

Progress Report on Fraser Island management issues

This summarise many issues FIDO regards as critical for sustainability

Subject	Issues	Progress as at 1 November 2003
1. Degradation of Lakes		
Allom	Two alluvial plumes are pouring sediments into Lake Allom — one on the southern side where an old road ran down to the lake and a newer one adjacent to the viewing platform. The lake may be filled with sediment within 100 years. As well the water level is being unnaturally lowered through pumping from the lake. This has broken the equilibrium between precipitation and evaporation.	An attempt made to curb the southern plume in 1996 failed to work because no maintenance was done. The EPA then ignored our urgent alert regarding the rapidly growing plume adjacent to the viewing platform for almost two years.
Allom	The lake is becoming eutricified. The lake now has a green tint and nutrients are irremovable. Sediment from road wash may be adding nutrients. People feeding turtles are also adding nutrients.	Action is required to stop turtle feeding. Belated action has recently been taken to try to stop all sediment flow.
Boomanjin	The silt continues to flow from cark park into lake basin.	This is an echo of the Lake Allom story.
Boomanjin	Rangers still drive rather than walk from car park to pump despite assurances that the practice had long ceased.	Why should any vehicles be driven on the lake shore and why pump from the lake?
Boomanjin	The fence at the camp-ground continues to visually offend.	There are no plans to modify the fence.
Birrabeen	Buses drive beside Lake Jennings and along the Lake Birrabeen beach have heavy environmental and social impacts. A parking area on the beach results in sump oil dripping there. Woodchips flow into the lake and the noise of the buses sound like an approaching Panzer Division shattering the serenity of the lake for all others.	The EPA claims to be awaiting the outcome of the long stalled and overdue Transport and Access Study but has plans only to shift the bus parking area a little further back from the Lake Birrabeen beach and still impact on Lake Jennings
McKenzie	Sediment is flowing into Lake McKenzie from a nearby road forming a significant alluvial plume in the lake. The detritus includes a large volume of woodchip washed off the road.	After ineffective and half-hearted attempts to stop the flow since 1996 in mid 2003 another more serious attempt has been undertaken.
McKenzie	The swale below the day-use area and camping ground has accumulated more than a metre of alluvium washed down the slope.	There is still no monitoring of the rate and impact of this relocation of sand.
McKenzie	The camp-ground is to be closed and redeveloped as a day use area in from December 2003.	Initial EPA planning failed to take account of the wash filling the swale.
McKenzie	Buses are allowed to use a road to access the lake closed to all others	Objections to this have been over-ruled.
Boomerang	The highest perched dune lake in the world is being filled with silt.	No action has been taken.
2. Roads, Transport and Access		
Wanggoolba Creek	Heavy vehicles travelling on the side cutting above the creek are destabilizing the bank resulting in major land slip along. Wash from the road is affecting riparian vegetation. Most large trees between the road and the creek have visible leans indicating the road destabilization of the banks. Vehicle noise is disturbing the aesthetics of this Fraser Island icon.	The Environmental Protection Agency continues to ignore the warning signs and refuses to install any monitoring of these impacts. It takes its most heavily loaded trucks along this road and allows other heavy vehicles to continue to use it.
Awinya – Woralie Road	This was closed under the 1994 Management Plan. It was closed but reopened in 1997 by Ministerial decree. It remains open intruding on the wilderness value of this part of the island.	The road carries little traffic and intersects one of the few true wilderness areas in all of south east Queensland.
Hook Point to Dilli Village	This road was promised to be opened so that the beach could be closed. This would create a significant vehicle free beach.	The EPA is currently evaluating how it will proceed to implement this promise.
Transport and Access Study	For years the EPA have deferred taking the hard decisions to address the environmental and economic impacts resulting from 4WD use of Fraser Island's "roads" pending completion of this study. GH&D were commissioned to undertake it.	Having stalled for so many years to start the study the study has not proceeded in 2003 to completion for reasons best known to the EPA.
Light Rail	FIDO has been calling for a light rail on Fraser Island since 1974. There is a concensus that this is desirable to provide a more sustainable form of transport on the island while minimizing environmental impacts and providing a more comfortable more efficient people mover.	FIDO has commissioned two studies into preliminary feasibility which provided positive prospects, the Queensland Government has deferred any further initiative until the completion of the Transport and Access Study
Trail Bikes	Under the Management Plan only 4WDs are allowed on Fraser Island. Trail bikes are noisy, intrusive and have a long history of ignoring no-go areas.	We are waiting for the EPA to bite the bit and stop Trail bikes accessing the island
Aircraft	There are major issues of public safety with aircraft making an increasing number of landings on a beach used by an increasing number of motor vehicles and visitors as well as the increasing impact of noise with aircraft overflying major Island icons.	The EPA has steadfastly refused to address this issue or even charge access fees for aircraft using Fraser Island for commercial purposes.

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3. Land Titles and Planning		
Moon Point	FIDO has advocated acquisition of freehold inholdings since 1973. The Government's failure to respond resulted in the Orchid Beach debacle and Kingfisher Resort. FIDO successfully opposed any subdivision of a 300 ha block at Moon Point.	Despite repeated representations over three decades have not yet got a Queensland Government to acquire this land for National Park purposes.
Kgari Trail	FIDO has advocated the establishment of a long distance walking trail from Sandy Cape to Hook Point to be known as the "Kgari Trail" since 1976. It has the potential to be the most popular walking trail in Australia worth millions of dollars.	A great walk is being developed from Dilli Village to lake Garrawongera. There is no provision to complete the full Kgari Trail
Single authority	The island is split between two local authorities which have different standards and both areas are given very low priority by Maryborough and Hervey Bay City Council. FIDO has argued since 1974 that the island be brought under a single authority.	The Beattie Government was elected in 2001 with a commitment to establish a single authority and give statutory base to the Management Plan. See p 1
Planning Controls	The Queensland Government developed draft DCPs for the Fraser Island sections of both Hervey Bay and Maryborough City Councils which would be compatible with the Management Plan.	Neither Council adopted or implemented these plans resulting in inappropriate development at Orchid Beach..
Shrinking Town areas	Both Happy Valley and Eurong township reserves are many times larger than the area covered by the existing developments. The Councils have been asked to allow the surplus area to be incorporated into the National Park.	Both Councils have been reluctant to even contemplate this but leave road maintenance within the reserves to the QPWS.
4. Camping		
Indian Head	The use of the informal camping ground below Indian Head by up to 300 people on most nights is a disgrace. There are no amenities. Both FIDO and traditional owners want the area closed to camping.	The EPA continue to allow this obscene camping to continue because they believe closed it would only transfer the problem.
Waddy Point	Although the RAM Act was used to stop anti logging protesters camping more than 21 days in the same spot in 1990, no action has been taken to move overstaying campers from Waddy Point.	Professional fishers remain in permanent beach camps at Waddy Point defying the RAM Act. The EPA does nothing.
Free Range	The deterioration of the foreshore areas as a result of overuse has been a constant FIDO theme since we unilaterally stopped Eli Creek camping in 1981. FIDO wants regulated pre-booked camping.	EPA staff are opposed to more serviced camping grounds on the basis of cost and the added workload.
5. Natural Resource Management Including Fire, Fishing, Ferals, Weeds		
Fire Policy	There was an issue of the lack of fire from 1980 until 1999. Now the issue is establishing an appropriate ecological fire regime which emulates traditional Aboriginal burning practices.	The "controlled burns" are more determined by public service awards than ecology with midday fires being the result
Banksia Serial Killing	Vegetation, particularly banksias, as far as 20 metres from the road side, is being removed to create unnatural firebreaks. This irrational and unjustified EPA obsession is changing the island's World Heritage character.	In 1996 following an independent assessment this practice was thought to have stopped but it quickly resumed and continues.
Marine Resource management	The EPA has failed to accept responsibility for managing the marine part of the World Heritage area. The moves to establish both a fisheries Management Plan and a zoned marine park around the island languish	The EPA has deferred for too long to Queensland Fisheries which has had an appalling record as far as sustainability. Political action may correct this.
Fishing Expo	This is an inappropriate use of a World Heritage site purely as an advertising gimmick. It is ecologically unsound and places undue human pressure on the area closest to the Top End wilderness.	The current agreement expires in 2005 and FIDO hopes that it will not be renewed
Fishers Access	Access and other de-facto rights being given to commercial fishers in the Top End are compromising its wilderness value.	FIDO disagrees that commercial fishers have "rights" denied to all others.
Weeds	Weeds represent a major threat to the long term integrity of Fraser Island. Most originate in the centres of human settlement.	Not enough is being done by Councils to control the situation.
Quarantine	FIDO wants a more pro-active regime to prevent the introduction of injurious agents (including ferals and pathogens) to the island.	The under-resourced EPA doesn't even have quarantine on its radar.
Dingoes	FIDO doesn't support the Government's knee jerk reaction to shooting every dingo deemed to represent a threat to humans.	The Government is yet to adopt a more enlightened policy.
Brumbies	FIDO has long supported the removal of brumbies.	This is belatedly occurring in 2003.
6. Research and Monitoring		
Reporting	There is an urgent need for more transparency in why the EPA makes the decisions it does and would like regular written reports.	The last report was produced in January 2003. We are still waiting for the next.
Research	There is no regular publication of the abstracts of research which has been done on Fraser Island nor research in progress	The EPA has been asked to appoint a Research Coordinator to address this.
Monitoring	While the EPA counts human movements little monitoring occurs.	More focus is needed on natural resources