

# What is a Sustainable Stradbroke?

Since sand mining began in the 1950's on North Stradbroke Island (NSI) it has helped build the strong community we see today. Whether through directly employing local people, undertaking best practice rehabilitation or underpinning demand for important services, mining plays a key role in the island's future.

We believe the mining operations on NSI can be here for many more years to come and together with the people of NSI we can deliver better outcomes for the community, the environment and continue to support the island economy. There is a future for a Sustainable Environment, Sustainable Community and a Sustainable Economy on NSI.

## Sustainable Environment

Unimin – Mineral Sands is an award-winning organisation recognised for its contribution to best practice environmental rehabilitation. In fact, in 2008 it was awarded the prestigious Resource Industries Sustainability award for outstanding performance in environmental best practice by the Environmental Protection Agency. On receiving the award, the Queensland Environment Minister said "CRL's [Unimin] continuous rehabilitation of land at its North Stradbroke Island sand mining operation has achieved a self-sustaining ecosystem similar to pre-mine conditions."

- Unimin – Mineral Sands operates Queensland's first accredited plant nursery specialising in mining rehabilitation. Plant nursery production averages 140,000 plants used to restore 75 hectares per year.
- 75 hectares of rehabilitated land is the equivalent of 150 football fields each year!
- Only 1% of mineral sand mined on NSI is actually removed from the Island. That's why Unimin can rehabilitate the sand dunes mined back to their original form.
- At Unimin we have looked closely at our lease holdings and have identified areas of undisturbed land and rehabilitated lands that would be suitable for National Park, without affecting our current and future mining interests. We believe a staged implementation of National Park, over a number of years, could achieve a balanced environmental, economic and social outcome.
- However, National Park cannot occur until the state has resolved its interests with the native title claimants. Without a resolution of land tenure issues and native title rights, no land can be "converted" to park.

## Sustainable Community

One in five of the 2,000 people who live on the Island are part of a mining family. In fact, Unimin – Mineral Sands supports more than 600 jobs on and off the Island.

- Unimin employees form an important part of the volunteer services for fire, coast guard and SES. One third of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Services members on the Island are mining employees.
- Ceasing mining activity on NSI could result in a total employment reduction of 30% (including direct and indirect employment with the mine)<sup>1</sup>.

- Around 40% of all children in childcare and at school on NSI come from mining families. Without this level of attendance, the same range of services are unlikely to be offered to the remaining students as there would not be enough to justify specialist teachers and programs<sup>1</sup>.
- Around 15% of mine workers are from the local Indigenous community. Without mining operations on the Island, Indigenous communities may experience greater impacts due to a loss of employment and an escalation in the costs of living.
- Sand mining on NSI supports almost \$100 million in wages and income for small businesses<sup>1</sup>.
- Unimin – Mineral Sands has contributed more than \$1 million in sponsorship and community funding over the last ten years.

## Sustainable Economy

Unimin was keen to better understand exactly what impact sand mining has on NSI, and the consequences of ceasing sand mining all together. For this, Unimin engaged independent advice from Synergies Economic Consulting<sup>1</sup>.

The economic analysis clearly demonstrates that current sand mining operations on NSI are critical to the Island's economy, creating up to 44% of total economic activity – that is a \$130 million injection into the Queensland economy each year.

Stopping sand mining on the Island would have a direct negative impact on the future of NSI.

- A doubling of tourism activity would be needed to offset the loss of mining activity on the Island. However, the Synergies economic analysis suggests that given the weakness in the growth of domestic tourism, tourism is unlikely to fill the gap for almost 20 years.
- Stopping sand mining is likely to increase the price of ferry transport services, electricity services and fuel prices on NSI.
  - Stopping sand mining could undermine the viability of barge operations to the island.
  - Transmission costs on NSI are currently \$6 million a year. Without the mining operations the costs would need to be shared around the remaining Island residents and holiday home owners. This would increase the cost of electricity for all Island users.
  - The mining industry on NSI currently accounts for 80% of all fuel use. The loss of mining could force the primary fuel supplier to withdraw their facilities on the Island, thereby increasing the cost of fuel.

<sup>1</sup>Data obtained from Synergies Economic Consulting, May 2010