

AN OPEN LETTER TO CAMPBELL NEWMAN

Stradbroke Island is precious

Dear Mr Newman,

We have some questions about your North Stradbroke Bill to extend sand mining.

Your father, as Federal Environment minister, ended sand mining on Fraser Island in 1976. He accepted that sand mining causes major permanent environmental harm and damages the tourism economy. Why won't you?

Sand mining will result in the total destruction of 14 square kilometres of forests, rich in biodiversity and scenic value, at Sibelco's Enterprise mine.

On 30 October, your department admitted that over 70% of the mine path is "undisturbed bushland". Did you know that this is home to many threatened species, including the island's genetically distinct koala and the beautiful glossy black cockatoo?

Scientists conclude that sand mining also destroys the complex structure of ancient sand dunes integral to the flow of water to the island's internationally recognised wetlands and lakes. These constitute half the island. A huge fresh water aquifer also lies beneath the whole island.

There is significant widespread opposition to your actions, including from island business owners. Your legislation will cause more community division. It will also set back reconciliation with traditional owners, who say they will challenge your Bill in the Federal Court.

Prior to the 2012 State election you promised a level playing field for mining leases on Stradbroke. Instead, your Bill shifts the goal posts for Sibelco and sacks the umpire. Elsewhere in Queensland opponents can challenge mining extensions in the Supreme Court. Your Bill abolishes this right.

Your Bill creates a special law for a private company owned by the fourth richest family in Belgium, a company which is on trial in Brisbane for illegal sand mining on Stradbroke. Why didn't you await the court's verdict, due early next year?

As you know, your Attorney-General has refused to arm the Director of Public Prosecutions with your government's files so the DPP can decide whether he agrees with the opinion of two experienced criminal lawyers (one a senior counsel) that there is a prima facie case for also charging Sibelco with stealing and fraud.

Our Supreme Court in 2010 decided that Sibelco had no lawful authority to sell non-mineral sand for landscaping and building. It had been doing this for a decade. If you take and sell another's property without lawful authority, isn't that stealing?

An analysis of your Bill shows that Sibelco is getting everything it asked for and more! In 2011, Sibelco asked for an extension of mining to 2027 - you are extending it to 2035!

Mr Newman, what is going on? Why are you breaking pre-election promises and trashing the rights of Queenslanders to hand over \$1.5 Billion (Sibelco's own figure) to a wealthy Belgian family?

Your government has sacked over 20,000 public servants. Do you really think that Queenslanders will swallow your claim to be extending sand mining for 22 years to provide a "transition" for, according to the latest census, 115 mine workers?

Sibelco declared, well after the 2012 State election, that it spent \$91,840 to help your campaign in Ashgrove. But it also spent much more (undeclared) money on numerous full page newspaper ads and television advertising to peddle its PR myths.

Is there a connection between your broken promises to electors and Sibelco's political expenditure? What was discussed at your private meetings with Sibelco CEO, Campbell Jones?

You know that there have been no independent economic or environmental impact studies. And your department admitted on 30 October there has been no consultation with anyone apart from Sibelco. Do you think Queenslanders may conclude that this looks like a crooked deal?

Isn't it time there was an independent public enquiry into sand mining on North Stradbroke?

Friends of Stradbroke Island Inc.

