

FIDO's K'Gari E-News 8

FIDO's K'Gari E-News No 8 (23rd September, 2016)

A further interim update by the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation following MOONBI 134

MOONBI 134 went into the mail distribution on 13th September. It hasn't included some of the more topical issues and these are some updates. This issue deals almost exclusively with filling in the background to just two topical issues: 1: the establishment of the Barbara Winkley Scholarship and 2: reports from FIDO's Annual General Meeting

Barbara Winkley Scholarship

On 1st September FIDO handed a cheque for \$100,000 to the University of the Sunshine Coast



The above photo includes all of the USC's key players except Russell Ousley who advanced the PhD scholarship concept. L to R Prof David Young, Prof Roland DiMarco, Vice Chancellor Prof Greg Hill, Colleen Enchelmaier (FIDO President), John Sinclair and Dr Adrian McCallum who will supervise PhD.

The university subsequently issued the following Media Release coinciding with advertising for applications from PhD candidates to take up the Barbara Winkley Scholarship. It is a most attractive opportunity and has wide scope to attract a highly-qualified applicants from a wide geographical area and with a range of disciplinary backgrounds because it could lead on to many exciting employment opportunities.

**Media Release**

9 September 2016 For immediate release

Fraser Island Defenders fund \$100,000 USC scholarship

The University of the Sunshine Coast has received a \$100,000 donation from a conservation organisation to fund research into minimising the impact of vehicle traffic on the fragile natural environment of Fraser Island.

The Fraser Island Defenders Organisation (FIDO) decided to fund a PhD scholarship at USC following a generous bequest from passionate environmentalist Barbara Winkley.

The Barbara Winkley-FIDO Fraser Island PhD Scholarship will see a research student investigate the environmental

damage caused by vehicle traffic and develop sustainable transport solutions for the iconic island.

USC Lecturer in Geotechnical Engineering Dr Adrian McCallum said the scholarship recipient would work closely with FIDO to ensure future generations of visitors could enjoy Fraser Island's natural setting and wildlife.

"There's been concern for many years about the effects of traffic on the island," he said. "Four-wheel drives and tour buses cause masses of sand to be dislodged, and there are parts of the island where the road surface is now many metres below where it was.

"There's a potential that visitors could be loving the place to death. We want to sensibly examine current practices around access to the island, the road system, and the impacts that vehicles could be having.

"Ultimately, this research will benefit the island's incredible environment and also enable the tourist industry on the island to be sustainable."

FIDO's benefactor Barbara Winkley was originally from New South Wales, but worked and travelled extensively around Australia, Asia and in her adopted home of Alaska, where she studied a degree in Natural Resource Management.

Ms Winkley died in 2013 and left her \$1.5 million estate to be shared between three conservation organisations to continue her passion for wilderness preservation: the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, and FIDO.

FIDO Honorary Project Officer John Sinclair said the PhD project could make a significant difference in conserving the World Heritage-listed island's fragile ecology.

"We've invested this money in the University of the Sunshine Coast to provide some sustainable solutions to what is a very serious and urgent problem on Fraser Island," he said.

"FIDO has been collaborating with USC for some time, so it was a logical place to fund a scholarship, and we're confident it will go a long way to preserving Barbara's legacy."

The scholarship recipient will be named in December this year, with the project to begin in early 2017.

For more information contact: Media Relations, University of the Sunshine Coast

FIDO and the Barbara Winkley bequest

The amount of money FIDO will ultimately receive from the Barbara Winkley Estate will not be known for some time as the proportion of taxes due in the USA and Australia are negotiated. However FIDO has dispersed/allocated the \$150,000 received to date as follows:

Barbara Winkley Scholarship	\$100,000
4WD to carry out weeding program on K'Gari	\$14,000
Organizing the BioBlitz	\$5,000
Purchase of acoustic recording devices	\$5,000

The latter 'listening posts' have been provided on permanent loan to the QPWS to enable the latest sophisticated electronic devices to detect the calls of birds, frogs and other fauna and detect the presence of rare or threatened species

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Who was Barbara Winkley?

Although Barbara Winkley joined many safaris organized by FIDO Honorary Project Officer John Sinclair through his GO BUSH Safaris travelling to the Kakadu, Kimberley, South-West Western Australia, Torres Strait, Tasmania and other great destinations, she never got to visit Fraser Island (K'Gari). This is because she lived in Alaska and could only annually return Down-Under during the Alaskan winters. This didn't coincide with safaris to Fraser Island but not having actually been to K'Gari didn't dim her enthusiasm to see it protected. She loved wilderness.

Barbara Winkley 1938 - 2013

A summary of her remarkable life and legacy based on information provided by her many friends and relatives

Barbara Winkley was born at Dorrigo in New South Wales in Australia on March 31, 1938, the youngest of five siblings. She had three older sisters. Her oldest sibling, her brother was twelve years older than her. Barbara loved her homeland of Australia deeply. Although she lived in Alaska for forty years, she often reminisced of her life in Australia. Her family was large and they lived simply and frugally.

She grew up on the Dorrigo dairy farm where her remains now rest. She said that on her first day of school she was so uncomfortable in shoes that, while waiting for the bus, she had to take her shoes off as they were one of the first pairs she had worn.

After matriculation she worked as a radiotherapist at the Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. Her blood count was affected by the radiotherapy she was administering. That led her to change her career.

Barbara was an adventurer and explorer and that helped shape her last 50 years. As a young woman she traveled extensively, working her way all around the world, having a wealth of adventures and visiting many countries. She secured a position working on an ocean freighter in order to afford "broadening her horizons." This included being part of the crew on a ship taking live cattle from Derby, Western Australia to Singapore.

Her love affair with Alaska began with a wild adventure in the Arctic wilderness of the Yukon in 1962 when she set out from Alberta, Canada. She hitchhiked and trekked down the Yukon River including for six days rowing a boat. She entered Alaska for the first time in a canoe via the Yukon. That encounter with magnificent animals, led her to return to Anchorage and to make Alaska her permanent home. Despite living in Alaska, she proudly retained her Australian citizenship throughout her life.

Barbara was a very hard worker, taking labouring jobs including with the Alaska pipeline and state highway construction crews that were physically demanding. She built a log cabin home in Anchorage. In later years she replaced the cabin to become a landlord of a small apartment building she owned, and manager of a B & B she established in her lovely home on Rabbit Creek Road in Anchorage. She had helped build her final home with her own hands.

During this time as an external student, Barbara worked towards her Degree in Environmental Sciences at the University of Alaska. She had enrolled in a variety of courses ranging from geology, conservation, resource management, and forestry to ceramics, Spanish language, writing, and photography. After having undertaken coursework through

the Anchorage Community College from 1967 to 1972, she physically attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus from 1974 through 1975. She received a Bachelor's of Science in Natural Resources December 29, 1975.

After her graduation, she did field work for several governmental agencies in the outdoors which she particularly enjoyed. Barbara's work for the environment was acutely sharpened in 1989 when the *Exxon Valdez*, a super oil tanker accident, dumped more than 11 million gallons of crude oil into the pristine environment of the Alaskan coast. Barbara committed herself physically and financially to helping to clean up after Alaska's largest environmental disaster. She was passionate in her support for conservation and the environment both in America and in Australia as her generous bequests testifies.

Political discussions were always lively when Barbara was around. She wore her political colours very brightly. As a political progressive and an active Democrat, she followed American politics very closely. She was no fan of another Alaskan, Sarah Palin, or any other conservative American politician.

For more than fifteen years Barbara returned annually to Australia during the Alaskan winter and Australian summers and travelled extensively visiting every state during these breaks home. She roughed it on Go-Bush safaris to the Kimberley, Torres Strait, Tasmania, the outback and even to Papua New Guinea and South East Asia.

Barbara loved the Alaskan Wilderness as much as she loved her huskies. She had a team of huskies that she regularly "ran" until she started losing them one by one. She took her huskies with her whenever she could as she gathered wild berries alone in the wilderness. She was a dual citizen of both USA and Australia but was determined to retire to Australia. She needed to wait as long as one of her remaining beloved dogs needed her. Sadly her huskies outlived her.

Barbara passed on May 21, 2013, in the Oregon Health Sciences University Hospital in Portland, Oregon of pancreatic cancer. She left her estate worth about \$1.5M to be shared between three Australian conservation organizations: the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, and the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation.



Barbara Winkley 1938-2013

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FIDO's Annual General Meeting

Although FIDO is almost 46 years old, it wasn't incorporated until 1976 due to difficulties with the then hostile Bjelke-Petersen Queensland Government. For a not-for-profit NGO FIDO opted an uncommon way to incorporate as a company limited by public guarantee. Thus the AGM on 23rd August was only the 40th meeting of the organization in its company status.

Office-Bearers: The FIDO AGM has re-elected all of the former Board of Directors who carry a long corporate memory for Fraser Island (K'Gari) back to the birth of FIDO almost 46 years ago:

President: Colleen Enchelmaier

Vice Presidents: John C Sinclair, John Davey, Saren Starbridge and John Cruickshank

Treasurer: Jane Enchelmaier

Honorary Secretary and Project Officer: John Sinclair Snr

President's Annual Report — August 2016

In the last 12 months since my last Annual Report, FIDO has continued to pursue projects to protect K'gari (Fraser Island) as well as continuing our strong educational, consultative and advocacy roles.

George Haddock Track: 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. However, FIDO remains committed to completing the project and is committed to maintaining the sections already opened up. A working bee last Easter will be followed up with another next Easter.

Green Army: One of the collaborations of FIDO has led us to Host two Green Army teams to assist with work in weed management, track development and erosion control while gaining training and employment experience. We are encouraged that the teams have included five young Butchulla men and have already led one man into paid employment.

Logo: The World Heritage logo developed by Gympie Graphics encapsulating the key environmental values of Fraser Island/ K'gari is now being used more widely. We hope will lead to a better environmental understanding of the correlation between the soil profile and the vegetation patterns.

Nature Walk: FIDO has established a Nature Walk to help interpret Fraser Island's natural environment and unique values in Eurong, the most visited place on K'Gari.

Bioblitz: FIDO is conducting a Beach to Boomanjin and Birrabeen Bioblitz from 28 November to 4 December to record the biodiversity in the bioregions and the dune systems between the Southern Lakes and Dilli Village. This is attracting widespread interest and is being enormously assisted by a close collaboration between FIDO, QPWS and the University of the Sunshine Coast that is making a major contribution and trusts that the Bioblitz helps add significantly to its growing Fraser Island Repository in its library. The Bioblitz has also played a part in FIDO

acquiring five Acoustic Sound Recorders (Listening posts) that have been provided on permanent loan to the QPWS to help identify the presence of birds and frogs by their calls

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 epi-centres of weed infestation Eurong and Happy Valley. In the last 12 months FIDO has contributed 2,000 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 and to Maree Prior for leading the very popular working bees at Eurong that now includes assisting building up the capacity of the nursery. FIDO continues to fight against the accidental import of more alien species and pests and diseases with capacity to destroy and to promote a nursery of plants native to Fraser Island.

Weather Stations: FIDO is promoting Fraser Island's claims to become the National Laboratory for Climate Change research, as proposed by Prof. Bruce Thom. As part of this program FIDO is about to establish its second K'Gari weather station to enable the people to scrutinize weather data for both Happy Valley and Eurong on-line in real time.

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 to connect Kingfisher Resort to Eurong via Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) and Central Station. FIDO is continuing to advocate the building of a light rail system but will be guided by the recommendations of the sustainable transport options studies (see next item). FIDO has met with Minister Steven Miles and his department officers and the University of the Sunshine Coast and is moving towards achieving the research needed to support the viability of the light rail. 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.

Barbara Winkley Scholarship: FIDO is establishing the Barbara Winkley Scholarship in collaboration with the University of the Sunshine Coast for a selected PhD candidate to examine the sustainable transport options on Fraser Island. This will be part of a major study by the University of the Sunshine Coast to establish the need for and the options for more sustainable transport on K'Gari.

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

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Indian Head (Takky Woorroo) that continues to degrade while nothing is being done. FIDO continues to advocate for World Heritage renomination to recognize both Cooloola and additional values for Fraser Island.

Education: FIDO continues to play a strong educational role with the 2017 7th Biennial Conference, *Time, Tide and Tourism* on 17 August in preparation. Six backgrounders were produced in the last 12 months including Parts 2 and 3 of *Balarrgan The Hub of History*. As well as producing two MOONBIs for the year, FIDO also introduced three Electronic Newsletters to keep members informed on vital issues. 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. FIDO continues to encourage the continuance of the Community Advisory Council meetings and processes despite the Federal government's delaying tactics.

The 10th anniversary FINIA meeting on K'gari last November was a great success. FIDO continues to work with the Butchulla people in extending and finishing the extension to the Great Walk and in protecting this marvellous island we all love and respect. FIDO acknowledges the sad passing of Butchulla elder, Marie Wilkinson.

Political change: Reintroducing environmental protection measures in Queensland by the Palaszczuk Government has continued to be a battle within the government and society.

The Executive: The Executive meets monthly and increasingly communicates electronically on key issues. I want to thank John C Sinclair, John Davey, John Cruickshank and Saren Starbridge (Vice Presidents), Marie Prior 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



Call for Volunteers to work on K'Gari 2017

FIDO has been conducting week-long working bees to tackle the urban weeds of Fraser Island for more than a decade. With support of other organizations aiming to improve the natural integrity, FIDO is determined to bring the urban weeds in the townships of Eurong and Happy Valley under control. Volunteering has progressively grown with each new event offered. Many volunteers are returning (some more than four or more times). As a result more recently our logistics have been unable to accommodate all applicants.

While the houses can accommodate up to 9 we can only provide transport from Brisbane to Fraser Island for up to 6 volunteers in FIDO's 4WD. We can only take more if additional 4WD transport is volunteered or volunteers travel independently to the destinations.

Details of FIDO's past working bees based at Eurong can be found at www.fido.org.au. These are both enjoyable and very satisfying projects mixing work, recreation and exploring Fraser Island. These projects are funded with grants from the Burnett Mary Regional Group for natural resource management. FIDO asks volunteers to contract to undertake a minimum of 20 hours voluntary work.

FIDO provides the transport, catering and accommodation in comfortable shared houses as well as tours of World Heritage Fraser Island. Volunteers are asked to contribute 20 hours of on-the-ground work in return. Volunteers also need to provide their own towels and bed linen. FIDO also seeks voluntary contributions to meeting some costs not covered by the grant. (tours, travel and some catering). This voluntary payment but for budgetary reasons preference is given to contributors. As a guideline we suggest \$200 (\$100 for concessions). This allows a more generous budget to provide a little extra and helps maintain FIDO's 4WD.

Bush Regeneration and monitoring — Eurong 18th to 25th February, 15th to 22nd July and 22nd to 29th October, 2017 (Saturday to Saturday)

This programs will be led by veteran bush regenerator Maree Prior. It will be based at "Talinga", the former Sinclair family home in Eurong Village and will focus on weeding, bush regeneration and building the capacity of the Eurong nursery as well as continuing FIDO's on-going environmental monitoring programs. This program also includes the development of a Nature Walk within the village area. John Sinclair will be pleased to show volunteers as much of Fraser Island as is possible in the time and he knows the island better than anyone else.

Weed Management — Happy Valley 5th to 11th February, 14th to 20th May, 6th to 12th August and 19th to 25th November, 2017 (Sunday to Saturday)

Peter Shooter leads these trips to help tackle the heavy weed infestation in and around Happy Valley. A group of 8 will share one of the comfortable holiday houses in Happy Valley. The group will work to contain a particularly aggressive weed with poisonous seeds, *Abrus prectorius Var Africanus* that is heavily impacting on the vegetation but isn't found anywhere else on Fraser Island. Peter's groups continue their long-term battle to eradicate Abrus and prevent seeds being set for another crop of this virulent weed. Fitness is needed to carry heavy chemical backpack sprays across steep terrain.

George Haddock Track, Lake Allom 14th to 17th April, 2017 (Covering the Easter period)

John Sinclair will lead the annual party to carry out maintenance work on the George Haddock Track between Lake Garawongera and Arch Cliffs, with a base camp at Lake Allom. It is demanding work in the most pristine and attractive parts of K'Gari.

Application Forms at www.fido.org.au or E-mail to john@sinclair.org.au. Places are limited. If a selection is necessary places will be filled in order of receipt of Application Form