



# MOONBI 110

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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## Strategic Directions for Fraser Island

**Paper Without Discussion:** There is little doubt that the interpretation and the implementation of policy is at least as important to the management of Fraser Island as the written policies themselves. That is why this issue of MOONBI places a heavy emphasis on the Strategic Directions adopted by the QPWS. With their public release of the Strategic Directions document, the public is now entitled to express their opinions on the appropriateness of the positions adopted by the service, which have so far been uninfluenced by any form of public comment. How the QPWS arrived at its very controversial positions and what should be the priorities to ensure that the integrity of Fraser Island's World Heritage values are preserved are the substance of the article on p.2.

**History:** FIDO along with all stakeholders continues to be seriously concerned with the lack of consultation by the QPWS. This lack of consultation is best demonstrated by the fact that it was discovered in April that the Eli Creek boardwalk was to be demolished without any plans for replacement in the foreseeable future. (See story p.3) Advising people about *faites accompli* hardly represents consultation. Yet this has become the standard *modus operandi* of the QPWS in more recent times. Communications issued by the service tell the public what has happened and fail to foreshadow any intentions.

**Pests:** FIDO is anxious that the factors most likely to compromise the natural integrity of Fraser Island are being inadequately addressed. These are fire, introduced pests and climate change. While it is a function of the Queensland Government's appointed managers to address the issue of fire and pests, FIDO and other volunteers can materially assist with the problems of pests, particularly weeds. Pages 4 and 5 deal with some of the issues relating to introduced pests and what is and isn't being done to deal with them.

**Noisy machines:** For some time many environmentalists have been alarmed at the uptake of mechanical blowers by the public. Most lovers of the naturalness of National Parks find nothing more anti-ethical than these incredibly noisy machines in parks. However, FIDO has recently discovered that the mechanical blowers, euphemistically called "air brooms", have much more serious environmental impacts than previously appreciated. They are making a contribution to greenhouse gases which far outweigh their engine size. (See p.6)

**Fishing Expo:** The agreement, which was controversially struck by the Borbidge Government in 1998 to allow the Fraser Island Fishing Expo to operate at Orchid Beach, has now expired. What should have been the end of this event is now uncertain because of the determination of the QPWS to seek expressions of interest from anyone interested in conducting this event into the future. In view of the huge environmental significance of this event on both the management of Fraser Island and the marine resources and because this seems such an inappropriate event in a World

Heritage site, FIDO, the AMCS and the NPAQ have jointly approached the Commonwealth Environment Minister seeking to have this action reviewed under the EPBC Act. (See p 7.)

**Emergencies:** With 350,000 visitors annually there are always many accidents on Fraser Island. Some of these are reported on p.8 following up our story on Emergency Services in MOONBI 109. However for the most part MOONBI is focused on reporting progress towards more sustainable management of this resource.

Most of the photographs used in MOONBI are from our increasing collection of old historical pictorial records.



Jacob Lack's Indian Head Cottage in 1969.

*What had been a temporary lease over a small squatters shack in a State Forest designated Beauty Spot was miraculously given freehold status by the Bjelke Petersen and was immediately sold. There seems now some uncertainty about the extent of the property boundaries.*

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# QPWS Strategic Directions Paper

After more than a decade of FIDO frustration because actions recommended to the QPWS in one report allegedly couldn't be implemented until another report was undertaken, we thought there may have been some decisiveness with the development of a "Strategic Development" paper for Fraser Island. It was a long time in the pipeline before, finally, a confidential draft was given to members of the CAC to comment on in April, 2004. It was introduced with, *"the intent... to provide a very clear statement to key clients on what direction the QPWS intends to take in relation to a number of issues"*. It was surprising that it was for "clients" and not the public. Like most of submissions to this Draft, FIDO's response was also ignored.

**No Change Policy:** Consultative is not a meaningful word to describe the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The April, 2004 Draft marked on every page "Not for public distribution" had a statement *"This document will be used as a discussion paper with the Fraser Island World Heritage Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for feedback and may be amended as necessary prior to seeking Ministerial and Cabinet approval."* That was one of the few sentences which remained unchanged in the final document dated November 2004, which was given to CAC members in February, 2005. Thus FIDO's (and presumably everyone else's) comprehensive response to the alleged draft was totally irrelevant. The QPWS only distributed the document to be able to tell their political masters that they had invited comments from stakeholders. In the final document which then had Ministerial Approval the wording was changed to *"A number of proposed directions will require further consultation with key stakeholders and interest groups"*. While this suggests some QPWS flexibility the truth is seen in the lack of any response to the earlier submissions.

Because of their impact on the natural integrity for Fraser Island, FIDO ranked

1. Pest management,
2. Fire management and
3. Transport and patterns of recreation

(in priority order) as the most urgent strategic directions to be addressed. In this issue of MOONBI we have devoted a two page spread to the issue of pest management.

**Fire:** The impact of fire on the natural integrity is not immediately obvious unless it is a devastating wildfire. However there are subtle changes to the ecology which can become really serious over the long term unless a strategy is implemented now. There is a strategy for fire management on Fraser Island but it is in urgent need of fine-tuning. Fraser Island can't sustain the impact of too many wild fires such as the one which resulted from an ill-planned "management" burn last August. Oddly enough though, despite fire management being so critical to the overall management of Fraser Island, it hasn't even been addressed in the QPWS Strategic Directions paper.

The existing Fire Management Strategy has done an enormous amount of work to document the impact of fire on the various ecosystems. It has one thing wrong with it. It assumes that fire management is a **science**. The reality is that fire management in practical terms is an **art** which is based a lot of subjective skills acquired through decades of experience and close ecological monitoring.

**Transport and patterns of recreation:** The QPWS had pre-judged the outcome of the expensive Transport and Access Study, which it had previously commissioned and then abruptly stopped before it was concluded. Instead it has locked itself into continuing the status quo.

The Strategic Directions paper categorically ruled out the option of developing a light rail system. It quotes the Transport and Access Study as estimating the cost of *"a light rail system as about \$10M/km ... with only minimal improvement to overall environmental outcomes"*. One senior Officer told

the CAC *"It is beyond the means of the Department which isn't in the business of building rail lines"*. However in October, a month before the Strategic Directions Paper we and the QPWS had already been told by engineers that the cost of building 22 kilometres of line and acquiring rolling stock could be accomplished for as little as \$10 million (about a twenty-fifth of the cost the QPWS was quoting. They had also been shown that there were major gains for the environment by adopting a route not considered by the Transport Study. It would also help transform the patterns of recreation and management for both Central Station and Lake McKenzie and make the use of both more sustainable. This inflexibility shows the service's lack of vision and its incapacity to think imaginatively.

**QPWS Proposals for Road Management:** This section of the paper is euphemistically sub-titled Sustainable Transport Management. In the end it proposed to:

- Develop a road classification system. (This was done more than a decade ago but never implemented. The current management team seems intent on reinventing the wheel).
- Develop operational guidelines for track maintenance
- *"Sand tracks will be retained where possible to preserve the remote feel of the Fraser Island experience"*
- *"Restrictions on vehicle types and movements will be introduced to protect World Heritage values"*
- *"Commercial Tour Operator's and organizations undertaking commercial activities [backpacker hire vehicle companies] will be required to convert over time to 'island friendly' vehicles"*.
- *"Motorised vehicles will be prohibited in remote and semi-remote recreation areas"*
- *"The beach (or section of beach) between Hook Point will be closed to vehicles..."*

FIDO continues to support the closure of the beach between Hook Point and Dilli Village; this has been part of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan for the past 11 years. While there has been little progress to achieving this, the roads elsewhere continue to have unacceptable environmental impacts.



**Track Impactor at Middle Rocks**

*While 4WDs are capable of hauling large and very heavy trailers, the impact on the fragile sand tracks from the inevitable wheel slip is most adverse.*

## Future Directions Ignore History on Fraser Island

*In adopting their own set of Strategic Directions for Fraser Island the QPWS has not only ignored all submissions on the directions which should be taken but they have ignored the history which has resulted in many of the management practices which are in place. The rationale for some decisions is based on budgetary considerations. Others appear to be based on expediency.*

### Eli Creek

The imminent demolition of the northern section of Eli Creek walkway due to the creek undercutting the structure has FIDO's alarm bells ringing. The southern part of the boardwalk is also being undercut in one area, and unless funds are available to maintain it, the whole boardwalk will end up closed in the future. This is an untenable position given the visitors that Eli Creek attracts.

FIDO has a strong and intimate vested interest in the Eli Creek boardwalk and this demolition is occurring without any consultation or without any consideration of the history of this boardwalk. In 1981, in response to the self-evident environmental degradation of Elli Creek, and despite the lack of any support or cooperation from the Bjelke-Petersen Government, FIDO of its own initiative and from its own resources built the Eli Creek boardwalk. This established the walking circuit which was used for 24 years until February this year when it was closed by the QPWS. It was a major financial outlay for this small voluntary organization. As well as spending almost \$10,000 at that time, FIDO undertook 18 full weekend working bees using entirely voluntary labour and community support. Despite their adversarial position to FIDO over the future of Fraser Island logging, Hyne and Sons contributed timber for this project. The boardwalk was officially opened by Warren Hyne.

The Eli Creek boardwalk was the first boardwalk on Fraser Island and demonstrated the practicality of such structures in reducing environmental impacts. It was also so successful that it shamed the Bjelke-Petersen Government into acting to manage recreation on Fraser Island for the first time. It resulted in the creation of the Fraser Island Recreation Management Act in 1985 which established in that same year, the Fraser Island Recreation Board. In what could be considered a very political act, the first act of the Board was to remove all traces of the FIDO boardwalk and replace the entire structure at a cost to the Queensland Government of \$345,000.



**Other deteriorating Infrastructure**

FIDO is dismayed that the government has allowed much of the infrastructure on Fraser Island to deteriorate or remain incomplete

because the island is being starved of funds to properly manage it. In particular, FIDO is concerned about the following:

- \* A toilet block which was constructed at Dundubara more than two years ago but remains inoperable because there are insufficient funds to progress the project any further;
- \* An operating toilet block at Lake McKenzie was demolished apparently because the building had deteriorated through lack of maintenance and there are no funds available to repair it. Lake McKenzie now has just one toilet block containing only four cubicles to service up to 2000 people per day;
- \* Many roads have been palletted to allow them to carry constantly heavy traffic loads. However, many pallets are now well past their use-by dates but there are no resources to replace them;
- \* Buses continue to drive along the beach of Lake Birrabeen (causing erosion into the lake) because the QPWS allows tour operators to dictate the size of the buses that will be used on the Lake Birrabeen route. When concerns are raised about the impact this is having on the lake, QPWS claims that they don't have the resources to provide alternative access for those vehicles.
- \* The beach south of Dilli Village remains open to traffic because the QPWS claims it has insufficient resources to provide an alternative access.

These are but some of the many examples encountered during an inspection by the Community Advisory Committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> April. On each occasion, "lack of resources" was cited as the obstacle preventing the achievement of management objectives and leading to what FIDO considers to be significant run-down of Fraser Island's existing infrastructure.

In view of the significance of Fraser Island to the Queensland economy and identity, Fraser Island deserves the State government's genuine commitment to providing funding for responsible and sustainable management. We therefore urge the Minister to urgently intervene to ensure that there are adequate resources to manage Fraser Island.

#### What is affordable?

Part of the reason for the "lack of resources" to repair or replace the Eli Creek boardwalk is the high (meaning expensive) standards of specifications required by the QPWS. The cost of replacing only a third of the boardwalk at the upstream end was undertaken in 2004 at a cost of over \$600,000. At that rate it will cost over \$2 million to fully replace the whole boardwalk. (Compare this with FIDO's \$10,000 in 1981 for both boardwalk and toilets). FIDO has long questioned the need to have such elaborate and expensive structures. The QPWS says that all structures have to meet "Australian Standards". However, given the wholly inadequate budget provided to manage Fraser Island, meeting such standards seems unaffordable. QPWS's policy is that of refusing to accept second best which can be afforded and preferring to do without if we can't afford to build using shiny stainless steel railings. Interestingly, other states are not so insistent on meeting "Australian Standards" in their National Parks and are installing what they can afford. If the Queensland Government insists that such standards must be met, the Queensland Government will need to provide sufficient resources to build and maintain them.

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# Pest Management Priorities

*Weeds and feral fauna have the capacity to irreversibly change the ecology of Fraser Island. Along with fire management, the prevention of the introduction and spread of introduced pests on Fraser Island has to be one of the major priorities for management if Fraser Island is to maintain its integrity and many of its World Heritage values. This has long been FIDO's views and it is encouraging that others are belatedly recognizing this as a priority. MOONBI 110 outlines why pest management deserves to be elevated in Fraser Island management priorities.*

**DRAFT Strategy Released:** The QPWS is to be congratulated on its release of the Draft Pest Management Strategy for Fraser Island. It is a positive step forward and a recognition of a problem FIDO has been advocating needed much more effort for many years.

**What happens to the "Draft" now?** Unfortunately the QPWS has developed a habit of never finalizing Drafts such as this Strategy or inviting public comments. For example, the Draft Review of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan was never released for public comment. The same seems to be destined to be the fate of the Pest Management Strategy. While FIDO applauds the first stage of the completion of a Draft, we believe that it does need the benefit of some public input which should help to improve it. Below we address some of the matters that need to be better developed in the final strategy.

The Draft Strategy currently focuses on how to address the pests, which have already been identified as being on the island. The final strategy needs to focus more on isolation and quarantine. It needs to aim at preventing further introductions and limiting the spread of those introductions which are already there.

**Quarantine:** Most people recognize that prevention is cheaper and easier than dealing with problems later. Fraser Island is better placed than most other Queensland National Parks because it is isolated by a moat around it. Managers need to take advantage of this isolation. Yet oddly enough the Draft Pest Strategy doesn't even address this issue. It is an incongruous oversight which needs to be urgently addressed. The examples given later should amply illustrate the benefits of a comprehensive strategy to prevent the introduction to Fraser Island of aliens which can be so easily and innocently done by people through simple ignorance.

**Submissions ignored:** When the Draft Pest Management Strategy and the Strategic Directions papers were being developed, FIDO's submission to the department in May 2004 on the Strategic Directions was ignored. The submission stated

***Quarantine:** There is no evidence of any effort to enforce quarantine measures to stop further introductions. There are no signs at the barges and ferry terminals warning people about how weeds are spread and the risk that alien fauna could be hitch hiking on their vehicles or in their equipment. Further, there is no evidence of any attempt to police or enforce a stricter quarantine policy even though Fraser Island has hitherto been able to escape from many serious pests such as foxes, rabbits, pigs and goats through its isolation. A recent comparison of the incidence of weeds shows that as bad as weeds are on Fraser Island, it does not have as high a proportion of introduced plants as coastal mainland areas where introductions are easier.*

**Weeds:** Some idea of the benefits of prevention is gained from a study of the approach in northern Australia. There, authorities recognize the advantage of identifying and eradicating potential problem weeds before they have time to become established. In the Wet Tropics, the authorities have established a network of "weed spotters" to help them in their colossal task. The "weed spotters" are dedicated landholders and government agencies who send in unfamiliar plants they find. The process has been taken a stage further by the government who has two botanists who look out for potentially invasive weeds that may come from other countries to our north. These scientists have shown time and again that early detection of a new invasion is the way to go — controlling, maybe even eradicating,

new landscape destroyers before they can get a foothold. FIDO would like to see a mechanism for "weed spotters" being established for Fraser Island under the final Pest Management Strategy,



Although domestic cats and dogs have not been allowed to be on Fraser Island since the Fraser Island Recreation Management Plan in 1978 and certainly since the 1994 plan, this domestic black cat was seen prowling on the loose at Yidney Rocks in March 2005. It seems that the Management Plans may have been ignored.

### Ant Threats

Most Queenslanders are aware of the enormous (and justifiable) efforts to rid South East Queensland of the dreaded fire ants. However, an ant species which is almost as nasty, Yellow Crazy Ants, have suddenly turned up in Hervey Bay urban areas just a few kilometres across the water from Fraser Island. If this species gets on to Fraser Island, it would have a devastating effect on the island ecology as it rapidly spreads out. A clear example of this ant's devastating abilities is its impact on Christmas Island. Yellow Crazy ants have killed an estimated 15-20 million red land crabs since Crazy ant super-colonies were first reported in 1989, a decline of 30 per cent of the crab population. This has led to major changes in the island's rainforest ecosystem, and is threatening a range of rare and endangered species on the island. It is having a devastating impact in several places in northern Australia but isn't on Fraser Island.

Yellow Crazy Ants could easily be transported from Hervey Bay to Fraser Island with almost any building material but they would be most likely to hitchhike (as did the Fire Ants in Brisbane) in potted plants.

**Public Participation:** Just as the public was denied any input into the Draft Pest Strategy, they seem to have also been overlooked in the QPWS plans to deal with the current pest problems and also in suggesting ways that the public might be engaged in helping to deal with Fraser Island's pest problems.

**Education:** A major focus of the strategy needs to be the education of all landholders and their roles in helping to prevent and eradicate pests. Many landholders are oblivious that some plants which they are growing are noxious weeds. FIDO recently had to point out to very large landholders that they were cultivating Easter cassia and Asparagus fern in their gardens. These are respectively No. 2 and No. 3 on the List of Top 40 pests. The active engagement of all landholders is vital to deal with Fraser Island's pests.

**Volunteers:** The Draft Pest Management Strategy only covers volunteers recruited by the QPWS and overlooks the pest eradication work done by other voluntary groups. It didn't discuss the idea of greater community participation and how to achieve more community (and local government) involvement in dealing with pests specifically on Fraser Island. For example, FIDO has been organizing and coordinating weeding bees in the townships for some years. Now FIDO has found that many experienced bush regenerators are willing to fly up to Fraser Island to participate in weed work for more than just a weekend and this should help make some significant inroads into the urban weed problem. FIDO is now actively planning to step up this work in the townships which are the major centres of weed infestation. Unfortunately though, there are still many bureaucratic obstacles to removing urban weeds such as the requirement that a tree eradication permit is required from the DNRM to remove Easter Cassia. There are also logistical difficulties which we hope to resolve with the cooperation of the two City Councils.

**Difficult pests:** The Strategy lists the top 40 pests without any mention of cane toads or of feral bees which are present and spreading. Queensland has been far too complacent about feral toads in view of their impact on quolls (now extinct on Fraser Island) and the reptile population, particularly Death Adders. Attention needs to be paid to how to deal with them on Fraser Island. There has been some remarkable success with a toad trap developed by Frogwatch in the Northern Territory. Likewise the feral bees, which are displacing the smaller harmless native bees, need to have every nest or hive tracked down and destroyed. On the island, there are apparently feral cats, which are very elusive but very destructive. These have not been included in the list of major pests but they need to be on the list.

**Grasses are major invaders.** A species of Rhodes grass is rapidly spreading in any wash from tracks and roads including the walking track into Wabby Lakes. FIDO has pointed out the infestation of Green Panic (*Panicum maximum*) at Dundubara. It is also well established right beside the roads in the townships of Happy Valley and Eurong and at Dundubara. From here, the seeds can be transported on vehicles to other parts of the island. There are a number of similar grasses and some other weeds that can be controlled by mowing and this was not noted in the strategy. Although mowing is not a feasible option in the bush, it is very feasible in the townships of Happy Valley and Eurong and should be considered in such a strategy.

**Hopefully now that the QPWS has a pest management strategy (even if in a draft form), it may elevate pests to a higher priority. Rangers may start to see weeds as a bigger threat to Fraser Island's natural integrity than leaves lying on a walking track or some litter carelessly tossed aside. The notion of "tidiness" which seems to be an obsession needs to encompass the fact that weeds are not only untidy but have the potential to destructively change the ecology.**

**The last brumbies:** In March, Minister Boyle proudly announced the removal of the last of Fraser Island's brumbies. Unfortunately, a few days later the QPWS discovered that a couple of stragglers had missed the "last round-up" and during April the last of the stragglers were being tracked down. The removal of the brumbies from the southern part of the island in the late 70s had a remarkable effect on the foredune vegetation and was particularly beneficial to allowing the regeneration of Pandanus. It remains to be seen what impact their final removal will have on the northern part of the island.

## Points of Agreement

There are some very good points within the QPWS Strategic Directions Paper. It should be noted that despite our criticisms of some of its key aspects there are many points we did support. We should state the many areas where the document had our support to ensure that we are not seen as knockers on all issues.

- **Aspirations of Traditional Owners:** FIDO endorses the aspirations of the traditional owners, which seem to be compatible with the principles of management espoused in the Great Sandy Region Management Plan.
- **Waste management:** FIDO supports the principles established in the proposed actions to deal with Fraser Island's waste management problems.
- **Firewood:** FIDO endorses the firewood policy because open fires have contributed very significantly to the environmental impacts of free range camping.
- **Signage:** We particularly applaud the proposed action to mitigate the impacts of inappropriate signage along the eastern beach.
- **Aircraft:** We don't believe that the Strategic Directions Paper goes far enough with respect to aircraft.



Ronda Cook inspects Track widening work at Eli Creek

## Belated Funding for Fraser Weed War

On 22<sup>nd</sup> April, it was announced that part of the Australian and State Government \$12.6 million funding for the Burnett-Mary Region in Queensland will end up being used on Fraser Island. This three-year investment plan includes \$4.2 million from the Natural Heritage Trust and \$8.4 million from the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

*"The target for Fraser Island is to control weed populations like lantana and groundsel, so that there is no net gain by 2008. This will give native plants and animals the foothold they need to re-establish themselves,"* Senator Campbell said. FIDO is yet to establish whether this includes the \$54,000 to address the Fraser Island weed problem, which was announced by former Federal Environment Minister, David Kemp, prior to the federal election last year.

It is also interesting to note that Senator Campbell said, "The Burnett-Mary Region is also home to significant wetland areas and the preservation of endangered and migratory birds through the species recovery actions outlined in the plan is admirable."

## Air Brooms in Queensland National Parks

*Witches in fables rode through the air on a broom,  
Now mortals carry new sweeping gadgets that boom  
Just another invention adding to environmental doom.*

Ever since we first heard an air-broom being used to clean paths and walkways at Central Station on Fraser Island, FIDO has been questioning the environmental wisdom of a branch of the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency using such environmentally unfriendly machines in National Parks. Our continuing complaints about the use of air brooms have been treated flippantly by the QPWS. MOONBI 103 in November 2002 featured a satirical verse on air brooms.

The use of air brooms is no laughing matter. A close examination of the environmental impacts raises several serious issues:

- Should the matter of clearing paths and addressing litter in parks assume such a priority when major more pressing issues of natural resource management such as more effective fire and pest management are being neglected?
- Is it necessary to have all major walkways in National Parks leaf free? What is wrong with leaves which is a natural part of the environment in National Parks being allowed to lie on paths? Shouldn't natural areas present a natural organic landscape? Shouldn't manicured presentations be kept for urban parks rather than National Parks?
- Even if the need to sweep paths with 100% removal of all leaf litter can be justified, why shouldn't manual rakes or brooms be used instead of air brooms or blowers?
- Has any work been done to assess the environmental impact of the use of air brooms on the actual site where they seem to be applied frequently with enthusiasm? FIDO has observed the impact of air brooms in many Queensland National Parks and noted that many paths suffer greater erosion and the leaf litter is much deeper just off the paths. The leaves are only moved not removed.
- Why has there been such widespread use of these noisy machines when there is such widespread evidence of their wider environmental impacts of noise and air pollution?

Following an estimate by the NSW Environmental Protection Agency that one hour's use of an air broom produced air pollutants equivalent to driving a standard motor vehicle from Brisbane to Sydney, FIDO pursued its investigations on the last point. There is an enormous volume of material on the Internet relating to air brooms (as they are called in Australia) or leaf blowers (as they are called in America). The following summarizes some of the main points we discovered:

By generating a powerful stream of air, a leaf blower can move leaves, twigs and yard debris from hard surfaces like lawns, patios, garages and walks. It has been estimated that it can take five times longer to clean a typical landscape site with a broom and rake than it does with a power blower. Some workers estimate that their costs would increase about 20 percent if they had to perform the same functions without a leaf blower.

About 1.5 million blowers are sold in the United States each year. According to the American Environmental Protection Agency, gas-powered garden equipment, which includes more than just leaf blowers, contributed 5 percent of the country's ozone-harming pollutants by 1990.

**Noise:** Early leaf blowers averaged about 78 decibels, with some machines measuring even louder. The League for the Hard of Hearing reports that noise levels above 85 decibels can harm hearing over time.

The average blower measures 70-75 dB at 50 feet, according to a manufacturer's lobbyist and thus is louder at any closer distance. Sacramento's city code states, "Every person in the city is entitled to live in an environment free from excessive, unnecessary or offensive noise levels". The code states, "The normally

acceptable ambient noise level in residential areas is no more than 60 dB; 60-70 is conditionally acceptable; and higher levels are normally unacceptable." The decibel scale is logarithmic--each increase of 10, say 60 to 70, represents a noise 10 times louder. However a noise level typically, 67 to 69 decibels, when measured from a distance of 50 feet, is considered as acceptable in most U.S local authorities.

**Impacts on users:** Blower noise can impair gardeners' hearing. A blower measuring 70-75 dB at 50 feet can reach 90-100 dB at the operator's ear. According to the World Health Organisation, "there is an increasingly predictable risk" of hearing damage from noise above 75 dB.

**Air Pollution:** Noise may be the main complaint at a local level, but engine emissions have environmental regulators closely examining these machines. According to the Lung Association, a leaf blower causes as much smog as 17 cars.

Emissions from the two-stroke combustion engine include solid particulate matter as well as gaseous carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrocarbons (CO, NOx, and HC). The unburned hydrocarbons were of particular concern, as they are mainly responsible for the formation of ozone in the lower atmosphere and are considered to be the primary pollutant created by these small handheld engines.

In 1990, Californian regulations reduced the combined limit of ozone-depleting hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen to 180 grams per brake horsepower hour for small engines such as are used in air brooms. Until that time, emissions were as high as 230 g/bhp-hr.

Leaf blowers also raise (entrain) dust from the ground. One American web sites notes "*Street dust includes lead, organic carbon, and elemental carbon according to a study conducted .... The Lung Association states 'the lead levels are of concern due to [their] great acute toxicity... Elemental carbon ... usually contains several adsorbed carcinogens.'* Another study found arsenic, cadmium, chromium, nickel, and mercury in street dust as well." Luckily the Fraser Island dust stirred up by the air brooms doesn't have the concentrations of street dust, but it isn't entirely benign.

**FIDO has again called on the QPWS to review its use of air brooms in Queensland National Parks.**



Jacob Lack's launch in Urang Creek, 1969

## What Future for the Fraser Island Fishing Expo?

*Since 1984, a large and environmentally damaging fishing competition has taken place annually on Fraser Island. The competition has grown exponentially and even by the time Fraser Island became a World Heritage Area in 1991, the environmental impacts were also increasing exponentially.*

This Fishing Expo will take place again from midnight Saturday 28th of May to 1pm Friday 3rd June 2005 around the northern ocean side of Fraser Island. It is sponsored by the Toyota Corporation. The agreement between Toyota and the Queensland Government expires this year. A widespread view exists that the Fishing Expo is an inappropriate activity for a World Heritage area. Public pressure makes it likely that Toyota will not sponsor the event after 2005. However, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has indicated in a draft "*Strategic Directions for Fraser Island*" dated 28 April 2004, that it intends to continue the "expo" regardless of sponsor withdrawal and public opposition. QPWS recently advised that it proposes to seek expressions of interest from potential sponsors to continue the event after this year.

We consider that this "expo" has significant negative impact on matters of national environmental significance, specifically World Heritage values. To our knowledge, it has not been subject to appropriate consultation or referral pursuant to the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Given the inexplicable support of the QPWS to continue this environmentally insensitive event which is distorting the patterns of recreation on Fraser Island in an appalling way, FIDO has joined with the National Parks Association of Queensland and the Australian Marine Conservation Society in calling on the Federal Government to enact the EPBC Act to review the environmental impacts before any new sponsorship agreement is entered into by the Queensland Government.

FIDO also calls on its members and supporters to write to Premier Beattie urging him to intervene to stop this event from continuing. After all, it was Premier Borbidge who personally intervened to resurrect the Fishing Expo at the behest of Toyota and to relocate it from Eurong back to Orchid Beach.

The QPWS stated position in their "Strategic Directions" document for Fraser Island is:

### **Background**

*"QPWS has assessed the event to be cost neutral to park management. The terrestrial environmental impacts are considered to be relatively low and short term. The impact of intensive and concentrated fishing on the marine environment, particularly within important fish breeding areas is unknown.*

### **Proposed Actions**

*Negotiations will commence with Toyota Motor Corporation regarding the fishing competition agreement. Toyota Corporation may not wish to renew and so the process may involve identifying other parties which may be interested in major sponsorship of the annual fishing competition on Fraser Island, from 2006 onwards*

*QPWS will continue to support the fishing competition as an on-going tourism event. QPWS will continue to monitor the impacts associated with the event."*

*"Sensitive fish habitat at Wathumba Creek, on the western shore of Fraser Island will be excluded from any post 2005 fishing competition agreement".*

### **Great Sandy Marine Park (Northern Section)**

MOONBI 109 reported on the disappointment over the Beattie Government's proposed zonings for the Great Sandy Marine Park. The community shared our view that such a proposal which offered so little of our precious marine resources any additional protection. With other conservation groups FIDO representatives met with the Environment Minister, Desley Boyle, as had other delegations representing community, tourism and amateur fishing interests. We have been assured that the proposed zoning plan will be redrafted in the light of the huge volume of responses to the Draft Plan which provoked all of the comment. We have been told that the new plan will not be ready until next year. While this is going on the whole of the proposed Marine Park will receive no additional protection to that which already exists. However we have some anxieties:

- Deferring a decision which is inevitably going to be controversial and disputed by some sectional interest to the third year in a government term usually means that there will be no decision for a Cabinet is unlikely to approve in the year before an election any proposal which may have adverse political consequences. This means that the present impasse is likely to continue until well into 2007 unless it is broken this year.
- There are many groups lobbying to have the plan amended but although we are advocating that 40% be set aside as Marine National Park (green zones) in the public interest, the most vocal lobbyists are the fishers, both amateur and professional, who are each concerned about securing the best outcome for themselves.
- The way in which the submissions to the Draft Plan are dealt with is unknown. The track history of the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, which has a history of betraying the name given to it, doesn't inspire confidence.

We will wait to see the outcome but continue to monitor the progress. If the matter is resolved this year, and if it is accepted that there must be a huge increase in the area set aside as green zones, then it is likely to be a much better outcome than waiting until next year.



**Fraser Island fishing shack in 1957 (probably Eli Creek)**

*In 1960 to prevent such squatters' shacks appearing the Queensland Government established townships at Eurong and Happy Valley. These blocks were auctioned off in 1962.*



## More calls on Emergency Services

*MOONBI 109 dealt with the trend away from self-reliance to dependence on services provided by others. This transformation which mainly occurred during the 1980s and particularly during the 1990s passed without much remark, but it has had a profound impact on visitor management on Fraser Island both by the government and the private sectors. These further examples illustrate that the trend has to be addressed more actively by the non-government sector.*

On Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April, nine backpackers had to be flown to hospital after their 4WD troop carrier rolled on a sharp bend near Wanggoolba Creek and Central Station. Fraser Island police said the 4WD had been travelling around the hairpin bend at high speed when it flipped, injuring the nine occupants. One woman suffered head and abdominal injuries, another woman sustained head and chest injuries, one man received facial fractures and two women and a man suffered broken collarbones. The other three passengers suffered cuts and bruises. All were helicoptered to Hervey Bay Hospital.

A similar accident occurred on March 2 when a 4WD flipped near Eurong Beach and injured seven backpackers. Police said backpackers frequently got into trouble on the island. The 24 y.o. English male driver was charged with driving without due care and attention.

Sgt Mooney from the Fraser Island police station said that no special licence was required to drive a 4WD. He added, "Generally its just inexperience. The 4WDs are top heavy and have two gear sticks. A lot of the young backpackers just aren't used to handling these kinds of vehicles."

A spokesman for a 4WD hire company said local operators were meeting to address the problems associated with the hire of the off-roaders on the island.

Regrettably there are no restrictions on anyone from anywhere holding any kind of drivers' licence presenting themselves to a hire company and being allowed to drive a top-heavy, overloaded 4WD, on Fraser Island. A federal Parliamentary Committee on road safety has recommended that there should be special licences for 4WDs in view of the number of serious accidents they are involved in but it is up to the State Governments to implement this and there is an extreme reluctance to do anything to change the existing system (or lack of one).

**Comment:** These incidents not only raise the need for the Queensland Government to review the provision of emergency services actually based on the island but it again raises the issue of the need for a special drivers licence endorsement to drive 4WDs. Knowing that a large number of backpackers are inexperienced and irresponsible on Fraser Island the EPA, which seems so paranoid about risk assessment, may need to assess their potential liability if they keep issuing RAM permits to drivers without making any attempt to ensure they know how to drive and. They may need to accept some degree of liability for the accident.

Apart from the inexperience in 4WD driving in sand, many of the FIT (free and independent traveller) backpackers feed dingoes, and create major problems for campground management with noise and other bad behaviour. Further the FIT backpackers gain much less appreciation of Fraser Island because they get so little information. The increasing number of backpackers joining commercial tours go away being better informed and more appreciative of the outstanding natural values of the island and they don't create major problems for management.

Fraser Island was included in the national Easter road toll statistics when a man was crushed to death at Middle Rocks. Apparently after he towed one vehicle out of loose sand his own vehicle rolled back on him as he was unhitching the snatchem strap from the rescued vehicle. In another incident a French tourist drowned whilst swimming amongst a group of tourists and was found face down in shallow water at Lake Birrabreen.

## Call for Wider Mobile Phone Coverage

In the meantime, a Fraser Island resident claimed that the safety of tourists and residents on the Queensland island is being put at risk because mobile phone coverage is inadequate. Eurong SES leader, Nigel Freemantle, estimates only 40 per cent of the Island has CDMA coverage. He said that the lack of coverage is potentially dangerous. "Anything can happen," he said. "You have only got to get an accident somewhere where it is a bit quieter, or night-time when there is no-one around, and people cannot get radio contact or telephone contact with anyone. So it could be quite dangerous."

However when that comment was made, Telstra was busy negotiating to install a new mobile tower at the Eurong Park HQ. This installation has been delayed by a number of procedures, which included laying an underground cable some kilometres from the Park HQ to the tower on the Eastern Firebreak and installing a new higher tower at Eurong. The project will enable park HQ to have fast cable internet connection as well as complement other services at Happy Valley and Orchid Beach to provide CDMA mobile phone coverage for most of the eastern beach of Fraser Island.



### STOP PRESS - GREAT SANDY MARINE PARK

The Labor party State Conference at it's Annual Meeting held recently in Cairns **unanimously** passed an urgency motion supported by the Environment Committee and Minister Boyle. The key part reads -

*'... that the Draft ... Plan fails to recognize long-standing ALP policy to nominate the GSR for World Heritage Listing and to manage the area appropriate to that future listing. We also advise the Minister that Draft Plan is not Ecologically Sustainable given that it protects less than 4% of the Marine Park as "no-take area", whereas 34% was deemed necessary in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.*

*[The] Conference calls on the Minister ... to ensure that the final GSMP Plan advances the Principles and Policies of the ALP by ensuring it promotes ecological sustainability [and] maintains the World Heritage Values of the GSR ...'*

FIDO could not agree more and awaits the Minister and the Beattie Government's response.



## News in Brief

### Island of Lost Innocence

In an unflattering article in the travel section of the "Sydney Morning Herald" on 16<sup>th</sup> April in what was supposed to be a boost for Queensland tourism the only uncomplimentary article in this comprehensive supplement called Fraser Island "Island of Lost Innocence". Comparing Fraser Island now with what it was like when the writer first visited it as a backpacker 10 years ago. He was appalled by the incompetence of the current crop of backpackers "*who can't drive 4WDs because they've only ever driven their mum's mini around the bloody Cotswolds*". He was also upset at the behaviour of vehicles on the beach. "*Now the beach is a highway and we're all playing one big game of chicken. No one has time to drive on the soft sand and salt water causes rust ... Get out of the way, little backpackers — our bus is a monster.*" He goes on, "*No sooner have we bullied our way past the tourist minnows than we have to give way ourselves to a plane. Pleasure flights irritatingly buzz overhead.*" He was deprecating at the time schedule of his tour "*...at the Pinnacles we have eight minutes to soak up the atmosphere that Nature has spent millenniums creating.*" The bustling on the Eli Creek boardwalk upsets the writer, day-trippers descending on Lake Birrabreen and the Eurong Resort. He concluded that Fraser Island has left its innocence behind.



### Harvest of the Great Reaper

In the drams and events affecting FIDO over the past 35 years there have been many actors. Few played a more prominent role than the late Joh Bjelke-Petersen. In the eulogies that followed his death too many people overlooked his corruption of both the political and judicial systems in Queensland and the environmental vandalism that he actively aided and abetted. The scars of sandmining inflicted on Fraser Island 500 ha would not exist now if a less bigotted and vindictive person than Bjelke-Petersen had been Premier. It is amazing what the eulogists of Bjelke-Petersen choose to omit, overlook or forget while extolling the virtues of the deceased. Joh has been credited with many achievements which would have inevitably occurred whoever was in power and possibly with more sensitivity and hopefully without the corruption which occurred in his term and for which he was tried.

The recent passing of George Clark, a Sydney based planner, went almost unnoticed in Queensland although he had contributed much to FIDO. According to the large obituary in the "Sydney Morning Herald" George was arguably one of Australia's greatest planners in the post World war era. FIDO remembers him because he worked pro-bono for months to present the case against the siting of the Kingfisher Resort at North White Cliffs in a lengthy court case in 1987.

### Quantum on Dingoes

During March the ABC TV science program "Quantum" featured a segment on dingoes. This highlighted the great significance of the Fraser Island population and their present precarious status. Fraser Island is critical to the preservation this species. The following is a summary of some of the key points made.

Dr Alan Wilton (UNSW) said that although the dingo is an ancient type of dog, it will readily breed with domestic dogs. So the problem is it's difficult to tell a hybrid from a pure animal in the wild. He collected wild dingo DNA samples from the far north, right down to Victoria and discovered the awful truth. Most dingo populations were 80% hybrids. Some were 100%. The inescapable conclusion is that within 100 years, the pure dingo will be extinct in the wild. Only Fraser Island's isolated population is rumored to be pure.

Dr Darryl Jones (Griffith Uni): *We actually have miraculously this astonishingly purebred group of dingoes which are the only remnant left of what the pure dingo was like.*

U of Q dingo researcher, Nick Baker, is still trying to refine it but he puts the permanent Fraser Island dingo population at "around 120".

Dr Darryl Jones: *In conservation biology we think, we talk about viable populations and that's a pretty low number for a viable population, especially one that's got so many threats.*

Nick Baker: *It's the sort of situation that seems crazy to wildlife managers that you can have so many people in close proximity to a wild predator. It is inevitable that you have interactions with those animals because people want to get close to them. People want to have a dingo experience.*

Dr Darryl Jones: *It's 100% certain that there will be another serious incident one day. My greatest fear is an official reaction of some sort that won't be in the best interest of the (dingo) population. Another big cull of the scale that we have already just had, this population would be seriously undermined. In a sense if you really wanted to put it in stark terms, it's the difference between the extinction of a species and places for humans to play. It's that trivial and that profound. It would be tragic if in the enlightened times that we live in now that that actually occurred in our lifetime.*



**Eli Creek in 1957 with a fishing shack located there. The creek was flowing north. There have been many changes to Eli Creek environs since.**

## FIDO Inspection Report

On the weekend of 8-10 April, the FIDO Executive made an inspection of Fraser Island. Their inspection coincided with an annual inspection by members of the Scientific and Community Advisory Committees. They were impressed by some things and appalled by others. The following are some of the matters noted on this and other recent visits to Fraser Island.

**Eli Creek:** Perhaps the most alarming situation was at Eli Creek where the FIDO team was dismayed to learn that not only had the QPWS closed the northern section of the boardwalk but they were planning to demolish it. They have absolutely no plans to replace it in the foreseeable future and lack the resources to even consider it. This story is covered in more detail elsewhere in this MOONBI. However, it was not just the demolition of the northern section which upset FIDO and some CAC members.

The southern section of the walk which is now the only way to get upstream had been assailed by a chainsaw maniac. Instead of trimming a few branches protruding across the track some larger trees several metres off the track were felled. Then the mass of trimmed debris was left strewn about where it had fallen. It was left for at least a week. The love and environmental sensitivity lavished by the FIDO volunteers when constructing the original boardwalk back in 1981 hasn't been passed on to the 21<sup>st</sup> century managers of Eli Creek.

**Orchid Beach** was a revelation not made very pleasant by the deputations of residents who claim to be "the majority" and assert their right to drive on South Waddy beach, a point which was overwhelmingly opposed by the majority of the Scientific and Community Advisory Committee members who were descended upon by some aggressive "lobbyists" when they went to see the situation on the beach which has yet to be closed as scheduled in the 1994 Great Sandy Region Management Plan. The Airstrip which receives a \$5,000 grant annually from the Hervey Bay City Council was in a sad state of repair. The irrigators had not been used for some time and the airstrip did not appear to have had much use.

**Tree Poisoning:** What was most deplorable is that hundreds of trees on vacant public land between the housing estate and the airstrip and beach are now dead the victims of obvious poisoning by a person or persons unknown who wanted to improve their sea view which the trees were obstructing.

**Disastrous Fire Management:** However it is not only poison which is killing the trees. On the northern walking track into Wabby Lakes about 18 months ago the QPWS undertook a management burn. The results were disastrous. Over 50 large fire-sensitive Cypress pines were killed even though the Fire Management Strategy identifies the need for special fire management in areas with concentrations of cypress pines. Worse was the lost of about 24 ancient melaleucas which had survived the movement of the sandblow between 2000 and 4000 years ago only to die as a result of a careless and ill considered fire. After surviving being engulfed by sand and then exhumed as the sand invasion passed on, they were carelessly burnt. This was one of the most impressive stands of these ancient trees which bore adventitious roots as testimony to how they had survived the engulfing sandblow.

**Lake Birrabeen:** Although the parking lot for tour buses adjacent to the Lake Birrabeen toilet block has been enlarged and ready for use, tour operators continue to drive along and park on the beach. The visual and sound aesthetics resulting from this abominable practice are appalling. It can't be justified as being in the public interest. The Strategic Directions say this will cease. FIDO would like to know when.

**Apocalypse Now!** At 11.00 am on 23<sup>rd</sup> March the beach at Lake McKenzie was crowded. The weather was glorious. Suddenly a very loud military helicopter flying about 100 metres above the surface thundered out of the southeast. After passing over the lake, it swerved and went south for a similar move over Basin Lake before returning for a second viewing of Lake McKenzie before heading off in the direction of Kingfisher Resort. One could not resist the conclusion that this was a joy flight for the occupants of the chopper but being paid for by the taxpayers. It was further evidence that the military aircraft should be required to observe the same flight restrictions as civilian aircraft in this situation. The military seems to have no accountability for the joy flights they take. While their helicopter's vantage gave the occupants viewing pleasure, its noise unnecessarily seriously impacted on the enjoyment of hundreds of others.

**Waddy Point Camping:** The management of camping at Waddy Point is a matter of some concern. We note that a permanent camp appears to be established again on the beachfront site closest to the ramp. Two caravans were installed on the Point side. We will keep observing to see if these move every 28 days as required. We note that although the toilet block is immaculately clean the septic pit area is fenced off and growing one of the richest crops of weeds on Fraser Island (including Mossman River Grass). There was a problem when the FIDO inspection occurred. Every water tap at Waddy Point was marked as being not fit for human consumption. One wonders what anyone who camped at Waddy Point did to obtain drinking water.

**Lakes Report:** At Lake McKenzie, positive efforts have begun to stop the flow of silt into the swale behind the lunette. This swale has almost disappeared as over a metre of sand has washed from the road, the tour operators' area and the now disused campground. However the water diverting "Whoa-boys" installed have caused a few people to slip dangerously. Unfortunately though the loss of the former campground toilet block means that there are now only four pedestals to cater for up to 2,000 day-visitors in an eight-hour period.

At Ocean Lake maintenance of the short circuit walking track had been neglected for months although the fence in the parking area had been repaired. Several trees have been felled in the day-use area. There is no evidence of these being replaced. This has also detracted from the day use area.



Yidney Rocks in 1957 (Cynthia O'Gorman)

## Wild Rivers on Fraser Island?

There is some confusion about whether the election promise made by Premier Beattie to introduce wild rivers legislation to protect Fraser Island streams as well as other Queensland wild rivers will live up to its early promise. FIDO is most concerned that this does not become as hollow an election promise as the promises he made three years earlier in relation to Fraser Island.

Previous promises have yet to be honoured. In January 2001, Premier Beattie pledged his government would be:

- \* *Giving statutory recognition to Queensland's responsibility to fulfil our obligations under the World Heritage Convention to formulate and implement WHA Management Plans that give priority to the protection and conservation of World Heritage values while presenting those values to the best advantage;*
- \* *Giving legislative effect to World Heritage area Management Plans to ensure their planning policy and principles are reflected in local planning schemes and considered in the assessment of development applications, and*
- \* *Giving priority to implementing the Great Sandy Region Management Plan (including bringing Fraser Island under the planning control of a single government agency) and finalize submissions necessary to expand the Fraser Island World Heritage area to incorporate the entire Great Sandy Region including Coolooloa National Park.*



**Maheno 1957**

**Some Brief News:** Only one driver of 250 randomly breath-tested on the Fraser Island beach over Easter was detected as being over the legal limit. 20 people were fined for not wearing seat belts but no speeding fines were issued. However an 18 year old was charged with the illegal possession of a firearm.

Fifteen new Ranger residences have now been installed on Fraser Island. It has been a continuing saga to improve the living conditions for the rangers on the island. In April, they had yet to be occupied because of some final finishing yet to be complete. These single-unit, one-bedroom buildings, which were prefabricated on the mainland appear to be very comfortable, with most modern conveniences. There are eight at Dundubara. However they appear to be likely to be finished before the new Dundubara toilet block, which has been years in construction

Eight new fire-fighting units have been purchased for Fraser Island. These are lighter, more ergonomic and have a greater storage capacity.

## Catering for the Backpacker Demand

There is a widespread and increasing concern among the many traditional visitors to Fraser Island about the impact of Free and Independent Travellers backpackers as they travel around the island in crowded and often top-heavy "troop-carriers" driven by people inexperienced with handling 4WDs under any conditions let alone in loose sand. Further most have very little knowledge of Fraser Island and go away not much wiser.

Then there are the more critical issues of the problems they create for administration with where they camp, the noise they create, the hazards they pose for other drivers and the increasing number of emergency situations they are becoming involved in. However with about 200 - 400 being dispatched from the backpacker hostels at Hervey Bay, Noosa and Rainbow Beach every day, they represent a very significant proportion of the 350,000 visitors who visit Fraser Island annually. They also represent a huge economic bonanza for the industry which has grown up to hire them the vehicles and kit them out. This industry has grown like topsy and has concentrated only on the supply rather than providing the kind of Fraser Island experience these younger overseas visitors are seeking.

An American university student, Tamara Jacobi, recently undertook a very well conducted survey to investigate the expectations of 283 backpackers and what they wanted. She concluded, "*Responses of backpackers surveys indicated many different problems with four wheel drive tours. The majority of backpackers, both male and female, and of many different nationalities, expressed a significant interest in hiking on Fraser Island as well as an interest in supported hikes on the island.*"

Elsewhere she noted, "*Only 3 backpackers of the 283 surveyed had even read about hiking on Fraser Island from the many billboards scattered around the island, Yet this lack of awareness was not from lack of interest. When asked if they would be interested in hiking on Fraser nearly 70% of backpackers said 'Yes' they would be interested.*"

It appears that the Backpacker issue needs to be approached on several fronts:

- The market with some resultant consumer misgivings isn't currently catering for the pattern of recreation, which a majority of backpackers would prefer. More backpackers would hike and produce fewer problems all round for management if options for walking were better known and better catered for.
- There needs to be a "product" developed and marketed which will better cater for the backpacker's needs and wants rather than selling them a second-best package which requires them to hire 4WDs.
- The EPA should accept responsibility for issuing visitor permits to people who are incompetent to drive 4WDs on Fraser Island just as bar tenders have a responsibility not to serve alcohol to people who are inebriated.

*FIDO believes that there needs to be some more creative thinking employed to provide patterns of recreation on Fraser Island which are more sustainable. Most visitors to Fraser Island follow the pattern of usage set by previous visitors. This results with an undue concentration of visitors at hotspots like Central Station and Lake McKenzie. A three day walk from Moon Point to Lake Bowaraddy and return camping at Arch Cliffs would offer many backpackers a much less expensive and better experience with much less environmental impact.*

## Waste Management Strategy

FIDO responded to an advertisement in the "Courier Mail" calling for expressions of interest in Management of Waste on Fraser Island. It sought to identify "interested parties to provide and manage waste operations including alternative proposals or initiatives as to how waste could be best managed on the (Fraser) Island."

The Hervey Bay City Council placed the advertisement. As a result FIDO has received a copy of the "Fraser Island Waste Management Strategy" concluded on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2004 by HLA-Envirosciences. The Strategy has some interesting information which outlines what is becoming one of the most intractable problems on Fraser Island. It is proposed to delve more deeply into the report in the next MOONBI.

The waste management situation has become steadily worse with the increasing number of residences on the island. It is now also more difficult to enforce a "Carry-in and Carry-out" policy because of the banning of fires which could once be used to get rid of some packaging and cleanse some of the putricables out of cans so that these could be returned to the mainland.

Added to that is the fact that far too few financial resources are allocated by local, state and federal governments for all forms of management on the island. As a result, recently over the busiest period, garbage trucks were broken down and the bulk bins on the island were overflowing.

The matter of waste management clearly needs a lot more creative consideration as the Hervey Bay City Council has called for.



Happy Valley Circa 1957

## Brief News from FIDO

Following two separate events last year when the Scientific Advisory Committee held a Colloquium at Gatton College in July and FIDO held a Fraser Island Conference at Noosa in August both groups are now working to hold a conference in 2006. Tentative dates have been selected between 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September but a venue which will be somewhere in South East Queensland within easy reach of Brisbane has yet to be determined. The next MOONBI will provide more details.

Regrettably FIDO's plans to hold a photographic exhibition in 2005 have had to be put on hold. The proposal has not been dropped but unforeseen circumstances prevent FIDO from being able to proceed with the event this year.

## Fraser Island Defenders Organisation Limited Notice of Meeting

**NOTICE** is hereby given that the Twenty Eighth Annual General Meeting of the Fraser Island Defenders Organization Limited will be held at the Marchant Office, North Regional Business Centre, 960 Gympie Road, CHERMSIDE, 6.30 p.m., **Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2005.**

### BUSINESS:

1. To receive the Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheets and Reports of the Directors and Auditors
2. To elect Directors for the ensuing term in accordance with the Articles of Association.
3. General Business.

*M.S. Sinclair*

**BY THE ORDER OF THE BOARD**

Michelle Sinclair

Honorary Secretary

DATED this 18<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2005

## PROXY FORM

### 28<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

I, .....

(Please print in BLOCK letters)

of .....

being a financial member of the Fraser Island Defenders Organization do hereby appoint .....

or failing him/her ..... as my proxy, to vote on my behalf at the Twenty-eighth Annual General Meeting, to be held at 960 Gympie Road, CHERMSIDE, 6.30 p.m., **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2005** and at any adjournment thereof.

Signed .....this .....day of ....., 2005



## URGENT

Section 248 of the Companies (Queensland) Code provides that all members be given 21 days notice of any meeting (including A.G.M.s) at which they are entitled to vote. It is important that as many proxies as possible are received. The Proxy Form is also taken as your apology for non-attendance. This form (or a copy) should be completed under Article 31 of the constitution. **If you cannot attend the meeting please photocopy this form and return it promptly** to reach Secretary, FIDO, PO Box 70, BALD HILLS QLD 4036, on or before 9th August, 2005

## Nomination Form for FIDO Office Bearers

To be returned to Secretary FIDO, PO Box 70 BALD HILLS QLD 4034 by Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2005

We, .....and .....

being financial members of the Fraser Island Defenders

Organization hereby nominate .....

for the position of ..... for the 2005-06 term

Signed..... Nominator