

## **Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc.**

50 Old Maryborough Rd.

Pialba Qld. 4655

Ph: (07) 4124 1979

Email: [mkrail@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mkrail@bigpond.net.au)

ABN: 15369 628 753 INC:1A37577 CP 5365

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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#### **Fraser Island in focus. Rescue, Research and Dingo Genetics.**

Dr. Kylie Cairns, Conservation Geneticist from the University of NSW was invited to be guest speaker at the Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc. AGM held in Hervey Bay on Sunday 14th January. Dr. Cairns spoke of the dingoes evolutionary history and distribution across Australia and expressed her concerns regarding the health of the Fraser Island population.

Previous DNA studies indicated a high level of inbreeding compared with animals on the mainland. Dr. Cairns suggested that further research was crucial to determine the long term viability and sustainability of this genetically isolated and unique population. A pilot DNA study commenced in 2016 under the guidance of USC researcher, Dr. Gabriel Conroy, since that preliminary report was released there has been no further research and all proposed projects for the Island have been put on hold due to ongoing native title claims.

Also present at the SFID AGM was Dr Ernest Healy from the National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program. Dr. Healy spoke of conservation efforts by his organisation and the current status of the dingo in Victoria.

Considering the ecological and cultural importance of Fraser Island which includes the native dingo population, SFID strongly recommends that ongoing genetic research be considered a priority and that a Dingo Health Monitoring Program be established.

Whether the introduction of genes from a mainland population to increase fitness (genetic rescue) is necessary or warranted is something that needs to be determined sooner rather than later.

Cheryl Bryant. Publicity Officer. Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc.

Email: [bellkat@bigpond.com](mailto:bellkat@bigpond.com)

Ph: 07 4125 6056

Contact Dr. Kylie Cairns Email: [kylie@kyliecairns.com](mailto:kylie@kyliecairns.com)