

FRIENDS OF STRADBROKE ISLAND



Established in 1988, FOSI is dedicated to the protection of the natural environment of North Stradbroke Island and its surrounding waters. FOSI also works to ensure that urban and economic development of the island is founded upon the principles of environmental protection and preservation of the unique urban characteristics of its townships.

MEMBERSHIP RATES, 2014: Individual \$15.00 Family \$20.00 Concession \$5.00
Friends of Stradbroke Island, PO Box 167, Point Lookout QLD 4183.

Issue #71
April 2015

In this issue

2015 Queensland State Election.....	2
Farewell shorebirds	4
Glossy Black Cockatoos.....	5
Quandamooka Youth Bush Restoration - Open Day	7
Tony Fitzgerald principles	8
Tawny Frogmouths	9
Updates.....	11
Eighteen Mile Swamp	12

“The sands of North Stradbroke Island have long been a political battlefield. Once again, the treasures hidden in those sands are at the centre of Queensland politics, perhaps forming a quagmire into which political careers could vanish without a trace”.

[Stephen Keim SC](#), Independent Australia,
June 2014.



Loading mineral sands onto barge at Dunwich

2015 Queensland State Election

The election result will go down in history, as will the formation of Labor's post-election cabinet which for the first time has a majority of women. But what a result for the natural environment of North Stradbroke! Of course, allowing Sibelco to continue to clear old growth forests and cause serious environmental harm for another five years is very sad and FOSI could never approve, but ending it in 2019 obviously is preferable to a further extension of mining leases.

Labor's promised repeal of the Newman government amendments to the North Stradbroke Act should prevent at least an additional seven square kilometers of mostly original bushland and ancient dunes being bulldozed. Now that QYAC and the new State Government once again agree on the end date, presumably the Indigenous Land Use Agreement will also be amended, to make the end date and restricted mine path for Enterprise a crystal clear part of the agreement. Remember, the LNP government obtained advice from Crown Law that the ILUA was not watertight and this paved the way for the LNP's legislation. Perhaps the ILUA has already been amended? If not, the recent Billy Gordon events hopefully will result in this occurring soon, before a potential change of government occurs.

Why did the extraordinary electoral turnaround on January 31 occur? Members may recall this extract from a statement from [Tony Fitzgerald QC](#) which partly explains it –

*"Dishonest members of parliament, nepotism, preferential treatment of supporters, removal of limits on political donations, large-scale public service sackings, a major down-grade of hospital staff conditions, shutting down health and juvenile rehabilitation programs, **reduced protection of the environment and support for commercial activities posing a risk of major damage to natural assets including the Great Barrier Reef and Stradbroke Island**, termination of the office of Climate Change and approval of activities involving large-scale emissions, limiting union rights, ill-informed and sometimes invalid criminal laws, changes to electoral laws - an unfortunate reminder of the gerrymanders which gave the National and Liberal Parties an unfair advantage in pre-reform Queensland - and proposed public asset sales provide the background to the government's blitzkrieg on the institutions which protect citizens and inhibit government excess. In its brief period in office, the government has sacked, stacked and otherwise reduced the effectiveness of parliamentary committees, subverted and weakened the State's anti-corruption Commission and made unprecedented attacks on the judiciary and judicial independence". Brisbane Times, July 2014.*

In a recent interesting [article by Alex McKean](#) about the role of independent and social media in the election result, the author made this valid point:-

"While it is difficult to isolate any of the factors leading to the loss by the LNP as being decisive, it can be said with some confidence, given the narrow margin of that loss, that the removal of any one of those factors may easily have seen the result go the other way".
Independent Australia, March 2015

One of two environment factors mentioned by McKean (the other being the Great Barrier Reef issue) was the Stradbroke sand mining issue.

Considerable effort went into the FOSI campaign against the Newman government amendments, commencing with the open letter published on page 2 of the Courier Mail on 20 November, 2013. Jackie Trad [read](#) it into the parliamentary record (page 4076) and [tabled](#) a copy, commenting that *"This open letter says it all."*

There were numerous media references to Stradbroke sand mining related issues in the lead up to the election, most of them generated by FOSI or QYAC. A selection of articles can be found on the following page.

Towards the end of last year FOSI formed an election committee. In the last week of the election campaign the Ashgrove electorate was letter boxed with the hard hitting FOSI flyer. It was also distributed in some other electorates and on North Stradbroke and it was attached to a FOSI media release. A hyperlinked version with information sources was

published on the savestraddie.com website and referred to in the flyer. FOSI and QYAC were signatories to the Fitzgerald democratic principles published in the Courier Mail and elsewhere in the last week of the campaign. A copy is published in this newsletter.

On 28 January, the Labor party wrote to QYAC promising that *"Queensland Labor will act to immediately repeal the disgraceful North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Act Amendment Act 2013."* The letter was [published](#) by QYAC and was reported by the media.

FOSI wishes to acknowledge the pre-election contributions, which helped to raise the profile of the North Stradbroke sand mining issue, from the following in particular:- Cameron Costello, Dale Ruska, Richard Carew, Tony Fitzgerald QC, Stephen Keim SC, Alex McKean, Alan Jones, the ABC, the Guardian, the Brisbane Times, Independent Australia, the Westender and Straddie Island News, and MP's Jackie Trad and Jo Ann Miller. These MP's asked pertinent questions of then Mines Minister Andrew Cripps and Premier Newman at parliamentary committee hearings and in parliament which became invaluable in exposing the Sibelco/LNP relationship.

In a dissenting [parliamentary committee report](#) (at p. 131) Labor's Jackie Trad also stated in November, 2013 that the Newman legislation benefiting Sibelco... *"has all the hallmarks of a morally corrupt 'cash for legislation' deal"*. She later tabled the [Rowland report](#) which

graphically exposed the extent of Sibelco's expensive political campaign (eg. 108 prime time TV ads) which preceded its legislative benefit of potentially \$1.5 Billion in additional revenue.

Jackie Trad last year also made the initial [complaint](#) to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

FOSI also wishes to acknowledge the post-election events, including the comments made by former ICAC Commissioner David Ipp and retired Integrity Commissioner David Solomon at the [safeguarding against corruption conference](#) held in Brisbane on February 9, as reported by [the Guardian](#). Their comments concerned the curious decision by the Crime and Corruption Commission last year not to investigate the Stradbroke complaints and the relationship between the LNP and Sibelco.

Special thanks to the FOSI election committee. We look forward to the repeal of the Newman amendments as the first new step in protecting the natural environment of our beautiful island. Let's hope the recent events involving the member for Cook do not prevent the immediate repeal. They do highlight however, the need for the ILUA to be amended without delay, to ensure that it is crystal clear that the 2019 end date and a restricted mine path are essential parts of the agreement between the State and QYAC, as both intended when the ILUA was signed in June 2011.

Sue Ellen Carew, President

A selection of media coverage...

- ñ ["Campbell Newman lied about Stradbroke Island mining promises"](#), Brisbane Times, 22 January 2015 (also read out by Alan Jones on 4BC radio, 27 January 2015)
- ñ ["Mining company faces court accused of taking millions of dollars of sand from Stradbroke Island"](#), ABC 7.30, 21 August 2014
- ñ ["Old LNP's dodgy donations for deals: Move on, nothing to see here"](#), Independent Australia, 20 August 2014
- ñ ["Campbell Newman is in quicksand over mining on Stradbroke"](#), The Guardian Australia, 10 August 2014
- ñ ["Tony Fitzgerald slams Newman's 'politically motivated' apology"](#), Brisbane Times, 25 July 2014
- ñ ["Stafford by-election shows up Campbell Newman's drunken shambles"](#), Independent Australia, 15 July 2015
- ñ ["The government is lying about Stradbroke Island sand mining"](#), Brisbane Times, 15 July 2015
- ñ ["Newman's Straddie sand mining bill: The Sibelco favours"](#), Independent Australia, 5 July 2015
- ñ ["Labor refers Sibelco sand mining company to CMC"](#), Brisbane Times, 24 June 2014
- ñ ["Sibelco's influence on sand mining policy should go to CMC: Barrister"](#), Brisbane Times, 11 June 2014
- ñ ["Clive Palmer, Jeff Seeney and Campbell Newman's Straddie donation"](#), Independent Australia, 10 June 2014
- ñ ["Stradbroke Island elders take Newman Government to the High Court"](#), Brisbane Times, 6 June 2014



Sand mining is having serious environmental impacts on internationally important wetlands surrounding the island's mines. Uncontrolled discharges of mining water into these wetlands are destroying the biodiversity of ecological communities.

Clearing of original forest in the mine paths is wiping out habitat of precious island animals.

They are seeking new homes much closer to the dangers of traffic.

The Queensland ALP before the Jan 31st election promised to end mining by 2019 and to repeal the Campbell Newman amendments to the North Stradbroke Island Act. Only by stopping the mining juggernaut can the ecocide be reversed.

Friends of Stradbroke Island. www.fosi.org.au



Farewell shorebirds

Millions of shorebirds are now beginning their amazing migration northwards from our shores to breed in the Arctic. We wish them the best and hope for their safe passage as conditions along their pathways worsen with increased land development. For more information and a chance to track their progress go to www.farewellshorebirds.org.au



Numenius madagascariensis (Eastern Curlew) – Photo by Heyn de Kock



Numenius phaeopus Wimbrel – Photo by Vince Bugeja

Glossy Black Cockatoos

We all know the raucous screeching call of the white cockatoo as it soars past our house or calls from the gumtree, however there is a cockatoo which doesn't make its presence so audibly known.

The smallest of the black cockatoos, the Glossy Black, resident on North Stradbroke Island, has muted calls which are soft and infrequent, a distant tarr-red sound. Indeed, you might only be aware of their presence if you stand quietly under a Casuarina (She oak) tree when they are feeding, and hear the clicking noise as they crack the seeds with

their broad bulbous bill which is a handy tool for the job.

Strangely, Glossy Blacks are all left handed (or footed!) and use only this foot to collect and manoeuvre food. They are finicky eaters too, enjoying only the seeds of selected Black and Forest She oaks trees, which they check to ensure it has the highest nutrient value and regularly return to the same tree. They spend most of the day foraging for food and travel via a watering hole on their way home to roost for the night, often covering 10km between these locations.

These cockatoos like to live in coastal woodlands, drier forest areas and timbered water courses where Casuarinas are common. Research into the birds has shown the Glossy Blacks from Southern Moreton Bay Islands prefer man made water sources, dams, ponds, bird baths and puddles. They generally gather in small groups of two or three but larger groups are found at water holes or when roosting. Residents and holiday-makers may spot them as they gather each afternoon on the road to Amity.

The Glossy Black, which averages between 45-60cm long, has

striking features, with males easily identified by solid bright-red panels in their tail feathers, and females with red / orange panels with horizontal black stripes and some pretty yellow feathers on their head.

Glossy Blacks choose a mate for life, about 15 to 30 years, and lay only a single white egg every two years. At this time, the female prepares the nest in the hollow of a tree before she incubates the egg, and then only leaves the nest to feed when the baby is a week old. The male takes the responsibility of feeding the mother and the baby throughout the incubation and brooding period, and both parents feed the fledgling for four months and remain with it until the next breeding season two years later. What a great example of gender equality in the wild!

Sadly, this slow reproductive rate leaves them vulnerable to natural disasters especially bushfire and the pressures of urbanisation and development. Hence they are listed as a

vulnerable species in Queensland. The major threat to the Glossy Black Cockatoo is the loss of habitat. Sand mining on Stradbroke has led to the clearing of their food supply in woodland areas and the loss of mature eucalypts for nest hollows. With it taking 200 years for nature to provide a hollow large enough for birds to nest in it makes us aware of how precious the old growth

forests are to their survival on the Island.

Feral cats and possums regularly raid the nests, and competition for nest hollows from Galahs, Indian Mynas and introduced honey bees cause problems for the Glossy Blacks as well. More widely, poaching and the illegal bird trade and egg collecting is another threat.



How you can help:

- As the bird's nest in both living and dead trees it is important **not** to remove these old trees for firewood or land clearing.
- Retain and protect existing habitat and known nesting sites
- Plant trees to provide food and a place to nest
- Reduce the impact of fires
- Report poaching
- Don't let your pet dogs and cats wander unsupervised at any time of the day
- Report sightings on the Glossy Black Conservancy website. <http://www.glossyblack.org.au/>



Article by Angela McLeod

Quandamooka Youth Bush Restoration - Open Day



Bush restoration group, Photo by SEQ Catchments

At Amity, where the sandy beach stretches away from the rock retaining walls, at the very end of Ballow St, is a shady woodland conservation area. Koalas commonly inhabit the tall eucalypts and island cypress but the understorey has been largely overtaken by the invasive weeds we see all too many of at Stradbroke.

For the last three months, under the auspices of the Federal Government's Green Army Scheme, a group of young Quandamooka people, mostly first year school leavers have been restoring this weed infested understorey to allow the native plants to take hold again. SEQ Catchments, Australian Conservation Volunteers and QYAC have been giving expert guidance

and supervision to the group who recently held an open day on the site to explain their work to the public.

Through concentrating on the hard job of eradicating those familiar weeds- asparagus fern, umbrella trees, pepper trees, orange gloriosa lily, yellow cassia and ochona, these young people grew in many ways. They explained to us how they had learned not only the different eradication techniques needed but gained greater familiarity with the natural bushland, organisational and work skills, knowledge of safety procedures and importantly moved to a closer connection to their traditional country- all good knowledge for the environmental restoration that is needed on the

island. Congratulations are due to the group.

It was gratifying to hear there are groups of young people all over Australia working on bush restoration under this scheme. If it assists them to develop knowledge and caring for nature then it must be a positive not only on a personal level but for the future of our country's environment.

It is worth taking a walk through Amity to explore the village at a slower pace as well as looking at the continuing restoration in the conservation area. As you walk down the main thoroughfare, Ballow Rd, turn left at Toompany St then turn right down a dirt track marked BEACH to find the bushland and beach access. Remember to look up for Koalas.

Sue Ellen Carew

Tony Fitzgerald principles

AN OPEN LETTER ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN QUEENSLAND

On 8 January, The Australia Institute wrote an open letter to the leaders of Queensland's political parties asking each "to commit to the following principles of accountability and good governance put forward by **The Honourable Tony Fitzgerald AC QC**":

1. *Govern for the peace, welfare and good government of the State;*
2. *Make all decisions and take all actions, including public appointments, in the public interest without regard to personal, party political or other immaterial considerations;*
3. *Treat all people equally without permitting any person or corporation special access or influence; and*
4. *Promptly and accurately inform the public of its reasons for all significant or potentially controversial decisions and actions.*

The Australian Labor Party, Katter's Australian Party, the Palmer United Party and the Australian Greens all agreed to adopt the principles if elected. The Liberal National Party did not respond by the deadline but, after being asked by an audience member during the televised debate, Premier Newman agreed to the principles.

The Fitzgerald Principles, to which all parties now say they are committed, necessarily look to the future, beginning with Saturday's election. The full responses of the parties are available at www.tai.org.au. This information is publicly available so that Queenslanders heading to the ballot box can consider each party's political track record and the terms of its commitment to the Fitzgerald Principles.

Research shows that corruption hinders growth, increases the cost of doing business, and lowers the quality of public infrastructure, which makes each party's commitment to transparency and accountability essential to a healthy democracy and economy in Queensland.

We the undersigned call on the parties elected to the Queensland Parliament to honour their commitment to govern for the benefit of all Queenslanders and our unique environment; to ensure that industry lobbyists and representatives, including those from the resources and property development industries, will no longer enjoy privileged access to the government; that individual liberties, proportionality and the separation of powers will be respected and future judicial appointments will be based on objective merit after wide consultation, always respecting confidentiality; and, that Queensland's weakened anti-corruption watchdog, the Crime and Corruption Commission will be fully restored.

Australian Lawyers Alliance	Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation
Australian Lawyers for Human Rights	Queensland Conservation Council
Australian Marine Conservation Society	Queensland Council of Unions
Basin Sustainability Alliance	Queensland Council Civil Liberties
Environmental Defenders Office (Qld)	Save the Reef
Environmental Justice Australia	Solar Council
Friends of Stradbroke Island	Sunshine Coast Environment Council
Independent Community Accountability Network	The Australia Institute
Law and Justice Institute of Queensland	The Wilderness Society
Lock the Gate	TJ Ryan Foundation
Oakey Coal Action Group	Working for Queenslanders

Members of the public are warmly invited to attend the
'Accountability and the Law: safeguarding against corruption in Queensland'
Monday, 9 February 2015 at Customs House, Brisbane.

The one-day conference features a keynote address by the Hon. David Ipp AO QC on 'Coal and Corruption – the ICAC experience'

www.accountabilityconferenceqld.com/

Authorised by Richard Denniss, The Australia Institute, Level 5, 131 City Walk, Canberra 2601

Advertisement published in the Courier-Mail 29 January 2015

Tawny Frogmouths

What an intriguing bird is the Tawny Frogmouth. To hear their strange call at night - a soft, deep and continuous low "oom oomoom" - sounding across inner city suburbia or Stradbroke Island the two places I spend my time - always brings a sense of connection to ancient, wild Australia. While to successfully spot one in the bush, roosting stick-like in a tree, brings joy to my twitcher's heart and a strong "gotcha!" sense of birding achievement.

The Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides* is the second largest of Australia's night birds (after the Powerful Owl) and is endemic to Australia. Currently three subspecies are recognised and all occur in Queensland. Males of all sub-species are grey, while females of two of the subspecies (*strigoides* and *brachypterus*) can be grey or chestnut tinged.

Frogmouths are sexually dimorphic – the males are heavier and have slightly larger bill sizes, wing and tail length. However, in the field it's difficult to identify the sex unless a male and female are together and even then i.d. is not certain due to their ability to change the appearance of their size depending on their posture and feather positioning.

Their remarkable cryptic plumage provides excellent camouflage for protection from their predators (Lace Monitors, Wedge-tailed Eagles, Carpet Pythons, cats, foxes etc) as well as camouflage in their role as nocturnal predators.

Tawny Frogmouths are a case study in feather types as they have evolved to sport all the different



Adult pair - Photo by Lyn Isermann

types of feathers that birds have developed: down feathers; filoplumes; bristles; semi-plumes; head plumes; flight feathers; tail feathers and contour feathers – all on one bird! Similar to owls, their wings also have a special layer of feathers close to the leading edge of the wing to absorb any noise created by air turbulence to allow for nearly silent flight. In addition, unlike most birds, Frogmouths have only vestigial preen glands – instead they have "powder-down" feathers which shed a waxy powder that provides exceptional waterproofing.

Their massive beak, surrounded by bristles and tufts of feathers

which protect the eyes, is well designed to cope with the wide variety of hard shelled, wriggling, biting and stinging beetles, wasps, moths, spiders, centipedes, scorpions, slugs, frogs and mice that they feed on. They are perch-and-pounce hunters able to catch their food on the wing or through foraging on the ground.

Found throughout most of Australia, Tawny Frogmouths prefer open wooded habitat, particularly at the edges of forests and cleared areas. They have been able to adapt to human presence and can be found roosting and nesting in garden trees and parks. Living close to humans has its

downsides which include being struck by cars as they feed on moths attracted to street lights.

My first experience with Frogmouths was in a share house with a vet where we cared for disabled birds who had survived collisions but only as one-winged amputees. Tawny Frogmouths breed in solitary pairs and tend to form partnerships for life. The couple duet and share in the building of a precarious nest of loose sticks lined with leaves and grass stems in the fork of a tree.

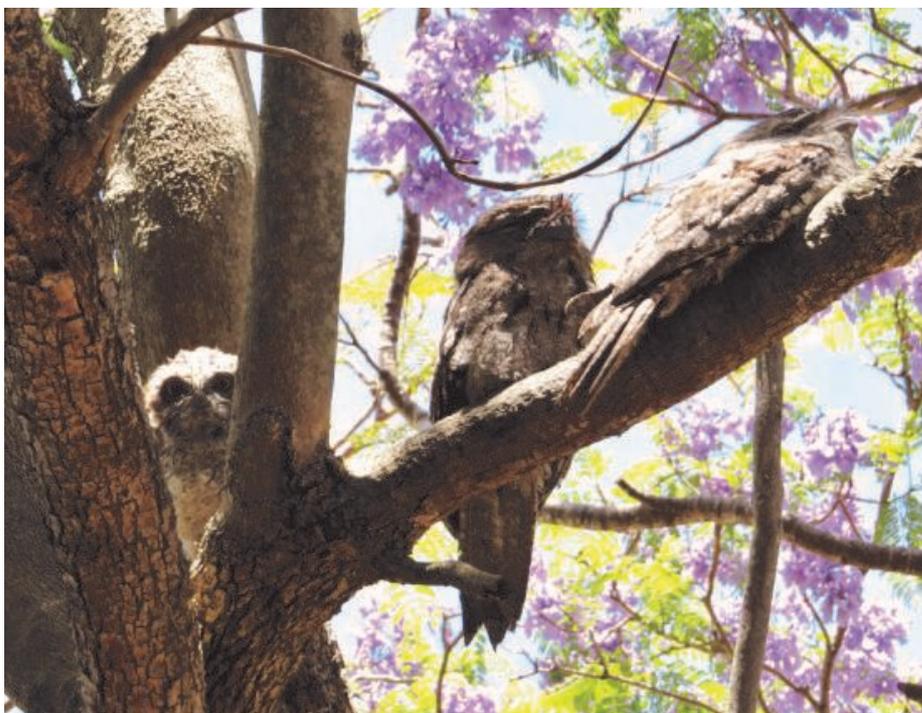
The male broods the clutch of 2-3 eggs during the day with the female undertaking most of the overnight incubating. The dedicated pair then share the feeding, protecting and training of the chicks- including in how to roost safely and freeze properly into the form of a broken branch (in correct alignment with the tree's branches!), as this behaviour is apparently not fully innate.

To learn more about these charismatic birds (voted number 6 in Birdlife Australia's Favourite Bird contest in 2013!), I commend Gisela Kaplan's monograph "Tawny Frogmouth" published by CSIRO in 2007 from which much of this information is drawn.

Written by FOSI member Mary Barram and reproduced from Birds Queensland Newsletter Vol 46, No 1 February 2015

Dowse Lagoon, Sandgate – Photo (top right) by Vince Bugeja

Juveniles – Photo (bottom right) by Ian Henricksen



Updates

EPBC Act and the Enterprise Mine investigation

In early March, 2015 a second report from Dr Errol Stock was provided to Federal Environment Department investigators. It concerns environmental damage in 2010, including the death of vegetation in about 95 hectares of off lease bushland to the west of the Enterprise Mine. In a very detailed analysis, Dr Stock concludes that this was caused by mismanaged mine water discharges and constitutes a "significant impact". Around 80 hectares is within the Moreton Bay Ramsar site. The Enterprise mine commenced in 2004 without being approved by the Federal Environment Minister under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. FOSI has been seeking action from the Federal Department since 2012. The department's investigation continues.

Federal Senate Inquiry and Report

On 15 March the Senate Committee inquiring into Queensland Government actions and practices published [FOSI's detailed submission dated 17 November, 2014](#) (submission no. 114 on page 6). On [25 March the committee also published FOSI's supplementary submission](#). In FOSI's initial submission at 2.01, the words "unlawful removal" previously linked to an ABC 7.30 Report which is now available [here](#).

There were a [number of other submissions](#) which mentioned North Stradbroke issues, in particular a detailed submission from QYAC (no. 54). There was also one from SIMO (no. 78).

Late on Friday, 27 March the committee report was released. The report unfortunately contains factual errors. But nevertheless the recommendations include:-

- The establishment of an ICAC style anti-corruption commission;
 - An investigation into Sibelco's electoral support for the LNP and the legislative favours it received.
-

Point Lookout Sewerage Plant Upgrade

As members were advised by email, the Redland City Council in February referred its proposal to the Federal Government under the EPBC Act. FOSI's submission supported the need for an upgrade but pointed to several issues, including that the proposal did not appear to comply with best practice. We also drew attention to the lack of a management plan for the Moreton Bay Ramsar site (declared in 1993) against which the proposal should be measured. A management plan for each declared site is required by both the Ramsar Treaty signed by Australia and the EPBC Act. The referral also did not contain an intelligible declaration by the Council. In an [unexplained decision](#), the Minister's delegate recently decided that the proposal will not be a "controlled action". FOSI has requested a statement of reasons from the Federal Department of Environment.

Correspondence with Premier

Since the election, FOSI has sent correspondence to the Premier and other members of her cabinet concerning the implementation of Labor's pre-election promise to repeal the Newman government's amendments to the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Act 2011. We have also sought meetings to discuss issues flowing from the repeal, such as the reinstatement of the restricted mine path.

SIMO now supports repeal of Newman government amendments

As some members, who are also SIMO members, would already be aware, in its March 2015 newsletter the SIMO management committee appeared to support Labor's promise to repeal the Newman Government's amendments to the North Stradbroke legislation. Articles in support of Labor's promise to restore the 2019 end date by SIMO secretary and long term president of the local branch of the ALP, Howard Guille, were linked to the newsletter. The articles were published by the Redlands 2030 website in late February 2015, after the election result was finalised. In contrast, in October last year, prior to a general meeting of all SIMO members to discuss sand mining, members were notified by Mr Guille that the SIMO committee unanimously recommended that members vote against a member motion for the association to support the repeal of the Newman amendments. We welcome the recent move by the SIMO committee to now support the repeal of the Newman amendments.

Eighteen Mile Swamp



Report by Dr Errol Stock shows Eighteen Mile Swamp is at risk from changes in hydrology caused by sand mining.

----- How to Support FOSI's ongoing work -----

Thank you very much to all the generous members who have made donations to Friends of Stradbroke Island in the past.

We continue to highlight the increasing environmental damage caused by land clearing, sand mining, hydrological changes, plastic and feral animals on North Stradbroke Island. Donations are integral to help fund our ongoing public information and education campaigns and to help fund relevant scientific research.

All donations to the Environment Fund are **tax deductible** and may easily and securely be made by bank transfer to: **FOSI Environment Fund - BSB 124029, Account 21645410**

Receipts will be mailed to donors so please remember to put your name on the transaction and follow up with an email to our Membership Secretary Edith McPhee emcphoe@westnet.com.au