Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc.
ABN: 15369 628 753 INC.NO: 1A37577 CP 5365
50 Old Maryborough Rd
Pialba, Hervey Bay Qld. 4655

To: The Hon. Leanne Enoch M.P.
Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef,
Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts.

13 March 2018

(your ref CTS 30573//17)

OPEN LETTER **(6 November 2017)**

Dingo Management on Fraser Island.

Dear Ms. Enoch,

The Fraser Island Strategic Research Program (2014) is part of the Queensland Governments research component of the Fraser Island Dingo Conservation and Risk Management Strategy (FIDCRMS) and forms the basis for management of the Fraser Island dingo.

Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc. (SFID) would like to bring to the Minister's attention our concerns that many of the policies outlined in the Progam have not been implemented and that research funding and planned projects for the Island have come to a halt.

Considering the importance of Fraser Island as a World Heritage listed National Park we believe that research must remain a priority and innovative methods of conserving and protecting the Fraser Island dingo should be constantly explored.

We would like to address the following:

1.Genetic research has identified Fraser Island dingoes as being a unique lineage that could be at risk of inbreeding. However, despite the importance of the population there is little data on the levels and trends in genetic diversity. The potential consequences of lower levels of genetic diversity include reduced fitness and concerns for the long-term adaptability of the population. Therefore, to ensure the conservation of a self-sustaining viable population, and to assist with management decisions, we propose that this much needed research be considered a priority.

2.We strongly advocate that a health assessment scoring system be considered as recommended in the Strategic Research Program, and a Dingo Health Monitoring Program be implemented to determine the prevalence of disease and the general health of the dingo population.
We suggest that the health status of animals be incorporated into the Interaction Report Form.

The health and welfare of individual animals should also be taken into account and Veterinary assistance sought in a timely manner.

3. A more accurate population estimate is needed. This can be achieved by the use of strategic DNA profiling and other non-invasive methods, such as facial recognition technology. This approach could also potentially identify relatedness between individuals and groups. We propose a survey of dingo numbers and demographics be undertaken on an annual basis and be openly available .

Invasive techniques, such as GPS collars, are unreliable and can have a wide range of physiological effects on an animals health, collars can also compromise movement and cause injury. Even small

differences in collar weight or fit can affect specific behaviours. (Jewell 2013)

It should be noted that stress is also a common factor in any process involving capture and handling and the effects of stress on individuals of a population can be passed to the next generation. (Jewell 2013)

4. Since the focus of any research should be to utilise methods that interfere with wildlife as little as possible, we strongly advocate the exploration of new technologies and techniques that are less invasive and also crucial in improving human safety, animal welfare and dingo conservation.

'The emerging literature on the immediate and longer-term effects of capture and handling indicate it can no longer be assumed that a wild animal's survival of the process implies the safety of the procedure, that the procedure is ethical, or the scientific validity of the resulting data.' (Jewell 2013)

5. Management of dingo/human behaviour remains a contentious issue with animals still being destroyed. There remains a large knowledge gap in understanding the causes of human-dingo conflict on Fraser Island and the factors that may lead to a negative encounter. We suggest that additional research be undertaken with a focus on eliminating the continued destruction of animals.

'Results clearly show that dingoes rarely seriously injure even the most vulnerable of people, despite the opportunity to do so arising on occasion. Nor do they regularly seriously injure people more generally.' (Appleby et al. 2017) 'In fact, large numbers of encounters, which are probably benign or positive in nature, go unreported' (Burns and Howard 2003; Hytten and Burns 2007.)

We look forward to your response regarding our recommendations as outlined above and a further update on research initiatives planned for Fraser Island...

Addendum:
Since the Fraser Island Strategic Research Program states that all relevant research be transparent and findings released in a timely manner. We also request the government:

6. Make available current research published regarding dingo health and genetics. (The government has indicated these studies have been undertaken.)

7. Provide information on any Health Monitoring Program.

8. Provide details of planned research projects for 2018.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Bryant. Publicity Officer.
(Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc.)
Email: bellkat@bigpond.com
Ph: 07 4125 6056

Malcom Kilpatrick, President.
(Save Fraser Island Dingoes Inc)
Email: mkrail@bigpond.net.au
Ph: 07 4124 1979

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