

612 ABC Radio Interview 8 February 2011.

Steve Austin interviews Queensland Environment Minister Vicky Daring on Stradbroke Island.

Steve: Just explain to me, as environment minister what do you see as the key environmental issues facing you as the Environment minister for this state? What's your priority?

Vicky: I had several priorities coming into this position. I was very lucky I had a predecessor like Kate Jones who actually set a lot of major reforms and very courageous reforms, going for the State. So my job was to implement a lot of those, things like our waste reform strategy which is reducing land fill also I thought it was important to continue those commitments on North Stradbroke Island making sure we had 50% National Park by the end of last year and of course of Coal seam gasetc

Steve: So that is the main ones, there is recycling, Stradbroke Island and Coal Seam Gas?

Vicky: There three, I think there is a lot of land based protections and also marine protections that are really big issue and on my mind a lot.

etc

Steve: Lets tackle a number of the issues that you have raised as your priority. Firstly let's start with the Stradbroke Island. First you said in the past that areas after sandmining been through Stradbroke can be rehabilitated after mining. Explain to me how these areas can be rehabilitated because I'm told and have read a number of scientists observations that you can plant things but you're not actually rehabilitating the site? How can you rehabilitate sand mining sites on Stradbroke Island?

Vicky: Well firstly not disturbing the site in the first place is .. is the .. is the ultimate goal. If you can keep any mining away from sensitive areas that's important and that's why legislation to restrict the sandmining and ultimately end the sandmining on north Stradbroke Island is very important. So not only has the Government put time lines to stop sandmining, where've also made sure that those sensitive areas are not touched at all. And we've done that in other legislations around the State for example with Wild Rivers legislation, it's always best to not disturb the environment at all.

Steve: But you do let them disturb the environment, you let them dig it up and cart it away.

Vicky: Well that's right, right now of course on Stradbroke the company has a couple of different mining leases and it was important to make sure that mining can stop without just cutting off peoples jobs overnight.

Steve: Your misunderstanding my question. How can you rehabilitate these sites, we know that you let them mine, how can you rehabilitate the site?

Vicky: Well it is part of the licence conditions of the mining company that it does need to replant and revegetate where it can. I don't know that the sites will ever be exactly the same. For example on

Fraser Island you can see where revegetation has worked, again, not as good as the pristine undisturbed environment but it's their job to rehabilitate and we will expect them to rehabilitate.

Steve: The old Fraser Island royal commission actually found that sandmining caused and i quote 'major permanent and irreversible damage'.

Vicky: Well I don't want to see sandmining, ill be looking forward and celebrating the day we finish sandmining on North Stradbroke Island i can assure you and i don't want to see sandmining ever again on these beautiful sand island we have off the coast of Queensland.

Steve: So what you are telling me is that you can't actually protect it. The old Fraser Island royal commission found that sandmining does cause irreversible damage , your allowing miners to mine on Straddie ,that it causes irreversible damage. Unless I've misunderstood you can't fully or completely rehabilitate these sites.

Vicky: Well i think rehabilitation techniques have come a long way and i don't think we will be able to see, maybe in 30 years Steve you and i will have to have another conversation about how that rehabilitation has gone. It's the requirement, I expect it to be to a highest standard but I acknowledge that it is never as good as not having sandmining at all which is why we are putting a stop to it.

Steve: 12 to 9(am), my guest is Queensland Environment Minister Vicky Darling for what is her first ever studio interview.

cont: to Coal seam gas issues