



Speech by

# JOHN KINGSTON

## MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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Hansard 16 May 2001

### DINGOES, FRASER ISLAND

**Dr KINGSTON** (Maryborough—Ind) (6.40 p.m.): I rise to support this motion. I do so because of concern about the current dingo situation on Fraser Island, concern about the general state of Fraser Island and concern about the management and conduct of Queensland's Parks and Wildlife Service. Having raised the fact that the two reports concerning the management of dingoes on Fraser Island were presented to the previous minister, I am dismayed that the government could ignore the warnings and not completely implement the plans.

I do not think that the member for Mudgeeraba has read or looked at the plan put forward by Jacobs, because that plan is a win, win, win; the dingoes win, the tourists win and the island wins. It is a sustainable plan and it has been tested for the last 20 years on Jacobs' own place.

Moreover, during the past two years the government has ignored the increasing number of attacks which have served as a clear warning that the degree of danger was steadily increasing—ignored it, unfortunately, as everybody has said, until a fatality occurred.

I sympathise with the Premier with regard to the culling of dangerous dingoes. He was damned if he did and he was damned if he didn't. In fact, he was canned by the inaction of his ministers both past and present. Despite what some TV commentators might want to imply, I agree with the Premier's decision that the dangerous dogs had to die, given the past inaction and neglect.

However, had action been taken in a timely manner, such public executions would not have been necessary, a series of public executions which has polarised the public and given rise to concerns about public safety—safety from .22 rifle wielding rangers.

I sympathise with the rangers on Fraser Island. The QPWS is understaffed and underfunded and has had to cope with between 300,000 and 400,000 visitors to the island in recent years. The majority of these visitors have no appreciation of how to act when confronted with a dingo grown cheeky over the past 30 years.

There are other problems on Fraser Island and the warning clouds are gathering for those also. Since the timber cutters left, the state of the sand tracks on the island have deteriorated and already buses have rolled off roads and people have been injured. Driving on the ocean beach, the so-called tranquil ocean beach, and on the island generally requires familiarity with four-wheel drives and sand. People who have visited the island for years such as me—and I have been going there for 55 years—regard the rally-type driving on the ocean beach with great apprehension—well-based apprehension if the number of accidents and injuries is studied. Policing of the driving habits has been needed for the past five years and has been asked for and has not been implemented.

Another area of concern is wildfire—wildfire on a heritage island. When the timber cutters and the forestry department were present, they maintained firebreaks and they maintained roads. If a fire did happen to occur, they had the heavy machinery capable of being effective. There is no heavy machinery on Fraser Island now that can cope with a wildfire. There are many expensive houses built in the Orchid Beach area, just to identify one fire-prone area. Many warnings have been issued by experienced island residents, but definitive action is needed and has been neglected.

To conclude, I want to record that I am concerned by the process of prioritising the activities of the QPWS, and I quote a recent example. The local staff have been directed to spend countless hours rescuing and confiscating a red kangaroo from a partly disabled girl—confiscated to protect the people involved and the kangaroo. The kangaroo entered QPWS care as a healthy animal and within weeks it was dead. Whilst Mitchell the red kangaroo was the centre of attention, a fatality occurred on Fraser Island.