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Welcome to the first edition of the FINIA newsletter for 2019, keeping FINIA members and supporters up to date with K’gari (Fraser Island) news and current FINIA projects.

Our next meeting is being held at Maryborough Town Hall on **Tuesday 5 February** from 10am to 2pm.

Thank you to our contributors and look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

Shifting Policy Focus to Environmental Biosecurity



*Some of the symptoms of the Myrtle rust fungus *Austropuccinia psidii* (Photos: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries)*

Environmental Biosecurity is re-emerging as a big issue for our protected places. For a while now, we took our eyes off the ball, focussing purely on agricultural biosecurity – addressing threats to farming such as the recent outbreaks of cucumber green mottle mosaic virus in the Northern Territory, tomato potato psyllid impacting potato growers in Western Australia, and closer to home here in Queensland, banana Panama disease tropical race 4 (TR4) and white spot disease in the prawn farming industry.

The impacts of an outbreak can be devastating. Banana Panama disease cost the Queensland banana industry over \$400M after being discovered on a property at Tully, in far north Queensland in March 2015. Previously, the soil-borne pathogen had wiped out the banana industry in the Northern Territory in the 1990s. The emergency and ongoing response have cost the Queensland Government \$22 million, with significant investment also coming from the Federal Government and growers.

White spot disease wiped away \$25 million from the farmed prawn industry, with seven Queensland prawn farms falling victim to the highly contagious disease which kills more than 80% of prawns in an infected farm. The Federal Government imposed a ban on green prawn imports two months after white spot disease was first discovered.

Meanwhile, in environmental biosecurity, we are all facing the huge threat being faced by myrtle rust. The plant fungal disease myrtle rust was first detected in Wyong, NSW in April 2010 and spread across the eastern Australian landscape to bushland reserves, home gardens, commercial operations, parks and street plantings in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and on the Tiwi Islands in the Northern Territory. Affecting over 350 species from 57 different genera of Myrtaceae, it has been declared endemic and cannot be eradicated.

But let's put that in context - Myrtaceae dominate many fragile and essential ecosystems and there are more species of Myrtaceae than any other plant family in Australia. Myrtle rust will not only threaten one species, it will threaten hundreds of species and has the potential to impact on some of the most pristine and protected World Heritage properties including Fraser Island (K'gari), the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia and the Wet Tropics.

But there is some hope. Late in 2018, the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture and Water Resources appointed Ian Thompson as Australia's inaugural Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer (CEBO) within the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. A dedicated office will be established to support the CEBO and to oversee the delivery of an \$825,000 a year project fund to drive investment in building environmental biosecurity capability and capacity.

The key objectives of the CEBO role are to: enhance understanding and oversight of environmental biosecurity risks, perform a national policy, engagement and leadership role, ensure that Australia's environmental and community biosecurity risks are better defined and prioritised and improve the maturity of Australia's environmental biosecurity preparedness, surveillance and response capacity.

With the costs of clean-ups and stakes so high, it's time to stop mopping up pest incursions and for us all to focus on prevention. If not, it may just cost us our environment.

Article submitted by Sue Sargent, FINIA

Shaping the Future of the Island's Biosecurity

A pest is any animal or plant that has an adverse economic, environmental or social impact on a particular place. Pest plants and animals degrade our natural resources, damage precious vegetation, compromise biodiversity and interfere with human health and recreation.

Fraser Coast Regional Council is updating their Biosecurity Plan to align with the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Biosecurity Strategy. The Fraser Coast Region Biosecurity Plan 2018-2022 covers the entire local government area including all land and water (but excluding marine) resources. This includes all the settlement areas on Fraser Island such as Eurong, Happy Valley and Orchid Beach.



The plan provides a framework to facilitate the coordinated management of invasive plants and animals in the Fraser Coast region identified in the Biosecurity Act (2014) as well as other invasive species identified as having significant local impacts.

The Draft Biosecurity Plan 2018-2022 was launched for Public Consultation on 19 December 2018 for a 6-week public consultation period before the final draft is submitted to Council for adoption in early March and can be found on FINIA’s website at the address below.

To have your say, please provide feedback to Col Zemek, Biosecurity Coordinator, Fraser Coast Regional Council by 31 January 2019 or participate in the Fraser Island (K’gari)

focussed, FINIA Consultation Workshop being held during the FINIA meeting on Tuesday 5 February.

https://contactfinia.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/FCRC_Draft_Biosecurity_Plan_2019-2022.pdf

Contributed by Col Zemek, Fraser Coast Regional Council

Towards Eradication: Bitou Bush



Sticking with the biosecurity theme of this issue, Linda Behrendorff (QPWS) has co-authored a paper with Stacy Harris (Biosecurity Queensland) and Ian Muirhead on the bitou bush eradication project on K’gari - Fraser Island, which was recently published in the journal *Ecological Restoration and Management*. Key points from the paper are that bitou bush has a low recruitment rate, that the majority of the bitou bush seed germinates within three years, and no germination has been recorded after 7 years.

The paper highlights that the collaborative investment by many stakeholders including QPWS, BQ, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Traditional Owners and volunteers has been highly successful and concludes that eradication of bitou bush from K’gari - Fraser Island within the next decade is a realistic goal. The article can be downloaded from the FINIA website, just click on this [link](#).

K’gari Stories for Children

For those of you that subscribe to our website or FINIA Facebook page, you may have noticed a few stories for children creeping in?

John Sinclair, aka ‘Fearless Leader,’ started writing stories with a message for young children for his own grandchildren in 2005. He has now written over 130 stories, with 50 of these compiled into a book of stories for younger readers. Five of these stories have been published on the FINIA website to date:

- Wilfie’s War on Woody Weeds – which tells of Wilfie and his Scout Patrol who get a wonderful project for their Bob-a-Job week when an old man offers to give the patrol 50 cents for every woody weed they removed from his valley on Fraser Island, but only as long as they removed every single one!
- The Last Easter Cassia - Jacob Jones and Herbert Hancock were fiercely competitive. These two ten-year-olds challenged each other to see who could get the best marks in every subject at



John Sinclair’s
K’gari Kids Stories



school, and who was the best athlete, who scored the most runs in cricket or who had the best computer game score. During the September school holidays, their mother's set them a challenge – to find the Last Easter Cassia in Fraser Island.

- Stowaway Antics – when Fearless Leader thwarts the plans of some ants: Ant-Idote, Icipate, Ler, Tique, Ithesis, Iwar, Onym and Igen, that plan their escape from Queensland's suburbia to make the move to idyllic Fraser Island.
- An Adventure of the Vocal Quartet – the story of four birds, Cheeky, Scarlet, Brownie and Louie with a special bond of friendship. The Vocal Quartet help out a local resident, Beryl, when she doesn't notice a problem with her water tank.
- The Big Four meet the Eurong Weed-busters – which tell of the big four biocontrols for lantana on Fraser Island (K'gari) a leaf sucking bug, (*Teleneia scrupulosa*) or "Scruples" for short, a leaf-mining beetle (*Uroplato giardia*), the seed-eating fly (*Ophlomya lantanai*) that lays its eggs on the green lantana seed and its caterpillars then eat out the seeds and the leaf-mining beetle (*Octotoma cabriponis*).

The last story wasn't included in John's book, so is an 'exclusive' for you as FINIA members.

So if you have a budding environmentalist in your family, or just want to see a different perspective of K'gari, why not check them out? Just search 'children' on the www.finia.org.au website or get a copy of John's book for yourself. To order your own copy of John's book, please email john@fido.org.au

FIDO's Bush Regeneration Program 2019

The Commonwealth Government has now escaped direct and any indirect support for volunteer programs on K'gari (Fraser Island). Fraser Island Defenders Organisation (FIDO) was heavily reliant on this support for over a dozen years, but when it abruptly stopped on 30 June 2018, FIDO lost more than \$6,000 on the four working bees scheduled to be conducted between July and November 2018.

FIDO has been in a dilemma about how they can continue because the weeds won't stop growing and spreading without the management FIDO volunteers have been effectively providing. FIDO has now needed to make some major adjustments to how they can afford to continue the program.

Because of the generous donations of accommodation at "Talinga" by FIDO members and supporters they are planning to carry out three working bees at Eurong in 2019, but alas without other support their Happy Valley activities will be reduced to just one Easter Cassia Blitz at the end of April that has already been filled by a long queue of volunteers who have previously worked at Happy Valley.

To meet the costs of these programs FIDO has sadly needed to resort to increasing their charge to volunteers to \$300 for the week-long activities to meet the costs of accommodation, food and transport. Without this, their programs are now unsustainable.

Article submitted by John Sinclair, Fraser Island Defenders Organisation

Protecting the Turtles of Sandy Cape

Sandy Cape Lighthouse Volunteer Group is pleased to announce that their "Nest to Ocean" (N2O) project (Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science DES) is well underway.

Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care Group was successful in acquiring N2O funding through Burnett Mary Regional Group to purchase fuel for use by volunteers. The 200L drums of fuel are transported to Sandy Cape by QPWS Rangers. Each day, volunteers drive the 90km of beach in their own vehicles searching for endangered loggerhead turtle nests to be relocated to predator-proof hatching pens.



Dingoes are a natural predator of turtle eggs



The Connell team took time out to demonstrate the procedure of "Nest Relocation" to Wayne and his family.

Because of this year's low numbers of green turtle nests, of which dingoes have the choice to supplement their diet, it has become a race between man and beast to determine the fate of the loggerhead nests-relocated or predated. But the volunteers are winning, with 47 nests relocated to date.

As usual, Aub came armed with Satellite trackers for his volunteer tour of Sandy Cape. Six trackers were deployed at Sandy Cape. One of the trackers was used on a Hervey Bay turtle as training for Linda and her team on the procedure of gluing trackers on turtles.

While relocating nests and releasing a turtle with a Satellite tracker, all volunteer teams have chatted with

any visitors that may be present about turtle lifecycle, dingo safety especially with regard to children and regulations of beach driving.

The Bradley team have conducted several "turtle talks" in the Hervey Bay and Maryborough libraries, at schools, Poona Progress Association and delivered a Channel 7 news segment. On occasion, wallowing in the muddy creek has been the venue for training by the Bradleys of prospective volunteers in the monitoring of turtles and collecting data.

Article submitted by Don and Lesley Bradley, Sandy Cape Lighthouse Conservation Association

Reducing Your Waste Footprint

As part of the 'Future Waste' team for Fraser Coast Regional Council, Jeanette Harrold, Environmental Services Manager said that the process of consulting with the Fraser Island (K'gari) community had left her questioning her personal waste management decisions.

Heading over to Fraser Island for a camping trip in the September School Holidays, Jeanette decided to challenge her family to minimise what they took to the island and to bring back all their waste.

"My motivation was to reduce our footprint out of respect for Butchulla Lore and Fraser Coast Regional Council. I committed to taking home all of our solid municipal waste. I planned our food and drinks so we didn't have wastage during our 18-night camping trip at Waddy Point Fraser Island. I vacuum packed our main meals so we could reuse the packaging. I removed excess packaging before leaving home. I saved 30% of space in our food boxes by doing this."



Jeanette Harrold and her family challenged themselves on waste reduction on a recent camping trip to K'gari

“We washed and crushed our solid waste so we could store it for the 18 nights. We will take home our eggshells to feed to our chickens.”

Jeanette is already thinking up improvements for next year’s trip. “We can reduce the amount of waste for next year by removing extra packaging I hadn’t thought about, like soap wrapping, sauce bottle seals, small crisp packets.”

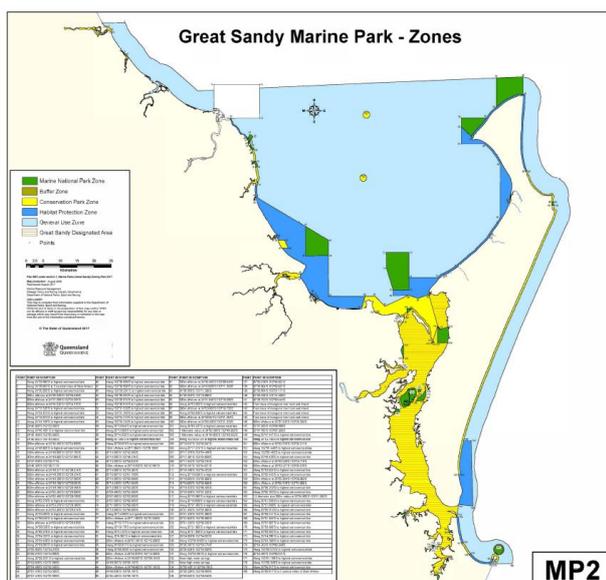
So, the **Great Waste Reduction Challenge** is on, what other good ideas can you suggest?

Article contributed by Jeanette Harrold, Wide Bay Water

Great Sandy Marine Park Zoning Plan Opportunities

After 12 years, the Great Sandy Marine Park Zoning Plan is finally being reviewed. Gazetted in December 2006, the ten year review should have been completed in 2016, but the Department was keen to complete a habitat assessment before putting out a discussion paper.

You can have your say on opportunities to enhance the zoning plan for the marine park via [this survey](#) until Monday 25 February 2019. Before you begin the survey, read the [Great Sandy Marine Park discussion paper - Zoning plan opportunities](#) which provides information to assist in providing feedback. In addition to the information in the discussion paper, detailed information on the key species, habitats and geographic regions of the marine park are available on the Department's website.



Current zoning in the Great Sandy Marine Park (Source: DES)

The survey will facilitate public feedback on the opportunities presented in the Great Sandy Marine Park Zoning Plan discussion paper to enhance the management of the marine park. Presented in two parts: **Part 1** includes 10 general questions about Great Sandy Marine Park management and should take about 5 minutes to complete. **Part 2** of the survey is optional and includes topic-specific and regional marine park issues that should take up to 20 minutes to complete. You can skip any of the questions in Part 2 and only answer the ones that interest you. Questions with no response will be taken to mean you have no opinion on these topics.

Responses to the survey and other submissions will be used to prepare a draft revised zoning plan which will be subject to further consultation in 2019.

Give yourself a Pest Workout!

Sisal hemp - *Agave sisalana* (Local Law No. 3)

A succulent plant from Mexico, originally cultivated for its fibre.

- Tough rosette of thick sword-shaped, smooth-edged leaves to two metres.
- flowers green/yellow on a long central stem to over 5m
- Rhizomes sucker from the base and plantlets grow from flowering stem.
- found in rocky hillslopes, roadsides, beach dunes and older gardens.
- Carefully hand remove and bag when small.



Keep your eyes open for Sisal Hemp this Summer!

- Chemical control by applying glyphosate through stem injection or cut, scrape and paint. Apply picloram and triclopyr (e.g., Access) at 1:60 mix with diesel using basal bark method (PER11463).
- Before using any herbicide, always read the label carefully and apply strictly in accordance with directions on the label.

Indian/Common Myna

What can you do? Learn to correctly identify Indian mynas (as opposed to the native mynas).

Get involved in mapping: Where, when and how many mynas we see. As part of a preventative approach to addressing the Common (or Indian) Myna bird, Fraser Coast Council is looking to collect sighting and activity reports within the region. These will be mapped to show the distribution of the pest birds, where "hot spots" exist and to identify possible nesting and roosting sites.



Record and Report: Visit <https://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/pest-management/pest-animals> and fill out council's form or <https://www.feralscan.org.au/mynascan/>. *Mynascan* can be downloaded as an app on your phone to record sightings, how many, damage and see if other sightings have been made and what controls.

Trapping: There are also helpful resources and links to trap making plans and further information.

For further information please Contact Council or visit the websites mentioned. If you are interested in assisting with a trapping program on Fraser Island, please contact FINIA.

Article contributed by Juliet Musgrave, Fraser Coast Regional Council

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

As many of you would be aware, the Fraser Island Natural Integrity Alliance (FINIA) is a non-incorporated, not-for-profit, umbrella organisation for its partners. As a non-incorporated organisation, we rely on our partners to support our activities for the Fraser Island (K'gari) World Heritage site, with no dedicated funding to support our meetings, administration and barge transfers.

Without this generosity, FINIA's activities would be far more challenging, so we would like to acknowledge the following sponsors for their generous support:

Fraser Coast Regional Council – who provide a venue for our meetings.

Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service – who sponsored the catering for the November meeting,

Kingfisher Bay Resort Group – who support many of our on-ground activities with subsidised barge fees.

Add to this our amazing contributors, volunteers and donors—a special place attracts special people. Thanks to you all for making FINIA work.



Dates for the Diary

What: Fraser Island Natural Integrity Alliance Meetings

Where: Town Hall, Maryborough

When: Tuesday 5 February, Tuesday 6 August and Tuesday 12 November

For: For all FINIA members and supporters. Quarterly meetings are a great chance to catch up and share what's happening, or should be happening on Fraser Island (K'gari). The annual on-island meeting has also been scheduled for Tuesday 7 May (details in the next newsletter).

Cost: Free (although we always appreciate a sponsor for morning tea and/or afternoon tea).

More info: Please contact the Chair, Sue Sargent on 0429 462 041 or email contactfinia@gmail.com.

What: Australian Biosphere Conference

Where: Brolga Theatre, Maryborough, QLD

When: 13th – 15th March 2019

What: The inaugural Australian Biosphere Conference 2019 is a first-of-its-kind opportunity to learn, share and celebrate what it means to be part of a vibrant, healthy and connected Biosphere Reserve community. The UNESCO Biosphere Program recognises areas that represent world-renowned terrestrial or coastal ecosystems and demonstrate innovative approaches to living and working in harmony with nature. As a delegate to the Australian Biosphere Conference 2019, you will enjoy an inspirational program of presentations and exhibits focused on six key Biosphere themes: Biodiversity; Education; Sustainability; Indigenous; Innovation and Economic Development.

Cost: Registration \$395 (includes all planned activities and Tours across the conference).

More info: For bookings and more information contact <https://greatsandybiosphere.org.au/conference/admin@bmrq.org.au>, or by phone on (07) 4181 2999

What: Bush Regeneration and Monitoring

Where: Eurong, Fraser Island

When: [31 March to 6 April](#), [21-27 July](#) and [13-19 October](#) (Sunday to Saturday)

For: FIDO has been conducting weeklong weeding-bush regeneration programs in Eurong since 2005. These have progressively transformed Eurong and dramatically reduced the weed threats there. All will be based at Tallinga, the former Sinclair family home in Eurong Village. Work will focus on weeding, bush regeneration and building the capacity of the Eurong nursery as well as continuing FIDO's on-going environmental monitoring programs. In 2018, this program will be led by Suzanne Wilson who has made such a great contribution to the nursery. Eurong Resort supports this program and provides dinner for the volunteers each night.

Cost: \$300 (\$200 for concessions) to subsidise costs.

More info: Bookings can be made via EventBrite, just click on the link for the date(s) of interest above. For concessions, please pay the full \$300 and then apply for a \$100 refund from FIDO.

What: Easter Cassia BioBlitz

Where: Happy Valley, Fraser Island

When: Sunday 29 April to Saturday 5 May

For: Peter Shooter leads these trips to help tackle the heavy weed infestation in and around Happy Valley. A group of up to 8 will share "Kurrawa", a comfortable holiday house in the centre of Happy Valley. The group will work to contain a particularly aggressive weed with poisonous seeds, *Abrus prectorius* Var *Africanus* that is heavily impacting on the vegetation but isn't found anywhere else on Fraser Island. As the Abrus is coming under control the team will be increasingly turning to eliminate large woody weeds Easter Cassia and Lantana. Fitness is needed to carry heavy chemical backpack sprays across steep terrain.

Cost: SOLD OUT

What: **Cooloola Bioblitz**
Where: Rainbow Beach
When: Friday 17 May (3.30 pm) to Sunday 19 May (3.30 pm) 2019
For: A BioBlitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area. Groups of scientists, naturalists and volunteers conduct an intensive field study over a continuous time period. No natural history expertise is required because there will be very experienced mentors and leaders accompanying all the teams on their field excursions to help find, identify and document as many species as possible and provide information. Information sessions and evening meals will be at the Rainbow Beach Community Hall.
Cost: TBA
More info: For more information and links to the registration page, please check out Cooloola Coastcare's website <https://www.cooloolacoastcare.org.au/projects/bioblitz>

What: **8th Biennial K'gari (Fraser Island) Conference**
Where: University of the Sunshine Coast (Fraser Coast Campus), Hervey Bay
When: Saturday 31 August
For: Community, Culture and Collaborations – this event is a collaboration between the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation and the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation. Two keynote speakers who have provisionally accepted are prominent Butchulla actor, Wayne Blair (Redfern) and producer (The Sapphires) and leading social psychologist and advocate for wilderness experiences, Steve Biddulf, author of 10 Things Girls Need Most, Raising Girls, Raising Boys, Complete Secrets of Happy Children, and The New Manhood.
Cost: TBA
More info: For more information and links to the registration page, please watch the FIDO website for more information.

Funding Opportunities

What: **Gambling Community Benefit Fund**
For: One-off grants of up to \$35,000 (inc. GST) for not-for-profit organisations to help provide community services or activities that benefit the Queensland community.
When: Round 100 is now open and closes at 11.59pm on 28 February 2019.
Email: cbf@treasury.qld.gov.au
Phone: (07) 3247 4284
Website: <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/corporate/sponsorships-and-grants/grants/community-benefit-funding-programs>

What: **Queensland Citizen Science Grants**
For: Applications are now open for grants of up to \$30,000 are available to eligible Queensland-based applicants. Funds need to be spent within a three-year period. Specific assessment criteria must be addressed. Collaboration between institutions (e.g. organisations, research institutes, media organisations, community groups, government) will be highly regarded, as will activities that involve co-contribution to the project.
When: Applications close 1:00 pm AEST Monday 25 March
Email: advancequeensland@qld.gov.au
Phone: 137468
Website: <https://www.chiefscientist.qld.gov.au/science-comms/citizen-science-grants/about/>

What: **Ian Potter Foundation**
For: Sustainability, preservation of biodiversity and landscape-scale conservation are important and complex challenges addressed in this program area. Our Environment & Conservation program aims to support Australian urban and rural communities to better manage our natural resources and preserve biodiversity in the face of challenges such as land degradation, limited water resources and climate change.
When: Expression of Interest opens on 25 March and close on 19 April (for mid-September) 2019.

Phone: (03) 9650 3188 – Louise Arkles
Email: admin@ianpotter.org.au
Website: <http://www.ianpotter.org.au/home>

What: Norman Wettenhall Foundation—Small Environmental Grant Scheme

For: Projects that enhance or maintain the vitality and diversity of the Australian natural living environment. Objectives of the Small Environmental Grants Scheme (up to \$10K) are flora and fauna conservation and threatened mammal conservation with one or more of the following: monitoring/recording data, community education, community capacity building (training) and research/science. NWF has funded projects ranging from supporting local communities to maintain or restore habitat; to the production of education kits; and the publication and dissemination of research information.

When: Opens 1 April 2019 (funding in May 2019)
Phone: (03) 5472 1316 - Elizabeth (Beth) Mellick, Executive Officer
Email: beth@nwf.org.au
Website: <http://www.nwf.org.au/>

What: Australian Geographic Society Sponsorship

For: Founded by Dick Smith, each quarter up to \$15,000 is made available for Australian Geographic Society Project Grants. Funding provided by the Society for Project Sponsorship targets all four Project Categories: Science, Community, Adventure and Environment. The society also offers seed grants between \$500 and \$3000.

When: Applications are now taken throughout the year for sponsorship rounds.
Phone: (02) 9263 9825
Email: society@ausgeo.com.au
Website: <http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/society/sponsorship/2013/11/apply-for-sponsorship>

What: The Mullum Trust

For: Supports projects which have significant, ongoing or catalytic environmental outcomes. Grants are available from \$100 to \$10,000. Projects with specific localised environmental outcomes are preferred, although projects which are locally based but have far reaching impacts are also encouraged.

When: Ongoing
Phone: Mr Ryan Neoh on (03) 9671 6658
Email: rneoh@deloitte.com.au
Website: <http://thetrusteeforthemullumtrust.myob.net/>