria to obtain one?

Are buses given specific routes?

Is and operator allowed to sub-lease a permit? If so, how many are sub-leased or doesn't Parks know?

Encourage your member to become familiar with Fraser Island and the issues. Just because it is registered on the World Heritage List does not mean we have no control over what goes on

there nor does it mean that we abdicate our interest in its management.

There should be no different management practices on Fraser Island than there is in other

National Parks in Queensland. The questions above do not exhaust the lack of knowledge as 'secret rangers' business'!!

**FIRST BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:**

We celebrated our first birthday in grand style at Orchid Beach on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September.

Thanks to a great team ably led by committee member Doug Bell two large marquee tents were erected on land kindly lent by Ed Ozolins. In one of them a display similar to the one used at the 4WD Show last year was established. Thanks to a group of members the display was manned (womanned) from about 3.30pm until after 10.00pm. The 150 or so people showed a great deal of interest in the displays in attendance. Thanks too to Doug Bell for arranging the large TV screen on which the two football finals were shown.

At the Birthday Function we were saddened to learn that Mrs Bobbie Monks decided that she could no longer carry on as President. Mr Lin Powell of Hervey Bay has taken her place.

Lin is an 'old' stager of Fraser Island, his great grandfather being one of the first Crown rangers in 1860's.

He had an uncle who was Keeper of the Sandy Cape Light and he was the Parliamentary representative of Fraser Island for 15 years. Lin was the inaugural Chairman of the Community Advisory Committee on Fraser Island World Heritage Area. The change of Government saw Lin's tenure of office terminated.

He is a keen fisherman and camper and has regularly holidayed on the Island for many years.

**Membership:**

As we are now over twelve months old, those who joined at the initial rally will have membership renewals due. This will be addressed at our next AGM which will be held early next year.

So as Friends of Fraser may continue to make our presence felt, we continually need help. Any member that would like to become more involved please contact any of the Office Bearers or Committee members below.

Lin Powell

**[For Friends of Fraser Incorporated.](#)**