



Newsletter
Moreton Island Protection
Committee Inc.

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Clean up Australia Day



2020 Clean Up Australia Day participants, Bulwer Wrecks – Photo: Griffith University 1st March 2020

Griffith University Environmental Science students and executive members of Moreton Island Protection Committee (MIPC) spent Friday, 28th February – Sunday, 1st March cleaning up parts of Moreton Island. On Friday, MIPC members reorganized seedling tables at the North Point Nursery after many plants died due to water supply problems with the automatic sprinkler system.

A clean up around The Cape on Saturday saw 12½ bags of rubbish collected from the beach at Harpers and The Fingers. Much of the rubbish collected at the Cape was marine debris from ships including trawlers and was found in rocky areas that were difficult to access. Asparagus Fern and Prickly Pear was also removed from Bulwer.

Sunday, 1st March – Clean Up Australia Day – saw 37 participants register at Bulwer Wrecks as part of the national program. This year was the 30th anniversary of Clean Up Australia. Since 1990, 17.7 million people have participated. A special thanks to Bulwer

locals Belinda Henzell and Troy, Rhonda and Sophie Darben for their participation.

Almost half a tonne of rubbish was collected from the beach, fore dunes and around Bulwer Township. This included plastic and glass bottles, plastic bags, cans, cigarette butts, polystyrene, fishing line, food packaging, a fridge, fridge motor, mattress, sheet metal and steel pipes. Griffith University vehicles took the rubbish to the Waste Transfer Station.

Bulwer Progress and Social Association generously assisted with payment of accommodation for the students and provided lunch at the Bulwer Fire Station. Thanks go to; the MICAT for reduced student fares; John Kluba for access to the Fire Station; Karen Kerr, Rod Holloway, Jan and Rob Noble, and Dick Craig for their work in keeping the volunteers fed and watered; and Dr Peter Davey for coordinating the students. The combined effort of all involved has made a difference to Bulwer and Moreton Island.

Greg Curtis

“The amount of electricity saved by recycling one aluminium can is enough to run the average TV for three hours” – Clean Up Australia

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Executive members

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Secretary: Pam Schindler

Treasurer: Peta Frampton

Executive Committee:

Helen Sutherland *minutes secretary*

Leonie Hegvold

Greg Curtis

Tom Vaughan

Diana Dawson

Joanne Easton

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.

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Covid cancels activity

The global pandemic and lock down saw only residents permitted on the Island from March to June. The MICAT service was reduced one service per week on Tuesday.

Tourists Operators, Tangalooma Resort and all Island businesses have been seriously affected. Restrictions saw MIPC Volunteer Weekends and Township Association events canceled. Other organised events such as Brisbane City Council's (BCC) pre Easter Cane Toad Campaign, as well as the Gould's Goanna Survey scheduled for May were canceled. Subsequently in lock down, the amount of 4WD traffic was negligible as campgrounds were closed.

It was worth noting how bird and marine activity increased and flourished in many areas, including North Point.

Activity by Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) Rangers in cleaning the ocean beach of large rubbish items and maritime debris is commendable. The June/July school holidays saw the lifting of some restrictions and the start of Island activity returning to normal levels.
Greg Curtis

Feral pig control

Park closure provided an opportunity for Ranger Peter Bull to step up pig control effort. During the park closure 18 pigs were culled. Last financial year 34 pigs were culled, 21 adults and 13 sub-adults. In the last 7 years a total of 343 pigs have been culled. Peter has constructed two remotely operated traps. When a pig enters the trap, an alert is sent to a mobile phone. Photos are sent to the phone making it possible to wait for the whole group of pigs to enter the trap be-

fore the gate is closed remotely. It is important to trap the whole family group together to ensure orphaned piglets don't suffer. Trapping part of a family group can also result trap shyness, which can be passed on by mothers to the next generation. Image recognition is now being commissioned to reduce false alerts in the early hours of the morning. The status of the pig population on Moreton is defined as functionally extinct. A focused effort is now seeking to achieve elimination. Feral horses and goats have already been eliminated. The next feral animal control is expected to focus on feral cats.

MIPC Email list

The MIPC email list uses Google Groups. Inclusion on this list is available to all at no cost. Email MIPC to add or update your email address.

Membership fees

Annual membership is now \$20. Concession membership is \$10.

Newsletters are mailed to members, with the expiry of your membership noted on the address label.

Newsletters will not be sent to members who are more than 12 months in arrears with membership fees.

Tax-deductible donations

MIPC is registered as a tax-deductible organisation. Donations are used solely for conservation.

EFT Details

BSB: 633 000 (Bendigo Bank)

Account no: 141368456

Account name: Moreton Island Protection Committee

Reference: Please note the purpose of the payment.

Report from QYAC meeting in November 2019

Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) National Park is entering into a new period of its management, with a joint management arrangement under development, between the Quandamooka people and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. A historic landmark was the recognition of Quandamooka native title on Mulgumpin, on 27 November 2019.

Members of the MIPC Executive met with staff of Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) and representatives of Moreton Island township residents' groups from Bulwer, Cowan, and Koorinal, at QYAC's offices, 4/124 Florence Street, Wynnum, on 15th November, 2019 at 10am. The aim was to learn from QYAC about their values and priorities for Mulgumpin, and to make contact between these groups which all have vital interests in, and care for, Mulgumpin, and to open communications for working together in future.

Representing MIPC were Alan Gennings (President), Greg Curtis (Executive member), and Pam Schindler (Secretary).

The CEO of QYAC, Cameron Costello, chaired the meeting, which was also attended by Darren Burns, joint management coordinator on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), coordinating management between QYAC and QPWS, and Daniel Crouch, joint management coordinator for Mulgumpin. Also present was QYAC's lawyer, Katherine Ridge.

QYAC expects the process of shared management to be broadly similar to what has been carried out on Minjerribah. They mentioned that they have a positive liaison and working relationships with Stradbroke Island Management Organisation (SIMO), Friends of Stradbroke Island (FOSI), and the local progress associations. The two islands have significant differences, in particular that Mulgumpin is almost entirely national park, and is in a much more wild, natural state, than Minjerribah.

QYAC tabled copies of two documents, a *Strategic Plan 2017-2020*, available at: <http://qyac.net.au/docs/17-20StrategicPlan.pdf> and a five-year tourism plan entitled: *Gudjundabu Marumba Gubiyiyanya: Tourism for a glad tomorrow: a five-year strategy for sustainable tourism on Quandamooka Country*, available at: http://www.qyac.net.au/docs/Tourism_for_a_Glad_Tomorrow_WEB.pdf

QYAC stated their aims very simply: to “help

manage the national park”, and to “undertake cultural activity”.

It is clear that tourism is also a major focus for QYAC, looking to tourism development as a way of providing prosperity and employment for the Quandamooka community. The three statements endorsing the five-year tourism plan come from;

- 1) the chief executive of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council,
- 2) the Redland City mayor, and
- 3) the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development and Minister for the Commonwealth Games.

There is no statement from the Minister for the Environment, and nowhere in the three statements do the words “national park” occur. MIPC is concerned with the need to ensure that nature conservation is placed first, in the management of national park on Mulgumpin.

Discussion included:

Management

- QYAC intends to propose World Heritage status for Minjerribah and Mulgumpin, and has the support of the Queensland government for this. MIPC would also support this, as World Heritage listing is the highest level of protection possible.
- QYAC expects that a new management plan for Mulgumpin will be prepared; this was done for Minjerribah in the context of the introduction of joint QYAC/QPWS management. There was every indication that stakeholders will be involved and will be listened to. MIPC looks forward to contributing to the new management plan, as we have done for past plans.
- QYAC expects to impose some access restrictions on culturally significant areas.
- QYAC expects to establish a ranger base at Koorinal for cultural work, due to its closeness to Minjerribah. They expect increased travel between the islands. They foresee a future access road from Koorinal via the Rous Battery track.
- Unallocated state land (for example, within townships such as Koorinal) will come under

native title and can be turned into freehold land by QYAC.

- No land is to be removed from the national park. The beaches aren't part of the native title claim; however, they would come under another native title application made in 2017, referred to in the annual report.
- The relationship between QYAC and the Queensland government is covered by "commercial in-confidence" and is not available to the public. Some funding comes with the joint management agreement. Fees collected on the island would be used to support management of Mulgumpin.
- MIPC would welcome increased interpretative work on Mulgumpin, providing visitors with the chance to better understand both the natural environment and its cultural heritage.

Fire management

- QYAC is keen to introduce a burning regime which would involve cutting a grid of tracks across the island, to enable mosaic burning. Similar regimes are being implemented on Minjerribah and on K'gari (Fraser Island). QYAC staff said we should expect to see a lot more burning. MIPC is concerned about any cutting of tracks into untracked wild areas, which would immediately reduce their wildness and increase their exposure to human impacts such as pollution, weeds, damage, and fires.
- QYAC is involving an academic in advising where species need particular fire regimes. MIPC believes that fire management on the sand islands needs to be scientifically-based, as well as culturally appropriate. MIPC is keen to discuss these issues with QYAC and to provide input as plans are developed. An invitation was extended for us to walk through areas on Stradbroke to see what they intend.

Tourism

- Tourism is to be a major focus for QYAC. Their language included expressions such as "tourism product", "unlocking our lands", and "global tourism destination". They expressed interest in attracting more "higher value" visitors, "value" meaning people who will pay more and stay longer, and in providing more

up-market camping options within the existing established campsites.

- Commercial tourism in Queensland national parks is of increased concern since the legislation passed by the Campbell Newman Liberal government, which allows for expressions of interest in leasing land inside national parks for private commercial development. MIPC's view is that this is contrary to the whole purpose of national parks, in which the "cardinal principle", or overriding value, must be nature conservation of these priceless wild places.
- In addition, very popular national parks close to major cities need to be managed to protect wild areas from the impact of excessive visitor numbers, rather than seeking to attract more. Mulgumpin has already seen mass tourism in the form of cruise ships, a questionable use of a national park. QYAC's vision of expanding indigenous cultural tourism is exciting, but a balance will need to be sought, in terms of impact on the wild places of the island, so that the total visitor impact is minimal.
- Unlike Minjerribah, where the camping grounds were run by the local council before coming under the management of Minjerribah Camping, Mulgumpin's camping grounds are all within the Moreton Island National Park. There is a principle here, that simple camping in national parks should be affordable by all citizens. At present, camping on Mulgumpin is the same price as in other national parks throughout Queensland, and is set at a very modest rate. Because Mulgumpin is national park, it would be a concern, in equity terms, if prices should rise.

Future cooperation:

QYAC acknowledged their awareness of MIPC's longstanding commitment to conserving the natural environment of Mulgumpin, and our volunteer work over several decades, and indicated their general support for our work to continue, in cooperation with the new joint management.

QYAC proposed that consultation meetings be held quarterly, between QYAC, the township residents' groups, and MIPC, and this was welcomed by all.

Pam Schindler.

Cane toad found at Bulwer

Highlighting the continuing need for the Moreton Island Cane Toad Campaign, a Cane Toad was found at Bulwer on Sunday, 17th May. It was captured near a resident's BBQ area and collected by Queensland Parks and Wildlife (QPWS) Rangers. Several nearby properties had various types of recently delivered landscaping materials.

Trevor Hassard, handler for Cane Toad Detection Dog (CTDD) Reggie was called and searched the location. With weather cooling any toads would hunker down, making them difficult to locate without Reggie. Green Tree and Rocket Frogs had been seen of late, but no other Cane Toads were found. It is likely the Cane Toad came from recently delivered plants, soil, mulch, building or landscape materials. This highlights the importance of checks to all these types of materials coming to the Island.

To follow up, three new Toadinator Traps supplied by Brisbane City Council were set in the area for two consecutive nights. These traps use broadcast toad calls as the attractant.

Greg Curtis



Trevor Hassard with CTDD Reggie indicating on landscaping materials in Bulwer 18th May 2020

Tadpoles confirmed as native species

Soon after camping reopened in June, campers reported tadpoles in water bodies along roads behind the ocean beach connecting southern BLN campsites. They were concerned the tadpoles could be cane toad tadpoles. From photos supplied by QYAC Rangers, Harry Hines, Senior Conservation Officer, QPWS was able to confirm they were the Scarlet Sided Pobblebonk tadpoles native to the Island.

Cane toad tadpoles are small, less than 25-30 mm including the tail, plain black and tend to school together, forming large black masses. Native frogs operate independently, though when ponds are drying

up they can be forced together in large numbers. BCC have ready to be deployed cane toad tadpole traps. Traps are baited with a pheromone which only attracts cane toad tadpoles. (See MIPC Newsletter 2016 Vol 38 No2. Page 4)

Responding to a request from BCC, CTDD Reggie with Trevor and Susan Hassard and Greg Curtis checked campsites around the low swampy track areas. This failed to reveal any presence of Cane Toads. The report by the concerned camper, shows that the current Cane Toad Campaign, which promotes public awareness, is achieving its goal of alerting visitors to the toad free status of Moreton.

Search "cane toad challenge" to join the community effort to trap toad tadpoles on the mainland. Baits are free, search "bufotabs" for more information.

Python kills cat at Yellow Patch



Python and feral cat, Yellow Patch Camp 7 July 2020

In July, campers at Yellow Patch reported a cat in the area to QPWS and QYAC rangers. A few nights later they heard a commotion in the bushes which revealed the above photo.

Sightings of cat tracks and cats by campers and residents appear to be increasing. To date trapping of feral cats has had very limited success. Feral cats are trap wary and seek live food rather than baits.

Mulgumpin managers are waiting for results of trial deployments of Felixer being developed by Thylation a not for profit company in South Australia. At the Arid Recovery nature reserve near Roxby Downs 20 Felixers were deployed over a period of 6 weeks. An estimated 2/3 of the estimated 50 cats were killed. Units are estimated to cost around \$5,000 each. The cat has to walk in front of the Felixer to be killed.

Cane Toad Stories

Diana Dawson has created a series of videos showing how visitors can help keep Mulgumpin toad free status. Search in you tube for "cane toad stories"



Whats on ... !!!!

Aug 14 -16 Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

Sept 4 -6 Volunteers at Blue Lagoon

Sept 18-20 Doctors for the Environment Aust. Blue L.

Nov 14th AGM Toowong

Volunteer nominations

Alan 0428783781 (text only please) *or email:*

alan@moretonexperience.com

or MIPC's voice mail on 07 3321 1463.

Cost; \$100 – covers MICat fares, and 4WD transport

\$60 for returning volunteers.

Minjeeribah fire management.

MIPC was invited by QYAC to see the results of their fire management on Minjeeribah on 22nd July. On arrival we received a generous acknowledgment of MIPC's contribution over the years by representatives from the Quandamooka Land and Sea Management Agency, (QALSMA). Many of the staff have previously worked for QPWS on Mulgumpin. Staff from QPWS and Jan from Stradbroke Island Management Organisation Inc, attended.

The first site we visited was a forest of Cypress, on the shore of the 18 mile swamp. Trees here have been dated as ranging between 500 to 1,000 years old. Cypress are sensitive to fire and their survival depends on excluding wildfires. Fire promoting plant communities have been invading the surrounding forest as a result of recent hot fires. Fire promoting paperbarks are also encroaching along the swamp. Water extraction by the Redland City is resulting in a lowering of the water table of the swamp, which facilitates expansion of the paperbarks along the swamp.

During a recent wildfire on ground fire fighting and water bombing saved the forest from a hot wildfire which would have killed the ancient cypress trees. Hand clearing of the forest and a fire regime to suppress fire promoting species in the surrounding vegetation is being implemented. This is a culturally important site given its long term occupation on the shore of the 800 year old swamp.

Plans are to undertake similar fire exclusion management of the plant communities associated with the extensive midden complex on Mulgumpin on the bay side to the south of the Little Sandhills.

The second site was the shore of Bummeria (Brown Lake). We were shown a thicket of Allocasuarins between the road and the lake. The high density of Allocasuarinas results in poor seed production, making the cones unsuitable for Black Cockatoos to feed on. (Allocasuarinas in a mixed open forest produce enough seed to support Cockatoo foraging). Up until the 1970's this site was burnt by indigenous people to maintain the open forest plant community. This came to an end when those conducting the burns were threatened with jail for implementing traditional management practices in the 1970's. Plant surveys were conducted by Prof Specht at the current thicket location in the early 1970's. Thus current managers can see how the plant community has changed from open forest to ta hicket as a result of fire regimes since the 70's.

After lunch, generously provided, we traveled along a fire break along a ridge top. The fire break had been cleared of undergrowth but all of the larger Eucalypts had been retained in keeping with QALSMA fire break guidelines. The break bordered an area that had been cool burned a few days before. An estimated 30% had burned leaving much vegetation unburnt. A further 20% will be burned to achieve the goal of burning 50% of this plant community this season.

QALSMA have developed a Township Fire Management Strategy for the townships. Development of the the strategy required agreements with a plethora of land mangers; Redland City Council, Dept Natural Resources and Mining, SEQ Water, Dept Environment and Science, Energex, Sibelco (mining),and Transport and main roads. The plan is now being implemented. There were reports that initially some local residents were skeptical that a plan requiring so much work could be implemented, but the significant effort being put in by QALSMA staff is making the plan a reality. *A high priority on Mulgumpin is to develop and implement a Township Fire Management Strategy.*

We thank the QALSMA staff for making their time available to provide an opportunity for one on one access so many different staff. Thanks also for the inclusion of QPWS staff and Jan from SIMO. Thanks to Joel from Healthy Land and Water for facilitating the visit, and for his suggestion we move between cars so we all could talk one on one with all staff.

Alan Gennings

Annual General Meeting

1 pm Saturday 14th November 2020

Toowong Community Meeting Place, Josling St, Toowong.

Doors will open at 10 am to set up. Bring a plate to share before the meeting. Tea and coffee provided