

WINE NEWS

North Stradbroke Island sand mining to end by 2019

By Gail Burke

Updated Thu 26 May 2016, 6:52am

Sand mining will come to an end on North Stradbroke Island by 2019, reversing a decision by the former Newman administration to extend Sibelco's lease to 2035.

The Labor Government passed the legislation early this morning with the help of two independents — Billy Gordon and Rob Pyne — in the hung parliament.

Former Labor premier Anna Bligh had previously legislated to end the mining on the island, off Brisbane, by 2019, however the former Liberal National government extended the term until 2035.

North Stradbroke Island is the second-largest sand island in the world after Fraser Island, and has been mined for sand since 1949.

"Today marks the start of a new chapter," Environment Minister Dr Steven Miles said.

"The debate is over. The community, the business sector, traditional owners and new investors supported by the Palaszczuk Government can now move forward to ... new exciting, sustainable jobs of the future."

A Deloitte Access Economics analysis that was commissioned by the State Government and released earlier this year found sand mining generated between \$60 million and \$80 million per year for the local economy and employed 95 island residents.

The Liberal National Party opposed the bill, which ends mining by the end of 2019, arguing it was bereft of logic.

"This bill will put workers out of work, it will undermine the economic stability of the local community," Opposition environment spokesman Andrew Cripps said.

"It will mortally wound the bottom line of small businesses ... and impact on property values."

Traditional owners locked out of places of cultural significance

Government minister and Indigenous Labor MP Leanne Enoch absented herself from Cabinet discussions on the issue because she belongs to the Quandamooka people, who are traditional owners of the area.

She spoke in the Quandamooka language in Parliament to acknowledge her ancestors and the strength of her people.

She told parliament her own family had varying views on when sand mining should end, but said she felt the Newman government had caused division in the community on the issue.

"My father worked in that sand mine as a young man," she said.

"He would say that it was the right kind of economy for that time. Many of my family members have benefitted."

She said much of the mining lease covered traditional places of great significance.

"Places that traditional owners, my family, representing thousands of generation do not have access to, cannot teach children about, cannot pass on to the next generation," she said.

"That is why it is important to understand that it is time for a new economy."

Quandamooka elder Bob Anderson said it was a good outcome.



PHOTO: The sand mine on North Stradbroke Island has been in operation since 1949. (ABC News: Giulio Saggini)

RELATED STORY: Other industries 'will not replace all sand mining jobs' on North Stradbroke Island

"Tourism will be one of our main money spinners and people will learn more about the many facets that Minjerribah offers to tourists," he said.

The Katters Australian Party tried to put up a compromise of a 2024 close date, but independents Billy Gordon and Rob Pyne argued the earlier closure was better for the Quandamooka people and the environment.

Topics: mining-industry, mining-rural, tourism, laws, state-parliament, cleveland-4163, qld