



Speech by

Hon. Kate Jones

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Fraser Island, Dingoes

Hon. KJ JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.22 am): April this year marked eight years since the tragic death of Clinton Gage, a young boy who was mauled by a dingo on Fraser Island. Since this tragedy the work being performed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is integral to protecting the future of the island's dingo population and, most importantly, improving safety for visitors. Most notably, we have implemented a Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy that has not only reduced the risk posed to humans but also conserved a sustainable wild dingo population on the island. A key principle of the strategy is that dingoes are regarded as wild, native animals and should be interfered with as little as possible. The strategy has been regularly updated and the public were recently invited to comment on it following the announcement of a scheduled audit by renowned dingo expert, Dr Laurie Corbett. Seventy-five submissions have been forwarded to Dr Corbett for his consideration. Outcomes of the audit are expected in the next couple of months.

Along with strong enforcement, our dingo education program has become internationally recognised as best practice, although we need to make sure it remains effective in discouraging everyone from feeding dingoes. Therefore, I have asked the department to review the long-term effectiveness of public education about dingoes on the island and feeding penalties. In addition, dingo-deterrent fencing around the main ranger campgrounds, Kingfisher Bay Resort and other townships has proven very effective. There have been no aggressive incidents within these areas. Also, as part of the strategy, scientific research and monitoring have examined dingo behaviour, dietary habits and population size with results indicating the population is viable and in good health.

Opposition proposals to artificially feed dingoes have been consistently rejected over many years as counterproductive and irresponsible in terms of both the future viability of the dingo population and public safety. Through feeding stations, dingoes lose their natural hunting instincts, begin to associate people with food, and ultimately endanger the safety of everyone on the island. For the strategy to be truly effective, it is reliant upon all people—visitors and locals—to remain vigilant by obeying the laws and guidelines on how to be dingo safe while on Fraser Island. I look forward to the findings of the current strategy audit, but I will not allow a known dangerous dingo to go unchecked and be given another opportunity to attack a child.