

From:  
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To:

Department of the Senate,  
Senate Environment etc.,  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### **A submission on National Parks**

#### **Tamborine National Parks**

Ground dwelling wildlife in national parks in my area of S.E. Queensland are being exposed to increasing numbers of feral predators and the state authorities, both Q.N.P.W.S. and Dept. N.R. & M are making progressively less effort to address this situation.

This surely is contrary to the proposed objectives of national parks.

As an owner of 60ha situated between two of these national parks and adjoining both I have for the past 16 years witnessed the decline in numbers of these ground dwellers and the increase in predators, dogs, foxes and cats. This 60ha is with the exception of our house, kept for the preservation of wildlife. It had up to 5 years ago, an orchard and ran cattle years before that but is now free of farming activity.

I carry out daily monitoring of both wildlife and feral predators by maintaining several bare pads of damp raked earth over a distance of some 3 kilometres of fire trails which with daily inspection give me a good idea of abundance and activity of these animals. As a result of this and general daily observations I am aware that ground dwelling wildlife has seriously declined to the point where some species of rock wallaby which have been sedentary to this area have not been seen at all for some time and others have been reduced so much that they are rarely seen and then only in small numbers.

For example the Red Legged Pademelon (*Thylogale stigmatica*) which was numerous in a section of our rainforest has not been seen by us for at least 2 years. The Swamp Wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*) which lived on the lower escarpment has not been seen by us for 1 year and the Red Necked Wallaby (*Macropus rufogriseus*) which lived in the same area has not been seen for several years. The Whiptail Wallaby (*Macropus parryi*) which also lives here has been reduced to near extinction and is a rare sight. The Red Necked Pademelon (*Thylogale thetis*) is also a rare sight. These last two species have great difficulty raising young as they are forced, when chased to cast their babies to

survive. Their numbers are so reduced that the tiny gene pool remaining would probably not allow sustainable regeneration. These animals are not nomadic, they have possibly been living in this area for thousands of years and are now disappearing. Advice from older residents of this district who have been conscientiously involved in environmental activities and who lived their whole lives here relate the same story on an even bigger scale but with the bulk of the reduction occurring in more recent years.

Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Services are responsible for the national parks adjoining me and these areas have had no feral predator reduction, - i.e. 1080 baiting, - carried out for years. When the ranger in charge of Tamborine Mountain was the one who lived here there was every effort made by him to preserve wildlife. When he was relieved of this duty and the management transferred to the Gold Coast, Q.N.P.W.S. have been conspicuous by their absence and the parks here have suffered accordingly. They are also in denial that there is a predator problem and have not monitored the parks adjoining me for years. Almost daily I see dog and/or fox tracks traversing my property from both these national parks. I have even been in the company of National Parks Rangers when we've seen a dog coming out of the park into my property.

The Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines controls 1080 baiting of feral predators through its Land protection Officers. Last year (2005) we were able to get one baiting programme instigated with good results. We need at least 3 programmes per year to have any positive effect on wildlife numbers. Less than that is a losing battle. I feel that this department is much too concerned with political fallout than it is with the health and well being of native wildlife.

### **Fraser Island National Park**

30 years ago the Queensland Government resumed almost all of Fraser Island for a national park. In those days it had farming, timber, sandmining and tourist industries – now it has just a tourist industry. It cost the public considerable money but generally everyone thought it was a step in the right direction to preserve a significant piece of coastal environment for all time.

Since then all that has happened environmentally has been seriously offset by the huge build-up of dingoes there and it could be said that instead of a wildlife refuge and sanctuary it is merely a dingo nursery.

It's location and topography is ideal for the natural preservation of wildlife but it seems to me that the dingo – claimed by many experts to have an ecological niche and pack structure conducive to the benefit of wildlife – is having a negative effect on the wildlife there. I have written to the Minister for the Environment (6/10/05 and 18/11/05) requesting that after 30 years it would be a good time to assess whether the Fraser Island National Park resumption has been a success and whether the dingo there (supposedly the "purest" of the pure) has had a positive or negative effect on the ground dwelling wildlife on the island. The Minister declined my request. I was advised that Fraser Island was never known for an abundance of macropods and larger ground dwellers (the natural prey of the dingo) and also just because I did not see them didn't mean they weren't there.

Well, not only are they not seen but their dung and their footprints are not seen either unlike on Moreton and Stradbroke, similar sand islands not so over-run by dingoes but where macropod dung and footprints abound!

30 Years ago these macropods were on Fraser Island not just nomadic kangaroos but sedentary colonies of wallabies and they were often seen (by myself as well as others) swimming Sandy Straits to escape the increasing numbers of dingoes.(As they grazed on tidal flats a dingo pack would corner them and they would have no choice but to swim. Because of the width of the Straits many would have drowned)

Fraser Island with its enormous potential to be a safe haven and sanctuary for native wildlife is being used as some sort of dingo theme park. This philosophy is being applied to all Queensland national parks with tourist contractors and tourism seeming to be of first concern and the native wildlife taken very much for granted.

This is not the purpose for which national parks were intended. The conservation, preservation and regeneration of native Fauna and Flora should be the main game and arguably the only game. If that is done well then tourists will be much more genuinely impressed and respond accordingly.

Jim Inglis 26.02.2006