

# Q and A

## Premier Palaszczuk answers Our Questions on Sand Mining

*Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk agreed to be our guest in Q and A to answer questions in relation to the ending of sand mining on North Stradbroke Island in 2019. Legislation will be put to the Queensland Parliament later in the year, and will need the support of the cross benches who include former Labor member Billy Gordon, Katter Party representatives Shane Knuth and Rob Katter, and Speaker Peter Wellington. The Premier's response follows:*

**Q: Whilst you were overseas, the Queensland State Government announced plans to introduce legislation to end sand mining on North Stradbroke Island by 2019. Do you endorse this proposed legislation?**

A: The Labor Party has had a long-standing commitment to transition North Stradbroke Island away from sand mining, with an end to mining operations by 2019. We held this commitment in Government, the commitment never wavered in Opposition, and we will deliver on our commitment now that we are back in Government. In Opposition, shadow ministers visited the island and engaged with stakeholders on numerous occasions. It has been no secret that the Labor Party and the LNP have vastly different visions for North Straddie's future. In our view, North Straddie is not just a workplace, it's an environmental wonder. We must make the tough decisions now in order to protect the island for generations to come. We are willing to make these tough decisions because we need to confront the stark reality that the longer sand mining continues on North Straddie the more damage it will do to the environment over the long term. I know that this decision affects real people and real families. I wouldn't be making it if I didn't feel like there was appropriate transition arrangements in the pipeline, as well as a significant number of other opportunities for employment now and into the future. We have made a \$20 million commitment in this Budget to aid the transition process, we have boosted Tourism Queensland's budget to ensure we can attract more tourists, and we have made a priority of the development of Toondah Harbour, which will be a major jobs generator in the Cleveland and Bay Islands region.

**Q: Why has there been no consultation with the 2000 island residents – as confirmed publicly by the Australian Workers Union, Sibelco, the Straddie Chamber of Commerce, small business owners and community groups?**

A: The assertions in this question are completely false. As I have said, my shadow ministers visited the island numerous times in Opposition. Minister Miles, as the lead Minister, has been consulting widely with the island community and all relevant parties. He visited the island in May to meet with community

groups, island residents, and indigenous representatives. He has also undertaken consultation with the Australian Workers Union, Sibelco and the Straddie Chamber of Commerce. Minister Miles will continue with this consultation process.

**Q: As part of the consultation process, will you Premier personally commit to visiting the island to hold open community meetings to discuss the future prosperity of the island?**

A: I'm a regular visitor to North Straddie and I always will be.

**Q: Do you support the rather rushed actions of the Deputy Premier and Environment Minister, who appear to be trying to push these changes through?**

A: The Deputy Premier and the Environment Minister are acting on behalf of the government to meet our commitments, in the same way they are implementing other election commitments like investment in Great Barrier Reef protection measures. The Deputy Premier has also personally overseen the Toondah Harbour process and will have a significant input into establishing the transition plan.

**Q: Premier, can you clarify why Environment Minister Miles is stating that the government made an election promise to shut sand mining down by 2019 as part of the 2015 election. The evidence used is only a letter from a retiring Labor MP, to one stakeholder group (QYAC) without any media event/public announcement within a day or so of the State election.**

A: As I have said, Labor's position is longstanding. It was reiterated during the campaign by the then-Deputy Opposition Leader.

**Q: It seems rather surprising Premier that you have not been involved in this issue up until this point in time and surely such a statement would only be made by you with a media statement (not letter), at a public event (addressed to the public), after consultation with key stakeholder and community groups, after a decision from the Shadow Cabinet, with media attending.**

A: Our position is longstanding and was reaffirmed during the campaign.



Premier Palaszczuk



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**Q: If the Government goes ahead and shuts mining down prematurely, how is this compatible with your election promise to protect and create jobs?**

A: As I have said previously, I wouldn't be implementing this decision, which is in the best long-term interests of the island as well as all those who enjoy North Straddie and want to take their kids and grandkids to North Straddie, if I didn't feel like there was appropriate transition arrangements in the pipeline, as well as a significant number of other opportunities for employment now and into the future. We have made a \$20 million commitment in this Budget to aid the transition process, we have boosted Tourism Queensland's budget to ensure we can attract more tourists, and we have made a priority of the development of Toondah Harbour, which will be a major jobs generator in the Cleveland and Bay Islands region.

**Q: Given the position of Government Debt, would it not be advantageous to postpone the closing of the mine until such time as the State is in a stronger financial position, rather than having to pay a reported \$20 million in transitional funding?**

A: That's like saying the Government shouldn't invest \$100 million to protect the Great Barrier Reef. I reject that. The Reef and North Straddie are Queensland environmental and tourism icons that must be protected. Any expenditure we make in that regard should be considered as an investment. But we also recognise that implementing this decision will have an impact on the employees, which is why we will put in place an appropriate transition plan.

**Q: What will happen to the Economic Transition Group that includes local community and business representatives?**

A: The Government values the role of the Economic Transition Group and the leadership of Mayor Karen Williams. We will continue to consult with all stakeholders represented on the group.