



COOK SHIRE COUNCIL



13 June 2006

Dr Jacqueline Dewar
Secretary
Senate Environment Communications
Information Technology and the Arts Reference Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA QLD 2600

Dear Dr Dewar

Inquiry into Australia's National Parks, Conservation Reserves And Marine Protected Areas


Please find attached a submission from Cook Shire Council for the above Inquiry specifically addressing the issue of pest management.

The development of this submission involved feedback from Cook Shire Council's Pest Management Officers and the NHT funded Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Program which has been operating on Cape York Peninsula for over 7 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to make an additional submission.

Should you have any further enquiries with regard to this submission, please contact Cathy Waldron, Manager Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Program on (07) 4069 5020.

Yours sincerely


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Cook Shire Council Submission – Senate Inquiry into Australia’s National Parks, Conservation Reserves And Marine Protected Areas, with specific reference to pest management.

It is obvious to all concerned on Cape York Peninsula that National Parks are under staffed and under resourced, especially in the area of pest management (weeds and feral animals). Specifically:

- There should be more resources for feral pig control in all park estate. This needs to include 1080 baiting.
- Feral horses need to be controlled in Mungkan Kandju NP. This park is a disgrace and only serves as a breeding block for horses which then move out onto neighbouring properties. This needs to be made a priority and dealt with immediately as there is adequate scientific evidence to show that unmanaged horses spread weeds, cause erosion and destroy fencing. Parks need to stop bowing to the animal activists and get on with protecting the national park estate values. Other land managers bordering National Parks are tired of spending value resources on feral animal control only to see there land reinvaded. Parks need to put meaning into its Good Neighbour Policy.
- The issue of wild dogs and dingoes also needs to be addressed. Queensland has two pieces of conflicting legislation; the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*, declares wild dogs and dingoes a Class 2 pest and requires land holders to take reasonable steps to keep their land free of them; the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* protects dingoes on National Parks. Consequently the land holder adjoining a National Park is required to continually control wild dogs and dingoes. Parks should be required to either fence the dingoes and dogs in or conduct 1080 baiting along a reasonable buffer zone around the border of the National Park.
- QPWS have no specialist weed or feral animal officers. Lack of skill means less direction and a reduced result in pest management programs. There is also a lack of pest management plans for National Parks in Cook Shire resulting in adhoc measures for pest control work. It is unrealistic for a ranger to be as multi-skilled as they are expected to be, especially in some of the larger remote Parks in Queensland, where staff numbers are ridiculously low.
- If feral animals such as horses and cattle are not controlled on National Parks the Government should provide funds for neighbouring properties to claim compensation for fencing destroyed by animals coming off park.

On a more general note, QPWS should consider setting up management boards for each national park, with a representative from the local Council on these boards.

Cook Shire Council also requests that there be no more National Parks on Cape York Peninsula.