

# Fraser Island Defenders Organization

## President's Annual Report — August 2015

In the last 12 months since my last Annual Report, FIDO has completed, continued or pursued five major projects as well as continuing our strong educational, consultative and advocacy roles.

The three completed projects were Stage 1 of the George Haddock Track, the very successful 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference and the production of a logo to help ecologically explain the island's World Heritage values. The continuing projects to help control weeds at the epicentres of infestation at Happy Valley and Eurong have made remarkable progress. FIDO is now embarking on its most ambitious project in decades to help achieve more sustainable visitation to Fraser Island by facilitating a Feasibility Study for a light rail to connect Kingfisher Resort to Eurong via Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) and Central Station.

**George Haddock Track:** The work to complete Stage 1 of this ambitious project in October 2014 contributed 864 hours of on-ground work. More than half the track is now clear and the first shelter and project base is finished. Unfortunately work on the track has come to a standstill pending Native Title approval to construct 10 sections of the 26 sections of the overall 52 kilometre track. These 10 sections total 10.9 kms but without Native Title approval, the track, that mainly follows former roads where Native Title doesn't apply, can't be completed .

**Sand Sea and Sun:** Our conference at the University of the Sunshine Coast held on 12 August was our most successful yet attracting over 100 participants. WE are indebted to the Queensland Government that contributed \$4000 to support this event and to the University of the Sunshine Coast for providing the venue as well as to all of the presenters who made the conference so interesting and so relevant.

**Logo:** FIDO worked with Gympie Graphics for over a year to develop a logo that we hope encapsulates the key environmental values of Fraser Island/ K'gari and we hope will lead to a better environmental understanding of the correlation between the soil profile and the vegetation patterns on Fraser Island. The logo is now freely available to be used by anyone wanting to promote Fraser Island and we hope that there will be a strong take up to apply this logo to help promote Fraser Island .

**Weeds and Bush Regeneration:** In the last 12 months FIDO has organized and delivered seven week-long trips for volunteers to work on the weeds in the two main epicentres of weed infestation Eurong and Happy Valley. The four weeks in Eurong August, February, May and July contributed 1231 hours of on-ground work which is making a big impact and helping restore the natural integrity to those villages. FIDO is indebted to the Burnett Mary Regional Group for grants making this project possible, to the support of the Kingfisher group that includes the Eurong Resort, the Regional Council and the QPWS for their support and cooperation. We are particularly indebted to Peter Shooter in accepting the leadership role for our Happy Valley working bees that have been particularly challenging with a daunting challenge to remove Abrus weed. Special mention should be made of the work of Su Dawson who has organized the food and catering for the increased number of working bees. She recently received well-deserved recognition from the BMRG. She has also participated as a volunteer in the field in 18 working bees in Eurong since 2005. Thank you Sue.

**Light Rail:** The large and unanticipated bequest from the late Barbara Winkley is imminent and FIDO is proposing to make as the priority use of it the undertaking of a detailed feasibility study into a light rail operation on Fraser Island that will make visitation more sustainable and stop over a tonne of sand movement in heavy rainfall events. FIDO aims to work collaboratively with the Queensland Government and all stakeholders to sort out the obstacles to replacing the road in the interior of the island with a type of passenger cane train. It is an ambitious project but could deliver an enduring benefit instead of seeing the continuing degradation of the island as the roads become canyons being cut ever-deeper into the landscape.

**Advocacy:** FIDO has a difficult role in that it is required to speak out strongly on some issues and our advocacy has some strong opposition. However, it is a mark of our acceptance in the community that we can be opponents on some issues and collaborators on matters of shared concern. FIDO is still concerned about the lack of any concrete measures to stop the degradation and erosion at Indian Head (Takkay Woorroo) that continues to degrade while nothing is being done.

**Education:** FIDO continues to play a strong educational role with our conferences. Four backgrounders were produced in the last 12 months. As well as producing two MOONBIs for the year FIDO also introduced three ad-hoc Electronic Newsletters to keep members informed on vital issues such as the State Election. These will be continued.

**Consultation and collaborations:** FIDO continues to be represented on the Fraser Island World Heritage Community Advisory Committee and participates in Ministerial Round table meetings. FIDO continues to play a key role in the Fraser Island Natural Integrity Alliance (FINIA) that has helped facilitate closer cooperation on mutual objectives. We congratulate the Badtjula people on their achievement in the grant of native title and the wonderful celebrations they had. FIDO looks forward to working with them in protecting this marvellous island we all love and respect.

**Political change:** Replacing the Newman Government that was well on the way to dismantling half a century's environmental protection measures in Queensland by the Palaszczuk Government has given us some encouragement

**The Executive:** Until his death last October, Terry Hampson had served on the Executive for almost 30 years as President, Treasurer and Vice-President. He will be sadly missed. The Executive meets monthly and increasingly communicates electronically on key issues. I want to thank John C Sinclair, John Davey and Saren Starbridge (Vice Presidents) and Peter Shooter as well as our growing army of volunteers. Special thanks go to John Sinclair (Snr), and Jane Enchelmaier for the time they put into the running of the organization. Thank you all.

The need to protect wild places is ever greater with the present Federal political climate and with the growth of population and the pressures this brings to places like Fraser Island, FIDO's work is ever more challenging but now we have the chance to bring light rail to K'gari.

**Colleen Enchelmaier**  
**President**

<b>Office Bearers</b>	
<b>Fraser Island Defenders Organisation</b>	
<b>2014-15</b>	
<b>President</b>	
Colleen Enchelmaier	
<b>Hon Secretary and Honorary Project Officer</b>	
John Sinclair (Snr)	
<b>Treasurer</b>	
Jane Enchelmaier	
<b>Vice Presidents</b>	
Terry Hampson/ until his death in October 2014	
John C Sinclair	
John Davey and	
Saren Starbridge	