



Speech by

**Hon. Kate Jones**

**MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE**

Hansard Tuesday, 1 September 2009

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Fraser Island, Dingoes**

**Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability) (10.13 am): Our No. 1 priority is to ensure that visitors to Fraser Island are safe. That is why we have an active dingo management strategy. The strategy we have in place is focused on reducing the risk posed to humans by dingoes on the island while ensuring we conserve a sustainable population of dingoes.

One of the first things I did as the new minister was bring forward the audit of our dingo management strategy to be sure in my mind that the strategy was working effectively to achieve these two priorities. Given the contrasting views in the local community about dingo management—from calls to exterminate all of them to proactively feeding them—I also directed that public comment be sought.

I am pleased to inform the House that the independent audit undertaken by internationally recognised dingo expert Dr Laurie Corbett has now been completed. Overwhelmingly, he has found that the dingo management strategy is dramatically reducing the risk posed to humans by dingoes on Fraser Island. In particular, he has endorsed our actions to reduce risks through better education of visitors, improved training of rangers and erecting dingo fencing in strategic locations.

Data shows that there have been no aggressive incidents within fenced areas around the main Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service camping grounds and the townships such as Kingfisher Bay Resort. He has also endorsed the substantial increase in training of our staff on the island in dingo management to help visitors to be dingo wise.

With regard to the health of the dingo population on Fraser Island, Dr Corbett found that, far from the claims made by those members opposite that the dingoes are starving, from his examination there was an increase in the average size of the adult dingoes on Fraser Island, from 16 kilograms to 18.3 kilograms. Most importantly, Dr Corbett found that research to date has indicated that there is adequate natural prey for a sustainable dingo population on the island. The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is undertaking further research to confirm this. He also rejected suggestions that dingo feeding stations should be erected as this would undermine the strategy of reducing human-dingo interaction and, worse, teach them to rely on food.

Fraser Island is a special place that more than 350,000 people visit every year and many Queensland businesses depend on for their livelihood. Our responsibility is to ensure it is a safe place. I am confident that the dingo management strategy we have in place is reducing the risk of dangerous dingo attacks, with no fatalities since it has been in place. Of course we must continue to be vigilant. I want to assure all members of this House that we are thoroughly examining this report and we will make any changes to the strategy that will help reduce the risk.