K'GARI (FRASER ISLAND) BUSHFIRE REVIEW

IGEM acknowledges the Butchulla people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of K'gari. We recognise their connection to the land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Review themes and findings

Strategic value

- Review World Heritage agreement and funding arrangements
- **Disaster management in World Heritage listed sites**
- Significant environmental and cultural heritage sites

Planning and plans

- State bushfire plans regularly reviewed and exercised
- Hazard specific guidance
- Happy Valley community planning good practice
- **Interagency Protocol for Fire Management**
- **Financial delegation and authority for Incident Controllers**
- Improved planning for bushfires in national parks
- Incident management transfer of command and control
- **Evacuation planning for bushfires on K'gari**

Understanding risk

- Local bushfire risk mitigation plans, bushfire risk mapping and methodology available to community
- Prescribed burn program
- Collaborative review of firelines, tracks and trails
- **Predictive products and services**

Stakeholder engagement

- Locality-specific fire management group for K'gari
- Increase Traditional Owners, community and business involvement
- **Aerial asset public information resource**
- **Bushfire risk communications planning**

Prevention and preparedness

- **Enhanced training and exercising for rangers**
- **Visitor management**
- **Campfire compliance and awareness**

Response capability

- **Remote Area Firefighting Teams**
- **Traditional Owner incident management roles**
- Resource model for firefighting in national parks
- Situational reporting and requests for assistance
- **Clarify incident levels and arrangements**

14 October 2020 **Orange Creek** Vegetation fire reported, QPWS and Orchid Beach RFB attended. QPWS assumed Incident Control. 15-23 October 2020 19 October 2020 **Orchid Beach** IMT established. Aerial **Platypus Bay Track** observation and predictive Backburn conducted. modelling commenced. Backburning Orchid Beach. Dundabara ranger base **Awinya Track** prepared to defend. 26 October – 11 **Bowarrady Track** November 2020 Dundubara Campers relocated and camping zones closed. Fire breaks cleared. Spotover controlled with backburning. 27 November - 6 5-15 November 2020 December 2020 **Cathedral Beach** Happy Valley Fire breaks prepared, Incident control transferred to campgrounds closed. QFES 27 November. Happy Waterbombing commenced. Valley residents community **Public Safety Preservation** meetings and preparations. Act invoked. Campers 6 December PSPA order evacuated. invoked and EA issued. Happy Valley township 17-23 November 2020 successfully defended. **Moon Point Road** Aerial waterbombing and gel laid by QFES. Backburning continued. Fire jumped Moon Point Rd. 21 November – 7 December 2020 29 November – 5 **Kingfisher Bay** December 2020 Waterbombing directed fire K'gari Camp away from the resort. Resort Aerial waterbombing and gel closed 30 November. drops conducted to protect K'gari camp and significant cultural sites. **Eurong township**

Total area 166,038 ha – approx. 85,000 ha burnt Source: DES and PSBA GIS Unit

K'gari key facts

- **UNESCO World Heritage site 1992**
- Butchulla native title rights confirmed by Federal Court of Australia in 2014
- Name changed from Fraser Island to K'gari in 2017
- **Queensland Parks and Wildlife manage 98% of the island (163,755 ha)**
- 2016 census showed 182 residents, 201 private dwellings
- Over 300,000 visitors per year
- 600km of roads, more than 250km of walking tracks and 28 campsites

Response facts and figures

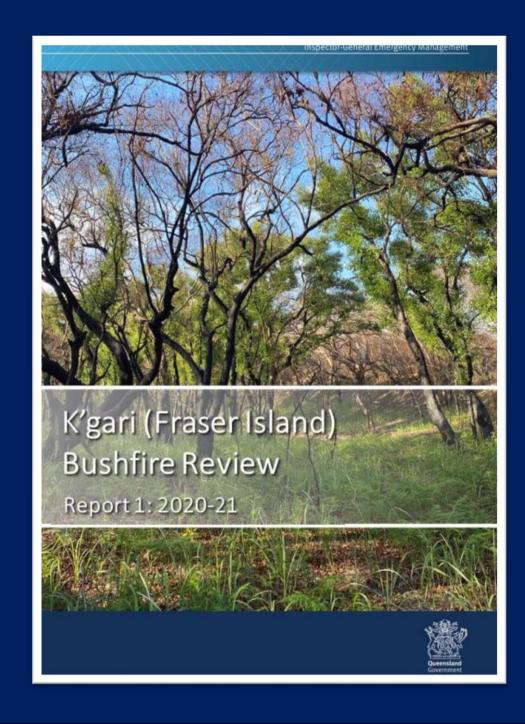
- **Event timeframe 14 October to 16 December 2020 total of 64 days**
- Communities and facilities threatened
- 30 water bombing aircraft used
- 13.3 million litres of fresh water, salt water and gel additives dropped

Challenges:

- Balance cultural and conservation values with visitor numbers
- Access and transport restrictions and limitations
- Limited or no mobile and internet connectivity No mains power, town water supply or connected sewerage
- Dry and fire receptive vegetation, inaccessible terrain and narrow sand tracks

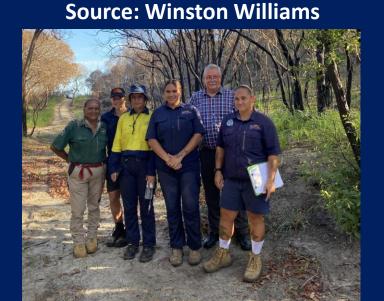
Review facts and figures

- Review timeframe 4 December 2020 to 31 March 2021
- 147 community members engaged
- 5 community and business forums
- 1 Traditional Owner forum 1 researcher forum
- 78 written public submissions
- 38 recommendations





Hazard reduction burn Happy Valley Source: Winston Williams



IGEM and Butchulla Land and Sea Rangers



Happy Valley Community Forum



Happy Valley residents. Source: Courier Mail online

To access the K'gari (Fraser Island) **Bushfire Review Report, go to:**







