

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Agriculture Resources and Environment Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Extension of sand mining North Stradbroke Island  
**Date:** Monday, 28 October 2013 11:32:05 AM

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My name is Bill Giles. I live in Dunwich, North Stradbroke Island. I am writing in support of the extension of sand mining on the Island. I am not an employee of Sibelco nor have I ever been an employee of any previous sand mining company. Nor do I have any financial interests in sand mining.

I have lived on the island, this time around, since 1996. Previously I lived here in the late forties/early fifties when sand mining was in its infancy. Consequently I have witnessed not only the development of techniques and practice for the rehabilitation of mined land but also the benefits the presence of sand miners have brought to the community.

### **Sand Mining – The Environment vs. Economic Stability**

When it comes to discussing sand mining the Green groups, especially Stradbroke Island Management Organisation (SIMO) and Friends of Stradbroke Island (FOSI) and supported by the aboriginal corporate body QYAC are long on emotion and short on rational argument. Unfortunately, emotional arguments so often trump reason at least until you start to reason. Changes should be based on solid evidence, consensus and need to build in the option for review as we learn more of what works best.

The Green's position on sand mining is based on emotional intelligence i.e. sand mining is an anathema and must be stopped at any cost. Whereas there should be a community debate based on enlightened self-interest, a considered, rational examination of options. I.e. what does sand mining contribute to the island and what would be the consequence of losing it? And, with what could we fill the void in the economy if the sand miners ceased operation?

The permanent, residential population of North Stradbroke numbers about 2,200. Stradbroke Island Management Organisation (SIMO) has a large mailing list, the majority of whom live on the mainland but, its paid up membership base is around 55 to 60 of which only some live on the island. In the fifteen years I have been resident on North Stradbroke I have never seen a SIMO or FOSI initiated survey of community opinion on sand mining. Yet they purport to represent the island community. On the other hand Mark Robinson MP, the member for Cleveland, commissioned a survey of the island population that revealed that 83% of respondents support sand mining.

The majority of members of the residential community take a balanced view. We accept that sand mining will be present on the island for some years to come and, we appreciate the contribution that Sibelco and its predecessors have made to the community. We know well the leavening effect they have on the local economy. However, we are also aware of the possible consequences to the environment that

could be caused by irresponsible mining practices. To alleviate those concerns UNIMIN and CRL and latterly Sibelco convened Community Consultative Committees to monitor the application of their Environmental Management Plans. I sat on one for several years and made many field trips to assess the efficacy of their efforts. I was totally satisfied. SIMO and FOSI are represented on the committee.

The previous Government contended that Eco Tourism will be the mainstay of the island's economy after sand mining. At present during the High Season all available tourist accommodation and camping sites are fully booked. To accommodate expansion of the tourist industry to meet economic goals set for post sand mining there will have to be a massive increase in public and private infrastructure. Given the various levels of Government and the numerous Government Departments involved in the development process it is doubtful that even the necessary planning and approval could be achieved in the seven years the Bligh Government had allowed.

The issue of expansion of town foot prints is further complicated by the granting of Native Title. The Indigenous Land Use Agreement has not been signed off consequently we still do not know what land will be allocated for exclusive use or indeed what exclusive use means. That's not surprising since all negotiations between the Quandamooka families and the Government were conducted in camera.

The favoured expression anti-sand mining factions (SIMO, FOSI & QAYC) use to define their objective post sand mining is "A Sustainable Economy." But that is not realistic because it cannot be measured. What is to be sustained and at what level? And, what is the unit of measure? - Average household income, the number of employed, the number of tourist visits, the length of stay on the island, the number of tourist dollars that remain on the island? Surely the start point in determining Stradbroke's future must be to decide what we want the island to look like. Do we want another Gold Coast? Do we want another Bribie Island? Or, do we want to preserve status quo for the benefit of a privileged few. To my knowledge, State and Local Government have ideas of their own for the future but there doesn't appear to be any coordinated attempt at planning. And, time to do that and arrive at a workable solution is vital.

Another flawed argument of those of the Green persuasion is that those who lose employment with Sibelco will find work in hospitality and tourism. The sand miners pay their employees, on average, \$30 to \$40 per hour. Hospitality employees receive, on average, \$16 to \$17 per hour. When it comes to swapping jobs there is no competition.

I accept that tourism will always be a part of the island economy. However to grow it rapidly in the time allowed will need large injections of capital and I cannot see government, at any level, having the resources to do that. Private capital will be necessary but private investors will not be willing to risk their capital under conditions of uncertainty. We need to start planning now to remove those uncertainties.

The majority of island residents accepts that there must be an end to sand mining on the island. All we ask is the time and resources to prepare for that time. The task of ensuring an enduring economic future for the island is an extremely complex one and will require years of research and planning. What the LNP is offering is a time frame within which to do that and during which we will have the continuing support of Sibelco. Please do not deny us that.

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