

28 October 2013

Parliamentary Committee Reviewing the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013

Via Email: arec@parliament.qld.gov.au

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) is the peak regional environmental advocacy group on the Sunshine Coast (QLD). Established in 1980 it currently represents 50 community groups working on conservation and sustainability with a combined membership of over 15,000 individuals.

SCEC is of the view that the Parliamentary Committee should consider **not** proceeding with ***The North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013*** for the following reasons –

1. The proximity of the Enterprise Mine to Ramsar listed wetlands poses significant and unacceptable risk to this Matter of National Environmental Significance (MNES).
2. Scientific evidence clearly demonstrates the immediate and longer term impact of such intensive mining activity on these wetlands
3. It is our understanding that the Federal Environment Department is investigating Sibelco's decade long non-compliance with the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. We submit the Bill should not proceed until this is resolved. This matter also brings into serious question this proponent's ability to exercise fundamental environmental stewardship and responsibility.
4. The proposed Bill removes the requirement for ongoing environmental studies of the largely old growth forest in the proposed extended mine path. The habitat of Koalas and Glossy Black Cockatoos and other threatened species needs to be protected
5. The real benefits and opportunities of long term sustainable jobs associated with nature tourism are likely to be lost if environmental and aesthetic damage to North Stradbroke Island is allowed to continue, particularly with weakened protections, for a limited number of short term mining jobs. The Bill will lead to loss of employment opportunities not a gradual transition as claimed. Those currently employed in mining should be accommodated in the initial phases of a transition to more sustainable employment and economic opportunities.
6. North Stradbroke Island is more valuable to Queenslanders retained in perpetuity as

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a natural resource for tourism and recreation than by short-sighted and vested interests.

7. The North Stradbroke Island Bill fails to restore the rights of Queenslanders to object to a mining extension and challenge a renewal in court. That right is available to them under the Mineral Resources Act, which applies everywhere else in Queensland.

8. It appears that Sibelco, a company currently facing criminal charges in the Queensland Magistrates Court, has been given preferential treatment by the government by way of a special law that bypasses the Mineral Resources Act. Why?

In conclusion, for the aforementioned reasons and that a case against the company is currently the subject of court proceedings, we strongly submit this should not be proceed, and, more appropriately, shelved.

Yours Sincerely,

Liaison and Advocacy
Sunshine Coast Environment Council