

# AUSTRALIA

## Fraser Island



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### II.1 Introduction

**Year of Inscription** 1992

#### Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Environment Australia  
Queensland Environment Protection Agency (EPA)  
Australia

### II.2 Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** N ii, iii

#### Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:  
The site contains complex Aeolian dune formations evolving from a unique interaction of coastal successional vegetation, hydrological and geomorphological systems not known to occur elsewhere.  
Other unique features include an outstanding vegetational chrono-sequence; an ancient group of ferns that first appeared in the Silurian Period 400 million years ago; and most of the world's known habitat for acid frogs.  
The property encompasses 250km of clear sandy beaches, striking sand cliffs, spectacular blowouts, fresh water lakes in a rich variety of settings (from rainforest to colourful heaths), and the largest unconfined sand island aquifer known in the world.

*“Fraser Island has broadband satellite connectivity to the EPA network which provides access to e-mail, internet and a subset of corporate applications.”*

#### Status of Site Boundaries

- The borders and buffer zone of the property are considered adequate.
- Changes to the tenure of some areas have been made.
- The Great Sandy Strait acts as a buffer zone between the WH area and the mainland.
- A proposal to establish the ‘Great Sandy Marine Park’ is currently being developed to establish the marine protected area over tidal waters and lands.

### II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- “Soil profiles and ongoing pedological evolution remain undisturbed on all but mined areas. All impact of logging on process such as nutrient cycling, forest structure and population genetics will shortly cease, and the refugial role of both closed forests and heathland is assured. Weeds, plant diseases and feral animals are present but in low numbers subject to active management and are controllable”.
- Localised degradation can occur from excessive numbers of visitors, inappropriate fire management, and invasive exotic species and pathogens.

### II.4 Management

#### Administrative and Management Arrangements

- Day-to-day management is carried out by the Queensland National Parks & Wildlife Service.
- Local government planning and development assessment is undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act (1994) and the Integrated Planning Act (1997).
- Relevant laws include the: Forestry Act (1959); Recreation Areas Management Act & By Law (1988, 1991); World Heritage Properties Conservation Act (1983); Nature Conservation Act (1992); and the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999).
- A joint Ministerial Council between the Commonwealth and Queensland Government has been established. However, no joint management arrangements (traditional protective measures) have yet been established.
- The ‘Great Sandy Region Management Plan’ for natural and cultural resource management was drawn up in 1994.

#### Present State of Conservation

- The original WH value is considered to be intact.

## State of Conservation of the World Heritage Properties in the Asia-Pacific Region

### Staffing and Training Needs

- 63 staff and 12 volunteers in 2002.
- Staff have received training in the use of firearms, fire management, workplace health & safety, first aid, compliance and legislation.

### Financial Situation

- The majority of funding comes from receipts under the 1988 Recreation Areas Management Act which increased from US\$1.47 million in 1992-93 to US\$4.1 million in 2001-2003.
- Supplementary revenue received by the Board (service permits, penalties, brochures sales) is paid into the Queens Recreation Areas Management Board Fund.
- There are general funding limitations.
- \* International Assistance from WHF: none.

### Access to IT

- Fraser Island has broadband satellite connectivity to the EPA network which provides Internet and email access and a subset of corporate applications.

### Visitor Management

- There were some 200,000 visitors at the time of listing in 1992, which rose to almost 340,000 in 2001-2002.
- Visitors are able to access information on Fraser Island through a variety of media: brochures, videos, maps, websites,

and an information kit.

- Visitor management covers: (i) pre-visit information; (ii) off-site orientation; (iii) on-site orientation; (iv) site interpretation; and (v) post-visit reinforcement.
- There is a general paucity of social science research addressing visitor and social impact management.
- The greatest potential threats to WH values include recreational activities and a lack of knowledge about the ecological impacts of visitors.



Map of the Fraser Island showing WH Area (in green)

## \* State of Conservation Reports

2000 Bureau CONF.202/5 IUCN informed the WH Centre that it had received a number of reports concerning the state of conservation of this property, including: (i) impacts associated with increasing tourism, particularly on fresh water environments; (ii) the unique dune lake system; (iii) adequacy of the fire management programme; and (iv) reduction in state government funding associated with other revenue generation mechanisms. IUCN further noted that the Fraser Island Scientific Advisory Committee had reviewed the WH value of the site and a report was due in 2000. The Bureau invited the State Party to consider extending the application of ACIUCN's consultation process to include Fraser Island, and requested the State Party to submit the report of the Fraser Island Scientific Advisory Committee to the WH Centre.

2001 Committee CONF.208/10 In April 2001, a 9-year old boy was killed by dingoes on Fraser Island prompting a re-evaluation of the risk posed to humans by dingoes, and a re-assessment of the draft FI Dingo Management Strategy (March 2001). Immediately following the incident, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) undertook a cull of 31 habituated dingoes. A Risk Assessment Report was also commissioned by the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which provided site-specific recommendations including the fencing of campgrounds & recreational areas; active deterrence of animals in the vicinity of popular visitor areas; restriction on food taking to certain locations; and time restrictions for visitors. Additional island-wide management approaches included: (i) limiting visitor numbers; (ii) increasing fines & penalties for feeding dingoes; (iii) enhancing public education & awareness; (iv) additional ranger presence; and (v) increasing dingo monitoring & research. The need for consultation on appropriate limits with the Island's residents, tour operators, the FI Community Advisory Committee, native title claimants, and the Island's WH Area Management Committee was also emphasised.

IUCN received further expert advice that the impact of the cull was unlikely to have any adverse impacts on the long-term viability of the dingo population. According to the IUCN Canid Action Plan, the FI dingo population is of great relevance to the status of Fraser Island as a WH site, and represents the best opportunity to maintain a self-sustaining population of wild genetically pure dingoes. Fraser Island does not, however, have an exclusive Plan of Management, as it is catered for by the 1994 Great Sandy Region Management Plan (GSRMP), which also includes adjacent marine areas and lands outside the protected area. A review considering a management plan specific for the FIWH property, as well as a commitment to new legislative requirements is scheduled for completion in March 2003. In July 2001, the Queensland Government announced the allocation of an extra AU\$1.75million towards the management of Fraser Island.

The Bureau commended the State Party/QPWS on the Risk Assessment and the draft Dingo Management Strategy, and invited the State Party to provide further information on the visitor management strategy as it is developed.

## II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

### Threats and Risks

- Growth in population in the Great Sandy Region,
- Expansion of residential areas and infrastructure development,
- Tourism & support industries,
- Fire hazards,
- Lack of knowledge from systematic monitoring,
- Invasive plants & pathogens,
- Global warming as a potential threat.

### Counteractive Plans

- Overall development within the WH area is controlled via local government planning schemes and state government legislation.
- In addition, a Dingo Management Strategy, a draft camping plan, and a draft fire strategy, have also been prepared.

## II.6 Monitoring

### Monitoring Arrangements

- A substantial monitoring programme is conducted by QPWS on Fraser Island.
- Some of the major ongoing monitoring projects in collaboration with different partners cover the effects of fire on flora & fauna; presence of key species; beach bird populations; frog monitoring and the impact of traffic on wildlife.

### Monitoring Indicators

- Monitoring indicators include: (i) presence of plants; (ii) species composition; (iii) small mammal population indices from Elliot box & pitfall trapping; (iv) visibility; (v) counts of birds; (vi) Dingo sighting locations; (vii) species presence & abundance indices; (viii) records of road kills.

## II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

### Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- The authorities have maintained the WH value.
- Recreation, visitation, and inappropriate fire regimes have however been identified as being the two main threats to the WH value.
- Discussions are underway with relevant stakeholder groups to consider a possible future extension to the boundary of the property.