



K'gari (Fraser Island) World Heritage Advisory Committee – Communiqué 1 November 2024

K'gari World Heritage Advisory Committee's (KWHAC) meeting was held online on 1 November 2024. This was KWHAC's eleventh meeting for the term.

KWHAC members thanked Minister Plibersek for approving the property's name change to K'gari on the National Heritage List (published on the Federal Register of Legislation on 28 October 2024). The World Heritage Committee will also consider a change to the World Heritage property name to K'gari at their 47th session in Sofia next year.

KWHAC members acknowledged the results of the recent election and welcomed the appointment of the Hon. Andrew Powell MP as the new Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation.

K'gari World Heritage Strategic Plan

During the meeting, KWHAC members continued to prepare a 10-year Strategic Plan for the K'gari (Fraser Island) World Heritage property. The Strategic Plan will focus on addressing threats identified by IUCN's Outlook Report – Climate Change, Biosecurity, Over-Visitation and Pollution and recognition of Indigenous Cultural Heritage, along with the need to review the 2010 Tentative List extension to the World Heritage property (noting this will require a commitment from both the Queensland and Commonwealth governments, and the consent and support of relevant traditional owners).

This plan will also align to the committee's function to support UNESCO's [World Heritage Convention](#) with a focus on five outcomes for the World Heritage property:

1. Protection
2. Conservation
3. Presentation (Communicate and Educate)
4. Scientific and technical conservation research
5. Monitor, Evaluate and Review – evaluating the strategic plan's success and demonstrating how the plan will contribute to the Commonwealth's State of the Environment (Commonwealth), Periodic (UNESCO World Heritage Centre) and Outlook Reporting (IUCN).

KWHAC members continued to workshop actions to address threats, along with the need to monitor K'gari's attributes to inform management response. The Committee identified that monitoring could be conducted collaboratively with input from land managers, Universities, NGOs such as EarthWatch, industry partners and visitors (through Citizen Science).

The Strategy will be future-focused and acknowledged the need for some courageous decision-making to ensure the resilience of K’gari through actions such as:

- Temporary closures – to replenish key sites and ecosystems; and
- Sustainable transport options - as part of a Tourism and Visitation Strategy.

KWHAC acknowledge the need for a greater focus on K’gari’s tourism industry. However, as visitation is **already having an adverse impact on key tourism sites**, KWHAC recommend the aim should be to maximise tourism’s value to the Queensland economy and contribution to the World Heritage property.

Visitors must also be better educated and supported to reduce their impacts to the World Heritage-listed property and risks associated with human-wongari habituation.

K’gari Management Plan

KWHAC members welcomed the Department’s commitment to develop a K’gari Management Plan (as part of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan) by the end of 2025.

Noting the World Heritage Management Principles, taken from [Schedule 5 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act Regulations](#) a World Heritage Management plan should:

- State mechanisms to deal with the impacts of actions that individually or cumulatively degrade, or threaten to degrade, the World Heritage values of the property; and
- Be reviewed at intervals of not more than 7 years.

The Great Sandy Region Management Plan was last reviewed in 2005 and is long overdue.

KWHAC members volunteered to assist the Department, through Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, with the development and review of the Plan and Thematic Strategies, committing to a series of workshops with the planning team between December 2024 and February 2025 (KWHAC’s final meeting).

Governance and Funding Challenges for the World Heritage Property

With multiple tenures (National Park, Unallocated State Land, Freehold, Aboriginal Freehold and Leasehold lands) on K’gari, the World Heritage property lacks a coordinated approach to governance and management of the World Heritage property e.g., through a Management Board or Authority. This is particularly evident through the issue of environmental biosecurity, with invasive weeds, pests and diseases an increasing threat to the property.

KWHAC recommend the development of a **K’gari World Heritage Protection and Management Act** to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is maintained for future generations.

KWHAC advocate for a user-pays access permit or cultural levy to the World Heritage-listed property to enable visitors to make a greater contribution to K’gari’s management.

Updates

A progress report was provided on the development of the K’gari Biosecurity Strategy by Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation (BAC) funded by an Australian Heritage Grant.

KWHAC provides advice to State and Commonwealth Ministers and management agencies on matters relating to the identification, protection, conservation, presentation, and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural values of the K’gari (Fraser Island) World Heritage Area from Butchulla, scientific and community perspectives.