



Newsletter
**Moreton Island Protection
Committee Inc.**

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Minister looks for balance on quads?

On one of our regular camping trips at the Little Sandhills on the Anzac Day long weekend this year, Philip and I (dedicated MIPC members) witnessed a local family arrive in a 4WD and on two quad vehicles, to enjoy some sand tobogganing on the dunes (with their dog!!). They proceeded to blatantly drive their quads off the 'designated track' and up on to the sand dunes in a way which suggested this was routine practice; although they were apparently aware it was an illegal one, as they scuttled off quickly when they realised they were being observed (and photographed).

We enjoy camping at the Sandhills because of its remoteness, relatively undisturbed environment and spectacular scenery. However we have noticed in recent years the proliferation of tyre tracks criss-crossing both the Big and Little Sandhills and have become aware of the problem of a 'rogue element' with the resident population misusing their quad vehicles. On reporting the incident described above to the Rangers it became apparent that this was not an isolated case, and we sensed a good deal of frustration among them with the difficulty (if not impossibility) of policing this entrenched behaviour. It is particularly disturbing that young adults and children within the communities are using these vehicles primarily in a recreational manner and with complete disregard of the sensitive environment in special 'protected' areas such as the Sandhills.

On returning home to Brisbane I wrote a letter to the Minister for the Environment, Ms Desley Boyle,

expressing my concern, and the hope that the recommendation in the Draft Management for Moreton Island which states, '*Discontinue the provision of vehicle service permits to quads, trikes and trail bikes to prohibit their use within the National Park, Conservation Park and Recreation Area*', is included in the Final Plan (due to be released very soon).

I have since received a reply on her behalf from Ross McLeod, one of her environmental advisors, which states –

'The future management of quad & trikes on Moreton Island is an important management decision for the Government. When used inappropriately in off-track circumstances, quads & trikes can cause significant damage to the ecological landscape and cultural values of Moreton Island. However, when used responsibly on designated tracks and beaches these vehicles use less fuel and are more compatible with the environment than larger vehicles such as 4WDs. Finding the right balance is important.

In developing the final management plan the government is considering these important points, and the views of stakeholders, to find a balance between protecting the environment and meeting the reasonable needs of island users. The capacity to introduce greater penalties for those found operating vehicles inappropriately is also being considered. It is envisaged that the Minister will release the final plan in the coming months'.

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AGM Wednesday 16th August 2006 at the Wrecks

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Statement of Aims

1. To promote the preservation of Moreton Island as a natural area to be managed for public recreation and enjoyment, provided always that the recreational uses are consistent with conservation aims.

2. To foster the conservation of the vegetation, fauna and natural features of Moreton.

3. To facilitate public awareness and appreciation of Moreton Island as a natural area and encourage support for its preservation and management in accordance with these objects.

4. To co-operate with, or promote co-operation by any means with and among persons, trusts, corporations, firms, associations, institutions, governments, instrumentalities or government, municipal authorities and other bodies in the Commonwealth or its Territories or elsewhere for the purpose of carrying out any object of the organisation.

5. To oppose any development or usage of Moreton Island which is contrary to the preservation and good management of the island in accordance with these objects.

6. Generally, to take such lawful action as it considers necessary or appropriate in the interests of promoting the preservation and good management of Moreton Island in accordance with these objects.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Moreton Island Protection Committee or its members.

Contributions to this newsletter are welcome, but the editors accept no responsibility for alterations made to articles.

Printed by Rex Leo ph. 3878 5248

Editor Alan Gennings

Printed 18th June. 2006

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Minister looks for balance on quads?

I certainly agree with the sentiment of looking for the right balance, but cannot see the problem in finding it. It is illegal to drive quads or trikes on public roads or tracks *anywhere* else in Queensland except on Moreton Island. The residents there have been given the exclusive privilege to be able to use them on designated tracks and beaches for reasons of convenience and low impact. If they are such an environmentally friendly and cost effective mode of transport in recreational areas, why can't others in similar circumstances be permitted to use them? I feel the damage being afflicted on the environment through their misuse far outweighs any potential benefit.

Its hard to see how increasing the penalties helps - it doesn't address the issue of how to catch the culprits, and would result in the rangers having to waste valuable time and resources in detection and policing. Apparently they cannot carry out these duties out of office hours (when most of the infringements occur) without claims of harassment being made from the locals! This all creates potential tension and conflict between residents and QPWS staff, which is not in anyone's interest.

I have heard QPWS officers proudly state the aim that Moreton Island will showcase best management practices for national parks in Queensland. How can this be achieved when it's the only park in Queensland where the otherwise illegal use of quads is allowed by a minority self interested group which has the ear of the Minister? QPWS staff should get appropriate support from their Minister in this issue, and hope that balance is restored in favour of the environment.

Linda Back

NPA affiliated Groups

The annual NPA Affiliated groups meeting was held on 24-26 March at camp Stacey, 1.5 kilometers from Cunningham gap. Cabin accommodation with full catering left heads and heels free for talks and walks ranging widely.

After dinner on Friday, Jon Walsh from QPWS talked on land clearing and court hearings, Bruce Lawrie spoke about nature refuges and Alberts Lyrebird. (Lyrebird heard but not seen on walks north of Mt Cordeaux).

On Saturday a large group walked up Mt Mitchell, with lunch at the top. On Saturday evening spotlighting was led by Steve Finlayson, QPWS. Highlight was the spotting of three greater gliders. On Sunday morning was the early bird walk, with member's necks craning upwards as if begging for breakfast. On Sunday the formal meeting received 13 reports from affiliated groups. The MIPC report was prepared by Patricia and presented by Denis.

The Minister for Environment, Desley Boyle, speech topics included; additional areas to protected estate, The Great walks initiative and ranger staff. The Minister expressed interest in visiting Moreton Island.

The Toohey Forest Protection Society has been forced to wind up due to a lack of active members and ageing of the present committee members. Concern was generally expressed at the lack of new memberships and volunteers to carry out the works of conservation groups.

Minjirribal – Moorgumpin Elders reported on activities which included; cultural talks to schools, project with the Redland Shire council on Terra Bulla Leumeah is slow. They are hoping to work with Conrutile Ltd on tracks and gardens shortly and working with Pt Lookout bush care people.

Dennis Maher

First Weekend on Duty for Volunteers

On Friday 26 May at 8.30am six MIPC members departed on the MICat as official QPWS Volunteers to receive on-site training at the Information Centre at Cape Moreton and then man the Centre for the weekend. Myself, Petra Janoschka, Denis Maher and Philip Squire were accommodated in the flat at the back of the old lighthouse keepers' house (used as the Info Centre) whilst Chris Hall and Alan Genninges attended the orientation training and then camped elsewhere on the Island.

We were met, transported and trained by Katya Thompson, the Interpretative Ranger stationed on the Island who, with friendliness and ease, led us through the necessary red tape required when working with a Government department. We were all issued with our official name tags and 'Volunteer Manuals' which has all the Department policies and procedures listed as well as lots of other useful information. The manual states;

The aims of the QPWS volunteer program;

- *To involve the local volunteers and volunteer organisations such as Moreton Island Protection Committee in Moreton Island's nature conservation and public contact programs,*
- *To provide volunteers with useful and rewarding experiences benefiting themselves and the Moreton Island Management Unit,*
- *To recognise the value of volunteers and volunteer organisations contributing to QPWS programs.*

This all sounded good to us.

It was a very quiet weekend for visitors so we had a good chance to get familiar with the office and resources available to us. Some regulars who dropped

in commented favorably about finding the Information Centre office open with someone available behind the desk to answer questions, so we felt useful.

The only complaint about the accommodation facilities was the lack of hot water due to a malfunctioning gas unit, but the weather was very pleasant and we were able to enjoy swimming at Boulder Beach and Honeymoon Bay. We also had the privilege of spotting an early migrating whale, making its way north past Cape Moreton.

We were excited to hear from Katya that the plant nursery, which has been languishing unused for several years at the Rangers Base at Ben Ewa, is to be moved up to North Point with the intention of using it again with the help of MIPC volunteers when they are on duty at the Information Centre. The idea is to revive some regeneration projects around the park by collecting seeds from endemic plant species, germinating them and raising seedlings which can then be planted out in degraded areas. This is a perfect project for our members, and we will let you know of developments either through the newsletter, or by posting the information on our website at www.home.acenet.net.au/mipc. The first step will probably be to have a camping / working bee at North Point to set up an irrigation system for the nursery.

It was a great start for the Volunteer Program. A further twelve members are booked to have similar training sessions at the Information Centre, six on the long weekend (June 10 – 12), and the remainder on June 23-25. If you are interested in more information on the program or how to be involved you can email me at mipcvolunteers@acenet.net.au or call the MIPC message bank and leave your name and phone number.

Linda Back



Volunteers at the Cape Moreton Information centre being inducted by Ranger Katya Thompson.

From left

*Ranger Katya Thompson,
Linda, Alan, Dennis,*

Petra and Phillip.

“Shifting Sands: Memories of Moreton Island”, launched

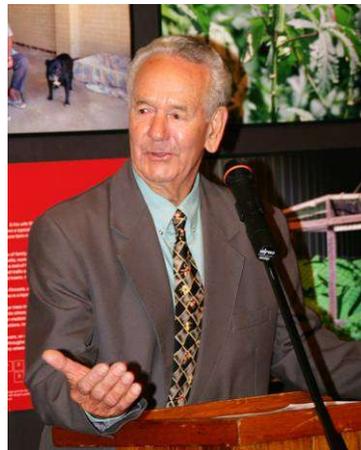
The official launch of “Shifting Sands”, published by MIPC, aided by Grant from Brisbane City Council, was held at the Museum of Brisbane, (MoB) City Hall on the 18th October 2005. Supplementary launches were held with the Elders at Dunwich and staff at Toowong library.

Skilful direction by Anna Meredith and staff from Museum of Brisbane drew almost 100 people to a superb setting in the Museum. Guests were from all walks of life; Brisbane City Council, Government, Environmental groups, MIPC members and several people featured in the book along with their relatives and friends.

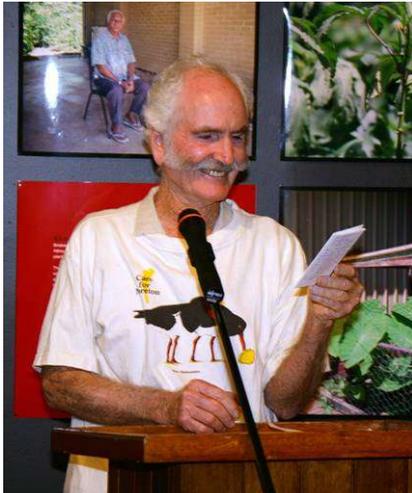
Deagon Ward Councillor Victoria Newton, who represents Moreton Island, officially launched the book with a stirring speech covering many issues.



Terry Ward the last permanent Head Moreton Light keeper 1981 to 1992 added tales to his stories in the book.



Cliff Campbell a direct Nugui descendent added personal tales to his stories in the book.



Dennis Maher acknowledged the efforts of all involved, especially Julie Dean who coordinated the project from preparing grant applications to printing the book.



Margaret Cook expressed delight in the task she undertook. She worthily wove stories with history into 7 superb chapters.

The front cover was praised by many. We thank Mandy Cilento artist and Designer Evelyn Currie.

Great thanks went to “Bayside Divas” the women’s choir. Their presence was due to the action of Councilor Newton. In their voices we rejoiced.

Between speeches, songs, champagne, sales of books were swiftly handled by MoB staff. Sales continued until early New Year 2006 when we sold out. After a few corrections, the MIPC Committee ordered another print run to meet continuing enquiries.



“Shifting Sands” now readily available. MIPC members arise; go forth with your copy, show it, get an order. Sand still shifting. The journey continues.

Dennis Maher



The “Bayside Divas”



Julie Dean and Keith Armstrong with their new baby centre, and second from left Beth Lawler granddaughter of Henry Lockhard assistant Cape Moreton lighthouse keeper 1906-1919.

All photographs of book launch generously provided by Museum of Brisbane, City Hall.

MoB Currently Exhibiting

“Taking to the Streets – Two decades that changed Brisbane 1965-1985”. Look for MIPC’s anti-mining banner “Moreton Island cannot be replaced” banner.

Cleanup Australia Day

This was originally planned for 5th March 2006, but was cancelled due to the high seas and squally conditions on the day. A small group of 8 attended the postponed activity on 12th March. This resulted in the collection of 26 large bags of rubbish from a 7 km stretch of the Western beach. It also netted some surprising finds for removal by the overworked rangers – crab pots, fishing nets, rope, car batteries, large esky full of bait, 3 bush toilets, fold up table and chair, large pieces of carpet, plastic and shade cloth. Most bagged rubbish consisted of glass and plastic bottles and aluminium cans. (Perhaps the Qld Government should consider reintroducing a payment for the return of such items, as in South Australia.)

Patricia Cavanagh



Above Gordon Bennet, Diane Bale and Margaret Cook



Deagon Ward Councilor Victoria Newton launches Shifting Sands.

Pied Oyster Catcher Survey

MIPC volunteers have been surveying Pied Oyster Catcher numbers and cars from The Cape to the southern limit of drivable beach.

Date	No of Birds	No of cars
Sat 3 rd Dec 2005	38	14
Sun 11 th Dec 2005	46	16
Sat 8 th Apr 2006	37	47
Sun 23 Apr 2006	44	23

ORDER FORM

Shifting Sands *Memories of Moreton Island*

Cost \$16 plus \$2.50 postage

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone _____

Send to MIPC with payment

What's on!!! Ph 3321 1463

Daily ~ Taking to the Streets 1965-85 Museum of Brisbane, City Hall 10am to 5pm (see previous page)
July 7 – 9 Whale watch camp at Cape Moreton
Aug 16 AGM at “The Wrecks”

MIPC trips

Whale watch at Cape Moreton

This weekend is a few days before full moon, so there will be plenty of moonlight. Location of the camp – either at the North Point campground or the usual bush camp on top of Harpers Hill, will be decided upon received your preference. Campers will need to bring everything, including fuel stoves.

Bookings and deposits by Friday 30th June, so we can confirm the trip is proceeding.

Cost \$90

Depart 6.30 pm Friday 7th July

From Howard Smith Drive Lytton



Eel grass survey volunteers on site in the rain, April 2005 Petra Janoschka, Nanette Kempel and Trish Cavanagh

Seagrass Survey Report

On Sunday 7th May, Linda, Janet, Petra and Trish went to Moreton Island compliments of Tangalooma Resort to continue monitoring our seagrass site. The survey been postponed previously due to windy conditions, but on this occasion, it was a fine mild day with good visibility. Transport to the site was by the Tangalooma research boat. To our surprise, the skipper was very experienced in researching the local foreshores and subsequently located a species of seagrass that we had not previously been aware of at this site. We are now awaiting formal identification by co-ordinator Paul Finn. There was no occurrence of Lyngbya at the site but the epiphyte and macro algae cover was generally high. West of our survey site we noted several Dugong trails.

Trish Cavanagh

Pied Oyster Catcher killed

On the 22nd March an Oyster Catcher recently run over, but still alive was observed by Keith Wilson, taxi driver, just south of Spitfire Creek. As he was unable to stop he rang me as I would be passing the injured bird in a few minutes. Unfortunately by the time I reached the bird raptors had already killed the injured bird. Strong circumstantial evidence observed by Keith and myself identified the driver that killed the bird. I believe speed and lack of beach driving experience resulted in the driver running over the Pied Oyster Catcher.

Alan Gennings



Pied Oyster catcher killed 22nd March 2006