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MEDIA RELEASE.

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Fraser Island Dingo Conservation and Risk Management Strategy Announced.

Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc was instrumental in bringing to light the inadequacies of the current Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy (FIDMS) and the need for a review of dingo management. The revised FIDMS has just been released by the Minister for Environment, Andrew Powell and National Parks Minister, Steve Dickson.

It would appear not much has changed from the basic concept of the original strategy and more consultation and hard work is ahead. It is hoped that the transparency spoken of and the proposed scientific studies will assist in overcoming concerns by conservationists.

The document states that conservation and protection are key components of the new strategy, this can only be evaluated when the policies are implemented.

We welcome research into an improved understanding of dingo distribution and population, this research is necessary to determine the viability of the population and put to rest continued speculation on dingo numbers, but SFID is sceptical that the \$50,000 allocated will not scratch the surface of what is required.

There is concern that dingoes will continue to be destroyed. This is evident after a juvenile dingo was trapped and killed recently because of inappropriate behaviour by a visitor, this indicates there has been no change in the policy of euthanasia.

The actual number of animals 'humanely destroyed' has increased over the past ten years, therefore the current risk management policies have not been effective, the new management techniques will clearly need to address this issue. Even if the current level of euthanasia will not impact a viable population, it hardly supports the policy of animal welfare.

The proposed fence around Cathedral Campground may keep the animals out of this area, but many incidents occur on the beach, how will this be addressed to protect the dingoes?

Education is an important component of the new strategy, \$84,000 has been ear marked for signage, it would be hoped the new signage will focus on improving awareness and understanding of dingo behaviour and the current fear campaign, which has caused confusion for many tourists, will be replaced.

SFID maintains that in the interest of animal welfare, dingoes should not be tagged until 12 months of age as is best practice worldwide. The number of animals with permanently damaged ears is well documented.

Trapping, ear tagging and research methods are to be reviewed to minimise the dingoes distress, this is a positive step in conservation and protection. It would be hoped that interference of any kind could be minimised.

Rather than investigate the possibility of vet checks, this should be considered a priority if animal welfare issues are to be addressed.

A pilot 'Friends of Parks' program is to be implemented where campground hosts advise visitors on safety issues. Another positive step is the appropriate training of rangers on dingo behaviour. These proposals are welcomed.

Further information will come to light as we discuss in depth the new FIDCRMS.

SFID will continue negotiations with the Minister regarding the establishment of a Wildlife Care Centre for the Island.

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on behalf of SFID Committee.