

2019 North Stradbroke Island State and Federal Advocacy Document



The need for assistance

There is an urgent need for a strong local economy on North Stradbroke Island (NSI) to replace sandmining, which ends this year. The end of sandmining doesn't just mean a loss of jobs but contributes to the breakdown of the island's social fabric.

The end of sandmining on NSI in 2019 will impact both the island and Redlands Coast's economy with the loss of 141 jobs and a \$55 million contribution per year to Redlands Coast's Gross Regional Product (GRP).

For Queensland, the economic loss extrapolates from \$55 million to \$86 million in GRP per year due to a loss in mining royalties.

In exchange, the State Government originally provided \$20 million over five years for the island's transition, with an additional \$3.87 million identified as in-kind funding from Queensland Government agencies and a related \$5 million Workers Assistance Scheme administered as grants.

Redland City Council acknowledges and welcomes the existing NSI economic transition strategy (ETS). However the reality is that many of the projects within the existing ETS are long-term, with many being studies or investigations. Council fears that this will result in little in terms of 'on the ground' deliverables that will provide real and tangible economic opportunity.

While this funding is welcome, in Council's view it is not enough to successfully transition the island's economy. While the impacts of the cessation of sandmining are already starting to materialise, it is not too late for the State and Federal governments to provide additional assistance and to confirm their commitment to the island's economic transition post-2019.

In addition to funding, there is also a desperate need for more genuine and inclusive engagement with the island community, which should include both Traditional Owners and other stakeholders.

The following projects are designed to complement the existing ETS projects and deliver immediate on-the-ground results. The projects should not be seen as replacing the existing ETS projects, or other projects planned by the State Government, Qundamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) or Council.





Projects:



1. Transport to, from and around the island

The State Government NSI ETS identifies tourism as one of the key industries to successfully transition the island away from sandmining. However, the cost of transport to and from and a lack of on-island public transport has been identified as a barrier to effective tourism on the island. To help overcome this barrier Redland City Council recommends the State Government investigate and immediately implement two key short-term transport services :

- a) subsidise marine transport to and from the island to provide a more affordable and cost-effective way for tourists to access the island. This subsidy would also benefit residents of the island and encourage use of public transport by linking to a new bus service, in turn reducing the reliance on private vehicles on the island.
- b) A low-cost shuttle bus or 'loop' bus service transporting people directly to key island areas. This bus could include options to transport people directly from the Brisbane CBD and Cleveland rail station to the island via vehicle ferry, and also to key locations on the island, again reducing the reliance on private vehicles. This bus should also align with passenger ferry timetables to provide a seamless transport solution.

Council notes the transport strategy being developed as part of the NSI ETS. While we welcome the development of this strategy we note its scope is limited to public transport. As such we request this scope be extended to include private vehicle travel (including parking at key locations) and other transport modes as part of an integrated transport plan. Council also notes the development of the Dunwich (Goompi) Master Plan as part of the NSI ETS. Dunwich is one of the islands key gateways and as such transport must be a vital part of the Goompi Master Plan.



2. Community benefit fund

The State Government decision to end sandmining on NSI has had impacts beyond the loss of jobs and economic investment directly related to the mining activity. A key impact has been the cessation of the Straddie Sand Mining Community Fund (Straddie Fund), which was administered by Sibelco and contributed more than \$1 million to the local community.

This fund provided vital support to local clubs and organisations including the Chamber of Commerce, local sporting clubs and upgrades to local community infrastructure. These organisations are the lifeblood of NSI, providing recreational, social, economic and cultural experiences that should be part of every local community. Council requests the State Government commit to a Community Benefit Fund to replace this vital grass-roots funding on the island. This fund should include funding opportunities not only for local community groups but also economic development grants for local businesses to assist them through the transition.



3. Recreational trails:

NSI's natural beauty is one of its greatest assets and will undoubtedly play a key role in the island's future as a tourism destination. This natural beauty includes a series of formal and informal walking and cycling trails that crisscross the island and provide significant opportunity for the walking and cycling tourism market.

Council acknowledges the existing commitment of \$3 million toward the long-term development of a cycle and trail network on the Island, with funding available for the Dunwich to Amity Point section. Council has been listed as project partner and has been involved in a number of information gathering and planning sessions with QYAC's consultant.

To help fully capitalise on these opportunities Council asks the State Government to commit to:

- a) An immediate financial contribution to the delivery of the Snapper Street pedestrian link. A funding commitment for a section of the Snapper Street link was originally planned by the Straddie Sand Mining Community Fund. However, the \$750,000 commitment was cancelled by Sibelco in November 2016. An estimated cost is approximately \$2.4 million.
- b) Long-term rolling funding for recreational trails. Redland City Council also has a program of future works, derived from the Point Lookout Coastal Walk Concept Plan, that provide guidance and recommendations for works from Cylinder Beach Headland to Main Beach, Point Lookout. These works could potentially combine with work currently being undertaken by QYAC to provide a whole of Minjerribah recreational trail similar to the Three Capes Walk in Tasmania.

In order to progress the planning, detailed design and construction of these trails, Council is requesting the State Government enter into a long-term (10 years) funding agreement with Council. This agreement would provide year-on-year funding (co-contribution, amount to be agreed) over 10 years to provide Council – in partnership with QYAC – with the security needed to plan, design and deliver a rolling program of trails. The agreement would give tourism investors the security to invest in the island knowing what would be delivered and also give residents a long-term plan of what would be delivered on the island over the following decade.



4. Communication infrastructure

Internet and mobile communications have been sub-standard for a number of years.

This presents significant barriers to businesses trying to operate from the island, in addition to community safety challenges in the event of disasters such as fires and storms. Council has been lobbying the Federal Government for a number of years to provide the infrastructure required to meet these communication needs. We acknowledge the existing commitment to construct a black spot tower on the island, but it should be recognised this tower will not deliver the connectivity required.

To facilitate the required communication connectivity for both economic prosperity and community safety, Council requests the following:

- a) A commitment from the Federal Government to construct mobile black spot towers and internet infrastructure to enable reliable connectivity across the island. Internet connectivity in the key business areas of the island should enable commercial speeds.
- b) A commitment from the State Government that any construction associated with the NSI ETS will include telecommunication infrastructure so the new facilities have commercial speed internet. This should include working with the Federal Government and NBN Co to ensure the infrastructure is compatible with future internet roll-outs on the island. Council also recommends exploring the potential for the new internet infrastructure being extended to nearby businesses or alternatively for space to be provided in the new facilities for hot desks that can be utilised by local businesses.





5. A commitment to long-term funding

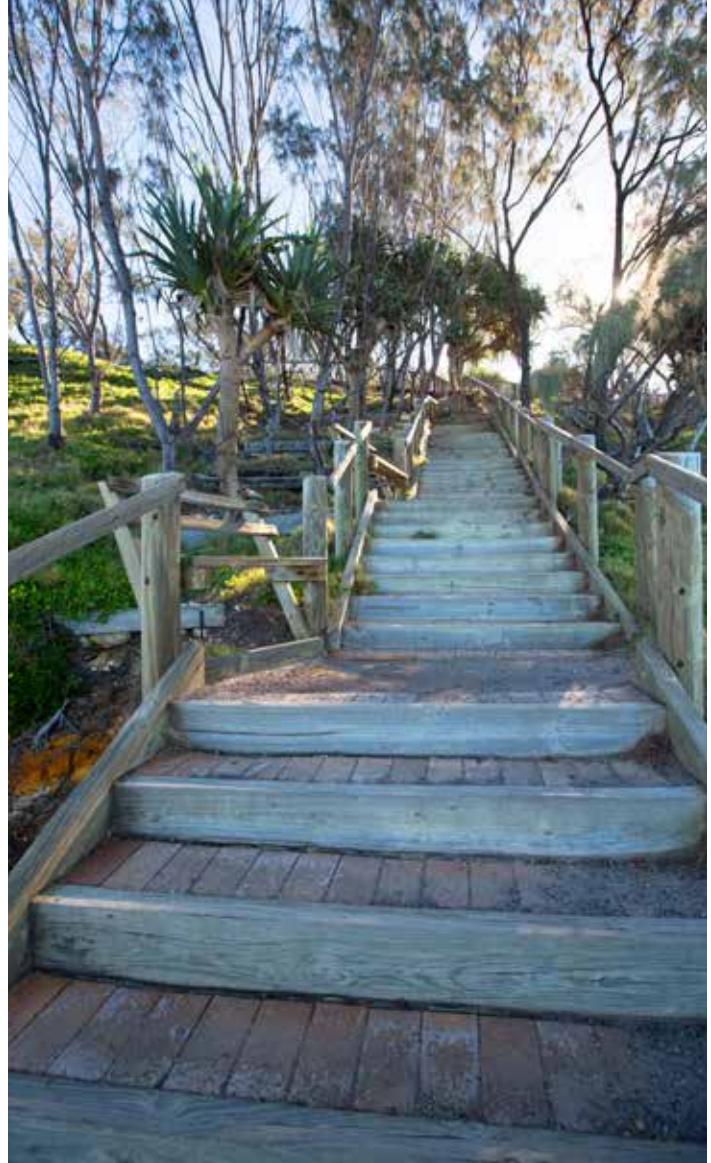
It is acknowledged the transition of NSI will be long-term and while Council

would have liked to see more progress made to date, there is little value in looking back. Instead we choose to look forward and in doing so ask the State Government to develop a long-term funding commitment for the island that provides security for the local community, local business and the tourism industry the State Government is encouraging to invest in the island.

Council seeks a 10 to 20-year funding model to provide that security. In the past Council has presented the State Government with various funding proposals that could achieve this, including a value capture model that invests expected future State revenue back into the island. It should also be acknowledged that the operation of sand mining on the island delivered significant royalties to the State Government over the last five decades. Council believes it is time some of these royalties were reinvested into the island.

Specifically there are two important pieces of work Council requests the State Government undertake with respect to long-term funding:

- Infrastructure at One Mile. One Mile is in critical need of basic public infrastructure including running water, sewage, roads, stormwater and electricity. This area is State Government land included as part a State-Government Indigenous Land Use Agreement. Council calls on the State Government to commit to long-term funding to provide the necessary infrastructure.
- Ongoing maintenance costs. Council understands the NSI ETS includes plans to change tenure or transfer ownership of certain properties. It should be acknowledged that transferring the tenure and uses of land will potentially result in Council being responsible for delivering infrastructure, planning or compliance on the properties. Due to a lack of visibility with regards to these land transfers, Council has limited information as to how they will impact Council's budget and ultimately our community. Council requests that before any land is transferred, the community and Council is provided with information in regards to the proposed final land use and how it will impact Council operations and costs.



6. Develop a 'vision' for the island (not just a list of projects)

The vision in the NSI ETS is for NSI "to become Australia's most desirable island community, striking a balance between sustainable economic growth and protection of the island's unique environment and cultural heritage".

Currently the NSI ETS is being rolled out as a list of 23 projects, with no overall vision as to how they interact to provide a vision of what the island will look like in the future. As the NSI ETS is rolled out it is important for the community to know what the future holds for the island and for them. Council asks that the State Government develop a tangible 'vision' showing what the island will look like in 5, 10 and 15 years and the benefits that exist at each milestone. This vision should exist in a format that is easy to view (such as a map or illustration) and include the planned works of all levels of government and the private sector.



7. Communication and engagement

Council has always maintained there needs to be greater engagement and communication by the Government with the broader NSI community. While it is acknowledged that there are confidential elements of the ETS and the ILUAs that govern some of the land transfers, Council encourages the State Government to engage with the whole of the NSI community on a deeper level.

Key information needed by the community includes land tenures and future land use. In February 2019 Council passed a resolution aimed at addressing this need. It included Council writing to the State Government requesting that any land transfers be based on strategic planning and community consultation and that there be a more coordinated approach to all land and tenure dealings so the community and Council were aware of proposed long-term uses across the island.



8. Develop an overarching Moreton Bay Tourism Strategy and ongoing tourism/industry partnerships

NSI holds significant tourism potential due to its natural beauty and location on Moreton Bay. However, to fully realise this potential, strategic partnerships will be required with regional tourism partners.

South-east Queensland is currently witnessing an injection in tourism infrastructure that has the potential to link visitors to NSI and deliver significant economic return. These projects include:

- Queens' Wharf development
- Brisbane airport new parallel runway
- Port of Brisbane new cruise ship terminal
- Howard Smith Wharves
- Brisbane Live
- Herston Quarter

In addition to these specific projects, other organisations intimately involved in the future of NSI and the broader Moreton Bay have the potential to contribute to the island.

Keeping in mind the need for balanced and sensitive tourism on the island, these projects and groups bring with them potential investors for key infrastructure projects on NSI.

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Council recommends the State Government formalises a Moreton Bay tourism strategy and establish a working group that brings together relevant parties to develop a blueprint that provides for the future of the island. This strategy should include plans to protect and enhance the island's cultural and environmental character in a way that still delivers on its economic future.

9. NSI employment/procurement

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census data, NSI had a total labour force of 904. Given the island's profile as a tourist destination, it is no surprise that a large proportion of island residents are employed in the accommodation and food services industry.

The island had a workforce participation rate of 51%, which is significantly lower than Redlands Coast at 63%. The island unemployment rate was 6.6%, which is slightly higher than the rest of the city at 6.1%. These census figures are now three years old and with the cessation of sand mining already starting to impact the island economy it is likely there is an even greater need now for employment and training opportunities on the island.

Training and skill development opportunities through traineeships and on-the-job experience offered by business on the Island can contribute to raising skill levels, improving worker productivity and increasing employability. This training can create employment opportunities and address the potential social costs of having a high number of out-of-work adults and disengaged young people.

Council recommends projects under the NSI ETS should include a requirement for any companies involved in construction or other works to offer traineeships or job skills to local unemployed people to provide training and skill development.



Redland
CITY COUNCIL

Redland City Council Advocacy Document regarding North Stradbroke Island
for the attention of the Queensland and Federal governments 2019

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