



**Hon Vicky Darling MP**

Member for Sandgate

Ref: CTS 21231/11

**20 DEC 2011**



**Queensland  
Government**

**Minister for Environment**

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

*Neil*

I refer to your letter of 1 December 2011 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 1772-11 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Petition draws to the attention of the House that the beach of Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) is one of Fraser Island's most iconic attractions. The petition advises that an artificial plantation or garden has now been established on the beach in a misguided attempt at beautification. The artificial matting and an unsightly fence installed to protect the garden seriously detracts from the natural beauty of this site, diminishing the lake's World Heritage values, its amenity and its natural integrity. The plantation is also interrupting the natural process that shaped the lake and environs.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House restore the Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) beach to its natural state by removing the artificial plantation, the matting covering the beach and the unsightly fence to allow the natural forces that created the beach and lunette to be allowed to operate without further man-made interference.

The redevelopment of the Lake McKenzie day use precinct in 2010 was a response to numerous recommendations to improve visitor facilities while ensuring sustainable management of this iconic area. The redevelopment was undertaken in consultation with the Fraser Island World Heritage Area Community Advisory Committee, Indigenous Advisory Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee. This included the consultation on planning concepts at a number of committee meeting and site visits during and post construction works in 2010 and 2011.

The shoreline adjacent to the pre-existing day use area was noted as being eroded and stripped of natural vegetation caused by considerable visitor access over time. Part of the planning for the site was to revegetate damaged areas with local endemic species to protect and restore ecosystems, establish a vegetation back drop, break up sight lines along the beach and create a buffer to the lake's edge.

A study in 2008 also acknowledged the need to urgently redevelop the Lake McKenzie site and mitigate impacts from visitor use. Further guidance was taken from work undertaken by Archaeo Cultural Heritage Services, in consultation with Butchulla representatives, which made this recommendation:

Level 13  
400 George Street Brisbane Qld 4000  
GPO Box 2454 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
**Telephone +61 7 3239 0844**  
**Facsimile +61 7 3227 6309**  
**Email [environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:environment@ministerial.qld.gov.au)**  
**Website [www.derm.qld.gov.au](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au)**

- **Minimising Impacts** - Particular care should be taken to minimise impacts on natural vegetation, with a particular focus on the beach area and adjacent vegetation. Protection of these important areas can be achieved by limiting beach access areas and by stabilising and adding to existing native vegetation inclusive of vegetation buffers to mask inland infrastructure.

Under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* the Australian Government (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts) stated that the redevelopment was not a controlled action provided it was undertaken in the manner set out in the decision. This included:

- (a) *Revegetate all cleared or disturbed areas of vegetation on the site. This will include:*
  - (i) *The use of locally endemic plants only, germinated from seeds collected from the site; and*
  - (ii) *Erection of clear sign posts and fences designed to deter visitor access.*

Detailed redevelopment plans were drawn up based on the stakeholders preferred option from consultation. These plans clearly showed the extent of revegetation works along the beach and the fence to protect the vegetation during establishment. Officers of the Department of Environment and Resource Management commissioned the work that implemented the approved redevelopment plans.

Works undertaken at Lake McKenzie include upgrading interpretation, car-parks, picnic areas, toilets and other waste management facilities to cater for the large number of people who visit and impact on this site. The vegetation and fencing works on the beach complement the other work. It should further be noted that the exceptional wet season of 2010-11 resulted in high water levels in the lake which affected the amount of beach accessible.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Peter Wright, Acting Regional Manager (Great Sandy) of the department on telephone 4121 1996.

Yours sincerely



**Vicky Darling MP**  
**Minister for Environment**