



With permission: Conway Burns

K'gari (Fraser Island)

World Heritage Advisory Committee – Communiqué

11-12 May 2022

The second meeting of the K'gari World Heritage Advisory Committee (KWHAC) was held on 11-12 May at the Hervey Bay Boat Club on Butchulla Country.

KWHAC comprises an independent chair and fifteen members and provides advice to the State and Federal Government on matters relating to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage of the K'gari (Fraser Island) World Heritage area from a First Nations, Scientific and community perspective.

Securing Additional Funding

Committee members once again discussed the urgent need to secure additional and ongoing funding to protect and maintain K'gari's Outstanding Universal Value and support a future nomination for the island's cultural heritage values. With several planning processes underway, including a Climate Change Adaptation Plan and a Strategic Plan for the World Heritage property, additional funds are also needed to support:

- Biosecurity – with a focus on prevention and surveillance
- Climate Change Adaptation – including bushfire prevention
- Interpretation and World Heritage branding for K'gari – to increase recognition of the island's World Heritage status
- Monitoring and Research – including emerging challenges like marine debris and the implications of micro-plastics on K'gari's cultural and natural values
- Visitor Management – to improve the visitor experience and interpretation of K'gari.

KWHAC recognise the urgent need for additional and ongoing funding to protect and maintain K'gari's OUV. KWHAC supports an increased management charge (or cultural levy) on visitors to the island and acknowledges the need for increased Federal Government support through the next Project Agreement for World Heritage Management (2023-2028).

South East Queensland Flood Event (February 2022)

KWHAC members discussed the devastating SEQ flood event of February 2022, with flooding occurring from northern NSW to the Mary River of the Wide Bay. While the direct impacts of flooding on K'gari



were minimal, the indirect impacts from over 40 cubic metres of flood debris that washed up on K'gari were extensive, with multiple management partners and stakeholders involved in the clean-up.

Members noted that climate change scenarios for South East Queensland predict changing rainfall patterns and an increasing frequency of flood events. Therefore, KWHAC recommends that Local Governments evaluate and amend the storage of 'floatable materials' for development in floodplains to reduce the impacts of marine debris in future floods.

Place Name Change

Committee members unanimously supported a formal change for Fraser Island under the *Place Names Act 1994*, recognising the island's original Butchulla name of K'gari. K'gari (Fraser Island) was recognised as the formal name for the World Heritage property by UNESCO in July 2021 and the island's National Park by the Queensland Government in April 2017.

KWHAC encourage the Minister for Resources, Hon. Scott Stewart MP to proceed with a public proposal to support the place name change in partnership with the Butchulla People.

Climate Change Adaptation Plan Workshop

The Plan is being co-developed by the World Heritage Unit in partnership with the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation and the Climate Systems NESP Hub. The Plan's development will follow a modified methodology of the Draft Climate Change Toolkit for World Heritage Properties in Australia (developed by CSIRO and commissioned by the Australian Government), focusing on attributes that express OUV and incorporate Butchulla cultural values for the property. Committee members (and guests) commenced the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for K'gari with a review of attributes that contribute to Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

Updates

Updates were provided by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE), the Department of Environment and Science (DES), Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS&P), Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation (BAC) and Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (BNTAC) with members visiting the BNTAC-supported mural under development at Fishermen's Point, Urangan.



The mural will reflect the region's rich heritage and the significance of fisheries to Butchulla Country

KHWAC members were also briefed and invited to comment on the following activities currently underway for the World Heritage Property:

- **K'gari Post-fire Ecological Assessments** (led by QPWS and the BAC): the *Post-fire Assessment Report: Natural Values - 2020 Duling Bushfire K'gari (Fraser Island), Great Sandy National Park (2022)* is now available on the Department's [website](#). Monitoring is ongoing.
- **K'gari Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy** (led by Fraser Coast Regional Council and funded through an Australian Heritage Grant)
- K'gari will celebrate its **30th Anniversary of World Heritage** in December 2022 (which also coincides with 50 years of the World Heritage Convention).
- The DES Partnerships Branch is developing three **K'gari-BAC protocols for the K'gari National Park**. These acknowledge co-management arrangements and processes for Butchulla camping on K'gari, wongari (dingo) and girra (fire) management.