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MEDIA RELEASE

4 out of 5 Queenslanders say 'Don't Shut Straddie Down'

A poll of 1000 Queensland residents has found 81% want sandmining on North Stradbroke Island slowly phased out to 2027, rather than an immediate shut down in the next couple of years.

Unimin Australia Sustainability Manager, Paul Smith, a long-time Straddie resident, said the research showed most Queenslanders want to see more national park on the island, but also want existing jobs and businesses to be protected from the sudden closure of mining.

The poll, conducted by Auspoll in November, showed 71% were in favour of more National Park on Straddie, but a similar 72% wanted mining to continue in its current form.

When asked the question of when they wanted to see mining end, 81% preferred the Government's original promise of 2027. Only 19% wanted to see mining shut down within the next couple of years.

"Four out of five Queenslanders are saying 'Don't Shut Straddie Down', and only one in five agree with the environmental groups that mining should stop soon," Mr Smith said.

"We are calling on the Government to be fair to the workers and businesses on Straddie and allow mining to continue to a dignified exit in 2027.

"Independent economic analysis* has shown Unimin's sand mines support almost half the economic activity on North Stradbroke Island, generating \$130 million of economic activity each year, and supporting around 650 jobs in South East Queensland."

Mr Smith said Unimin and its predecessors have been mining and rehabilitating Stradbroke for the last 50 years, and hold mining leases which they were planning to work until beyond 2050.

"We have always supported a managed transition to National Park, but we have valid rights to valuable mineral sands that the world is desperate to use," he said.

The mineral sands are used to make important products such as titanium metal and a lead replacement in paint.

"The Queensland Resources Council only recently confirmed the resources sector generates \$25 billion of demand in the Queensland economy. Queensland's prosperity relies deeply on mining and it is crazy to stop a clean, efficient and sustainable mining operation with an award-winning reputation for rehabilitation," Mr Smith said.

"The proposed mining path that will take Unimin's Stradbroke operation to 2027 covers ground which has largely been mined before, and will not affect any pristine wilderness or ecologically sensitive habitat.

"If the Government was to shut down mining now, the only thing it would be protecting is the egos of those who have campaigned against sand mining for years. Our polling shows most fair-minded Queenslanders want a balance between the environment and development.

"Early closure of the mine will hurt jobs, local small businesses and the Indigenous community. It won't provide enough time to put in place the tourism infrastructure that can replace the jobs that will be lost.

"The green groups want to return the island to wilderness, with 'low-impact, nature based tourism'. This means 'no development, no large populations, just a couple of tracks through the dunes and a camping ground.'

“Those who want to shut Straddie down simply don’t care what happens to the community and economy of our island. This poll shows the majority of Queenslanders do care, and want to see a sustainable community, a sustainable economy, and a sustainable environment.”

“And that’s what Unimin’s Sustainable Stradbroke strategy will deliver.”

For a copy of the Auspoll results please refer to the attached pdf document.

*Synergies Economic Consulting report on the impact on North Stradbroke Island from ceasing sand mining, June 2010

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For further information contact:

Paul Smith
Sustainability Manager – Mineral Sands
Community Relations Manager
Unimin Australia Limited – Mineral Sands

Email: paul.smith@unimin.com.au

Mobile: 0408 766 186

Website: www.sustainablestradbroke.com.au

Unimin Australia Limited (UAL) is an Australian resources company playing a key role on the international and domestic industrial minerals stage. With 10 sites in Queensland and over 40 sites within Australia and New Zealand, UAL is a major contributor to domestic GDP. UAL’s operations on North Stradbroke Island include both Silica sands and CRL Minerals Sands (Rutile, Ilmenite and Zircon). CRL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Unimin Australia. Unimin Australia is part of US based Unimin Corporation, a 134 year old family owned business.

Unimin has a proud record of environmental achievement and is committed to a Sustainable Stradbroke. As evidence of its environmental record, the Queensland Government in 2008 awarded Unimin the prestigious Resource Industries Sustainability Award for outstanding performance in Environmental Best Practice.