



The Friends of Stradbroke Island Association Inc.

Newsletter No. 56 December 2009

FOSI was formed in 1988 to oppose the construction of inappropriate development at Cylinder Beach. FOSI continues to monitor proposals for this site, and others on North Stradbroke Island, with the aim of preserving the island's unique features: coastal villages, remarkable landscape and beaches, and areas of significant vegetation and wildlife. Membership is open to those who support FOSI's aims.

MEMBERSHIP RATES, 2009: Individual \$15.00 Family \$20.00 Concession \$5.00

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Island life. . .



It's mine! I got it first! . . . a pair of Kookaburras (above) plays tug of war with a large caterpillar.



Strolling. . . Sooty Oyster Catchers on Deadman's Beach (above).

In this issue

- E-mail blasts Bligh p. 4
- Courier-Mail exposes mining destruction p.6
- We remember Jani Haenke p. 8

WHY WE SHOULD SAVE STRADDIE

North Stradbroke Island (NSI) is the only sand island off the south-east coast of Queensland not protected against the environmental devastation of sand mining. It is the closest of these islands to the major population centre of Greater Brisbane, which has an ever increasing need of open space for its citizens who would benefit from ending sand mining and declaring National Park.

There is a growing alliance of local and regional community groups and organisations concerned about the future of North Stradbroke Island.¹ The goal is to end sand mining on the island. There is a unique opportunity to do so. More than a dozen of the mining leases have expired. Some expired up to two years ago and some are large in area, including leases currently being mined pending decisions on applications to renew the leases for periods in excess of 20 years.

The mining companies have no 'right' to renewal of expired leases. The Government has an unfettered discretion to refuse, and in fact may not renew unless the Minister is satisfied of each of a number of factors - in particular that the public interest will not be adversely affected by renewal. ²

Currently, mining leases cover 70 % of the Island and the public is excluded under threat of prosecution.

Although damage has been done by mining, much of the island remains unravaged. But it is in danger and needs our collective assistance. It is time to save Straddie. These are some of the reasons for doing so:-

10 compelling reasons to stop sand mining

1. Save old growth forests, woodlands and everything else in the path of the mines

Sand mining is extremely destructive. Almost everything in the mine path is completely destroyed. *cont. p.2*

¹ See list on page 5.

² Mineral Resources Act, section 286A.

Why save Straddie cont.

Post-mining ‘rehabilitation’ is a poor substitute for ancient dunes and the complex ecosystems which depend upon them remaining intact.

2. Preserve the island’s remarkable biodiversity

The island is universally acknowledged as having incredible diversity in flora and fauna. This was reflected recently by Premier Anna Bligh –

“The Bligh Government recognises that Stradbroke Island is a valuable natural asset to the people of south east Queensland. The Bligh Government also recognises that this is an area that needs to be protected and preserved for future generations.”³

3. Hydrology – the extensive aquifer must be protected, not put at risk.

Stradbroke Island was formed by the deposition and erosion of dunes over thousands of years. The mechanism of water moving through these layers is not fully understood, nor the effect of this hydrological system on flora and fauna appreciated. Mining has already caused damage to freshwater lakes on the Island – further damage is a serious risk if mining continues.

4. Protect the unique Island koala

Island koalas are genetically different from mainland koalas, having been isolated for up to 8000 years. Genetic data indicates that Stradbroke Island has the only naturally occurring island population. Other island populations have been introduced. This means that

the Stradbroke koala population is of very high conservation value.⁴

5. We need more National Parks

The Bligh Government recognizes the acute need for more national parks and public open space. South East Queensland has 19% public open space compared to Greater Sydney’s 49%! See <http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/environment/index.aspx> and http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/environment/land_conservation.aspx

6. Create an economy based on preservation not destruction

It’s time to replace the temporary, ever-dwindling number of jobs in a destructive industry, with permanent jobs based upon National Parks and low impact, well-managed eco-tourism. There are opportunities for co-management of parks and jobs for the island’s Indigenous land claimants. More mining puts these jobs at risk because tourists are attracted by intact ancient dunes and their complex ecosystems.

7. Citizens’ rights before miners’ rights

Our opposition to sand mining on Stradbroke is specific. We are not anti-mining per se. But, it is one thing to mine in outback Queensland. It is quite another to lock up 70% of NSI under mining leases and to mine a fragile coastal environment within a short distance of major population centres in need of more public open space.

8. Areas being mined are zoned ‘Conservation’

The Redlands Planning Scheme, approved and gazetted by the State

cont. p. 3

³ The letter was written on the Premier’s behalf in March 2009 by her senior policy advisor and sent to those who emailed the premier about CRL’s attempts to extend its sand mining operations to selling island sand for construction purposes. The letter also stated that the Bligh government supported the Redland City Council’s rejection of CRL’s proposal, but to date the Government has done nothing to actively support the RCC’s decision.

⁴ Shown by research carried out under the direction of Frank Carrick of the University of Qld .

Why save Straddie cont.

Government in 2006, designates that most of the Island is zoned ‘conservation’, including the areas being mined by CRL and Unimin. Ending mining and declaring the Island National Park is the only logical way to ‘conserve’ the Island and put into effect the policy that the Island “needs to be protected and preserved for future generations.”⁵

9. The Global Context

In 1990, Darryl Briskey, the ALP member for Redlands, after announcing the Goss government’s intention to declare 50% of the island National Park (which did not happen) - also said this...

“We must not forget that ultimately the environment sustains all life. If we do not act quickly to protect it, our quality of life will deteriorate and, eventually, continued environmental destruction will mean an end to humanity.”⁶

The responsibility and the need for government to take the lead here is now much more acute than it was in 1990. We must ‘think globally, act locally’.

10. It’s Stradbroke’s turn

Despite the less acute global environmental and other reasons for doing so, the Liberal/ National Party Government under Malcolm Fraser stopped sand mining on Fraser Island in the 1970’s. Similarly, sand mining has been stopped on Moreton Island, Cooloola and at Shelburne Bay in North Queensland by previous ALP State Governments. It is time for the Bligh Government to stop sand mining on Stradbroke Island.

Why we need to act now

We appreciate that this may be a long campaign. However, it can be successful.

North Stradbroke Island is on the doorstep of a large population which is increasing at a very rapid rate as a result of government policy. Most people are concerned about the decline in their quality of life in recent years and understand that it has been brought about by a combination of rapid population growth and a lack of infrastructure to support it. A related issue is the limited public open space. The Premier’s website acknowledges that already there is an acute shortage of public open space. Our area has 19% compared to Greater Sydney’s 49 %. If the Government does not correct the imbalance, it risks suffering at the ballot box in South-East Queensland for this reason alone.

In addition, now that the damage being caused on NSI has been exposed by the Courier-Mail and commercial television news, the Government’s environmental credentials are at risk. People in the Greater Brisbane area and beyond generally are aware of and interested in the Island and most people have stayed on or visited the Island to surf, fish, enjoy the beaches, birdwatch or just relax in the peace and quiet. They care what happens and will take note of the decisions made that affect it.

The State already is the legal owner of the vast majority of land on NSI. By ending sand mining and, in consultation with native title claimants, dedicating this land as National Park, it will assist the Government to solve the public open space shortage. It will also demonstrate that it does care about the environmental destruction of the Island and has acted to save it from further damage. Refusal of all applications to renew expired mining leases is the first step.

More detailed reasons for ceasing sand mining and information about the relatively new category of National Park (recovery), which would be suitable for mined land in need of rehabilitation, are available from FOSI upon request.

⁵ letter from the Premier sent to people a week before the March, 2009 State election – see footnote 2.

⁶ Hansard, 8/5/90, p. 1150

SAVE STRADDIE

 Stop sand mining and declare the Island National Park

Queenslanders want:

- ▶ The destruction on Stradbroke exposed by the Courier Mail to end
- ▶ Preservation and protection of the unique environment for future generations
- ▶ Access to the whole island to enjoy areas denied to the public for decades
- ▶ Long-term employment opportunities, including for indigenous people, through low impact, well managed eco-tourism.
- ▶ National Park to enjoy FOREVER not short-term jobs and profits for a Belgian mining company

The Bligh Government can start the process NOW!
By refusing all applications to renew expired mining leases.

Help Save Straddie: Tell Anna Bligh what you think - email this (with any comments) to: thepremier@premiers.qld.gov.au



THE BIODIVERSITY OF STRADBROKE IS PRECIOUS

DESTRUCTION OF OLD GROWTH FORESTS, WOODLANDS AND ANCIENT DUNES IS CONTINUING - INCLUDING ON EXPIRED MINING LEASES



recent photos by Courier Mail photographer Adam Head

Issued by Friends of Stradbroke Island, Queensland Conservation Council, Community Alliance for Responsible Planning (CARP) Redlands, Fraser Island Defenders Organization, Moreton Island Protection Committee and Wildlife

Above: the e-blast flyer sent to Premier Bligh, see opposite for more detail.

E-mail to Premier with Save Straddie message

Thankyou to all FOSI members who forwarded the e-mail flyer shown opposite, otherwise known as an e-blast, calling for an end to sand mining on NSI to the Premier.

It's not too late to email your copy to the Premier and to encourage all of your friends, family and neighbours to do the same. Also, if you have a Facebook site please posts the flyer there too. Or, if you like write to the Premier directly:

The Hon. Anna Bligh MP,
Premier of Queensland,
PO Box 15185, City East,
Queensland 4002
thepremier@premiers.qld.gov.au

We are pleased to have the support of leading Queensland environmental groups in our campaign to bring an end to sand mining. A big thanks to the following organisations who have distributed the flyer to their members, spread the word about the on-going destruction of North Stradbroke Island via their websites and newsletters and alerted the media to the loss of precious green space:

- **Queensland Conservation Council**
- **Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland**
- **FIDO** (Fraser Island Defenders Organisation)
- **MIPC** (Moreton Island Protection Committee)
- **CARP** (Community Alliance for Responsible Planning (CARP) Redlands).

These groups are encouraging their members to send the e-blast to the Premier and to forward it to their friends, family and contacts so they can do the same. This will increase the pressure on the Government “to do the right thing”.

Miners brush off concerns

In one of its recent publications Unimin subsidiary CRL suggested the anti-sand mining position adopted by FOSI and other groups was a “personal choice” (*The Sand Times, Sept 2009*).

We agree. We live here. So do our kids.

The decision-makers in Unimin live in Melbourne and Europe. One less dune, Banksia or wallaby doesn't matter much to them!

We choose green space, bushland and intact ancient dune systems on the doorstep of a major urban area for generations of Queenslanders to enjoy.



It's not my backyard! . . . mining executives live in Melbourne and Europe, far from where the impact of their decisions is felt.

They choose destruction of dunes and bushland, short-term jobs, profits for a private Belgian company and paltry royalty payments to the State.

What do you choose?

In Brief

Illegal camping

People have been flouting the ban on camping on Deadman's and Frenchman's beaches and other areas of beach and reserve on the island



Pig sty . . . rubbish left by campers on Deadman's Beach.

While we understand the appeal of camping in these lovely places, the sheer number of island visitors means the environment does not have the chance to recover from the damage done by campers.

Illegal campers leave rubbish, human waste and toilet paper, trample vegetation and destroy trees. There is ample space for camping in island campgrounds.

Therefore, we urge the council to be vigilant in discouraging these campers and others to report them to island rangers on 1300 551 253.



Campfire on Frenchman's Beach during a total fire ban.

Paper exposes mining destruction

The Courier-Mail newspaper used dramatic aerial photographs of gaping holes in the ancient dunes to expose the devastation being caused by sand mining on North Stradbroke Island.

The double-page spread published in August prompted an immediate and passionate response from readers.

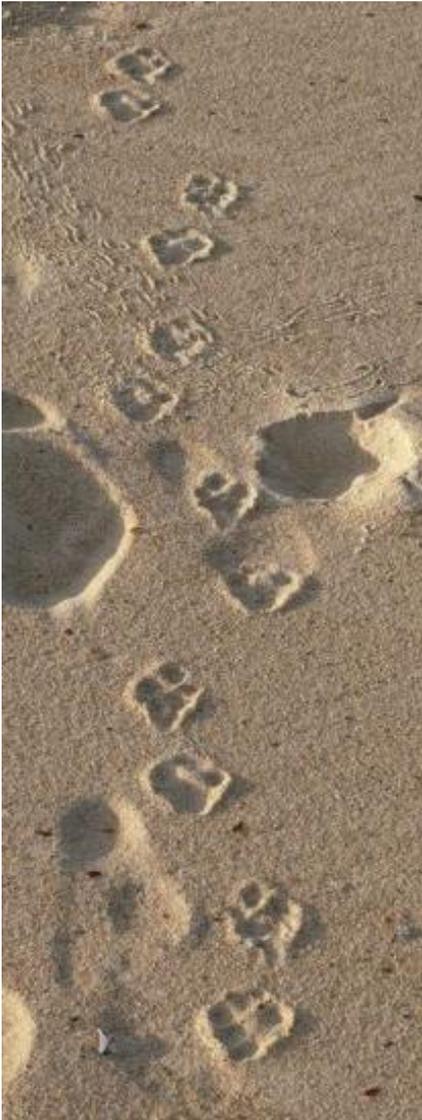
Many people voted in an online poll, participated in blogs, wrote letters to the editor and the Government and their local members to express their dismay. Around 80% of voters in the paper's online poll opposed sand mining on North Stradbroke Island.

While most of the island, including recent rehabilitation and mining operations, remain out-of-bounds to the public it is easy for this issue to remain "out of sight and out of mind" for most people. So well done to the Courier-Mail and others involved for alerting the people of South-East Queensland to what is happening on Straddie.



In Brief

Foxy footprints



Fox tracks on Frenchman's beach.

Emergency

Local emergency services are concerned that the lack of house numbers on island properties could one day lead to a tragedy.

The police, ambulance and emergency services have asked residents to display their street number in a prominent place to help officers find properties easily in case of an emergency.

Out of sight – Out of mind no more: letter writers call for end to destruction on NSI

The Courier-Mail's coverage of the destruction wrought by sand mining on NSI sparked a flurry of letter writing to the newspaper and the State Government. Here are a few extracts:

One wonders what the late Oodgeroo Noonuccal would have to say about the extensive sand mining on her homeland. . . The aerial shots of areas being mined (C-M, Aug 15-16) were staggering. Claire Jolliffe, Buderim. C-M 17 Aug, 2009.

. . . some of the mining leases have expired and are not yet renewed. What a golden opportunity for the Government to implement the ALP's long-held proposal to convert extensive areas into national parks. I defy anyone who has the long-term interest of the island at heart to justify the destruction of the continuing sand mining. **Elinor Drake, Point Lookout. C-M 18 Aug, 2009.**

The public debate about the future of NSI should not be about whether mining is good or bad per se. It should be about what use of the island's resources will best benefit Queenslanders. . . If we don't stop mining, quarrying and urbanisation on areas like this now . . . there will not be enough open space in the south-east for future generations. Robert Magdics, Bardon C-M 22-23 Aug, 2009.

People don't realise that, over the past 50 years, nearly half of NSI has been clear-felled and mined. It can never go back to what it was but we have a chance to keep what is left intact. **David Hannan, Dunwich. C-M 17 Aug, 2009.**

The Government could stop the devastation tomorrow. Some of the leases have been expired for quite some time yet the destruction of the island is being allowed to continue. Sue Ellen Carew FOSI. C-M 22-23 Aug, 2009.

Rejecting a proposed \$1.5 billion resort development at Inskip Point of the Fraser Coast, Premier Anna Bligh said the ancient dune system had to be protected . . . On Stradbroke, the miner doesn't even have to put the dunes back where they were before or in the same shape. **Fran Quinn, C-M 22-23 Aug, 2009.**

The Queensland Government has committed to a National Park target of 7.5 per cent by 2020, of which North Stradbroke Island is a key component. It is also recognised that mining is an integral component of the economy. . . Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy The Hon Stephen Robertson MP, 23/9/09 .

In Memory of Jani Haenke 19 June, 1940 – 6 September, 2009



*FOSI Vice-President the late Jani Haenke.
Photo: Angus Martin.*

Our guiding light, Jani was FOSI'S only Life Member. She essentially founded Friends of Stradbroke Island in 1988, after the threatened construction of a concrete high-rise at Cylinder Beach on the site of Clayton's cottages. Jani organised and funded the initial court case and after losses then successes the proposal was defeated. Over the years Jani's determination for FOSI to dispute other developments on this site led to further objections, court proceedings and negotiations with developers until the acceptably low-impact buildings we see now were completed. We can thank Jani that Cylinder is still unspoilt and bears such a contrast to other major beaches in South-East Queensland. These battles set a precedent for the limited tone of development that we have experienced at Point Lookout.

Jani, as secretary then vice-president, kept FOSI alive and active for many years. She interested people with suitable skills in joining the group and imbued them with her true conservationist principles.

Around 1993 she encouraged Michael Kennedy, an architect with a

strong preservationist perspective to join FOSI and continue the work of the group in controlling the nature of the inevitable changes to the built environment that popularity was bringing to a sleepy coastal hamlet. Together they joined with architects Peter O'Gorman and Brit Andresen to lobby the Redland Shire Council to control development, resulting in the introduction of the Development Control Plan for Point Lookout.

This plan embodied the principles of lightweight low-rise building and protection of the brush box canopy and native vegetation. Jani was in fact the driving force behind the preservation of Point Lookout's character as a unique coastal village.

Over the years of course it has been a struggle to have the council and developers maintain the vision. She wrote many development objections and numerous courts cases were run and financed with Jani always a leading figure. If ever questions were raised in committee meetings about whether FOSI should challenge a particular development proposal, Jani always quietly and determinedly put the affirmative position. She knew you had to stick to your guns.

But it was not her commitment to Point Lookout's built environment that was her strongest suit, Jani placed conservation of the natural world of the island and its surrounding waters as paramount and crucial. However, she always took a global perspective and maintained many other environmental interests and involvements.

Jani was always keen to take up any opportunity to halt the devastation caused by sand mining. I remember her submission condemning the Enterprise Mine plans. She wrote of the damage that would be caused to the ancient dune system upon which grew beautiful old forest and complex vegetation communities. This is the mine that is intended to continue for many more years

and which we have recently seen in aerial photos in the Courier-Mail.

Jani was really gratified that the recent construction sand proposal was rejected by the Redland Council and keen to support the court case in which FOSI and other islanders are supporting the council against CRL's appeal. She may not have seen the recent photos but she understood full well the destruction caused by sand mining.

The FOSI committee would like to

dedicate our future campaign to bring an end to mining to Jani.

We also hope, like many people, that the wonderful Stradbroke Chamber Music Festival organised by Jani and Rachel Smith will continue. I'm sure Jani must have enjoyed the festival more than any other musical experience since it occurred in the magnificent natural setting of Cylinder Beach.

Sue Ellen Carew

On the mining lease: CRL tour

Paul Vekselstein and Sue Ellen Carew attended the CRL Environmental Working Group (EWP) meeting and mine tour in August. Company spokespeople answered questions, gave an update on mining operations and showed community representatives around some of the mine operations. These photos were taken during the tour:



Now you see it - now you don't ... (left) mining operations devour bushland at CRL's Yarraman mine.

Moonscape ... (right) drains like this have replaced creeks and gullies formed over thousands of years.



Plan to privatise Island campgrounds causes concern

A council proposal to lease island camping grounds to a private operator was met with fierce opposition when the proposal became public knowledge.

Many island residents and visitors were concerned about the proposed length of the leases, 30 years, and the lack of community consultation on the issue.

A petition was circulated by concerned residents and a flier, co-signed by FOSI and other groups, was distributed on the island protesting against the move.

In response Redlands City Council conducted some “retro community consultation” and called a meeting of interested community groups, which included FOSI, SIMO, Amity Progress Assoc., Quandamooka and others.

At this meeting FOSI voiced its concerns that the campgrounds retain

their bush settings and new development should be environmentally-sensitive. FOSI also stated that bush camping on Flinders and Main beaches should be managed carefully to protect these sensitive and beautiful areas.

A number of community groups are now working with council to investigate the possibility of a community-based management group for the grounds.

Council has given the local groups a good hearing and has asked them to present a business plan. Some groups in the community are interested in taking up management of the campgrounds. FOSI supports their endeavours and congratulates them on their determination and on the hours of work they have put into their proposal..

Kate Campbell

New book on North Stradbroke Island native plants

The Flora of North Stradbroke Island is a new book that documents the tremendous diversity of plants on Straddie. It provides an excellent reference to all 599 species native to the island, which occur in a variety of habitats, ranging from coastal dunes, tidal wetlands, fresh water wetlands, heathlands, eucalypt forests, rainforests and rocky headlands.

Kathy Stephens and Donovan Sharp of the Queensland Herbarium wrote the book, which was sponsored by CRL and supported by the Minjerribah Moorgumpin Elders in Council. It contains keys, botanical description, and photographs to each of the species. Aboriginal uses for specific plants as related by Auntie Margaret Iselin are also included and are of great interest.

Straddie contains 14 species of plant that are listed as Rare and Threatened under the Nature Conservation Act 1992. Two of these are endemic to the island. In addition, the strikingly beautiful yellow

swamp orchid *Phaius bernaysii* only survives on Straddie after the extinction of other populations in southeast Queensland.



Plant natives... blossoms in an Island garden.

The book is on sale at the North Stradbroke Island Historical Museum, at the Point Lookout Newsagent, through the Elders and at the Herbarium.

Barney Hines

New floating pontoon for One Mile

The Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) organisation on North Stradbroke Island has a fully-equipped vessel ready for medical evacuations at any time.

Until recently, patients who required medical evacuation on a trolley boarded the vessel via the pontoon at the Little Ship Club at One Mile. Workplace Health and Safety have now stopped this practice as the pontoon becomes too steep at low tide.

For more than 10 years, representations have been made to State and Local Governments requesting the construction of a new floating pontoon at One Mile. This would allow safe medical evacuations by the VMR, and would also provide access to the Stradbroke Flyer Water Taxi for disabled passengers and passengers in wheelchairs. Promises of imminent construction followed these representations, but no action had been forthcoming.

In July, a FOSI representative attended a meeting to support the NSI Local Ambulance Committee in its efforts to generate some action on this issue. A Steering Committee was formed, and it was agreed that meetings be sought with the various State Departments involved, and that a media campaign be commenced.

The Steering Committee called a meeting in early September to report some positive news. Preliminary plans for the pontoon were discussed at the meeting, and the Committee advised that the location of the proposed pontoon structure is acceptable to the Environmental authorities because it will not require further dredging. The majority of the funding for the project has been promised from various departments, and construction should commence in early 2010.

Frenchman's cliff landslip



Gone with a crash ... Heavy rain in October caused this rockfall at the end of Frenchman's Beach.

Koala count – how you can help our furry friends!



(Photo: Dick Marks Australian Koala Fndn)

A study of North Stradbroke Island's koala population is underway and you can help! If you see a koala you can note down some vital details and send them to the study team.

Island resident Jan Aldenhoven is collecting information to send to the Redlands City Council and the State Government's endangered species unit.

"We hope to build a picture of the number of koalas on the island, their range and habitat, as we don't know what the local population is doing, if it is increasing or in decline," Jan said. When you see a koala note the following

information and send it to jan@wildlifefilms.com.au or PO Box 255 Point Lookout.

Date and time of siting

Your name and contact details

Koala's location. Be as precise as possible, you can even include GPS coordinates

Tree type. If you don't know the species note the exact tree so someone can identify it later.

Sex. Males have a brown stain in the crease of their chest and sometimes testes can be seen.

Maturity. Can be difficult to know. Whether the animal is small or large can be helpful. Also record a mother with young in her pouch.

Condition. I.e. healthy, sick (red eyes, wet bottom, skinny), injured, dead.

Report injured, dead or sick koalas to the local animal rescue team on 0407766052.

Kate Campbell

Moreton Bay water quality – don't blame the weather

The recent release of the 2009 Healthy Waters Report Card revealed a very unhealthy Moreton Bay (down to a D rating from a B). The State Government's only response seems to be to 'blame the weather'. (C/M p.5, 21.10.09).

Instead the Government should recognize the obvious - Greater Brisbane's rapid growth and resulting inevitable increase in pollution levels are to blame. To blame the weather is to completely miss the point and throw in the towel without a fight.

The area's population is forecast to almost double over the next 20 years or so

in accordance with current government policy. Unless we act now, the health of our waterways will decline further.

It is essential that the Bay islands, with their natural cleansing attributes, are protected and preserved to help counter the increasing pollution coming from the mainland. This is another reason why FOSI is determined to encourage the Government to stop sand mining on North Stradbroke Island and declare the majority of the island National Park

Sue Ellen Carew

Is your newsletter still arriving by post? If you'd prefer to receive it by email, please send your email address to Edith McPhee at emcphee@westnet.com.au. Thank you.

