Fraser Island, (K’Gari) lies off the coast of Queensland, Australia, approx. 300k north of Brisbane. It is the largest sand Island in the world with an area of 1840 km². The Island is over 123 kilometres in length and 22 kilometres at its widest point.

Fraser Island is known for its outstanding natural and cultural values, including a wide variety of native flora and fauna. **The dingo is an integral part of this unique environment and has significant conservation value** due to the fact that:

1. As Top Order predator on the Island, the dingo is vital in maintaining the health and balance of this fragile ecosystem.

2. The Fraser Island dingo adds to the value of the Island as a major international tourist attraction, it is one of few places where visitors may get the chance to observe a dingo in its natural habitat.

3. The Fraser Island dingo is also genetically unique because of its isolation from the mainland, and therefore we have an obligation to ensure that this genetic integrity is preserved.

**HISTORY.**
The Butchulla are one of three tribes indigenous to Fraser Island and have been resident for at least 5000 years, archaeological evidence suggests occupation could possibly be up to 50,000
years. Prior to European settlement the Fraser Island dingo lived in harmony with the Butchulla and were an intrinsic part of camp life, they held a significant place in their spiritual and cultural practices, but after European occupation in the 1840's this relationship was interrupted and eventually the Butchulla were removed from the Island. The last mission was closed in 1904 and now there only remain a handful of surviving descendants.

As the law stands today the Butchulla cannot have their camp dingoes or interact with them in any way.

The dingo arrived in Australia between 4,000 and 18,000 years ago and under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 is a declared indigenous species and classed as native wildlife. Sections 17 and 62 of the Act also provide for the legal protection of the dingo as a natural resource in protected areas such as World Heritage listed Fraser Island.

The Fraser Island (Great Sandy Region) was inscribed as a natural World Heritage Site in 1992, this resulted in an overwhelming increase in both domestic and International visitors. The Island dingoes have come under ever increasing pressure due to ever expanding tourism.

The mortality rate from vehicle strikes continues to rise.

Visitors interfering and attempting to interact with dingoes can lead to human /dingo conflict. Whilst encounters with dingoes can be positive, those deemed to be negative result in animals being euthanased.

Dingo deaths can compromise the stability of the pack structure.

The controversial use of ear tags to identify individual dingoes can result in deformed or ‘floppy’ ears.

Debate continues regarding supplementary feeding of dingoes during periods of extreme famine on the Island. A severe shortage of food, due to climate change or other factors, could place the population at risk. Visitors should NEVER feed dingoes.

ECOLOGY.

Fraser Island dingoes have a complex family group which consists of the Alpha Male and Female (parents who bond for life) their offspring from previous years, and new pups. As the pups mature they become part of a loose hierarchy which determines the pecking order of the group.

March to May is breeding season, this is the time that existing bonded pairs mate, or new bonds are formed amongst the younger generation. Gestation is 63 days and during this time the dingo family searches out a safe area for a den and begins to cache food for the new pups. June to August is feeding time for newborn pups. During the first three weeks the alpha female stays at the den and the other pack members provide her with food by regurgitating or delivering carcasses to the den. The role of the whole family group is vital at this time and subsequent stages of raising the pups.

As the pups grow older the mother leaves the den and goes hunting. Other members of the group take sentry duty and watch over the pups. The whole group hunt and provide for the pups and the mother continues to nurse up to three months and provide for them up to the age of six months.

The majority of pups do not survive beyond their first year.
DINGO DIET.

The diet of the Fraser Island dingo consists of small mammals such as bandicoot, rodents and echidna, also wallaby, reptiles, fish, turtle and some vegetation. Dingoes are also opportunistic scavengers and will enter tents and take food that is not properly stored. **To protect dingoes secure all food sources.**

DINGO BEHAVIOUR.

Dingoes are not aggressive by nature, they are curious and can be boisterous, they are notorious thieves and will often enter campsites looking for food or simply something to steal. This is normal dingo behaviour and not a sign of aggression.

Keep food and rubbish in secure containers at all times.

Fraser Island is dingo territory, respect the fact that this is their home and you are a visitor. If you encounter a dingo consider it a privilege, stay calm and observe.

**DO NOT** attempt to entice or interact with the animals in any way.

**DO NOT** FEED (penalties apply)

**KEEP CHILDREN** CLOSE at all times.

**DO NOT** RUN, this excites the animals and they will chase.

Dingoes that nip are destroyed. Don't be responsible for a dingo death.

**CONSERVE. PROTECT. RESPECT.**

The environmental impact of tourism and the strategies to maintain a viable and sustainable dingo population are constantly under scrutiny. **The challenge remains, is Fraser Island to be managed for the benefit of human visitors or are human visitors to be managed for the benefit and preservation of the wildlife?**

Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc. was formed in 2009 due to concerns raised by the community and visitors regarding the health and well-being of the Fraser Island dingoes. We became the eyes and ears of the Island, reporting our findings to the media, the public, researchers and scientists. We are working with experts in dingo/wildlife management within Australia and overseas. SFID was instrumental in instigating a review of the Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy and continue to monitor research programs and conservation practices.