



28 September 2013

The Chair and members
 Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee
 Parliament House, Brisbane QLD 4000
 Email: arec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee

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

The Wilderness Society, one of Australia's largest conservation organisations with some 45,000 members (many of whom are in Queensland), wishes to make the following very brief submission to the Inquiry into the *North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013*.

The Wilderness Society has seen at first hand the environmentally damaging effects of sand mining in ecologically sensitive places. TWS has previously campaigned with Traditional Owners to prevent sand mining in areas like Shelburne Bay on the north east coast of Cape York Peninsula, and is campaigning to oppose similar developments on the west coast of Cape York. Sand Islands, such as Fraser Island, Moreton Island and North Stradbroke Island are ecological jewels – and are Fraser and North Stradbroke are the two largest sand islands in the world, with existing tourism markets and immense future tourism potential. These islands demand the highest level of protection for their sensitive natural and cultural values, in a way which provides opportunities to use natural competitive advantages around nature and culture protection to build long term environmentally-sustainable economic opportunities such as eco-tourism.

It is understood that this *North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013* allows for the extension of mining at Enterprise beyond 2019 to at least 2035 and will increase the area to be mined. The Bill also allows for additional 5-year extension at Yarraman and Enterprise for the purposes of rehabilitation, bringing closure dates for the two mines to 2020 and 2040 respectively.

The Wilderness Society fundamentally opposes the proposal to extend sand mining on North Stradbroke Island. Mining destroys – forever – dune landscapes and habitats created over millennia. Mining impacts 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.

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The Bill lowers the bar on environmental controls. It removes buffers for Ramsar wetlands and national park and allows mining disturbance into plant communities previously protected under the provisions of the NSIPS Act 2011. Conditions preventing off-lease harm, and the requirement for robust environmental studies preceding new mine sites, are weakened.

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.

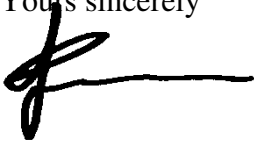
I am very concerned the government trampled over native title rights in order to make good favours to the mining company. The only stakeholder to be consulted on the legislation was Sibelco, as revealed in the ABC 7.30 program (18.7.13) and in Estimates (19.7.13). All other stakeholders including the Quandamooka People have been excluded. That the government has failed to consult with the Quandamooka People about the planned legislation is appalling. I am led to believe that Sibelco 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.

The island's environment, the rights and interests of traditional owners and Stradbroke's nature brand are being sacrificed so the government can give Sibelco everything it asked for. This doesn't make economic sense. The proposed legislation will hold the island back from a genuinely sustainable future.

Finally, the fact that the public has only been given a little over a week to comment on complex legislation that has many ramifications for the island community, the environment, the Quandamooka People and the People of Queensland is unacceptable. Such a woefully inadequate time-frame will surely make the risk of legal action and physical protest. Instead, the Newman Government needs to learn to take more time its processes, and to listen and respond to the TOs and others who are indicating the Bill should be opposed. The Wilderness Society certainly opposes in the strongest possible terms, the extension of sand mining on North Stradbroke Island, and the proposed legislation designed to facilitate this.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. Should you wish to discuss any issues contained in this brief submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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