

**SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT  
MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST  
GLEN ELMES MP**

**FRASER ISLAND DISCUSSION PAPER  
31 August 2010**

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Mr Deputy-Speaker, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July during DERM's Estimates Deliberations, the Acting-Minister tabled *Stage 1 of the Fraser Island Dingo Population Study*.

This is yet another step by this discredited department to sanitise and cover up their neglect.

Fraser Island is loved by all who have visited there and even those who have not, know and understand that it is a special place. It's relatively untouched by introduced species of plants or animals. It has high recreation values for walkers, 4WD enthusiasts, fishermen, naturalists and conservationists. It is home for around 100 locals yet visited by 380,000 tourists a year whose stay on the Island is, on average, four nights: that's an enormous strain on fragile eco system.

Earlier this year, with Ted Sorensen the Member for Hervey Bay, I released a discussion paper on Fraser Island so I could understand not just the difficulties facing the Island, but to start putting together solutions for its future.

I have come to understand that this State department, the administrator of the Island, is at best incompetent and at worst, duplicitous in overseeing the systematic destruction of our native dog.

Section 16 1(a) of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* states and I quote: "...is to be managed to protect the area's exceptional scientific values and, in particular -

- (i) to ensure that the processes of nature continue unaffected in the area;
- and
- (ii) to protect the area's biological diversity to the greatest possible extent.

Mr Deputy-Speaker, the department at best, rates a D minus when compared against what should be their bible, the *Nature Conservation Act*.

We have finally seen the introduction of tag-along tours yet this proposal was first put to government around ten years ago. How many accidents and deaths could have been avoided?

The Island's water quality continues to be degraded due to human activity. Both human waste and chemicals from sun creams affect some of the perched lakes while human waste and rubbish left in the bush behind camping areas along the beach, at Indian Head and elsewhere, has become a pollution and health problem.

By far the greatest discussion point has been the fate of the dingo population. Mr Deputy-Speaker, there are many representatives on my side of the parliament who come from rural areas and who have little love for the dingo. I understand their views.

Overwhelmingly, mainland dingoes have inter-bred with domestic dogs so with one possible exception, the only remaining pure strain of our native dog exists on Fraser Island, but instead of being concerned about their survival, we have a department

engaged in the ruthless and cruel, some would say deliberate, destruction of the species. The report released by the Acting-Minister during Estimates refers to 97 dingoes being removed from the database because of their known deaths. The report says "*from a variety of causes*".

I can inform the House, because I have nearly all the autopsy reports, that the causes of death include '*lethal injection*', '*shot*', '*run-over*', '*poisoned*', '*starvation*' and others. One autopsy lists under probable cause of death - '*rifleitis*' while another states '*half-an-ounce of hot lead*'.

Labor's interim report shows happy snaps of a dingo family, dingoes on the beach, dingoes frolicking in the water, a dingo running up the beach with a fish in its mouth. Mr Deputy-Speaker, on a normal day those dingoes would be hazed by rangers: that is, shot with a clay pellet, moving them away from the beach and away from one of their main food sources.

The battle for Fraser Island is now being fought in the media. We have a state government peddling information, which it still considers credible, that goes back to 1990. A couple of week's ago we saw a stage-managed tour for journalists, the result - a sanitised "*all is well in paradise*" image relayed to the general public.

By contrast, we have a small group - some Islanders, some from the Save the Fraser Island Dingo Organisation, indigenous people and long-time visitors, all dedicated to the Island - who are systematically ignored, harrassed and belittled. In one case a legalised home invasion, the circumstances around which, if it happened when we were in government, would see protestors in the street. Strange how silent those protectors of our democracy have become.

The Queensland government ignores its responsibilities and that is why I have taken steps to ensure that UNESCO, the organisation charged with overseeing World Heritage listed areas, has also been advised by me of the Island's plight.

Mr Deputy-Speaker, it's now a matter of whatever it takes Ted Sorensen and I, and those who want to save Fraser Island will battle on until we change the government's view or simply change the government.

I incorporate the paper into Hansard.

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