

I am the Chairperson of the Fraser Island World Heritage Area Community Advisory Committee which is appointed by the Ministerial Council to provide information regarding Fraser Island from the broader communities perspective. Our Committee is made up of stake holders from the tourism industry, conservation organisations, residents & recreational user groups such as fishing & four wheel driving. I wish to make the following submission to the Senate Committee enquiry into National Parks.

Our committee is concerned about the declining condition of the resources on Fraser Island & in fact the overall island itself. As a World Heritage listed site the island naturally attracts attention & many visitors annually, although visitation has declined in recent years most likely due the lack of suitable facilities.

Tourism, which is a vital industry to Fraser Island, the Fraser coast region, and Queensland in general, is having a significant impact on Fraser Island World Heritage values. The parlous state of the roads on Fraser Island, which are very difficult to maintain in this sandy environment, are one example of the direct impact that lack of research and development in Fraser Island infrastructure has on biodiversity and visitor enjoyment. Other examples include walking tracks and boardwalks that were originally designed to protect sensitive environments from high use visitor impact, but now need redesign and upgrading to ensure their original function is achieved.

Although the Queensland Government provides funds for basic infrastructure requirements on Fraser Island, the constant level of research and development that is needed to maintain the sustainable use of Fraser Island requires far more substantial funds than the State can provide. Safe roads, tourist educational facilities, and protection of sensitive cultural and natural systems from adverse visitor impact strike us as central and essential to Commonwealth responsibilities towards World Heritage Areas.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with your committee in greater detail & preferably accompany committee members on a visit to Fraser Island to see first hand the significant deficiencies which exist in the current funding & management arrangements for this very special place.

Regards
David Hay
Chairperson
Fraser Island World Heritage Area
Community Advisory Committee