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July 1996

**FRASER ISLAND VISITOR SURVEY 1995
FINAL REPORT**

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PREFACE

This document presents the Final Report of the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage (now Department of Environment) *Consultancy CC1/95 for Visitor perceptions, Attitudes, Movements and use of Fraser Island World Heritage Area* (known as the Fraser Island Visitor Survey 1995).

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The Department of Environment gratefully acknowledges the sponsorship provided by the World Heritage Unit, Department of Environment, Sport and Territories in funding this study. Without their assistance, this study would not be possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The consultants and authors of this report — Dr. Elizabeth Beckmann, Associate Professor Roy Ballantyne and Ms Jan Packer of the Queensland University of Technology — would like to acknowledge our gratitude to the many people who assisted this study, including:

- Sue Olsson, DE Senior Conservation Officer (Interpretation), who was without doubt the most indefatigable and dedicated Project Officer we have ever known, keeping us on track at every stage of the way;
- Marc Hockings and his students from Gatton College, University of Queensland, who provided assistance with interviewing on Fraser Island, as did Bill Carter, Tony Charters, Margaret Gooch and Allan Simpson;
- Adam Veitch and Erica Walter-Veitch who helped administer the on-site questionnaire;
- Kingfisher Bay Resort and Dilli Village who were both very generous in providing prizes of free weekend accommodation as incentives for the return of completed questionnaires;
- Department of Environment staff on Fraser Island who provided input to questionnaire development as well as on-site information during the consultants' visits to Fraser Island;
- Alan Chenoweth who provided valuable input in the early stages of the study; and
- Ree Kent and the other research assistants who were involved in entering the vast quantities of data collected during the study.

FRASER ISLAND VISITOR SURVEY 1995

CONTENTS

Preface & Acknowledgements

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. METHODOLOGY	4
Survey Periods	4
Development of Survey Instruments	4
Sampling Methodologies	6
Data Analysis	7
On-Site Inspections	7
From Data to Discussion	8
Reporting	9
Notes on Terminology and Stylistic Approaches	12
3. RESULTS	15
Sampling Data	16
A. The Visitor	18
A1. Age	19
A2. Gender	21
A3. Home address	22
A4. Structure of travel group	23
A5. Membership of relevant clubs	24
A6. Previous visit history	25
A7. Interest in returning to Fraser Island	26

FRASER ISLAND VISITOR SURVEY 1995 CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

B. The Visit	27
B1. Travel through Cooloola Section of Great Sandy National Park ..	28
B2. Duration of visit	31
B3. Accommodation	33
B4. Barge use and permit issue	35
B5. Main information sources	38
B6. Reasons for visiting	41
B7. Activities	43
B8. Visitors' most important and most time-consuming activities	46
B9. Pre-visit planning of stay patterns	51
B10. 4WD as a means of transport and as a recreational activity	52
B11. Most enjoyed aspect of the visit	54
B12. Least enjoyed aspect of the visit	55
B13. Changes considered for future visit	63
B14. Respondents' general comments about visit	64
C Patterns of Visitation	66
C1. Visitors' impressions of places they had visited on the Island	67
C2. Visit patterns by day	70
C3. Overnighting patterns	74
C4. Regional visit patterns on the Island	76
D Visitor Profiles	82
D1. Motivation by previous visit history	83
D2. Activities by previous visit history	83
D3. Motivations and activities by areas visited	83
D4. Visitor characteristics of motivation sub-groups	84
D5. Visitor characteristics of activity sub-groups	86
D6. Choice of accommodation/site for first night of visit by previous visit history	88

**FRASER ISLAND VISITOR SURVEY 1995
CONTENTS (CONTINUED)**

E Visitor Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions	90
E1. Visitors' attitudes and perceptions of the role of National Parks...	91
E2. Visitors' attitudes and perceptions as to the relative priorities of the needs of nature and people on Fraser Island	92
E3. Visitors' knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of Fraser Island's World Heritage status and features	96
• Interviewees' general concepts of World Heritage	97
• Visitors' understanding of World Heritage status of Fraser Island	98
• Interviewees' perceptions of Fraser Island's forests	99
• Interviewees' perceptions of Fraser Island's lakes.....	100
• Interviewees' perceptions of Fraser Island's coastal sand dunes	101
• Interviewees' perceptions of Fraser Island's beaches	102
• Interviewees' perceptions of Fraser Island's mangroves...	103
• Interviewees' perceptions of Fraser Island's Aboriginal cultural heritage	104
• Interviewees' perceptions of Fraser Island's history	105
• Describing Fraser Island to family and friends.....	106
E4. Visitors' contact with, and attitudes towards, dingoes on Fraser Island	109
Specific discussion of visitors' perceptions of dingoes	112
F Visitors' Responses to Minimising Environmental Impact	115
F1. Visitors' responses to restrictions on firewood collecting	116
F2. Visitors' perceptions of their own knowledge of ways to minimise impacts of 4WD driving	118
F3. Visitors' interest in learning about ways of minimising camping impact	122

**FRASER ISLAND VISITOR SURVEY 1995
CONTENTS (CONTINUED)**

G Visitor Information Needs.....	124
G1. Potential usefulness of suggested itineraries	125
G2. Possession of the Visitor Information Sheet and Park Guide	126
G3. Use of information services.....	129
G4. Satisfaction ratings for information services	132
• Sunmap.....	133
• Signage on vehicle tracks	133
• Information Centres	135
• Leaflets/Brochures	135
• Walking track signage.....	136
• Informal interactions with rangers	136
G4. Satisfaction ratings for information services (cont.)	
• Ranger-guided walks and talks	137
• Implications	138
G5. Information useful before arrival	139
G6. Information useful after arrival.....	140
G7. Visitors' comments on information services and suggested improvements.....	144
H Visitors' Preferences and Suggestions for Interpretive Media.....	148
H1. Interest in new services.....	149
H2. Scenic drives — visitors' preferred media.....	151
H3. Walking tracks — visitors' preferred media.....	153
H4. Maps	155
H5. Visitors' perceptions of relative value of investing in major new information services.....	156

**FRASER ISLAND VISITOR SURVEY 1995
CONTENTS (CONTINUED)**

4. DISCUSSION — Implications of the Visitor Survey Results for the Information and Interpretation Services of Fraser Island	158
4.1. Preamble	158
4.2. Meeting Aim 1 — To Understand Who are the Visitors to Fraser Island	160
4.2.1. Visitors' demographic characteristics	160
4.2.2. Visitors' motivations and interests	161
4.2.3. Market segmentation	164
4.2.4. Targeting first-time and repeat visitors	169
4.3. Meeting Aim 2 — Identifying Areas Appropriate for Orientation and High-Use Areas That Present Interpretive Opportunities	172
4.3.1. Visitors' flow patterns and use of Island	172
4.3.2. Use of Cooloola Section of Great Sandy National Park	174
4.4. Meeting Aim 3 — To Understand Attitudes of Visitors towards Island Values	175
4.4.1. Visitors' attitudes to World Heritage values	175
4.4.2. Visitors' perceptions of the role and management philosophy of National Parks	177
4.4.3. Visitors' awareness of natural and cultural values	178
4.4.4. Visitors' attitudes towards dingoes and their management	179
4.4.5. Visitors' attitudes towards use of 4WD vehicles	180
4.5. Meeting Aim 4 — To Ascertain Some Information Needs and Media Preferences for Information and Interpretation	182
4.5.1. Visitors' needs	182
4.5.2. Adequacy of existing information	184
4.5.3. Visitors' media preferences	186

**FRASER ISLAND VISITOR SURVEY 1995
CONTENTS (CONTINUED)**

5. CONCLUSION — Towards a Visit-Based Communication Strategy for Fraser Island	187
6. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	191
7. A FINAL WORD	197
8. REFERENCES CITED	198

4. DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS OF THE VISITOR SURVEY RESULTS FOR THE INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES OF FRASER ISLAND

4.1. PREAMBLE

In this survey, data were collected from people who visited Fraser Island during Easter, May/June and September/October 1995. The outcome has been the gathering of a huge amount of quantitative and qualitative information that will provide valuable input into the development of effective information and interpretation strategies for Fraser Island.

In this, the Discussion section of the Final Report, there has been no attempt to repeat all the individual findings of the survey, as these have all been presented in detail in the Results section, with specific implications identified as appropriate.

The intention in this Discussion is therefore:

- to present an holistic interpretation of some of the major findings within a theoretical framework; and
- to make informed recommendations on appropriate strategies to increase the effectiveness of Fraser Island's information services.

For easy identification, recommendations have been italicised and bordered.

As explained in the Introduction, the key areas of theoretical understanding used to drive data analysis for this survey included:

- motivation as a determinant of expectations;
- market segmentation — for example on the basis of motivation, previous use history and/or participation in recreational activities — as an appropriate approach to the provision of information services in natural resource and outdoor recreation management;
- the evaluation of information and interpretive services as a mechanism for their development and improvement (Beckmann, 1991).

Within the context of the survey's specific aims and objectives, as presented in the Introduction, this Discussion presents:

- sufficient theoretical background to inform the discussion;
- summary presentations of the major findings of the survey, thus providing an objectively-based understanding and knowledge of Fraser Island visitors; and
- recommendations of appropriate strategies by which to apply this understanding to the more effective provision of information and interpretation services on Fraser Island in future.

**4.2. MEETING AIM 1 —
TO UNDERSTAND WHO ARE THE VISITORS TO FRASER ISLAND**

4.2.1. VISITORS' DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

As explained in the Introduction, the survey was aimed specifically at independent travellers and therefore did not collect data on visitors in tour groups. Moreover, the survey methodology adopted for the second and third survey periods did not access overseas visitors. The data from this survey therefore cannot be used to develop a visitor profile across all visitors to Fraser Island.

The survey did provide significant information on the demographic characteristics of the mostly Australian adult independent travellers accessed through the SAQ, as detailed in Section 3A. Major demographic characteristics of respondents were that:

- 43% were in the 40-59 age-group;
- 72% were residents of Queensland (31% from the Greater Brisbane region, 12% from the Sunshine Coast and 9% from the local Maryborough/Hervey Bay region);
- 26% were residents of other states;
- 32% were visiting with their family;
- 28% were visiting with both family and friends; and
- fewer than 6% belonged to relevant special-interest groups, such as 4WD driving, boating, conservation or bushwalking clubs.

Knowledge of visitor demographics can be very useful in planning visitor services, for example by providing information on visitors' life-cycle stages, previous visit history or appropriate places for promotion.

In order for the Department of Environment to develop a visitor profile across all visitor groups, it would be very useful for basic demographic data to be collected, processed and reported on an on-going basis. Given the current permit application system, a simple procedure involving just a few additional questions and a simple processing and reporting protocol, would enable appropriate demographic data to be collected from permit applications and tour operators.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Department of Environment should develop a visitor profile across all visitor groups, by instituting minor changes procedures in existing permit application procedures in order for basic demographic data on visitors to Fraser Island to be collected, processed and reported on an on-going basis.

4.2.2. VISITORS' MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Why do people visit Fraser Island? Clearly, they are 'motivated' to do so. What are these motivations, and what expectations are involved when a decision to visit the island is made? Motivators — factors that increase a person's tendency to do something — may include internal factors, such as physical or emotional feelings or habits, as well as external factors, such as information, advertising or expectations (McClelland, 1987). Thus hunger increases the motivation to eat or to look for food outlets, fatigue increases the motivation to sleep or to look for accommodation, and effective advertising increases the desire to visit a site or to take part in a given activity.

Motivators may drive, and/or be driven by, both desires and expectations. Maslow (1970) proposed a needs-based hierarchy of motivation as a way of understanding the priorities accorded to different motivators. ('Maslow's Hierarchy' is discussed in more detail in Section 4.5.1. with reference to the adequacy of existing information services on Fraser Island.)

People's motivations determine how and what they seek out and select as recreational activities. These motivations may reflect an individual's demographic or psychographic characteristics as well as his or her personal interests. Age-related or life-stage characteristics may impact upon an individual's physical capability for acquiring a skill or participating in an activity as well as upon their motivation. For example, several respondents noted that it was their current life-stage — i.e. being responsible for young children — rather than any inherent lack of interest that had limited their use of walking tracks (such that they were restricted to short walks of an easy grade or, in some cases, to not using walking tracks at all).

Details of visitors' motivations and interests are given in Sections B6, B7 and B8. As a group, visitors to Fraser Island have many motivations. As individuals, most visitors also have a range of motivations. In the SAQ survey, the most common needs-based motivations expressed by visitors were:

- to enjoy peaceful relaxation (34%);
- to explore/tour the island (33%)
- to do something with family members (23%); and/or
- to enjoy the outdoors (20%).

These motivations were often combined with one or more interest-based motivations, such as:

- to 'go bush' in a 4WD, with special reference to beach driving (23% as a specific motivation, 78% as an 'activity' accomplished during the visit); and/or
- to carry out a given recreational activity, such as fishing (61%), camping (59%) or swimming (48%).

In planning and providing visitors services, trying to understand what motivates visitors before and during their visit is very important. Motivations determine expectations — a visitor who **wants** to go fishing and camping will **expect** to be able to fish and camp. Secondary expectations may then come into play: if that visitor associates camping with campfires he/she will expect to have a campfire. If expectations are met, they lead to satisfaction. If expectations are not met, they lead to disappointment.

Satisfied visitors are more likely to comply with management requirements and to cause minimum deliberate impact. Disappointed visitors are less likely to be compliant, and are more likely to show depreciative behaviour. The more disappointed visitors there are, the more inappropriate role models there will be for other visitors. In this survey, dissatisfaction with visits appeared to be related primarily to user-conflict (especially the behaviour of other visitors, for example in relation to driving or noise at campsites) and/or to losses of recreational amenity caused by overcrowding or litter.

While dissatisfaction may be somewhat more likely at peak times (because of higher visitation putting more stress on all facilities, especially toilet, water and waste management services), it may also occur among off-peak visitors, who may be less tolerant of other people's behaviour because they are visiting in an off-peak period (and thus have different expectations).

To summarise, most visitors go to Fraser Island to relax, to spend time with family or friends, and/or to explore the island. Many look forward to 4WD driving, fishing, camping and/or sightseeing. Their expectations are that they will be able to do these activities safely, at their own pace, without disturbance from other people and with access to relevant information (e.g. maps, travel directions, tide tables) as necessary.

When any of these expectations are not met, visitors become dissatisfied. This dissatisfaction is often related to conflict with other visitors and/or losses of recreational amenity. In turn, these are often related to a lack of visitor compliance, through ignorance or disinterest, with existing management regulations or practices, for example related to driving, feeding wildlife, campsite 'etiquette' or inappropriate waste disposal.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Effective presentation of information directly relevant to visitors will lead to better compliance and appreciation of management activities by more visitors, which in turn will better meet visitors' expectations.

As well as more information, there is a need for better enforcement of the management regulations that relate to visitor behaviour in the camping areas, at 'honey-pot' sites (such as Lake McKenzie, Eli Creek and Central Station) and on the driving tracks and beaches.

Visitors or tour operators who encourage inappropriate behaviour or non-compliance with regulations should be identified and appropriately advised, re-trained or censured.

At peak times of potential user-conflict or non-compliance with regulations (e.g. Easter), it may be appropriate to use extra staff, or to enlist the support of other agencies (e.g. police), at the same time as using appropriate media to maximise visitor awareness of regulations.

4.2.3. MARKET SEGMENTATION

The differences in motivations and interests among visitors can be used to identify segments of the visitor 'market' as specific targets for promotion, information and interpretation services.

Apart from the many bivariate analyses reported throughout Section 3B, multivariate analyses were also used to determine whether any clear sub-groupings (potential market segments) were evident among respondents (Section 3D). In part, we were looking for data comparable to that derived by Harper (1993), who distinguished five groups of Fraser Island 4WD campers based on their recreation experiences.

Although we were able to define motivation-based, destination-based and activity-based clusters (Figures 1, 2 and 3 respectively), we found that these did not show significant overlap and that many individual respondents often spanned two or more clusters. However, it is important to note that the SAQ survey had a somewhat broader base of respondents than Harper's survey, in that our survey:

- covered off-peak as well as peak periods;
- included non-campers as well as campers;
- used a more limited set of motivational responses; and
- offered a choice of motivational responses that were all affective in orientation rather than activity-orientated. (Although this was done deliberately, in part to keep it comparable with Harper's survey, some difficulty was encountered in dealing with data from respondents for whom 'fishing' was the primary motivation.)

It was not surprising, therefore, when the SAQ responses did not fall into motivation-based clusters identical to those described by Harper (1993). Nevertheless, the six motivation-based clusters that were distinguished (Figure 1) do show some overlap with Harper's categories, as noted below.

Comparing these sub-groups and their characteristics with those identified by Harper (1993) provides further insights into the motivations and behaviour of Fraser Island visitors. Harper (1993) identified five distinct clusters of summer 4WD campers based on the 'latent structure of their motives for visiting Fraser Island'. These clusters differed primarily on the interpersonal features of their preferred recreation experience (Figure 4).

Figure 1 Motivation-based Cluster Grouping of SAQ Respondents

Visitor sub-groups	Typical Motivations	Some Characteristics
4WD tourers (49% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to go bush in a 4WD• to explore/tour the island	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• younger• visit Central Station / Lake McKenzie during visit• shorter stays
Outdoor family people (38% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to enjoy the outdoors• to do something with family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• visit Central Station / Lake McKenzie during visit
Nature-lovers (24% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to be close to nature/wildlife• to see the scenery	
Socialisers (18% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to do something with friends• to meet/talk to other visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• younger• repeat visitors• unlikely to visit northern coast
Learners (16% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to experience new things• to learn about the island	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• first or second visit• stay at Happy Valley or Dilli• do not fish
Solitude-seekers (13% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to spend time alone• to get away from city life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• younger• avoid Central Station / Lake McKenzie

Figure 2 Destination-based Cluster Grouping of SAQ Respondents

Visitor sub-groups by region visited	Motivation	Activities
Central Station/Lake McKenzie region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• learning experience and/or• 4WD driving experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4WD driving• sightseeing• walking
Dilli village, Eurong area and Lake Wabby region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• nature experience and/or• 4WD driving experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4WD driving• sightseeing
Central Coast region (i.e. Poyungan Rocks, Cathedral Beach)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4WD driving• sightseeing
Northern Coast region (i.e. Indian Head, Orchid Beach)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• camping• fishing• sightseeing• unlikely to do walks

Figure 3. Activity-based Cluster Grouping of SAQ Respondents

Visitor sub-groups	Typical Activities	Some Distinct Characteristics
Tourers/sightseers (81% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4WD driving• touring the island• seeing coastal scenery• sightseeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• visit more areas• stay at campsites
Campers (63% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• camping• sitting around campfire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• repeat visitor• spend time in Central Coast area• have longer visits
Nature-lovers and bushwalkers (62% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• see wildlife• short walks• see World Heritage area• hiking/bushwalking• bird-watching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stay at campsites• often visit Dilli/Eurong area/Lake Wabby region
Fishers (60% SAQ sample)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• repeat visitors, having visited many times previously• visit with family or friends• seek relaxation• do not seek learning or nature experiences• camp on the beach /or use Cathedral Beach campsite / or stay in rented houses• stay longer (> 5 days)• stay in same place for several nights or for whole visit• visit fewer areas

Figure 4 Motivation-based Cluster Grouping of Summer 4WD Camping Visitors to Fraser Island (Harper, 1993)

Cluster	Place high values on	Place low values on	Characteristics
Family socialisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• being with family• socialising with friends• personal development/ introspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accomplishment & exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• older• in large groups of family or family & friends (with other vehicles)• stay for longer periods• long association with 4WD driving• likely to use a trailer• seek basic campsites with shelter, shade & scenery, within driving distance of fishing area
Asocialites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• being with family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accomplishment & exploration• socialising with friends (very low)• personal development/ introspection (very low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• older• smaller groups of mostly family• stay for longest periods• less likely to be with other vehicles• revisit island most frequently• seek attractive campsites with walking track opportunities and relative isolation
Family escapers		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• being with family (very low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• younger• small groups of mostly friends• more likely to sleep in their vehicle at some stage of visit• less likely to use trailer• seek campsites with distant views
Explorers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accomplishment & exploration• socialising with friends (moderate)• personal development/ introspection (moderate)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• younger• small groups, either with partner or mostly friends• least 4WD experience• less likely to use a trailer• seek attractive campsites with fire rings / walking tracks / seating / organised activities
Non-explorers		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accomplishment & exploration (very low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• older• in large groups of mostly family• likely to use a trailer• seek campsites away from others

By comparing Figures 1 and 4, links can be seen between:

- our 'Learners' & '4WD tourers' and Harper's 'Explorers';
- our 'Solitude-seekers' and Harper's 'Family Escapers'; and
- our 'Outdoor Family People' & 'Socialisers' and Harper's 'Family Socialisers'.

Harper's major finding was that the five recreation experience clusters did **not** differ significantly in terms of recreation activities selected or valued. Harper (1993) argued that this finding was consistent with the inter-related nature of activity participation on Fraser Island and the relative homogeneity of his sample. This led Harper (1993, 63) to conclude that:

- *4WD campers on Fraser Island may be characterised more by their similarities than by their differences;*
- *individuals participating in the same type of activity seek and achieve different experience outcomes; and*
- *there is no compelling evidence for variations in recreation experiences which can be attributed to activity participation.*

These conclusions are supported by our findings that individual visitors often spanned two or more of the SAQ-derived motivation-based clusters, and that the latter did not necessarily coincide with the SAQ-derived activity-based or destination-based clusters.

In terms of motivational descriptions, therefore, the SAQ survey respondents did not fall into clearly distinguishable groups that would be appropriate, identifiable and mutually exclusive large-scale targets in any communication strategy.

Nevertheless, the four sub-groups — tourers, campers, nature-lovers and fishers — could be usefully used as inclusive target groups for specific information services and interpretive media i.e. by ensuring consciously that all four groups are targeted for any given message, the chances of effectively communicating that message to all Fraser island visitors will be increased.

RECOMMENDATION 3

To maximise the effectiveness of communication with all Fraser Island visitors, all DE management and other messages should be designed to reach all four visitor motivational sub-groups i.e. tourers, campers, nature-lovers and fishers.

4.2.4. TARGETING FIRST TIME AND REPEAT VISITORS

As explained in Section 4.2.3, the survey findings suggested it would be inappropriate to segment the Fraser Island visitor market primarily on the basis of motivational sub-groups, as many of these overlap. However, such segmentation did seem relevant on the basis of sub-grouping of respondents by their previous visit history (i.e. first-time visitors versus those who had visited previously), as these groups showed significant and consistent differences in both motivation and activities planned/accomplished.

Two-thirds of the respondents were repeat visitors to Fraser Island (most having visited at least twice previously), while one-third were visiting for the first time. While a significant proportion of Fraser Island visitors may therefore be quite inexperienced and uninformed, a larger proportion may be relatively experienced and (at least in their own view) well-informed.

Combining this information with the results of the various bivariate analyses (i.e. cross-tabulations of frequencies for first-time versus repeat visitors) made it possible for us to identify characteristics differentiating the two sub-groups (Figures 5a and 5b).

Some of the differences between first-time and repeat visitors may identify information shortfalls.

For example, first-time visitors tended to spend less time on the island than repeat visitors: 40% of first-timers stayed for three days or less compared to 22% of repeat visitors. Does this reflect an information shortfall? For example, do the shorter visits indicate that first-time visitors do not think there will be much to see and do? Do they underestimate the size of Fraser Island and the time required to tour/visit in a relaxed manner? Or is it too expensive for many first-time visitors because they have less knowledge of cheaper alternatives to the resorts?

Similarly, although first-time visitors were more likely to profess very simplistic 'pro-nature' attitudes, they may also be more likely to have inappropriate understanding of acceptable behaviour, for example related to 4WD driving, collection of wood for campfires, or interacting with dingoes. Thus, although first-time visitors may, through ignorance, be less compliant with management strategies, they are also likely to be very open to re-education and reinforcement of their generally positive views toward conservation and management by effective and targeted interpretation.

Figure 5a Distinguishing Characteristics of First-Time and Repeat Visitors among SAQ Respondents¹

Significant area of difference	• First-time visitors	• Repeat visitors
More likely to want to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• experience new things• learn about the Island• explore/tour the Island• go bush in a 4WD• be close to nature/wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• relax• enjoy the outdoors• spend time with family or• spend time with friends or• be alone
More likely to do activities related to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• seeing wildlife• 4WD driving (i.e. as an activity not simply as a means of transport)• sightseeing• walking (short walks & bushwalks)• seeing World Heritage area• seeing coastal scenery• touring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fishing• sitting round campfire• family time together• peaceful relaxation
More likely to attach importance to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what they do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• who they are with
More common demographic characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• from distant Queensland, interstate or overseas• travelling as a couple• rented 4WD vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• likely to have visited more than twice• from Brisbane, Sunshine Coast & Maryborough/ Hervey Bay regions• own 4WD vehicle• more likely to be travelling with family and friends• want to return more than once
More likely to show this behaviour pre-visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use River Heads for access• use tourist information, travel agents, TV programs & magazines for pre-visit information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use Inskip Point for access• use permit offices & rangers for pre-visit information
More likely to have visits with these characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stay shorter periods (many less than three days)• tend to use National Park campsites or 'resort/hut' accommodation (especially Eurong)• visit Lake McKenzie, Eurong area and/or Central Station in first two days of visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stay for longer periods• camp or stay in own/rented house• camp on beach• plan night-time and day-time stays pre-visit• stay in same place for several nights or for whole visit

¹ It is important to note that the characteristics listed are ones for which significant differences occurred between the two groups, but that some individual first-time visitors may have had characteristics more commonly found among repeat visitors, and vice versa. The listed characteristics must therefore be taken as indicative rather than definitive. The relevant part of the Results section should be consulted for detail before making any assumptions on the basis of listing here.

Figure 5b Distinguishing Characteristics of First-Time and Repeat Visitors among SAQ Respondents (continued)

Significant area of difference	• First-time visitors	• Repeat visitors
More likely present use of information services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use VIS, Sunmap, Park Guide and Island information centres for information during visit• have VIS and/or Park Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• use rangers for information during visit• visit Dundubara and Waddy Point information centres
More likely interest in future information services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• leaflets on popular topics• walks/talks by Aboriginal guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• information video for sale
More common attitudes and perceived knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Parks are places to protect endangered plants and animals• Needs of nature should come before needs of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Parks are places for outdoor activities• Needs of nature should not necessarily come before needs of people• Know how to minimise impacts of 4WD driving

The differences between first-time and repeat visitors are certainly sufficiently marked for the two groups to be identified as valid market segments, both for the provision of information services and in the targeting of such services. For example, Pre-Visit Information Kits that were differentiated for first-time and repeat visitors would ensure that a 'fresh' consideration of Fraser Island's values and management was given by each visitor on each visit.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Information services on Fraser Island should recognise that first-time and repeat visitors have distinct characteristics and information needs, and should target these groups accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION 13

A comprehensive Fraser Island Pre-Visit Information Pack (PVIK) should be produced as a matter of priority. Suggested itineraries for different visit lengths and visitor interests should be included. Information on the Sunmap should be provided with the PVIK, and opportunities for map purchase provided at permit issue centres.

Distribution strategies for a PVIK should be streamlined and highly effective, aiming for distribution with all vehicle/camping permits, especially at 4WD hire centres. The fairly restricted number of popular access/departure points and permit issue offices should facilitate targeted distribution.

High-quality souvenirs that would reinforce memories and knowledge should also be produced and distributed at information centres, resorts and other appropriate outlets. Both the PVIK and souvenir material should be designed to capitalise on the importance of word-of-mouth promotion and should aim to develop appropriate expectations among future visitors.

Costs for developing and distributing a PVIK and associated souvenirs could be defrayed by a direct or indirect user-pays approach.

4.5.3. VISITORS' MEDIA PREFERENCES

Respondents clearly demonstrated their interest in, and preferences for, potential interpretive media (Section 3H). Provision of a full-colour guide book and large roadside signs are the services most likely to satisfy the majority of visitors. By indicating a rank order, the results demonstrated the relative priorities that DE should give to considering any of these services.

By indicating potential use, the results indicate the likely demand on any new service. For example, walks/talks by Aboriginal guides ranked lowest of the four options, but with a 20% potential use rate, such walks/talks would probably be sufficiently subscribed if offered.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Priority should be given to making a full-colour guidebook readily available. This may mean improving distribution of existing DE or commercial material, encouraging reissue of an existing commercial guide with DE input, or the development ab initio of a new publication.

4.3. MEETING AIM 2 —

IDENTIFYING AREAS APPROPRIATE FOR ORIENTATION AND HIGH-USE AREAS THAT PRESENT INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

4.3.1. VISITORS' FLOW PATTERNS AND USE OF ISLAND

Section 3C presents a great deal of detail of visitors' flow patterns and use of Fraser Island. It is impossible and inappropriate to summarise all these findings here. Nevertheless, some key findings can be re-iterated to show the extent to which information on the visitor flow patterns can be used to identify orientation areas and high-use areas which present interpretive opportunities. The major findings were as follows.

- Almost 50 different places on the Island were identified as areas visited by day by at least 2% of SAQ respondents.
- The main 'honey-pot' sites on the Island are Lake McKenzie (visited by day by 55% of respondents), Eli Creek (43%), Eurong (42%), Central Station (42%), Happy Valley (37%), Indian Head (37%) and Lake Wabby (33%), with at least one in five respondents visiting at least one of these sites on their first or second day.
- From a quarter to a third of visitors tended to visit Lake McKenzie, Eurong, Central Station and/or Happy Valley on the first or second day of their visit.
- About a fifth of visitors tended to visit Eli Creek or Indian Head on the third or subsequent day of their visit.
- Slightly more than half the respondents visited the Central-East area of the island (Poyungan, Happy Valley, Eli Creek, Maheno, Knifeblade and/or Cathedral Beach) on the first or second day of their visit.
- Some regions were markedly less popular destinations. Almost 80% of respondents did not go to Dundubara during their visit. Almost 80% of respondents did not go to Kingfisher Bay during their visit. Almost half the respondents did not go to the North-East region (Indian Head, Waddy Point and/or Orchid Beach) during their visit.

- Some sites, such as Lake McKenzie, Eurong and Central Station were visited by higher proportions of first-time visitors, while more remote areas were more likely to be visited by repeat visitors.
- Almost 80% of visitors tended to spend most of their nights in one place. Of these people, 28% spent all their nights in the Central-East region and 23% all their nights in the South-East (Dilli, Eurong and/or Lake Wabby) region.
- Many visitors choose their accommodation through their previous knowledge, word-of-mouth recommendation, because of specific amenities, or because of specific aspects of its location. A significant proportion of visitors appear to be somewhat 'forced' to choose their accommodation because of a lack of information or time or because of booking constraints.
- The most popular overnighting areas (all accommodation types) were the regions immediately around Eurong (16%), Dundubara (10%), Happy Valley (9%) and Lake McKenzie (9%).

Clearly sites such as Central Station, Eli Creek, Lake McKenzie and Eurong have significant orientation and interpretive opportunities, as the majority of visitors would visit at least one, and possibly two or three, of these sites on the first or second day of their visit. By selecting appropriate orientation and interpretive themes and messages at each of these sites, it should be possible to ensure maximum coverage without an information overload at any one site.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Visitor flow patterns show that significant orientation and interpretive opportunities are available at Central Station, Eli Creek, Lake McKenzie and Eurong. Appropriate orientation and interpretive themes and messages should be selected for each of these sites.

The existing information centres at Central Station and Eurong should be redeveloped as a matter of priority, with specific attention to orientation messages related to the whole island.

Appropriate interpretive themes should be addressed at Lake McKenzie and Eli Creek, with the use of environmentally-sensitive media.

The existing information centres at Dundubara and Waddy Point should be redeveloped with an emphasis on regional orientation and activities.

4.3.2. USE OF COOLOOLA SECTION OF GREAT SANDY NATIONAL PARK

As presented in Section B1, about one-third of respondents had travelled through the Cooloola Section on their way to Fraser Island, and most of these crossed the Noosa River at Tewantin. This finding shows the potential value of disseminating information about Fraser Island in Cooloola. Indeed, providing information about Fraser Island at strategic points in Cooloola could be a very useful and effective way of getting pre-visit information to potential or intending Fraser Island visitors, especially in off-season periods.

However, as some visitors simply drive through the Cooloola Section (partly because there is not enough information available about Cooloola to make them think of stopping!), it would be essential to provide information in an obvious and attractive manner at a place where they are likely to be able and want to stop. In such an information outlet, an emphasis should be placed on effective orientation material and relevant travel information (e.g. maps, ferry times and costs, tide tables, safety and 4WD driving information, information on where to go for on-island orientation, such that visitors will develop appropriate expectations. As a permit issue centre, such an information centre would be an ideal place at which to distribute a Pre-Visit Information Kit (see section 4.5.2).

RECOMMENDATION 6

As at least one in three respondents travelled through Cooloola on their way to Fraser Island, providing information about Fraser Island at strategic points in Cooloola would be a very useful and effective way of getting pre-visit information to potential or intending Fraser Island visitors, especially in off-season periods.

Albeit based on limited data, the survey findings support the Department of Environment's intention to develop a permit issue centre at Tewantin which would provide basic information about Fraser Island. Such information should emphasise travel, safety and orientation messages.

4.4. MEETING AIM 3 — TO UNDERSTAND ATTITUDES OF VISITORS TOWARDS ISLAND VALUES

4.4.1 VISITORS' ATTITUDES TO WORLD HERITAGE VALUES

Section 3E presents details of the survey findings on visitors' knowledge, attitudes and perceptions related to National Parks, World Heritage and Fraser Island's natural, historic and cultural values.

The majority of visitors showed basic attitudes towards National Parks and World Heritage areas in keeping with a reasonable conservation/management stances. However, there appeared to be significant confusion among visitors about the purposes and outcome of World Heritage listing.

Some visitors appeared unaware that Fraser Island is already a World Heritage Area (not surprising given the low key presentation of such status in most on-island signage and interpretation). These people often seemed concerned that such status would compromise their enjoyment of the island and therefore should not be sought. Other visitors clearly felt that any present or future restrictions in use or access are, or will be, the result of World Heritage status *per se* rather than management responses to excessive visitor impact.

This apparent lack of awareness of Fraser Island as a World Heritage Area, and of confusion about the potential and actual effects of a site having World Heritage status, was emphasised by the finding that only a quarter of visitors gave 'to see a World Heritage Area' as one of their reasons for visiting the Island, and many of those were first-time visitors.

Visitors' general concepts of a World Heritage Area appeared to be concerned primarily with the availability of access to all (although some visitors felt that this would be denied), protection from overuse and other impacts by effective management, an unspoilt and untouched state, and protection from resource exploitation. Overall, it appeared that many visitors were unsure about the concept of World Heritage — unsure about what it entailed and possibly unsure about whether they supported it.

Despite this apparent confusion, most visitors were able to describe the features of the island that they believed gave it World Heritage status. The images most often used were 'sand', 'lakes' and 'rainforests'. The words and concepts most commonly used were 'uniqueness' (25%), beauty (8%), 'diversity' (6%) and 'pristine state' (6%).

When interviewees were asked to describe specific aspects of Fraser Island, positive statements were made about the forests by 70%, about the lakes by 67%, about the coastal sand dunes by 50%, and about the mangroves by about 25% (the other interviewees having not seen the relevant features or having no comments to make). While almost half the interviewees also made positive comments about the beaches, about a quarter made less favourable comments about these areas, complaining about litter, traffic, dangerous driving and loss of recreational amenity values because of beach use as highways and aircraft landing strips for significant stretches.

Interviewees' understanding of Fraser island's historic and cultural heritage values were much more restricted, with 42% claiming some knowledge of the Island's history and 20% stating they knew little if anything, and just 18% of interviewees able to make any comment at all about their knowledge or interest in Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Overall, the, most visitors to Fraser Island seem generally supportive of World Heritage and National Park conservation approaches but have little real knowledge of Fraser Island's World Heritage status, or of its natural, cultural or historic values. Nevertheless, the visitors are able to see the natural beauty, diversity and uniqueness of the Island, and therefore appreciate it aesthetically and recreationally even if they don't understand its biological or cultural significance.

As few visitors belonged to relevant special-interest groups, such as bushwalking, 4WD driving, camping or conservation groups, it is unlikely that knowledge will be gained through such outside interests. While DE should communicate effectively with all such groups, it should be noted that there are unlikely to be major benefits gained from directing a great deal of effort to these groups rather than to visitors on-site.

On the whole, then, much needs to be done to ensure that the visitor population of Fraser Island is aware of World Heritage status, and of the importance and vulnerability of the Island's special features. The role of information and interpretation services in creating this awareness, knowledge and understanding cannot be over-emphasised. Clearly the existing services are not fulfilling this role to the required level.

RECOMMENDATION 7

While most visitors support World Heritage and National Park conservation approaches, relatively few appear to understand Fraser Island's World Heritage status or its natural, cultural or historic values. At present, most visitors appear to appreciate the Island aesthetically and recreationally rather than through any understanding of its biological or cultural significance.

Priority should be given to the development of more effective information and interpretation services to create greater levels of awareness, knowledge and understanding of Fraser Island's importance and vulnerability.

While DE should communicate regularly with off-site special-interest groups such as 4WD, conservation, camping or bushwalking clubs, such efforts should not be seen as effective substitutes for a greater interpretive effort on-site.

4.4.2. VISITORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE AND MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY OF NATIONAL PARKS

As described above and detailed in Sections 3E and 3F, most visitors showed a reasonable level of awareness of the need for conservation of the natural values of Fraser Island. This — together with the mostly supportive attitudes towards limitations on the collection of wood for campfires and towards restricting 4WD access to assist rehabilitation — suggests that, given appropriate and reasonable explanations through high quality interpretation, most visitors would respond well to management initiatives that required minor changes in access or behaviour.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Any management initiatives that require restrictions in visitor access or behaviour should be foreshadowed by extensive and targeted information campaigns explaining the relevant rationale. Compliance will be much higher with effective explanation.

Such material will have long-term impacts if targeted specifically to repeat visitors, but will also have immediate effects if provided at areas where first-time visitors might congregate e.g. Eurong, other resorts and National Park campsites on the island, and at backpacker hostels in Hervey Bay and Maryborough.

4.4.3. VISITORS' AWARENESS OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

The majority of SAQ respondents agreed with the 'pro-nature' perspective presented by one of the SAQ questions (Section E2), although the few who were strongly in disagreement were mostly repeat visitors. This finding suggests that Fraser Island visitors are generally sympathetic to the natural values of the island, although ignorance or self-interest may mean that they do not always reflect this sympathy in their behaviour.

In the 1990 Fraser Island Public Contact Plan, ten Key Messages were outlined, eight of which remain relevant and relate to visitors' awareness of natural and cultural values (Fig. 6). Although the understanding of these key messages was not tested directly in the survey, there was evidence (especially from the open-ended questions) that visitors had 'received' several of these messages in some format, although probably in the depth intended. Communication of messages 2 and 3 (i.e. those related to European and Aboriginal history) seemed the least effective.

Figure 6 Key Messages For Fraser Island Public Contact (Queensland Forest Service & Queensland National Parks & Wildlife Service 1990)

1. Fraser Island is the largest sand island in the world. The sand dune environment is constantly changing and is vulnerable to damage, including from recreational use.
2. European history is interesting and provides an insight into European settlement of the island and its relationship with the early settlement of south-east Queensland.
3. Aboriginal history on Fraser Island is valuable, fascinating and irreplaceable and must be protected.
4. The vegetation and fauna of Fraser Island is the result of a complex interaction between soils, landforms and other environmental factors.
5. How the landscape features (headlands, lakes etc) were formed and how to care for them.
6. Fraser Island's freshwater lake and stream environments are valuable and should be protected, particularly the water quality.
7. Queensland Forest Service and Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (as the Department of Environment) are the major land managers on the island and provide for its multiple use.
8. The future of Fraser Island is in your hands.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Few of the key messages of the existing Fraser Island Public Contact Plan are being received effectively by visitors. As a matter of priority, high-quality information and interpretive services must be provided to improve the current level of awareness and interest in the natural and cultural values of the Island. The key messages can be used to focus interpretive planning.

4.4.4. VISITORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS DINGOES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

As detailed in Section 3E4, contact with dingoes was obviously a significant aspect of the visit to Fraser Island for almost all visitors. Many respondents' comments about their 'interactions' with dingoes demonstrated an overwhelming sense of privilege in having been able to see truly 'wild' animals in such conditions. At the same time, the comments suggested a degree of fear and/or irritation with the dingoes' willingness to approach tents and people, a conflict between wanting to feed and knowing that one shouldn't, and a concern for the loss of 'wildness' of the animals.

While managers' perceptions about people - dingo interactions are generally supported (Section 3E4), there appear to be some areas where perceptions may differ from reality and be impeding appropriate action. For example, it appears likely that the number of 'theft' or injury incidents involving food, belongings and, in a few cases, people (especially children) reported through the survey is more than the number reported to DE staff.

The survey findings about visitors' perceptions of dingoes suggests that the management issues related to dingoes need to be accorded an even higher priority than they are at present. There are good indications that visitors would respond well to a higher-profile information/education campaign backed by rigorous enforcement of 'no feeding' regulations at key visitor sites such as Lake McKenzie, Central Station and National Park campsites. Many respondents blamed 'backpackers', 'overseas visitors' and 'tour groups' for feeding, and thus encouraging, dingoes, suggesting that these groups have been observed, and/or are perceived, as being less compliant with relevant regulations. If this is indeed the case, it will be very difficult to convince visitors that DE is serious about dingo management for the benefit of both animals and people unless significant re-education and enforcement measures are taken.

RECOMMENDATION 10

This survey found that almost all visitors to Fraser Island come into contact with dingoes, and that the potential risks to visitor safety and comfort are high.

Information and interpretation strategies related to dingoes must therefore be given a high priority.

Information about dingoes — and especially about how visitors should behave in their presence — should be included in a Pre-Visit information Kit, with vehicle/camping permits and at the information centres.

On-site signage about feeding dingoes should be made clearer and more forthright. The signs should be easily accessible to non-English speaking tourists.

Although dingo-related interpretation should be sensitive in not creating fear, a more realistic concept of 'wild animal' should be fostered.

A campaign of enforcement of relevant regulations should be carried out and publicised at peak periods, supported by mass-audience interpretive material directed especially at day-visitors and first-time visitors.

4.4.5. VISITORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS USE OF 4WD VEHICLES

The survey showed that 4WD driving was a very important motivator and one of the main reasons for visiting Fraser Island for at least a third of the visitors, and an important aspect for at least another third (Section 3B10). The survey also identified the need for more information on 4WD driving on sand and how to minimise 4WD impacts (3F2).

More than 10% of respondents felt they didn't know enough about 4WD driving on sand, and respondents' actual knowledge of ways of minimising 4WD impacts appeared less than their reported knowledge. Many respondents appeared to have only basic knowledge, such as keeping the vehicle in 4WD at all times and the need to keep to tracks.

Inappropriate and/or dangerous driving behaviour, especially drink-driving, was one of the most common complaints made by visitors, especially during peak visitation times. Many respondents highlighted 'backpackers' and 'tour buses' as particularly negligent in this area.

There was good evidence that, given appropriate and reasonable explanations through high quality interpretation, visitors would respond well to necessary restrictions on 4WD access to assist rehabilitation, and to active management of 4WDs, such as imposing lower speed limits on the beaches and enforcement of existing regulations pertaining to safety.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Undoubtedly 4WD driving is a key component of the enjoyment of a Fraser island visit for many people. However, "other people's" driving is also a key component of dissatisfaction for many visitors. Visitor safety should be made a priority and actions taken — through enforcement, regulation and education — to minimise dangerous driving practices.

If environmental damage is to be minimised effectively, information on techniques to reduce the impacts of 4WD driving must be made available to all visitors, with distribution especially aimed at reaching first-time visitors and those who hire vehicles.

4.5. MEETING AIM 4 — TO ASCERTAIN SOME INFORMATION NEEDS AND MEDIA PREFERENCES FOR INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.5.1. VISITORS' NEEDS

In Section 4.2.1., the motivations of visitors to Fraser Island were discussed. Maslow (1970) developed a positive theory of motivation. He postulated a hierarchy of needs, with the lower needs being those driven by physiology and survival while higher needs were those more likely to produce 'happiness, serenity and a richness of the inner life'. With each need requiring satisfaction before the next need can be considered, Maslow's Hierarchy of human needs thus encompasses:

- Physiological needs;
- Safety needs (includes need for 'a safe, orderly, predictable, lawful organised world');
- 'Belongingness' and love (family and social relationships);
- Esteem needs (self-esteem and esteem of others, basic self-confidence, independence, freedom, achievement, mastery);
- Self-actualization (a higher state, encompassing the desire for self-fulfilment, 'to become everything that one is capable of becoming'); and
- Aesthetic needs (in some individuals only, extreme need for beauty and beautiful surroundings).

Clearly Maslow's Hierarchy can be interpreted in different ways. While it has often been misused in its application to specific settings, it is a useful tool with which to focus a general understanding of how people's needs are likely to be prioritised, for example during a recreational visit to Fraser Island.

What Maslow's Hierarchy helps us understand is that information services must first and foremost provide for visitors' basic needs — as only when these are met will visitors be able effectively to absorb and use information that is related to higher needs, such as learning or appreciating natural, cultural and aesthetic values.

Put simply, a Fraser Island visitor who desperately needs food, water, toilets, shelter or petrol is not going to be interested in the details of the formation of sand-dunes or perched lakes.

Some survey results suggested that visitors' basic needs were not always being met fully.

Needs related to safety (including emergencies and first aid, and safety related to travel), comfort, accommodation, food and fuel are basic for all visitors on Fraser Island. However, the survey showed that the location and/or availability of facilities and services related to these needs is not always self-evident, especially not to first-time visitors.

It is essential that the accuracy of information related to basic needs — including tide times, costs, travel distances and camping safety — be continually checked and revised if necessary.

Much of the information related to basic needs is already available in some form. However, **such information must reach visitors when and where it is needed.**

If this is not the case, the relevant information service will do nothing but lull managers into a false sense of its effectiveness. In discussing the provision of an information service, therefore, it is clear that an information service can only be said to have been provided when:

- the information is accurate and relevant; and
- the information is presented in an appropriate format (i.e. appropriate in its language, readability level, graphics, size and choice of medium); and
- the information is distributed in such a way as to be easily available to its target audience before or when they need it.

Providing inaccurate information can be worse than providing no information at all, not only because it may put visitors at risk (e.g. incorrect tide times) but also because it reduces visitors' trust in other information or management strategies.

Once visitors have all the information related to their basic needs, they will begin to look for information related to their specific motivations and interests (for example, on fishing, birdwatching or bushwalking).

RECOMMENDATION 12

Information related to basic needs must be disseminated before or at the very start of a visit, and ideally should be provided pre-visit, so that potential visitors can incorporate the relevant basic needs information into their planning.

Readily available and appropriately distributed pre-visit information on the availability, location, distance, accessibility and (in some cases) cost of basic services — such as accommodation, water, food, toilets, showers, use of campfires and provision of firewood, garbage disposal, telephones (including mobile telephone coverage) and emergency procedures — would help more visitors feel more comfortable about their 'adventure' into what many describe as a 'unique, untouched' place.

4.5.2. ADEQUACY OF EXISTING INFORMATION

The findings related to visitors' use and interests in the existing Fraser Island information services, and some specific implications of those findings, are presented in detail in Sections 3B5 and 3G.

Pre-visit, about two-thirds of respondents obtained information about Fraser Island from family and friends. On the island, one-third of visitors indicated topics on which they would have liked more information pre-visit. One in ten wanted maps or related travel information. However, despite wanting more information before and during their visit, many visitors did not know how to find it.

Overall, existing DE information and interpretation services were not being used effectively. One-third of respondents used the Sunmap as their main source of information on the Island, while only one-fifth used National Park Rangers, visitor information leaflets and/or information centres. Up to a third of visitors did not have copies of the Visitor Information Sheet or Park Guide. Many visitors did not visit information centres despite being nearby.

Although visitors were generally complimentary about existing services, this appeared more to be because visitors were grateful for any information rather than because they perceived the quality to be unsurpassable. While only 7% made unfavourable comments on existing services (Section G7), about a third made suggestions for improvements or for new services. This

finding suggests minor levels of dissatisfaction with existing services among visitors, in that these services were clearly not meeting visitors' needs adequately. Suggested improvements included better written material, better road signs, changes to ranger-staffed services and better availability and distribution of information.

The latter point emphasises that visitors need to know **where and how to obtain information**. Again this knowledge ideally should be provided pre-visit, so that potential visitors can incorporate use of leaflets/maps or visits to information centres into their planning.

A comprehensive **Pre-Visit Information Pack (PVIK)**, and appropriate high-quality souvenirs that reinforce memories and knowledge, could easily be shown or passed on to family or friends. Given the importance of word-of-mouth information, such materials would be extremely important aids to promoting appropriate expectations among future visitors to Fraser Island

Given the high level of visitor satisfaction with the existing Sunmap, the latter could be considered as an appropriate inclusion in the PVIK.

The PVIK should include a set of **suggested itineraries**, as requested by about half the respondents. Given the survey findings in general, such itineraries should be based on visits lasting three or five days, and be clearly addressed to the needs and interests of either first-time or repeat visitors. Itinerary themes should reflect typical visitor motivations and highlight the features people want to see e.g. lakes/relaxation/walks; beaches/camping/fishing. The itineraries should be carefully devised to minimise management impact i.e. they should spread people appropriately around the island, allow reasonable times for travel, suggest opportunities for relaxation etc.

To meet the intended aims of the PVIK, it should not be an optional extra, at least not for first-time visitors, as it is essential that visitors have . Costs could be defrayed by a user-pays approach indirectly, by an increase in the permit fee (the preferred option), or directly, by charging an additional (compulsory) charge to visitors.

To simplify distribution of the PVIK, especially if there is no funding for separate repeat visitor kits, no distinction need be drawn between first-time and repeat visitors in distribution of the PVIK. In theory, regular repeat visitors would accumulate several kits over time, but in practice the emphasis on word-of-mouth promotion suggests that many 'surplus' kits would be given to potential visitors. Any apparent 'wastage' would thus be offset by highly effective off-site promotion.

5. CONCLUSION — TOWARDS A VISIT-BASED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR FRASER ISLAND

Although pre-visit information is clearly a priority, identifying visitors' information needs at other specific stages in a visit would also provide a useful planning tool for managers.

In simple terms, for information planning purposes the relevant stages of a visit to Fraser Island could include:

Pre-Arrival Orientation	thinking about visiting Fraser Island; developing expectations; finding out information; planning journey; planning/booking accommodation; selecting required equipment
Immediate Post-Arrival Orientation	arriving on Island; identifying first destination; identifying correct track/route; identifying location of services/ supplies
Needs Fulfilment	finding accommodation and services/ supplies; being able to meet all basic needs
Activity-Orientated Exploration	'exploring' the island in terms of specific motivations (e.g. sightseeing, fishing, bushwalking, walking, relaxing)
Departure	identifying and reaching appropriate departure point
Post-Visit Appraisal/Reinforcement	thinking about visit; looking at photographs and other souvenirs; talking to family and friends; thinking about re-visiting.

For each of these stages of a visit, specific communication needs can be determined. To meet these needs would mean maximising use of existing services and developing new services to fill specific gaps.

A Visit-Based Communication Strategy that addressed the aims, information topics and delivery mechanisms appropriate to various stages of a visit (i.e. based on McMillan's Park Experience Model as modified for interpretive planning by Beckmann, 1991) would help define areas of priority for the provision of information services on Fraser Island. Although a full Fraser Island Visit-Based Communication Strategy is out of the scope of this report, model sections — related to Pre-Arrival Orientation and Immediate Post-Arrival Orientation — are illustrated in Figures 7 and 8. While these sections are incomplete, they are intended to provide an example of how a visit-based planning approach could be used to identify visitor information needs, match them with appropriate information services, and prioritise the development of new services to fill gaps.

RECOMMENDATION 15

An integrated communication strategy should be developed to enable the most effective and consistent development of future information and interpretive services for Fraser Island. A Visit-Based Communication Strategy is suggested as a model.

Figure 7 Model Section of a Fraser Island Visit-Based Communication Strategy
I. Pre-Arrival Orientation

Stage of visit	Aim	Appropriate mechanism	Additional Benefits
Pre-Arrival	<p>To give potential visitors information on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travel (to/from and on the island), including importance of tides and tide tables • accommodation, including options for beach camping • availability and likely costs of food, water, showers and fuel • appropriate driving behaviour • contacts/actions in emergencies • relevant management strategies and impacts on expected behaviour (e.g. with relation to driving, personal and group waste management, track access and use, camping, walking trails, dingoes, and firewood) • possible recreational activities and what these entail on the island (restrictions, equipment and safety measures) 	<p>Pre-Visit Information Kit (PVIK) to be distributed with all vehicle and camping permits, and at selected 4WD rental outlets.</p> <p>Costs could be defrayed by increasing permit fee, making it clear that fee includes comprehensive and up-to-date PVIK.</p> <p>Sections of the PVIK could be designed so as to be easily updated.</p> <p>Ideally, a different PVIK should be produced for repeat visitors (colour-coded), with more in-depth information on topics such as fishing, changes in access plans, and recent changes in management strategies (and rationales for these).</p> <p>Key information should also be available at mainland ferry departure points, perhaps also in the form of signs.</p>	<p>The PVIK could be easily transferred to family or friends thinking about visiting Fraser Island, and would start building much more realistic expectations.</p> <p>Given that word-of-mouth is such an important pre-visit information source, it is essential to maximise the chances of accurate information being passed on.</p>

Figure 8 Model Section of a Fraser Island Visit-Based Communication Strategy
II. Immediate Post-Arrival Orientation

Stage of visit	Aim	Appropriate mechanism	Additional Benefits
Immediate Post-Arrival Orientation	<p>To provide visitors with immediate orientation on their arrival at key access points to the island (ferry arrival points) on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> travelling times to key destinations nearest key feature destinations accommodation options (and methods of contacting e.g. telephone access points) supply and emergency locations orientation / interpretation services (e.g. colour-coded signs, location of information centres, and local radio frequencies) appropriate behaviour to minimise environmental impacts (e.g. with reference to 4WD driving, camping, dingoes, firewood and bushwalking) and to maximise visitors' safety (e.g. with reference to swimming, vehicles on beach and dingoes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poster/sign presentation on ferries. Leaflet accessible on ferries. Some essential components of PVIK could be available on ferry. Orientation/Planning Area, perhaps in the form of a roadside pull-off, effectively marked to engage visitors' attention and interest, with 'dynamic noticeboard' concept (regular updates on changing information e.g. tides, fishing or whale watching notes) 	<p>Visitors would be able to refocus on the relevance of the PVIK to the initial stages of their visit and confirm any doubts or areas of insecurity <u>before</u> leaving the relative security of access points.</p>

6. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Specific suggestions and recommendations related to individual survey findings are included in the 'Notes - Implications' segments throughout the Results. This section provides a summary of the major recommendations in the Discussion.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Department of Environment should develop a visitor profile across all visitor groups, by instituting minor changes procedures in existing permit application procedures in order for basic demographic data on visitors to Fraser Island to be collected, processed and reported on an on-going basis.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Effective presentation of information directly relevant to visitors will lead to better compliance and appreciation of management activities by more visitors, which in turn will better meet visitors' expectations.

As well as more information, there is a need for better enforcement of the management regulations that relate to visitor behaviour in the camping areas, at 'honey-pot' sites (such as Lake McKenzie, Eli Creek and Central Station) and on the driving tracks and beaches.

Visitors or tour operators who encourage inappropriate behaviour or non-compliance with regulations should be identified and appropriately advised, re-trained or censured.

At peak times of potential user-conflict or non-compliance with regulations (e.g. Easter), it may be appropriate to use extra staff, or to enlist the support of other agencies (e.g. police), at the same time as using appropriate media to maximise visitor awareness of regulations.

RECOMMENDATION 3

To maximise the effectiveness of communication with all Fraser Island visitors, all DE management and other messages should be designed to reach all four visitor motivational sub-groups i.e. tourers, campers, nature-lovers and fishers.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Information services on Fraser Island should recognise that first-time and repeat visitors have distinct characteristics and information needs, and should target these groups accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Visitor flow patterns show that significant orientation and interpretive opportunities are available at Central Station, Eli Creek, Lake McKenzie and Eurong. Appropriate orientation and interpretive themes and messages should be selected for each of these sites.

The existing information centres at Central Station and Eurong should be redeveloped as a matter of priority, with specific attention to orientation messages related to the whole island.

Appropriate interpretive themes should be addressed at Lake McKenzie and Eli Creek, with the use of environmentally-sensitive media.

The existing information centres at Dundubara and Waddy Point should be redeveloped with an emphasis on regional orientation and activities.

RECOMMENDATION 6

As at least one in three respondents travelled through Cooloola on their way to Fraser Island, providing information about Fraser Island at strategic points in Cooloola would be a very useful and effective way of getting pre-visit information to potential or intending Fraser Island visitors, especially in off-season periods.

Albeit based on limited data, the survey findings support the Department of Environment's intention to develop a permit issue centre at Tewantin which would provide basic information about Fraser Island. Such information should emphasise travel, safety and orientation messages.

RECOMMENDATION 7

While most visitors support World Heritage and National Park conservation approaches, relatively few appear to understand Fraser Island's World Heritage status or its natural, cultural or historic values. At present, most visitors appear to appreciate the Island aesthetically and recreationally rather than through any understanding of its biological or cultural significance.

Priority should be given to the development of more effective information and interpretation services to create greater levels of awareness, knowledge and understanding of Fraser Island's importance and vulnerability.

While DE should communicate regularly with off-site special-interest groups such as 4WD, conservation, camping or bushwalking clubs, such efforts should not be seen as effective substitutes for a greater interpretive effort on-site.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Any management initiatives that require restrictions in visitor access or behaviour should be foreshadowed by extensive and targeted information campaigns explaining the relevant rationale. Compliance will be much higher with effective explanation. Such material will have long-term impacts if targeted specifically to repeat visitors, but will also have immediate effects if provided at areas where first-time visitors might congregate e.g. Eurong, other resorts and National Park campsites on the island, and at backpacker hostels in Hervey Bay and Maryborough.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Few of the key messages of the existing Fraser Island Public Contact Plan are being received effectively by visitors. As a matter of priority, high-quality information and interpretive services must be provided to improve the current level of awareness and interest in the natural and cultural values of the Island. The key messages can be used to focus interpretive planning.

RECOMMENDATION 10

This survey found that almost all visitors to Fraser Island come into contact with dingoes, and that the potential risks to visitor safety and comfort are high. Information and interpretation strategies related to dingoes must therefore be given a high priority.

Information about dingoes — and especially about how visitors should behave in their presence — should be included in a Pre-Visit information Kit, with vehicle/camping permits and at the information centres.

On-site signage about feeding dingoes should be made clearer and more forthright. The signs should be easily accessible to non-English speaking tourists. Although dingo-related interpretation should be sensitive in not creating fear, a more realistic concept of 'wild animal' should be fostered.

A campaign of enforcement of relevant regulations should be carried out and publicised at peak periods, supported by mass-audience interpretive material directed especially at day-visitors and first-time visitors.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Undoubtedly 4WD driving is a key component of the enjoyment of a Fraser island visit for many people. However, "other people's" driving is also a key component of dissatisfaction for many visitors. Visitor safety should be made a priority and actions taken — through enforcement, regulation and education — to minimise dangerous driving practices.

If environmental damage is to be minimised effectively, information on techniques to reduce the impacts of 4WD driving must be made available to all visitors, with distribution especially aimed at reaching first-time visitors and those who hire vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Information related to basic needs must be disseminated before or at the very start of a visit, and ideally should be provided pre-visit, so that potential visitors can incorporate the relevant basic needs information into their planning.

Readily available and appropriately distributed pre-visit information on the availability, location, distance, accessibility and (in some cases) cost of basic services — such as accommodation, water, food, toilets, showers, use of campfires and provision of firewood, garbage disposal, telephones (including mobile telephone coverage) and emergency procedures — would help more visitors feel more comfortable about their 'adventure' into what many describe as a 'unique, untouched' place.

RECOMMENDATION 13

A comprehensive Fraser Island Pre-Visit Information Pack (PVIK) should be produced as a matter of priority. The Sunmap and suggested itineraries should be included in a PVIK.

Distribution strategies for a PVIK should be streamlined and highly effective, aiming for distribution with all vehicle/camping permits, especially at 4WD hire centres. The fairly restricted number of popular access/departure points and permit issue offices should facilitate targeted distribution.

High-quality souvenirs that would reinforce memories and knowledge should also be produced and distributed at information centres, resorts and other appropriate outlets. Both the PVIK and souvenir material should be designed to capitalise on the importance of word-of-mouth promotion and should aim to develop appropriate expectations among future visitors.

Costs for developing and distributing a PVIK and associated souvenirs could be defrayed by a direct or indirect user-pays approach.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Priority should be given to making a full-colour guidebook readily available. This may mean improving distribution of existing DE or commercial material, encouraging reissue of an existing commercial guide with DE input, or the development ab initio of a new publication.

RECOMMENDATION 15

An integrated communication strategy should be developed to enable the most effective and consistent development of future information and interpretive services for Fraser Island. A Visit-Based Communication Strategy is suggested as a model.