

Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Fun vs Flora and Fauna on Fraser Island.

Easter is a time for family activities and fun, for Fraser Island it is the time when countless tourists flock to the Island, it is also a perilous time for the wildlife, especially the dingo.

The concentration of tourists, particularly at certain popular sites, is likely to result in dingo encounters which are then recorded as incidents and, unfortunately, animals are still being destroyed.

The current workforce on the Island is approximately 40 staff, at peak periods more rangers need to be out and about to monitor visitor behaviour and enforce compliance when necessary.

It is not only the fauna that is impacted, but also the flora, an alarming number of sites and tracks are being used far beyond their recommended carrying capacity during these peak periods. It was reported that over 1300 vehicles arrived on the Island in one day over the Christmas Holidays.

A prime example of overuse is the Eli Creek site. There is consistent inappropriate parking, track widening and changes in vegetation around the creek entrance. Key recommendations in a study released by the Dept. of Environment in 2008 proposed, improving parking management to reduce congestion and bogging, and prohibit parking at the track entrance. It is evident this has not occurred. Eli Creek is also the site of a recent dingo incident which resulted in an animal being destroyed.

To reduce congestion visitation needs to be spread more evenly throughout the year, as is the case in other National Parks. This would allow certain areas to be rested and regenerate. It would also benefit the dingoes whose mating, whelping and puppy cycle coincides with these peak visitor periods.

UNESCO reported a key threat requiring ongoing attention was degradation due to visitor numbers. The Cardinal Principle contained in the Nature Conservation Act states, a National Park is to be managed to 'provide to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition.' Are the World Heritage values of Fraser Island being adequately protected?

Future management practices will determine if a healthy balance can be maintained between visitor use and conservation concerns and if the new State government will commit to the preservation and protection of this valuable resource, which is Fraser Island.

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