



MOONBI 109

MOONBI is the name given by the Butchalla Aborigines to the central part of their homeland, Fraser Island or "Kgari"
MOONBI is the newsletter of Fraser Island Defenders Organization Limited, **PO Box 70, BALD HILLS QLD 4036**
FIDO, "*The Watchdog of Fraser Island*", aims to ensure the wisest use of Fraser Island's natural resources

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Since MOONBI 108

Just a little over a year ago, MOONBI 106 published a table listing numerous issues which FIDO has raised over many years with the QPWS which had remained unresolved. Although we have not yet revised the tables, it is clear that the QPWS/Environmental Protection Agency is moving slowly through the list to address the problems although clearly not as fast as we would like.

They have recently released the Camping Management Plan and the Pest Management Strategy. While there has been a release of the Draft Great Sandy Marine Park (Northern Section) zoning plan and finally a release of a Strategic Directions Statement, what is proposed in both of these documents doesn't offer very helpful environmental outcomes.

It is proposed to examine the QPWS's Strategic Directions in more detail in MOONBI 110. In the meantime we would like to deal with some of the more positive outcomes.

While the level of communication with the public and all stakeholders, particularly with conservation interests, has been appallingly bad, there are some signs of improvement. Page 2 summarises some of the recent revelations coming from the QPWS.

The hiatus over the long awaited Great Sandy Marine Park (Northern Section) has been broken although the draft plan recently released amounts to almost a total sell-out of any conservation objectives so eloquently expressed in the Premier's announcements and the accompanying document. An example of this sellout is the fact that in proportional terms, this Marine Park will have only a 10th of the area that is given National Park protection on the Great Barrier Reef. (See pp3-4)

One of the bewildering aspects of the overall management of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is the very low priority assigned to Natural Resource Management. It took ten years from the release of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan for a Pest Management Strategy to be released. This is a belated but welcome move to address what is potentially one of the most significant threats to Fraser Island's environmental integrity. (Comments on p 5)

Many of the problems of the Great Sandy Region originate outside the region in the upstream catchments of the Mary River. FIDO and the public have been given an opportunity to respond to the Queensland Government's initiatives in this area. (See report p 6)

Regular readers will appreciate that FIDO is strongly interested in seeing a significant change to the administration of local government for Fraser Island. The Minister shares some of our concern. MOONBI 109 also examines some other local government aspects. (See p 7)

Illustrations in MOONBI 109

In view of the references to the need for self-sufficiency when visiting Fraser Island during the 1970s in the article on appropriate Emergency Services (pp 11-12), MOONBI 109's illustrations are taken from some of our archival records.

The release of the Camping Management Plan has taken several years since the draft and is very welcome. FIDO's 20th Backgrounder on the "Case against Free Range Camping on Fraser Island" has been on FIDO's Web site for some time. That accompanies this MOONBI.

There are the young and the reckless and there are the old and the foolish but Fraser Island is a relatively undeveloped area that attracts all of the above categories amongst the 330,000 visitors annually. The result is that there are an ever increasing number of incidents which demand some emergency response. MOONBI is reviewing the level of emergency services most appropriate for Fraser Island. (See pp 11-12)

Geoff Mosley's contribution summarizes his vision for the Great Sandy Region by 2020 (see p 12)



Loading Logs Wangoolba Creek

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News from the QPWS:

It isn't unfair to say that the QPWS is reluctant to provide information about Fraser Island. It is seemingly very resistant to providing reports even to those people that the Queensland Government has recently appointed to serve on the Community Advisory Committee in order to advise them on issues relating to the management of the Fraser Island World Heritage area. The dearth of information during 2004 was the worst it has been in the last 15 years. The meagre amounts of information have to be extracted from cryptic forms couched in jargon [said to constitute "monthly reports" and the sometimes quarterly newsletter, "Sandpaper"]. Still this, is a small improvement on what was previously provided. The following summarizes the total sum of information gathered in February, 2005 — an unusually informative month.

- * The Moon Point to Happy Valley Road has had a major up-grade using \$70,000 of SAMS funding. The note said "*Close partnership was developed with the Fraser Island Company (major users of the road) resulting in free barge travel, sharing machinery and ongoing maintenance.*"
 - * Consideration is now actively being given to constructing a dingo exclusion fence around at least part of Eurong.
 - * Lake Wabby signage is to be reviewed and addressed by February 2005 following the coroner's report into the death of David Eason, a British backpacker who died in the vicinity but whose body wasn't discovered for more than two years.
 - * The QPWS plans to permanently withdraw Ranger services at Sandy Cape lighthouse. (This poses them with a dilemma as to how they can fulfil their obligations to provide a permanent caretaker presence at the lighthouse. The Noosa Parks Association resolved a similar dilemma by undertaking to caretake and restore the Double Island Point lighthouse with an outstanding result but it is logistically much more difficult to mount a similar operation at Sandy Cape.)
 - * All of the 15 new houses for Fraser Island have been delivered to Eurong and Dundubara. All houses are at various stages of being fitted out by builders and connection services will follow.
 - * The Camping Management Plan has now been finalized and released.
 - * From the end of January campfires are only be permitted in the QPWS communal fire rings in designated sites (Central Station, Dundubara and Waddy Point). These changes have required considerable public notice awareness and enforcement.
 - * The Eli Creek toilets were recently upgraded by installation of a micro-flushing system which uses 98% less water than normal toilet systems
 - * New steps have been installed inland from the Eli Creek mouth to allow access to the creek (now at a much lower level than a year ago) from the boardwalk. The project nominated the Queensland Police Service as an "event partner".
 - * New steps have also been installed at Middle Rocks at a cost of \$58,140. This project was the result of a risk assessment but it was stalled after the materials were acquired while waiting approval from the Beach Protection Authority (part of the Environmental Protection Agency).
 - * Two other Fraser Island projects are included in the Great Sandy Capital Works Program with an outlay slightly greater than \$500,000. These are \$326,475 for a Waste Treatment Plant for the Eurong Base of the Great Sandy National Park and a controversial \$121,614 for the dingo proof fence surrounding Kingfisher Resort. (The capital and labour was entirely provided by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service as indeed was a firebreak also surrounding the resort. While most of this is within the National Park some of it is inside the Kingfisher Resort boundaries. Tourism and Leisure Corporation did not request that the fence be built and therefore were not obliged to contribute anything to this Queensland Government initiative which will make their guests safer.)
 - * The Great Sandy Region Management Plan Review date of completion was extended to January, 2005. (It has still to be released to the public and it is no understatement to say that the public and even the Community Advisory Committee were well and truly short-changed over any consultation during the review process. The QPWS claims that there is no substantial variation from the 1992 Management Plan but we wait to see what the review process during the last three and a half years (exclusive of any public input) has achieved. If the review took so long, we are led to speculate what will happen when the currency of the present plan expires in 2010).
 - * A succinct statement titled "Fraser Island Strategic Directions" has finally been released placing the QPWS/EPA's policy positions on public record. While FIDO disagrees on some stances taken by the QPWS, at least the QPWS's stated positions have been clarified. The paper has ruled out support for a light rail or any changes to the existing use of 4WDs and the existing road network.
 - * There is a considerable amount of data forthcoming on the implementation of the Dingo Management Strategy. These relate to the data on the number of reported incidents involving the reporting of dingo incidents and any resultant killing of dingoes deemed dangerous.
- (See page 4 for the continuation of the key part of the QPWS reports on Natural Resource Management).



Logs await shipping at Wanggoolba Creek