

7th Biennial Fraser Island K'gari Conference

Time, Tide and Tourism

9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Wednesday 16th August, 2017

Innovations Centre, University of the Sunshine

Coast Sippy Downs

Organized by the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation



with sponsorship from



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and



Time

This conference celebrates two landmark anniversaries of some very significant events that have impacted on the destiny of K'gari. 2017 marked 40 years since sandmining ended on Fraser Island and 25 years since the island's World Heritage listing. The recommendations of the Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry led to the end of sandmining on 31 December 1976. The Inquiry's, Presiding Commissioner, Dr. John Hookey will open the conference. Dr Hookey was a pioneer in Australian environmental law. After 40 years he can now speak publicly on Fraser Island environmental issues. The succinct recommendations of the Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry ended mining and laid the foundations for its subsequent World Heritage listing.

Tide

In the tide of events the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporations will open the discussion on "*K'gari's Future with the Native Title holders*". Chris Loorham who was also a player from the 1975-76 Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry, returned to K'gari in 2016 to participate in a working bee and was impressed by the changes he noted after a 40-year absence not only in the physical condition of the island but in the relationships that are working to preserve its natural integrity. His paper is entitled "*Fraser Island and the sands of times—from confrontation to collaborations — the Enquiry 40 years on.*" On the subject of the impact of physical tides there are presentations on the sub-tidal environments surrounding K'gari (Fraser Island). As well as a close examination of some of the potential threats posed for Great Sandy Strait by a proposed 1.2 million tonnes per annum Colton Coal Mine, there are also two panels that are focussed on turning the tide. One deals with citizen science and what that can contribute to assist in managing K'gari while the other looks at the work being undertaken by volunteers to stop the spread of invasive species

Tourism

FIDO founder John Sinclair has explored over 100 World Heritage sites both natural and cultural around the world studying how tourist visitation is being handled. His paper is "*Handling the hordes — Lessons from how natural World Heritage sites manage visitation.*" Ross Waldron who is working towards his PhD is and also looking at tourism's environmental impacts will be on the theme of *Developing Sustainable Transport Options*.

Registration — 8.30 to 9.00

SESSION 1
9.00 am to 10.20am

Chair John Sinclair AO

Welcome to Country
Brianna Hanson

Butchulla Welcome
Malcolm Burns

Malcolm Burns (aka Uncle Mackie) is a Butchulla elder who wrote the 'welcome to country' transcribed into the Butchulla language that is now featured on three signs as visitors arrive the K'gari (Fraser Island) section of the Great Sandy National Park. Malcolm, a champion boxer in his younger days, has had a lifetime of fighting for Aboriginal rights that has taken him around Australia.

Welcome to the University of the Sunshine Coast
Vice Chancellor Prof. Greg Hill

Prof Hill has led a distinguished career as an educationalist and an academic. He has a very strong interest and background in the environment through his many years in tropical environmental science while in Darwin. The University of the Sunshine Coast is a big stakeholder in Fraser Island and runs an educational and research centre at Dilli Village as well as having many campus programs with a heavy environmental focus.

Opening
Dr John Hookey

Dr. Hookey was the Presiding Commissioner of the Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry that ran through 1975-76 that recommended the cessation of all sandmining on Fraser Island (K'gari). Dr Hookey was a pioneer in Australian environmental law. After 40 years he can now speak publicly on Fraser Island environmental issues. The three succinct recommendations of the Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry ended mining and that Fraser Island be listed on the Register of the National Estate. It was the first site in Australia to be recorded and it laid the foundations for the island's subsequent World Heritage listing.

Keynote Address
Drawing Artistic Inspiration from the Landscape
Dr Martin Buzacott

As a child growing up during the battle to save Cooloola from sand-mining, Martin Buzacott witnessed first-hand the capacity for the creative arts to influence public opinion. His father Hardie Buzacott's evocative audio-visual presentation called 'The Magic of Cooloola' played a significant role in the preservation of this vital part of the Great Sandy Coast environment. Since that time, Martin's career in classical music has brought him into contact with creative artists whose work has sought to raise awareness of the uniqueness of Australia's natural landscapes. In particular, Australia's greatest composer Peter Sculthorpe developed a fascination with Fraser Island, and Martin's keynote address examines the way in which Sculthorpe and other leading creative artists have been able to raise environmental concerns in compellingly different ways to those of scientists and political activists.



Martin Buzacott is the presenter of the weekday Mornings program on ABC Classic FM, and also the Brisbane classical music and theatre critic for *The Australian*. He is well-known for his radio documentaries which have been broadcast regularly on ABC Classic FM and ABC Radio National, has written published novels and plays, and has been an Adjunct Professor of Australian Studies at the University of Queensland. For several years, Martin was Manager of ABC Classics & Jazz, Australia's largest classical music record label, and as an author is best-known for his book *The Rite of Spring: 75 Years of ABC Music-Making*. Martin's recent projects have included an e-book on the history of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, jointly commissioned by QSO and the State Library of Queensland, and the remake of his acclaimed four-part radio series *Resurrection Symphonies: 85 Years of ABC Music-Making*.

Morning Tea — 10.30 to 11.00

Between the plenary sessions there are many visuals to be experienced including an exhibition prepared by the Fraser Coast Regional Artists and Tutors (aka RATS) who will be available to discuss their art. There will also be two poster displays and a table in the foyer where people can become more involved in the campaign to stop the impacts of the Colton Coal Mine on Great Sandy Strait.

SESSION 2

11.00 am to 1.00 pm

This session is composed of six presentations each of 20 minutes including questions and discussion

Chair, Dr Kim Walker, University of the Sunshine Coast

K'gari Future with the Native Title holders

Christine Royan and Gayle Minniecon

Christine and Gayle will make a presentation on behalf of the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation. On 24th October, 2014 the Butchulla People recognised by the Federal Court as the Traditional Custodians of K'gari in a Consent Determination on country.

QPWS Values-based Management Framework

Emma Henderson QPWS Park Services (Planning)

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has developed the Values-Based Management Framework (VBMF) – an internationally-recognised best-practise method to manage protected areas that is underpinned by evidence-based decision making and continual improvement. The VBMF recognises that every park is unique and has different values, management needs and priorities. The VBMF sets a clear process for identifying these values at every park, setting realistic and measureable goals, directing resources and evaluating the management outcomes. Through a continual process of planning, action, evaluating and reporting, the VBMF allows QPWS to continually assesses and improve its effectiveness at managing Queensland's diverse and unique protected areas.

Emma is acting Manager, Values-Based Management Framework with the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR). Emma started with NPSR in December 2016 as Principal Project Officer. Prior to joining NPSR, Emma worked with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection in the environmental offsets team for 8 months after relocating to Brisbane from Sydney in November 2015. Prior to that Emma spent just over eight years with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (and its predecessors) working on a range of projects including threatened species recovery plans, the NSW Saving Our Species program and the NSW Biodiversity Legislation reforms. Emma holds a Bachelor of Science (Environmental) and a Graduate Diploma in Environmental Law, both from the University of Sydney.

Fraser Island and the sands of time. — From Confrontation to Collaboration, The Environmental Inquiry 40 years on.

Chris Loorham

Chris examines the social and historic context to the protection and the appreciation of the environmental significance Fraser Island (K'gari) and argues for the need for the science to be interpreted in an accessible way both for the benefit of the visitors to the island and to support the continued protection of the natural values of the island. He draws on his experience as an advisor to the Commonwealth Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry in 1975-6 to demonstrate the critical importance of interpretation to the continued conservation of the island. He contrasts his experiences of 1974 with those of his return to the island in 1976. He calls for the development of an interpretation strategy to inform and educate the public on Fraser Island's World Heritage values that is flexible and worthy of the World Heritage Status of the Island.

Chris Loorham *B.Juris, LLB, MSS (Planning and Environment), MPIA. was an adviser to the 1975-76 Fraser Island Environmental Inquiry. Since then he has worked as Principal Solicitor with the Environment Defenders Office (Victoria) during its foundation years between 1993 and 1999, and has spent ten years as a mediation manager with the National Native Title Tribunal dealing with Native Title claims and agreements throughout Australia. Chris taught planning law at Victoria University and environmental dispute resolution at the Australian Maritime College. Since 2009 he has been based in Port Fairy Victoria where he has works as a planning consultant and mediator in conflict resolution.*

Incorporating coral into the tidal tapestry: classification, typology and mapping of the intertidal and subtidal benthic habitats of the Wide Bay / Great Sandy region

Maria Zann (corresponding author) and Mike Ronan

Wetlands unit, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

An interim benthic habitat map was needed for the Wide Bay / Great Sandy region to inform decision-making, management and planning for the Marine Park and for the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar area. The region shares values many of the values of both GBR and Fraser Island World Heritage areas, notably coral and seagrass habitats which require management within their surrounding context. The Interim Queensland Intertidal and Subtidal Classification scheme (in prep) provided a methodology to systematically attribute the benthic habitats present and factors driving their distribution. The scheme was produced by the Queensland Wetland Program (QWP) with input from more than 70 scientists, managers and consultants over eleven expert workshops. It is compatible with and extends on the Australian National Aquatic Ecosystem Classification scheme, providing a common language and understanding to align spatial habitat datasets through their biophysical attributes. Some notable habitat types of relevance to Fraser Island include potentially the northernmost high energy rocky shores in eastern Australia; and intertidal / subtidal reefs including coffee rock.

Maria Zann is A/Senior Program Officer, Intertidal and Subtidal Classification and Mapping CQ, Wetlands | Biodiversity Assessment, Wetlands, Species & Protected Area Analysis, Conservation and Sustainability Services Division, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

The Colton Coal mine and the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar site

Dr. Tanzi Smith

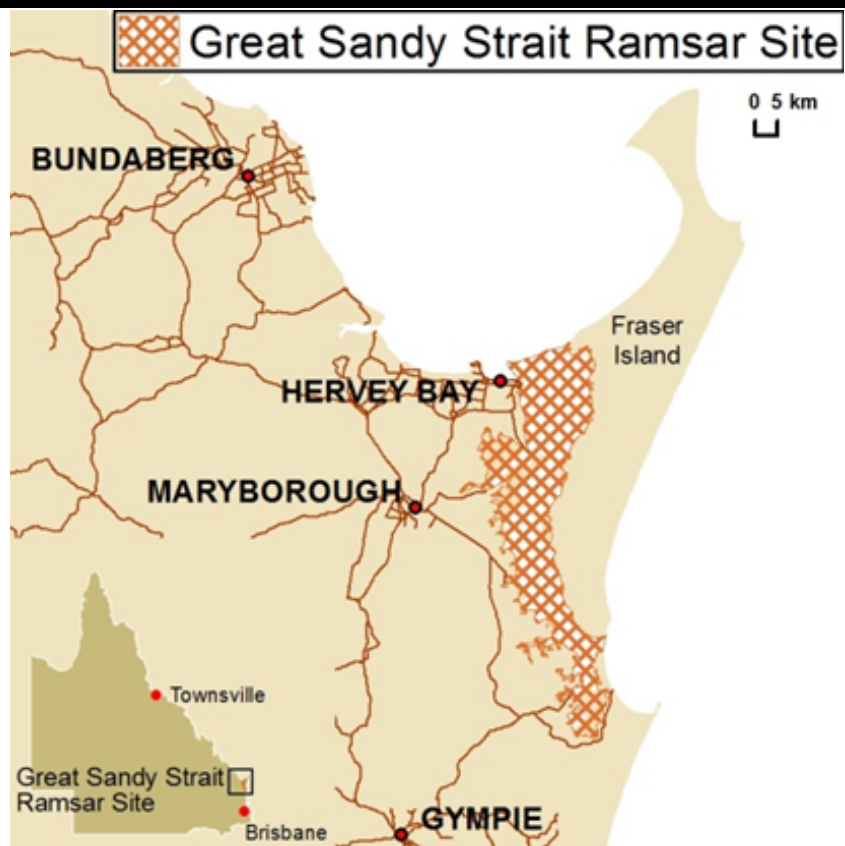
The Colton Coal mine is an open cut mine proposed by New Hope Coal. The mine itself would be located in the wallum country in the Susan River catchment and discharged untreated mine waste water into the Mary River 8.4 km upstream of the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar boundary and 8 km downstream of the town of Maryborough. First proposed in 2009, the mine recently received Queensland Government approval after members of the

Aldershot community contested the project in the Land Court on the basis of its impacts on the Mary River and on living conditions in the town of Aldershot 2.1km away. The Federal Environment Minister is currently deciding whether to make the project a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act because new information. This presentation focusses on the impact of the project on water quality in the Mary and Susan Rivers and ultimately the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar site. It will provide an overview of the proposed project, its impacts and the evidence presented in New Hope Coal's environmental management plan which demonstrates that the project will release effluent exceeding water quality guidelines.

Dr Tanzi Smith is a Catchment Officer at the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, a Fellow of the Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust and a former Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists Science Program Scholar. She holds a Bachelor of Environmental Science and Bachelor of Environmental Engineering (Hons 1) and has worked in the environmental field for more than twenty years. Tanzi grew up on the banks of the Susan River and now lives in the Mary Valley directly west of Noosa.



Map showing proximity of the Colton Coal Mine in the upper Susan River catchment to the Mary River and the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar site.



Great Sandy Strait is a double-ended sand passage estuary and, because of the relatively flat nearshore, has large horizontal tide movements. Low water is one kilometre offshore in some areas. Patterned fens have been recorded along Great Sandy Strait and Cooloola. This type of wetland is the only one of its kind in the world. A complex landscape of mangroves, sandbanks, intertidal sand, mud islands, salt marshes and seagrass beds, the Strait is an important habitat for breeding fish, crustaceans, dugongs, dolphins and marine turtles. The strait extends north from Tin Can Bay to Hervey Bay. The Mary River enters the strait at River Heads. It covers an area of 932 km². Boating and fishing are also pursued for recreation. Some 806 km² of the strait has been identified as an Important Bird Area because it supports about 120,000 non-breeding waders, including over 1% of the global populations of bar-tailed godwits, eastern curlews, great knots, grey-tailed tattlers, lesser sand plovers, pied oystercatchers, red-necked stints and red-capped plovers, as well as small numbers of the range-restricted mangrove honeyeater.

Exploring Sustainable Transport Options for K'gari Ross Waldron

Ross is at the beginning of a three year study using rigorous scientific methods to develop sustainable transport options for K'Gari (Fraser Island). It involves consultation and communication with stakeholders to provide the best possible options that may enhance and not compromise K'gari' World Heritage values, the cultural values of the Butchulla or the tourism values for operators and the industry. His focus is on minimising the various impacts from 4WD vehicles on the island. He will examine current real world transport options looking at different types of transport and infrastructure and explore alternative materials for road surfaces. In his consideration of different variables he will be examining the dune system type, slope and incline of the road, proximity of roads to important environmental features, especially lakes and cultural sites. The type of vehicles and amount of traffic will be studied as well as seasonal trends, road closures, etc. A three year study plan with the first year focussed on gathering information, communication and determining the particulars of field study and overall thesis. The second year continues gathering information and data as well as undertaking field study, measurements, etc. The third year involves completing the analysis and synthesis. And producing possible solutions.



Ross Waldron is a probationary PhD candidate at USC. He holds Class 2 Hons in Bachelor of Science USC 2014 in Forest Fire Ecology. Contact: Ross.Waldron@research.usc.edu.au

LUNCH — 1.00 pm to 1.30 pm

SESSION 3

1.30 pm to 3.20 pm

Chair, Dr. Gabriel Conroy, University of the Sunshine Coast

Handling the Hordes — Lessons drawn on managing visitation from National Parks and natural World Heritage sites around the world

John Sinclair

John draws on his experience as from visiting more than 100 World Heritage sites on six continents studying how visitation managed in heavily visited sites. He compares strategies for moving people and crowd dispersal to reduce the people at one time (PAOT) at popular sites. He discusses using shuttle buses, chairlifts and other strategies to limit or slow the numbers entering the parks are just some strategies employed. He also reflects on how other sites deal with issues of public safety from Brown Hokaido bears in Shiretoko Japan to the role of China's Red Army in crowd control at Juizhaigou. Managing human waste and rubbish in natural settings has produced a wide range of innovative solutions. Similarly there have been some very creative solutions to reduce and remove rubbish. Many Japanese parks quarantine to prevent pathogens reaching or spreading in their World Heritage sites. He also examines the role of visitor centres and volunteers in assisting the management of visitor behaviour and interpretation and calls for better badging of K'gari to improve the respect that visitors give it.

John Sinclair AO is celebrating 50 years as an active conservationist having been active at the local state, national and international levels. He was the founder of the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation in 1971 and has acted in various capacities being its CEO ever since. He led the fight to stop K'gari sandmining and to see the island gain World Heritage listing in 1992. With Leigh Hemmings he prepared the first World Heritage nomination for the island in 1984. He has served on the Fraser Island World Heritage Community Advisory Committee since 1992. From 1988 to 2010 John was a commercial tour operator leading small eco tours to every corner of Australia and even to PNG and South East Asia. His company GO BUSH Safaris had as its slogan Australia's World Heritage specialists. It enabled him to see more of Australia from the ground on an annual basis than 99% of Australians will see in their lifetime.

Citizen scientists helping K'Gari Management

Each panellist will make a 5 minute presentation before a Q&A Session

7 Panellists:

Keith Sinclair — The Role of Weather Stations on K'Gari

Beth Cawter — The University of the Sunshine Coast's Repository

Kelli McGregor — Art and citizen science in action

Suzanne Wilson — Increasing K'gari's nursery capacity

Perspectives from participants in the Beach to Birrabeen BioBlitz

- **Patrick Leonard** — Fungi
- **Shelley Gage** — Plants
- **Maria Miller** — Overview

Keith Sinclair is the Chief Technology Officer for Opmantek a Network Management and Audit company. Keith was the author of NMIS, Network Management Information System, released as an open source network management system in 1999.

The ability to closely monitor the weather and specifically rainfall of a natural environment has become critical to assist stakeholders in understanding the impacts of climate change on the many habitats making up the larger area. Providing this ability has in the past been expensive and not met the needs of the various stakeholders, this presentation will summarise a solution which is cost effective and scalable based on open technologies and open data.

Beth Cawter is the University of the Sunshine Coast librarian leading the team developing and cataloguing the Fraser Island Repository project. The collection will, for the first time, gather in one place dispersed material relating to Fraser Island, particularly that held in government departments.

Through USC's interests in Fraser-K'gari, which include the Research and Learning Centre at Dilli Village and Fraser Coast campus, it became clear that there are significant historical documents, data, research reports, oral histories and photographs that, up until now, have not had a 'home'.

The librarians working on the 'Collection' are in the process of identifying material that is already collected somewhere, even if it is in an office filing cabinet. There are other important materials that should be collected and a start has been made with the donated collections of figures key to Fraser Island, such as John Sinclair AO, who began the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation in the 1970s. As a great deal of the political and activist

activity around Fraser Island occurred during the 1970s, there may be other individuals who are ‘maturing in years’ who may hold private collections.

It is anticipated that the project and the accompanying materials collection will serve multiple goals. It will attract researchers from other institutions to collaborate with USC researchers on important research projects. USC is also hoping that the Collection will provide a central point for deposit of, and access to, Fraser Island resources for the broader region and the local community.

Kelli McGregor is an artist, tutor and facilitator who coordinated the RATS project to cover and portray the 2016 Beach to Birrabeen BioBlitz. Kelli began her artistic career later in life than most, her experience in architectural design heightened her awareness of space and negative shapes and of the compositional dynamic they create. Kelli combines training in design with an unerring sense of the aesthetic to produce her striking figurative paintings.

Suzanne Wilson has been a long-time volunteer working with Coolum Coastcare where she developed her interest in coastal native plants and identifying them. Her passion for propagating especially with the Coolum Community Nursery developed expertise with experience. Since 2015 she has also been instrumental in applying that experience to helping expand the capacity of the QPWS nursery at Eurong to grow plants suitable for island residences and encouraging landholders only to grow plants propagated on K’gari using only genetic material obtained on the island.

Patrick Leonard OBE is an amateur mycologist. He has studied fungi in his spare time for 40 years, in Australia, Europe and New Zealand. He is a co-author of *Australian Subtropical Fungi*. He has published many articles on fungi. He is the past Vice President of the Queensland Mycological Society. He is an Honorary Lecturer at the University of Southern Queensland. He was awarded the OBE for services to the environment for his role in obtaining the designation of the South Downs National Park in the UK.

Fungi are an essential component of any sustainable ecosystem. They help feed many trees and plants through symbiotic relationships, they break down organic matter to make compost, they provide food for native mammals and insects. The fungi of Fraser Island are very diverse, not yet well documented and some are only known from Fraser Island and the adjoining areas of the Great Sandy National Park. No fungi receive any protection under current Queensland legislation.

Shelley Gage is a retired primary teacher who has indulged in her passion for plants over a lifetime. She will share her involvement, experiences and reflections of the 2016 BioBlitz as a volunteer, citizen scientist from the plant group. Her presentation will be accompanied by slides of some of the many wonderful plants which were recorded.

Maria Miller, outdoor enthusiast and former globetrotter will attempt to capture the 2016 BioBlitz from a citizen’s perspective: How a holiday with 40 strangers proved to be an unforgettable learning adventure.

Citizen Science and other USC Initiatives on K’gari

Dr Kim Walker

Citizen science is collaborative research involving experts and members of the public who take part in the research process, usually in a voluntary capacity. This presentation seeks to explore the value Citizen Science has to various stakeholders on K’gari, volunteer learning, and the influence Citizen Science has, potentially, on participant behaviours and attitudes towards K’Gari and other communities more generally. Broad Citizen Science research opportunities will be discussed in the context of inclusiveness and respect and in relation to USC’s initiatives relating to K’gari such as the Fraser Island Repository.

Dr Kim Walker is an Adjunct Associate Professor in environmental education at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. Her specific project at USC is to explore how USC can better utilise the USC Teaching and Research Centre on UNESCO World Heritage listed, Fraser Island-K’gari, in terms of teaching programs and research. She has a background in sustainability in higher education and environmental education in school education. Dr Walker has been a Visiting Research Fellow, University of Bath within the Centre for Research in Education and Environment and a Visiting Scholar, Environmental and Social Sustainability Initiative, Department of Strategic Management and Public Policy, George Washington University. She also held the position of Academic Manager - Sustainability in Teaching and Learning, University of Technology, Sydney. Dr Walker is a past president of the Australian Association for Environmental Education and represented Australia in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Afternoon Tea
3.20 to 3.40 pm

SESSION 4
3.40 pm to 5.00 pm

**Chair, Sue Sargent Chair of Fraser Island World Heritage
Community Advisory Committee and the Fraser Island Natural
Integrity Alliance**

Tackling K’Gari’s Invasive Pests

Each panellist will make a 5 minute presentation before a Q&A Session

6 Panellists: 1 hour

Lynda Wills — *The role of BMRG in Keeping the Great Sandy Great*

Peter Shooter — *Weed Management at Happy Valley*

Maree Prior — *Weed Management at Eurong*

Don Bradley — *Islands in the Northern Section of the Great Sandy Strait
and Sandy Cape Lighthouse Environs, Fraser Island.*

Juliet Musgrave — *Fraser Coast Regional Council’s Weed Management*

Linda Behrendorff — *QPWS Pest Management*

Lynda Wills is a Project Officer with the Burnett Mary Regional Group Ltd (BMRG). BMRG’s Keeping the Great Sandy Great Program has been .

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Peter Shooter has led 15 working parties to Happy Valley to deal with the very serious weed infestations there since the beginning of 2014. His summary of his work can be found in his paper in the Conference bag.

Maree Prior has for the past two years led FIDO’s bush regeneration and weed management program at Eurong. He has a long involvement with Cooloola Coast Care and other landcare groups including being projects development officer and co-ordinator with Noosa Integrated Catchment Ass

Don Bradley has been a volunteer for QPWS since 2002. He is also a volunteer member of the Sandy Cape Lighthouse Conservation Assoc. (SCLCA) which is affiliated with the Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care Group, (Landcare Australia).

The SCLCA weeding program is an initiative of QPWS, with most of the weeding accomplished by volunteer caretakers.

Included in the presentation is an overview covering topics such as initial organisation of the weeding program, monitoring and collecting data, annual reporting and maintaining an on-going interest for the volunteer caretakers.

Juliet Musgrave is a Land Protection Officer, Vector and Pest Management with the Fraser Coast Regional Council with responsibilities for weed management on land under Council jurisdiction on K’Gari (Fraser Island). For several years Juliet has been involved both with the Council’s biannual weed management in the township areas and with the on-going Bitou Bush eradication program.

Linda Behrendorff has spent 17 years working for QPWS in a broad range of fields including threatened species, fire and pest species management. She has a passion for conservation of threatened species and protected areas. She enjoys working with external groups and has been an active contributor in fostering long-standing collaborative relationships caring for country and is a regular contributor to community forums, public workshops and popular articles and scientific publications on her work. Linda will be outlining QPWS pest species management within the Great Sandy National Park.

Rapporteur Report
Sue Sargent

Sue Sargent is a marine scientist and educator based in the Wide Bay. Sue is the current Chair of the Fraser Island Natural Integrity Alliance (FINIA), Fraser Island World Heritage Area Community Advisory Committee and the Australian World Heritage Advisory Committee (AWHAC). In 2016, FINIA celebrated its 10th anniversary a collaboration of government, non-government and community partners, all working to protect and restore Fraser Island’s (K’gari’s) natural and cultural integrity.

Close

Keeping it Great

The Burnet Mary Regional Group (BMRG) is partnering with community groups, including Fraser Island Defenders Organisation (FIDO), Lower Mary Land & Catchment Care Group and Cooloola Coastcare to deliver the project, **Keeping it Great**. Funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, **Keeping it Great** supports works which reduce priority threats to the natural integrity of the Fraser Island World Heritage Area and Great Sandy Strait Ramsar wetland.

FIDO works with teams of volunteers who make regular trips to Fraser Island to reduce the spread of weeds around the villages of Eurong and Happy Valley. These weeds are often garden escapees and have reduced significantly due to FIDO's persistence.

Since 2011, the visits to Eurong village have become an integral part of the **Keeping It Great** program. Three annual week-long working bees focus on weeding in the residential valley and around the resort. Two other components of the trips focus on landscaping around the village. Non-native species are removed from the area and replaced with native species and locally sourced material propagated on the Island. This material is grown at the QPWS depot nursery, managed by FIDO to ensure a reliable supply of planting material endemic to Fraser Island. Throughout these trips there is extensive collaboration with Eurong Resort, QPWS and the residents of Eurong village.

Since 2014, FIDO volunteer teams have visited the village of Happy Valley four times annually, to deliver a community weed control program. The goal of this program is to eliminate *Abrus prectorius* (var. *Africanus*) which is an extremely invasive creeper/climber. This program also targets other priority weeds such as lantana, Easter cassia and mile-a-minute. The extremes of the *Abrus* infestation appears to now have been identified and has been greatly reduced in some areas. The ultimate goal of total elimination now appears to be a real possibility.

The Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care Group has also been involved in a number of projects with the support of BMRG. These projects include: weeding and debris clean up in Great Sandy Strait on Woody and Round Islands; facilitation of a workshop and trapping trials to control cane toads on Fraser Islands; assistance with the Sandy Cape lighthouse weeding and turtle monitoring work; and control of weeds and the revegetation of a significant basking site for green turtles at Riverhead, in the Great Sandy Strait wetland.

Support for Cooloola Coast Care continues to deliver several projects, including: a three year seagrass monitoring project; production of a booklet, *"Great Sandy Beauties and Beasties, a responsible gardeners guide to coastal native plants and weeds"* and a number of other projects in the Cooloola region.

History of Biennial Fraser Island Conferences

Fraser Island is a World Heritage site that warrants ongoing monitoring because of its Outstanding Universal Value and fragility. It is a natural laboratory for a wide range of environmental studies. The results of those studies undertaken need to be communicated to the public because better appreciation fosters better care and management. That has remained FIDO's objective in continuing to organize these conferences.

7th 2017 Time Tide & Tourism, University of the Sunshine Coast

6th 2015 *Sand Sea and Sun*, University Sunshine Coast Sippy Downs

5th 2013 *A Natural Laboratory*, Mt Coot-tha

4th 2011 *FIDO at 40*, Walkabout Creek The Gap

3rd 2009 *Shifting Sands*, Walkabout Creek The Gap

2nd 2007 *True Grit*, University Sunshine Coast Sippy Downs

1st 2004 *Fraser Island 20-20 Vision*, Noosa

It is proposed that the 8th Biennial Fraser Island Conference in 2019 will be based around a theme of **Community, Culture and Collaborations (CCC)**.

USC K'Gari (Fraser Island). Symposium

The University of the Sunshine Coast is planning a two day symposium to complement the T, T, & T Conference at its Fraser Coast campus early in 2018. It will broadly examine the role of research on K'gari-Fraser over time and into the future including oral histories and historical photographs. The conference will draw on the work of the Fraser Island Repository and invite participants to contribute to the research discussion.

Thanks: The Fraser Island Defenders Organisation wishes to thank all contributors and participants to this conference. We especially appreciate the efforts of Dr Hookey and Chris Loorham and other presenters who have travelled so far at their own expense. We are indebted to the assistance of Maria Miller for her diligence and attention to detail in bringing this conference together. We are also appreciative of the sponsorship of the Queensland Government and the University of the Sunshine Coast for the continued support for these conferences.