

## **Submission to the Inquiry into North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013 (Bill)**

To: Chairperson and Committee  
Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee  
Parliament House, Brisbane QLD 4000

I completely oppose the extension of the sand mining timetable on North Stradbroke Island beyond what has already been legislated. There is adequate wind-up and wind down time already allowed.

In your recommendations to the Minister I ask that you urge the Minister to consult with

\* **tourism:** this is where Queensland is placing great economic emphasis and already Redlands is on this path. (A mined-out sand island that once had unique character is of little interest to tourists drawn to natural features)

\* **employment:** tying jobs permanently to mining gives no incentive to diversify nor develop alternative employment. That is not to say employment from mining has not been important. The cry of "jobs, jobs" tends to obscure alternative pathways not developed and current employees remain locked into one-skill jobs. Alternative jobs might come from tidal energy development, marine research, etc in addition to tourism and indigenous land care or whatever they themselves propose..

\* **science and education:** what research or higher skills could emerge from the strategic geographical values of this sand island? In this century of changing physical environments, North Stradbroke Island will no doubt provide research opportunities across a wide range of matters and this could fit well with other Asian-pacific countries also engaged.

In addition,

\* **Indigenous consultation:** I note that the recent report *Health and Community Services Committee regarding the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2013* inquiry pointed out that there were problems with consultation between indigenous groups and government in the National Parks matter, as in North Qld. With Stradbroke island, media coverage indicates at least one local indigenous Stradbroke group has not been a participant in talks with mining company and government. This does not fit with what the community expects the process to be and creates a perception of "getting around" the matter. I believe all parties have to be at the discussion table. It is to be regretted that the proposed legislation might be a part of this avoidance and this would set an unjust precedent. Some mining companies in Australia have made great progress in responding to their obligations. It has to be said that Sibelco, the mining company in the current matter, is still before the courts facing charges for removing and selling sand from the island without permits. There are question

marks over the lack of EPBC Act approval for Enterprise mine and the Commonwealth is investigating.

Any legislation would have to indicate what processes will be put in place to protect and enhance Stradbroke Island's natural values and report back to the people. I am in agreement with the following summary of the effect of mining on Stradbroke Island:

*Mining destroys – forever – dune landscapes and habitats created over millennia. Mining will impact on the island's aquifers, Ramsar wetlands and endangered species such as koalas, acid frogs and swamp orchids.*

*The Bill will allow mining into areas completely surrounded by the National Park. In fact, mining will destroy earmarked future national park. The NSIPS Act 2011 provided for 80% of the island is to become national park, jointly managed by the Quandamooka People.*

*The Bligh government gave a very generous transition period, extending the most lucrative mine, Enterprise, by eight years to 2019.*

*It is a preposterous assertion that an extra 16 years are needed for transition, on top of 8 years already granted, for an industry that employs only 13% of the island's workers.*

In conclusion, I ask that the Committee recommend that the proposed legislation be not just a "political decision" based on reaction to perceived past political decisions but that the legislation allows the full range of protective measures that will take the special natural and heritage features of this great sand island into a future befitting its residents and future generations.

The Bill should be opposed.

Genevieve Gall  
Birkdale Qld 4159

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