



Newsletter
**Moreton Island Protection
 Committee Inc.**

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Volume 36 No 1 January - June 2014

Moreton Still Cane Toad Free - Help Keep It That Way!!!

Bolt, a Springer Spaniel spent the Easter school holidays on Moreton looking for cane toads and spreading the message that Moreton is cane toad free.

On the 15th of November 2013 the Brisbane City Council met with stakeholders to explore what could be done to keep Moreton free of cane toads.

Christine Sanders represented our Committee and brought to the meeting her experience with Nifty the cane toad detecting dog who searched the island in December 2009 and January 2010 following the oil spill. Publicity associated with Nifty highlighted Moreton's toad-free status to campers which resulted in 2 toads being captured at The Wrecks campsite in January 2010.

Following the meeting, Dr. Sarah Bell from Urban Forest and Conservation Management, Brisbane City Council proposed sponsoring Steve Austin to bring a cane toad detection dog to the island over the Easter holidays. The project was supported by National Parks and Wildlife Service, Moreton Island Adventures, Tangaloma Resort and MIPC.

On Monday 14th April The Wrecks and Ben Ewa campgrounds were searched. All campers were briefed on Bolt's cane toad detecting ability and Moreton's toad free status.

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Steve Austin, dog handler, Christine Sanders, MIPC volunteer, Peter, Moreton Ranger and the Springer Spaniels from left Bolt ~ cane toad detecting dog; Jess ~ fox detecting dog and Sam and Freddie~ in training. The team's next engagement was fox detecting by Jess in northern New South Wales where Bolt had the satisfaction of finding a toad, which had not been possible on Moreton. YAY!!! Recently Jess has helped protect penguin rookeries on Phillip Island from foxes.

**** **AGM** ****

**10 am Exhibition Wednesday ~ 13th August
 237 Milton Rd, Royal Geographical Society Rooms,**

Located on the inbound side of Milton Rd, just before the brewery, expect to walk a block or two to park.
Bring a plate to share and catch up with friends, meet new friends or join the executive.

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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.

Edited by Alan Gennings, Lisa Dowall

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MIPC's Printer Retires

Rex Leo has printed for MIPC since the late 1970's. During these early years Rex's contribution to the campaign to prevent sand mining on Moreton was enormous. When timing was critical Rex would print through the night.

Two days before the last fish cage protest Rex contacted me to ask if we had posters. We had none so Rex offered to design and print several hundred A3 posters at no cost. These were so effective they were prominent in the TV news at the time.

Rex has assisted other Conservation groups in their hour of need.

Rex's offset printing press is now operated by Graphic Skills who printed our first coloured issue of our newsletter recently.

We thank Rex for his invaluable contributions over the years to MIPC.

The Cape Rain Gauge

Weather enthusiasts and volunteers seeking rainfall records to time plantings at the Cape, will have noticed the automatic rain gauge at Cape Moreton, in Nov 2013, started giving erroneously high records. Since then, rain records for the Cape have been unavailable which prompted a query to Bureau of Meteorology. Andrew Arnold replied on the 27th March that the faulty rain gauge would be fixed in the near future.

Andrew stated that when the gauge is working correctly the recorded rainfall is at times significantly less than indicated by radar records. A number of years ago the Bureau conducted a study which gave them an idea of a wind effect. He explained that weather instruments are positioned to achieve the best measurement of wind speed and direction. Strong onshore winds blow the rain horizontally over the gauge. Therefore the rain gauge is not ideally placed to measure

accurate rainfall.

Andrew also reported "In an attempt to obtain more accurate rainfall totals last year we introduced a manual gauge down-slope of the Ranger's bottom house. The data from this position is used internally by the Rangers at this point in time."

Donations to MIPC

MIPC welcomes tax deductible donations which can only be used for conservation activities.

MIPC (07) 33211463

Only messages can be left at the number above. Please start your message with your name and phone number.

EFT Details

BSB 633 000 Bendigo Bank

Account # 141368456

Acct Name Moreton Island Protection Committee.

Enter **your name** in the reference box otherwise we have no way of knowing who made the deposit.

Please always notify us by email, phone or mail of your payment.

Phone banking EFT transfers authorised by phone do not include any identification details so **please forward details of your payment** as above.



After a tough day searching for cane toads Bolt relaxes with a new friend Poppy holidaying at Tangalooma.

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Those who hadn't met Bolt on the MICat were mostly unaware of Moreton's cane toad free status. Those campers were informed with MIPC and BCC brochures and MIPC fridge magnets.

On Tuesday Koorinal, it's refuse station and the Oyster farm were searched. Most residents were aware of Moreton's cane toad free status. Those who were not were briefed. Brochures and MIPC's CD with cane toad and Moreton frog calls left at the cafe and were well received at the residents meeting later that week. On Wednesday Bolt searched the MICat Glamping Village at Bulwer, the Bulwer shop and homes along the Esplanade. About 30 residents were spoken to with only 2 groups being unaware of the toad free status. Additional pamphlets, toad and frog call CD's and fridge magnets were left at the shop.

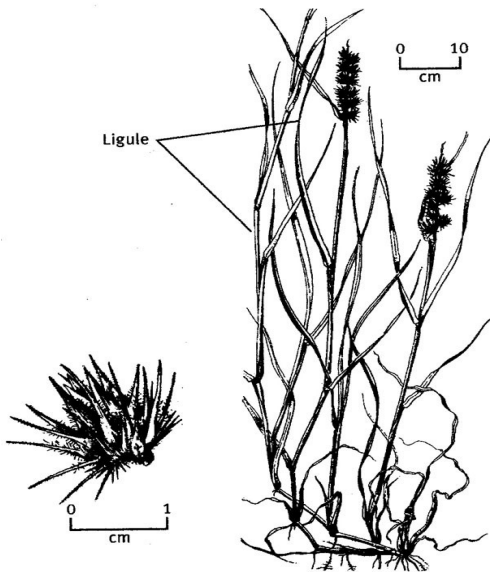
A presentation was delivered by Steve and Bolt at the Tangalooma Resort. About 30 people came to the talk but numbers swelled as people in the vicinity joined in.

Steve's dogs have been an integral part of the removal of rabbits, mice and rats from Macquarie Island (127 sq.km) which has just been declared free of rabbits.

<http://www.steveaustindogtrainer.com>

Bolt's work was an effective way to publicise Moreton's Cane toad free status. Those who worked with Bolt were introduced to the potential of using working dogs in feral animal control on Moreton.

Christine Sanders



Mossman River Grass ~ beware of sharp prickles when weeding them from your campsite

WE NEED YOUR HELP see back page

Volunteer Report: Jan to Jun 2014

Volunteers hours

	No persons	Weeding hours	Rubbish hours	Planting hours	Total hours
21-23 Feb	6	32		18	50
4-6 Apr	8	47		57	112
2-4 May	4	8		30	42
16-18 May	8	22	2.5	54.5	87
TOTALS	26	109	2.5	159.5	291

Planting and propagation.

Due to the dry start this season we postponed planting. We laid out over 250 metres of hose from a Ranger's residence to the planting area below the Graves at the Cape. Following soaking rains we were able to plant out areas at Harpers where we hand watered new plantings. Good follow up rains meant high survival rates.

Plantings

	Location	Casuarina	Pandanus	Other	Total
5,6 Apr	Cape (B) below graves	150	4	17	167
2-4 May	Harpers Cape Cliffe	70	17	23	110
16-18 May	Harpers Cape Cliffe	28	16		42
16-18 May	Cape (B, C) below graves	100			100
TOTAL		348	37	40	419

Mossman River Grass weeding

Our strategy was to tackle sites with the greatest infestation and groups of sites where we could complete removal from all sites in a session. EB7 was the worst, requiring 49 people hours. Campsites are mowed by a Parks contractor with a mower that collects most of the seeds. Mowing was timed for just before seed ripening and prior to Easter to reduce seed dispersal by the large number of campers at Easter.

Moreton Experience provided free use of the Blue Lagoon campsite and MICat provided discounted fares for the volunteers.

These volunteer projects are funded by the Friends of Parks Grant provided by the Queensland Government Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sporting and Racing.

Water Bores Drilled to Monitor Aquifers on Moreton Island

Pam Schindler



Bore at Eagers beach campsite

In summer 2011-2012, MIPC members were surprised to witness drilling of water bores, and the installation of monitoring equipment, being carried out on Moreton Island. When we couldn't get an explanation of the purposes of the bores, we made a "Right to Information"

application to the Queensland government, in October 2012. From the documents provided, we learned that the water bores were part of a \$1.6 million project for 238 new bores across Queensland for groundwater monitoring, funded by the Australian government's Bureau of Meteorology, and didn't point to an intention to exploit the island's aquifers.

Need for vigilance

Although Brisbane's severe drought ended with the floods of 2011, only a few years earlier, state and local governments, under pressure from water shortages and Brisbane's expanding population, had considered exploiting the aquifers of Moreton Island. For example:

APPROVALS to draw water from National Park lakes and other protected areas will be fast-tracked by the Beattie Government as dam levels in Queensland's southeast corner fall to record low levels... Responding to a call yesterday by Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman to exploit the water resources of Moreton Island, 35km from the city in Moreton Bay Marine Park, Mr Palaszczuk indicated the state Government would not stand in the way.

Although the island's lakes are protected as national park, Mr Palaszczuk said the Government would fast-track environmental approvals so projects could proceed on the island and elsewhere.

"Thirsty state eyes protected lake water" by Greg Roberts, *The Australian*, 30 September 2005, p. 3

Moreton's priceless freshwater ecosystems

The hydrology of the sand islands is a rare phenomenon, allowing freshwater lakes to occur just behind the dunes of the ocean beach, supporting a variety of ecosystems. The *Moreton Island National Park Management Plan (2007)* states, under "The Values of Moreton Island":

Few areas in eastern Australia exist where lakes and swamps associated with sand dunes occur in such a natural state and at such high density. More than 70 dune lakes and swamps occur on Moreton Island. These water bodies differ in age and form from those elsewhere in the Moreton region, with many possibly more than 10,000 years old.

Sedge-dominated swamps, perched and window lakes occur on the island. Perched lakes have formed where the sands have become cemented and capable of holding water and resisting erosion. [...] Window lakes such as Blue Lagoon (42ha) support an interesting variation from the aquatic fauna of the perched lakes.

The freshwater ecosystems of Moreton Island support unique fauna including three of the four vulnerable acid frogs and the vulnerable Oxleyan pygmy perch *Nannoperca oxleyana*.

--*Moreton Island National Park, Cape Moreton Conservation Park and Moreton Island Recreation Area Management Plan* April 2007, p. 9

Water bores on Moreton Island – Information from documents supplied under RTI

Queensland's then Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DERM) carried out a state-wide review of its groundwater monitoring in 2009, which included identifying "gaps" in the network. Moreton Island was one such unmonitored location.

Mark Woodward (Project Officer, Water Monitoring, DERM) wrote to Chris Hanlon (NPWS):

Moreton Island has been recognised as of high priority in our recent groundwater network review as it currently has no water monitoring on the island by DERM.

-- email June 2011, released under RTI 12-184

Twelve bores were proposed at eight sites on Moreton Island. Sites were chosen which were already cleared/disturbed and close to roads for easy maintenance. A representative of the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation attended the drilling as a Cultural Monitor in case cultural material was discovered during drilling.

DERM's project application recognised special values of Moreton and Stradbroke Islands, which effect how water management on the islands should be approached:

Considerable issues in island aquifers associated with future groundwater management and impacts on GDEs [Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems]. High social and cultural values and high levels of public interest.

-- Project Application from DERM, to the Bureau of Meteorology's "Modernisation and Extension of Hydrologic Monitoring Systems Program", 2010-2011, Part 4, Project Details, p 13. Released under RTI 12-184

The stated aims of the water bores project are no threat to the environmental protection of Moreton Island:

An element of this project is to quantify the size of the groundwater resources under Moreton and South

Stradbroke islands and provide ongoing water level and quality monitoring.

[...]

The program is an ecological monitoring program linked to the ongoing management of aquifer health and ground water depended ecosystems. Within protected areas the information gained will assist in understanding the effect of long term weather patterns on ecosystem condition and assist in the development of climate change adaptation programs.

-- DERM, Application Assessment, Interests in Protected Areas – Section 34, *Nature Conservation Act* 1992 – p. 2. Released under RTI 12-184

But since this project was completed, much has changed in the management of Queensland's natural environment. We have seen a weakening of the Vegetation Protection laws and of the cardinal principle governing the management of National Parks in Queensland, namely:

Management principles of national parks

- (1) A national park is to be managed to -
 - (a) provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values; and
 - (b) present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values; and
 - (c) ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.
- (2) The management principle mentioned in subsection (1)(a) is the cardinal principle for the management of national parks.

New laws have been passed to allow privately-owned resorts to be built inside National Parks, placing profit ahead of the natural environment in these most special places. The Brisbane mayor who called for exploitation of the Island's aquifer in 2005 is now premier of Queensland.

The natural environment of Moreton Island is a great treasure, held in trust, one of the few remaining pieces of southeast Queensland coast in mostly wild and pristine condition. Ensuring its wildlife, plants and landscapes continue into the future means preserving the aquifers on which all its natural systems depend.

Pam Schindler

Bribie Island Bores to be Mothballed.

In 2007 water reserves in Qld were running out and the Caboolture Shire Council (CSC) revived a 10 year old proposal (of theirs) which had previously been rejected as nonviable by the State Environmental Protection Agency.

Ian Bell from Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association gave a briefing to CSC planners demonstrating significant deficiencies in their assumptions and the dangers of drawing down the water table thereby allowing fresh water intrusion into the freshwater lagoons. His professional advice was ignored.

Ian took the issue up with the Commonwealth who agreed this project had the potential to impact the nearby RAMSAR protected wet lands. The Commonwealth reduced maximum production to 4.3 ML/day from the planned 10ML/day. Even at this reduced production level during the dry period in 2013 the bores reached the trigger point where they had to be shut down to prevent damage to ecosystems. Water production has never been enough to export to the mainland.

The planned cost of the project was \$10 million but this blew out to \$70 million making this source of water even more expensive than the Tugun desalination plant. A recent review has determined that the borefield should be shut down indefinitely.

extracted from Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association newsletter May 2014 vol 22(4) : Page 7 web site www.biepa.org

Cape Information Centre Staffed by Volunteers During Summer Holidays

The Cape Information Centre was staffed by volunteers from 13th December 2013 to 27th January 2014. 18 volunteers participated staying from 3 days to a week.

Close to 1900 people visited the information centre during this time with maximum visitation of 361 occurring over the 3 days from from the 28th December to 30th December.

The most common inquiries were about tides, the location of Blue Lagoon, island maps and the whereabouts of the toilets. Visitors included those from overseas, first time visitors to the island and others who had been coming to Moreton for many years. All were impressed with the exhibits and a chance to talk to the volunteers. There was also great interest in the preserved snake and stone fish.

Volunteers not only staffed the information centre but carried out cleaning of the cottage and information centre, weeding, and rubbish removal.

Approximately 31 hrs were spent spring cleaning the cottage, 14 hrs cleaning the displays, 9 hrs collecting rubbish around the Cape and at Harpers, 18 hrs weeding at North Point, 7.5 hrs weeding pots at the nursery, 4 hrs propagating and another 15 hrs on general weeding.

The information centre was staffed by volunteers during core times from 10am to 2pm but most days the centre was staffed from 8am until 4pm.

Thanks to Tangalooma who provided ferry transfers and parking for volunteers. MICat provided discounted fares for volunteers who were able to bring their own 4WD's for their transfer from MICat to The Cape.

Whats on ... !!

Aug 13 AGM at Royal Geographical Society, Milton

Aug 22 -24 Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

Sept 5 - 7 NPA and MIPC volunteering at Blue Lag

Oct 4 - 6 Long week-end Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

Oct 24 to 26 Bris Institute of Art workshop, Blue Lag

Oct 27 - Nov 9 Blue Lagoon Camp is available for volunteers for extended stays.

Oct 31 - 2 Nov Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

Volunteer trips

Bookings Alan 0428783781-text only please *or* email mipc@moretonisland.org.au *or* 33211463 (MIPC's phone answering service)

****PLEASE book at least 1 week in advance****

Depart 8.30 am 14 Howard Smith Drive, Port of Bris. arrive by 8am for orderly loading of luggage in vehicle.

Sat 8.30 departure – min 3 required

NB. MICAT charges \$12 per day for parking. Car pooling is arranged when possible.

Return departure from The Wrecks 4.30pm Sunday.

BYO sleeping bag, food, plates, cutlery and esky. A camp kitchen and tents with stretchers are provided.

Volunteers work at Blue Lagoon

This season work will include; planting out at the Cape, propagation at the North Point nursery, weeding Mossman River Grass and collecting rubbish. The Friends of Parks grant and MIPC funds volunteer's ferry and 4WD transportation costs.

Volunteers for 3 days free do 9 hrs work.

Volunteers for 2 days do 6 hrs work, pay \$30.

Volunteers pay \$15 for every hour not worked.

National Park Association Week-end.

NPA is combining a recreational trip with 5 hours of volunteer work. MIPC members and friends can join in the NPA trip or if they prefer the usual free week-end they can do the usual 9 hours work. Volunteers taking the free option will be able to join any one of the NPA 4WD tours. A unique opportunity for volunteers to see other parts of the Island, not normally able to visited on volunteer week-ends.

Cost \$145 - catered, 4WD tours included - 5 hrs work **Free** with 9 hours work (optional \$45 for catering)

Volunteers invited to stay longer

The Blue Lagoon camp is available to volunteers from 27th Oct to 9th Nov. Extend your volunteer weekend or stay for the week.

Recreational Weekends at Blue Lag

Prefer not to volunteer? You are welcome to come on volunteer weekends. An trip to the Cape is included. **Cost \$160 payable to MIPC.**

We Need You and Your Friends!!!!!!

MIPC has received a Friends of Park Grant of \$10,189.30 a condition of which is that we plant 2,000 trees on the Cape by the end of November. We have done 400 leaving another 1,600 to plant. Please volunteer for one of the 4 trips this season. Encourage your family and friends, young and old, to participate and enjoy the satisfaction of doing something practical for the environment.

Membership form

Name

Address

..... Post code

Email

Phone..... Mob

I consent to my photo, taken during MIPC activities, and my name being published in the public domain (cross out if you do not wish photo of you to be published)

Signed _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Annual fee \$10 Household \$15 Pens./Conc. \$5

\$..... for years membership.

\$..... as a tax deductible donation;

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

The MIPC Public Fund is a public fund listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under item 6.1.1 of subsection 30-55(1) of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*

Pay by cheque, money order or EFT transfer:

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Acct Name Moreton Island Protection Committee.

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