



Hon Kate Jones MP
Member for Ashgrove

Ref: 1249-09



**Minister for Climate Change
and Sustainability**

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

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 5 August 2009 and a copy of the wording of petition No. 1249-09 concerning the Fraser Island Dingoes.

Following the tragic death of a young boy in April 2001, the Government released a comprehensive strategy for the management of dingoes on Fraser Island. The objectives of the Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy (updated in 2006) include conserving a sustainable wild dingo population on the Island; reducing the risk posed to humans by dingoes on Fraser Island to an acceptable (low) level; and to provide visitors with an opportunity to view dingoes in an environment as near as possible to their natural state. A key principle of the strategy is that dingoes are regarded as wild, native animals and should be interfered with as little as possible.

A recent audit of Fraser Island dingo management by internationally recognised dingo expert Dr Laurie Corbett, has confirmed the Queensland Government's strategy is working to reduce risk.

The strategy has been prepared with expert input, is internationally recognised and implemented by a team led by well-qualified scientists who are dingo experts in their own right. Collectively, the team has the most direct and consistent experience in managing dingoes on Fraser Island.

As well as Dr Corbett other contributors included Dr Lee Allen (pre-eminent dingo research zoologist), the Fraser Island World Heritage Area Scientific Advisory Committee and many other key Fraser Island stakeholders including FIDO, WPSQ and the National Parks Association.

The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) is fully cognisant of its obligations under Queensland's *Nature Conservation Act 1992* to protect the Fraser Island dingo as a native species and the Department is committed to conserving the Island's dingo population.

DERM has an equally compelling duty of care to help protect members of the public from aggressive dingo attacks. The Government's number one priority is to ensure public safety. It is for this reason that a dingo identified as dangerous because of their behaviour will be humanely destroyed. DERM policy does not presently include any proposals for the culling of dingoes outside of the dangerous category.

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I have stated publicly on many occasions that I don't support the proposal to treat dingoes as pets and introduce dingo feeding stations. Feeding dingoes would artificially increase numbers on the Island, interfere with natural population dynamics and increase the frequency of dingo-human interactions. Ensuring dingoes do not become habituated by humans is more important than ever

I am particularly concerned that the Liberal National Party Opposition has been advocating Dingo feeding stations as the solution to this management issue.

On 1 September 2009 the I released the audit of the strategy carried out by Dr Corbett. The report is publicly available and can be found at www.derm.qld.gov.au.

Of the 91 strategy actions, Dr Corbett recommended that 88 of those continue and of those 20 require some modification.

His suggested modifications include:

- integration of research projects
- regular monitoring of dingo diet and prey abundance
- more research on the dingo population including adult dingoes
- increasing dingo awareness programs particularly during holiday periods
- further peer reviews of research
- a focused effort on education in isolated sites
- renewed cooperation with council to fence waste transfer facilities, and
- improving disposal of fish offal

In particular Dr Corbett has endorsed the actions to reduce risk through better education of visitors, training of rangers and erecting dingo fencing in strategic locations. DERM is currently analysing the recommendations.

I have listened to concerns about the dingo population. Data collected over the past decade suggests that the Fraser Island dingo population naturally fluctuates between 100 and 200, the I'm nevertheless keen to accelerate further research to be more certain of the numbers.

Accordingly, DERM is now proactively working with the University of Queensland, Griffith University and Biosecurity Queensland, so accurate figures on dingo numbers can be provided. The survey will provide a better understanding not only of the total numbers, but also of other factors such as dingo dispersal across the Island, the total number of packs and the age and composition of those packs.

I would like to thank the petitioners for their interest in this issue and I hope that the information I have provided clarifies the matters they have raised.

Yours sincerely



Kate Jones MP

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