



# FRIDAY ENVIRONMENT FORUM

NPA Environment Centre

17 March

## Pandanus in Peril

**This week at Friday Environment Forum – Joel Fostin** will be guest speaker at Noosa Parks Association's Friday Environment Forum 17<sup>th</sup> March, and he is passionate about preserving the iconic Pandanus trees (*Pandanus tectorius*) that provide habitat and stabilise dune systems all along our coastline. Mr Fostin observes that "for some time now the survival of Pandanus populations in South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales has been threatened by Pandanus dieback."



Pandanus devastation at Indian Head on Fraser Island.

Caused by a tiny stem sucking leafhopper, *Jamella australiae*, dieback has resulted in catastrophic losses of up to 50% of Fraser Island's Pandanus trees (approximately 50,000 plants).

Significant losses have occurred even closer to home in Cooloola National Park and Noosa Shire.

A tiny, native wasp has proven successful in the fight against Pandanus leafhopper, and where released as a biological control, has reduced leafhopper numbers to 'safe levels'.

Joel Fostin is a student at Sunshine Coast University who has been captive breeding and releasing the parasitoid wasp under the guidance of Queensland Museum's Curator of Entomology. He asserts that "Preventative and timely monitoring of Pandanus populations containing *Jamella australiae*, coupled with wasp translocation, will prevent new cases of dieback, whilst the imminent death of stress affected Pandanus can be prevented by physical intervention at critical stages."

At present there is no action plan or program to address this issue but urgent action and funding is needed. Joel aims to raise \$80,000 to establish and train a team to save surviving but critically affected Pandanus. He has established a fighting fund to which everyone is invited to contribute at <https://www.gofundme.com/fraserrescue>. Strong collaboration has been achieved with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, traditional custodians of Fraser Island (K'gari), the Butchulla people as well as environmental groups and tourism businesses.

Everyone who appreciates the iconic Pandanus trees so essential to the beauty and protection of our local beaches will be interested to find out more about this alarming problem.

Arrive early on Friday March 17 to enjoy coffee at 10.30am. For those interested in an interpretive birding walk before the forum, meet Valda in the Environment Centre car park at 8.30am.

**All welcome.**



This tiny wasp, *Aphanomerus* nr. *Pusillus* can help combat Pandanus dieback.