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BNE2009/5304

Department of  
**Environment and Resource  
Management**

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 3 June 2009 and a copy of the wording of petition number 1229-09 concerning the Fraser Island Dingo Management Scheme.

A key principle of the Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy is that dingoes are regarded as wild native animals and should be interfered with as little as possible.

Despite conflicting media reports and differences in opinions of members of the public, I'm advised the majority of Fraser Island dingoes are, in fact, not starving. It is important to remember that dingoes in the wild are of a naturally thin build. The hierarchical population structure means the dominant animals are likely to prevent access to food by subordinates, even at times when food is plentiful.

Fraser Island's adult dingoes average about 16 kilograms and 1.2 metres long. This is a higher average mass than dingoes from the Victorian Highlands (15 kilograms) and Central Australia (13 kilograms) and the same as those in Kakadu (Corbett, L. 1995, "The Dingo in Australia and Asia", UNSW Press, Sydney). The dingoes from these three areas were also about 1.2 metres long, indicating that Fraser Island's dingoes are about the same size as dingoes from other areas and, if anything, a bit heavier. They certainly are not leaner than dingoes from other areas.

I have listened to concerns from members of the community that humanely destroying aggressive dingoes might affect the dingo population. An independent audit in 2003 determined that dingoes remain prevalent and widely distributed across the island and that they are not in danger of imminent extinction. While data collected over the past decade suggests that the Fraser island dingo population naturally fluctuates between 100 and 200, I am nevertheless keen to accelerate further research so we can be more certain of the numbers.

My department is working with organisations such as the University of Queensland, Griffith University and Biosecurity to draw together various techniques so that accurate figures on dingo numbers can be provided. The survey will provide a better understanding not only of the total numbers but also of the other factors such as dingo dispersal across the island, the total number of packs and the age and composition of those packs.

Proposals to artificially feed dingoes have been consistently rejected over many years as counterproductive and irresponsible in terms of both the future viability of the dingo population on Fraser Island and public safety.

As part of the island's natural biodiversity dingoes should be allowed to regulate their own numbers in response to natural food. Feeding dingoes would artificially increase numbers on the island, interfere with natural population dynamics and increase the frequency of dingo-human interactions.

I would like to emphasise that a sustainable population of dingoes on Fraser Island is a dingo population which relies on native prey. It is not a dingo population which realise on human beings to feed them.

Analysis of 968 Fraser Island dingo scats reveals that their favoured natural prey species are bandicoots, echidnas and bush rats. Bandicoots and bush rats are particularly abundant on Fraser Island. In addition, plant food, such as midyim and blue flax lily fruits, is abundant at most times of the year.

Through feeding stations, dingoes lose their natural hunting instincts, associate people with food and begin to seek out people for food and ultimately endanger the safety of everyone on the island.

The Government's number one priority is to ensure public safety. In line with the Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy, any animal identified as dangerous will continue to be destroyed. Existing Department of Environment and Resource Management policy does not include any proposals for culling animals outside the dangerous category.

I should like to thank the petitioners for their interest in this issue and I hope that they will come to understand that a greater public benefit will be served by discouraging feeding dingoes and their interaction with humans.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kate Jones', is written over the typed name and title.

**Kate Jones MP**  
**Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability**