



Spring 2007

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After nine years devoted
to SIMO as its dedicated,
dogged and determined
president, Jennie Truman
stepped down from the post,
but not from the committee.

New SIMO committee

President: Jackie Cooper

Vice-president: Jennie
Truman

Secretary: Fran Quinn

Treasurer: Margaret Nash

Book treasurer: Gail Bell

Committee: Ellie Durbidge,

Susan Martin, Gary North,

Sean Hogben, Lucy Trippett

SIMO was formed in 1978 to stop a bridge from the mainland. Since then, SIMO members have engaged in many campaigns to protect Stradbroke Island's special environment and to lobby for conservation, sustainability and wise development.

President's AGM report

Jennie Truman announced she was retiring as president. Having thanked all those SIMO members who have responded to requests to make individual submissions regarding the environment this year, she delivered her last president's report. Here are excerpts:

Website We're making progress towards our website. \$20,000 has been promised from the Alan Phillips Peace Trust for a website to be shared by the island's three environmental groups (SIMO, FOSI and Point Lookout Bushcare).

Water has been one of our major concerns this year. NSI Water Action Group had a meeting with Deputy Premier Anna Bligh, who gave a commitment that no further water would be taken off the island until proper plans were in place. SIMO and others successfully applied under the Commonwealth Environmental Protection, Biodiversity and Conservation Act for the pipeline proposal to be deemed a 'Controlled Action'. Now an Environmental Impact Study must be done. However, the State government announced it would amend the Logan Basin Water Resource Plan to include the islands of southern Moreton Bay, and so we have to respond to that.

[See in this Newsletter a summary of SIMO's LBWRP submission.]

Mining Consolidated Rutile Limited constructed the large Ibis dune landform across a valley, instead of removing sand, leaving the valley in a pre-mine state. SIMO and FOSI urged the Environmental Protection Authority to take action, and EPA required CRL to report to them.

However, EPA accepted CRL's Environmental Evaluation, which is very disappointing. It sets a bad precedent by allowing post-mine landform to be determined by CRL's economic needs rather than, as previously, pre-mining landforms to be put back as closely as possible. SIMO consulted the Environmental Defenders' Office but they were not hopeful that we could successfully take action. We're investigating alternative action. *[An update is in this Newsletter.]*

Car park at Cylinder Beach The latest Redland Shire Council plan still locates 60 car parks along the foreshore area – which is not what the public consultation indicated.

Flinders Beach Land Management Plan This has been accepted by RSC and the State government, but the disappointment is that the 4WD issue isn't properly addressed. A proposal is to close the beach to 4WD use for an hour on either side of the high tide: we've asked how this will be enforced. Management of the camping area at Flinders Beach is better now, though the overflow is directed to Main Beach, potentially causing problems there. *Jennie Truman*

AGM guest speaker

John Bristow, President of National Parks Association Queensland, addressed SIMO. In the course of his talk he noted the many submissions that were made between 1962 and 1976 requesting National Parks on NSI. In the event, only one National Park was declared on the island, Blue Lake and Tortoise Lagoon. Mining still prevents the declaration of more National Parks; and further progress is not possible until after finalisation of the Native Title claim on the island.



SIMO members Joan Dowcra, Lisa Jackson and Hal Davis renew their annual memberships at the AGM, with treasurer Margaret Nash dispensing change. In the background, retiring SIMO president, Jennie Truman, chats with Murray Haseler.

Summary of treasurers' reports

Statement of receipts and payments for the year ended 25 May 2007

\$49,655.48

General account 1031 7450 reconciliation statement

\$8158.22

Book cheque account no 2 acc 1036 5306 reconciliation statement

\$2228.09

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 25 May 2007

Accumulated funds:

\$57,878.08

Treasurers' reports

<u>2006</u>			<u>2007</u>
414.52	Balance 26 May, 2006		
3645.58	- CBA Cheque 1013 7450	6394.61	
<u>29223.70</u>	- CBA Cheque 1036 5306 Book acc	5513.54	
33583.87	- Term Deposit	<u>31172.71</u>	43080.86
	RECEIPTS		
3990.00	Donations	2958.60	
9.09	Interest - General account	25.45	
1948.95	Interest - Term Deposit	1344.06	
477.00	Membership fees	588.00	
1.57	Net GST collected June 2006 qtr	0.00	
2082.28	Sale of Books	1613.05	
82.45	GST collected not paid	0.00	
0.00	Talks	45.98	
45.74	Net GST Collected June 2007 qtr	0.00	
<u>10773.11</u>			<u>6574.62</u>
<u>\$44,356.98</u>			<u>\$49,655.48</u>
	PAYMENTS		
388.00	Auditors Fees	400.00	
1.50	Bank Charges - General Account	0.00	
13.06	Bank Charges - Book Account	52.25	
0.00	Donations	15.00	
0.00	FOI Information	82.37	
19.55	Hall Hire	16.28	
201.00	Maintenance	141.22	
60.00	Memberships	63.19	
259.47	Miscellaneous	56.60	
358.00	Newsletter / Postage	30.28	
0.00	Travel	92.73	
0.00	Water Report	661.25	
0.00	GST owing from 06 paid 07	133.00	
4.55	Net GST paid June 2007 qtr	8.28	
<u>1276.12</u>			<u>1752.00</u>
6394.61	Balance as at 25 May, 2007		
5513.54	- CBA Cheque 1013 7450	8158.22	
31172.71	- CBA Cheque 1036 5306 Book acc	2228.08	
43080.86	- Term Deposit	<u>37516.77</u>	47905.06
<u>\$44,356.98</u>			<u>\$49,655.48</u>
	GENERAL ACCOUNT 1013 7450		
	RECONCILIATION STATEMENT		
	CASHBOOK RECONCILIATION AT 25 MAY, 2007		
	BALANCE 26/05/06	6394.61	
	ADD: DEPOSITS	3700.85	
		<u>10095.46</u>	
	LESS: WITHDRAWALS	1867.24	
	BALANCE AT 25/05/07	<u>\$8,158.22</u>	
	BANK RECONCILIATION AT 25 MAY, 2007		
	BALANCE AS PER BANK STATEMENT 25/05/07	<u>\$8,158.22</u>	
	BOOK CHEQUE ACCOUNT - No 2 acc 1036 5306		
	RECONCILIATION STATEMENT		
	CASHBOOK RECONCILIATION AT 25 MAY, 2007		
	BALANCE 26/05/06	5513.54	
	ADD: DEPOSITS	1774.35	
		<u>7287.89</u>	
	LESS: WITHDRAWALS	5059.80	
	BALANCE AT 25/05/07	<u>\$2,228.09</u>	
	BANK RECONCILIATION AT 25 MAY, 2007		
	BALANCE AS PER BANK STATEMENT 25/05/07	<u>\$2,228.09</u>	
	STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
	AS AT 25 MAY, 2007		
	ASSETS		
	CBA Cheque Account	8158.22	
	CBA Book Account: 1036 5306	2228.08	
	CBA Book Term Deposit	37516.77	
	Stock on Hand	7752.00	
	Photocopier	2223.00	
		<u>\$57,878.08</u>	
	ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
	Accumulated Funds brought forward	53788.09	
	add: excess of income over expenditure less stock adj	4089.99	
		<u>\$57,878.08</u>	
	The Organisation does not have any mortgages, charges or securities of any description affecting any of the property of the Organisation as at 25 May, 2007.		



A simple sign at the Rally of Opposition held in Dunwich in August expresses what almost everyone feels: it is necessary to have good scientific data and research before any decision can be made to take more water.

'Vital water decisions are being made across Australia without adequate data, based on politics and not science, according to the head of the National Water Commission, Ken Matthews. ...'There is a crying need for better water data to tip the balance of water management from an inaccessible political process to a publicly testable transparent process properly informed by science,' Mr Matthews said. The Land, 5.7.2007



Photographs of Rally of Opposition at Dunwich by Stuart Patterson

Focus on water

The last really big fight on the island was the one that gave birth to SIMO in 1978, the campaign to stop the bridge. That fight was notable for the unanimity of islanders and mainland supporters who opposed the very idea of a bridge. In the event the cause was won for a variety of political and economic reasons, with the staunch popular opposition being a significant factor.

Stopping the bridge is still understood as a crucial victory that preserved Stradbroke Island's integrity and island character.

Now nearly 30 years later we are fighting a battle of comparable significance: the State government's proposal to take an extra 22 megalitres of water per day to supply the SEQ water grid currently under construction.

Pumping is to commence in January 2009.

Unfortunately, this leaves insufficient time to properly assess scientifically whether it is safe to extract more water from the aquifer or not. There are already indications that it is not safe: environmental changes around sites where pumping occurs; scientific reports indicating the certainty of damage if extra water is taken; and the ultimate risk of saltwater intrusion if pumping is not sustainable.

It is deeply worrying that the government is prepared to go ahead with the extraction of more water before the necessary science can be undertaken to confirm how much water is in the aquifer, the rates at which it recharges, and the freshwater/saltwater interface.

Redland Shire Council has extracted island water to supply the bulk of the mainland shire's needs since 1989 – nearly 20 years – however, without ever having conducted an Environmental Impact Study. During the current prolonged drought, Redland Shire has remained on level 2 restrictions while the rest of SEQ has been on level 5 (and is expected to go to level 6 by year's end).

While RSC has been grossly irresponsible in its management of the water, the performance of Natural Resources and Water has not been much better. Monitoring bores supposed to track the changes in aquifer levels have not worked; what data have been collected over the years have not been fully analysed. Now there is a massive shortfall of information, leaving the government with nothing to justify the momentous decision to take additional water.

Like the unanimous opposition to the bridge, there is wholehearted opposition from islanders and mainland supporters to any proposal to take more water before the science can prove that further environmental damage will not occur. Jackie Cooper

Water blessing at Dunwich

NRW held a public information meeting at Dunwich on 11 August.

The purpose was to explain the Logan Basin Water Resource Plan draft amendment which binds the island's aquifer to the mainland catchment. Many wonder why NSI cannot have a stand-alone WRP. Equally, they ask why the Logan Basin plan took five years but NSI is being fast-tracked into a year?

Shortly after the official meeting commenced, another event started outside the hall, and proceedings stalled while everyone trooped out to watch. Aboriginal traditional owners made a statement objecting to the WRP process. They protested that RSC was extracting water without having ever conducted an Environmental Impact Study or negotiations with Aboriginal people. Elders spoke of their great fears for the future of the island as a result of water extraction. They held a water blessing ceremony. (View some early footage of a film by Gil Scrine on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfKG0rKJZsU>)

From SIMO's submission:

'S 39 (c) of the Water Act 2000 states that the "best scientific information available" must be used to prepare a WRP. However, significant gaps exist in available scientific information owing to partial data collection and analysis, incomplete monitoring during the past two decades of water extraction from NSI by RSC, and negligible, if any, assessment since the 1950s of the impacts from extensive displacements of water due to sandmining operations.'

'...At a meeting of NSIWAG and then Deputy Premier Anna Bligh in February 2007, Jennie Truman gave an account of SIMO's engagement with water extraction: 'From the start, SIMO has kept watch of RSC's water extraction operations. For the past six years we have been talking to NRW and attending meetings about the whole-of-island groundwater model. This model is used by RSC and NRW to make decisions about the water. The model is incomplete, lacks data and has major limitations.'

'4.2.4 Monitoring and reporting: Historically NRW has been lax in analysing data from RSC and CRL's bores. The reason given to SIMO for this has been the lack of funding and personnel. This dismal track record does not inspire confidence in the department's ability to take responsibility for the health of the island's environment.'

'Had NRW been monitoring the flow of major perennial streams during the past three decades we would be in a position now to know the range of seasonal variability of available surface water and how much flow there is in time of drought. As it is, we need to start from scratch and wait for many years before sufficient meaningful data are collected before we can know.'

Resuming the official meeting inside the hall, NRM staff were out of their depth and unable to answer scientific and technical questions from many locals about the aquifer and the island's complex hydrology. Rather than delivering information that enabled the community to feel confident in the integrity and sound scientific basis of the WRP process, the NRW meeting heightened the doubts and concerns of islanders, and left the impression that the State would take the water, whatever the environmental cost to the island.

SIMO's Logan Basin Water Resource Plan draft amendment submission

SIMO, along with other groups and individuals, has made a detailed submission objecting to the LBWRPda. Summarising the key points:

1 Current scientific information is unreliable and incomplete, and it will take some five to 10 years before meaningful data are available to inform the whole of island groundwater model.

2 NSI requires a stand-alone Water Resource Plan. This plan cannot be successfully undertaken in one year.

3 According to the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, proponents must demonstrate how environmental harm will not occur if water extraction is permitted.

4 Adaptive management of water extraction (ie, make it up as you go along) is unacceptable.

5 The public must have open access to scientific information for the WRP to be a transparent process.

6 The Native Title claim affects the legality of taking water without permission; negotiations with Aboriginal people must take place.

7 NSI Water Action Group will lobby to make sure that the community is fully informed of the facts and issues surrounding the WRP and future decisions regarding water.

8 The language of finality of official documents engenders doubt in the integrity of the LBWRPda process. The message is: there is no question that additional water will be taken from NSI, regardless of what the science says. This language implies that the process is already decided. If we know the outcome beforehand, then the EIS, community consultation and other trappings of the WRP are simply window dressing.

9 The Information Report – the only substantial document the State has issued to the public – is riddled with misleading and incorrect material and augurs badly for the quality, intelligence and competence of the process.

10 In civil law, the standard of proof is based on probabilities, but scientific certainly requires a higher standard of proof based on a 95% level of confidence. This higher level of confidence is what the public expects and demands of decisions affecting the aquifer. .

WAG: Need for real information about the aquifer

Various politicians and officials have promised the community a 'transparent' WRP process. Unfortunately, it is proving tricky to obtain several key environmental reports that we know exist. Perhaps this is down to officials being worked off their feet with the fast-tracked EIS and WRP running simultaneously. Nevertheless, we are anxious that no corners should be cut. Everyone has the right to be fully informed about this vital matter and to participate in the decision-making processes – indeed, this right is enshrined in the WRP process. Recently we have asked again for all relevant scientific information to be made available without further delay. The island community is watching very closely. *Jackie Cooper*

Wildlife Encounters

20.6.07 Four Dugongs just off Cascades in front of the headland. Two mothers, both with calves. Dolphins were either hassling them or playing with them. One mother came in fast onto the cunjevoi and rolled over back into the water – very frisky activity for a Dugong.

19.7.07 A Bottlenose dolphin held a dead calf on its rostrum all afternoon and into the next morning, off the headland. Every time the dead calf rolled off into the depths, she would go down and bring it back to the surface. Very sad to watch.

8.8.07 Surfing out at Frenchmans with a Dugong playing amongst three Sousas (Indo-Pacific Humpback dolphins).

15.8.07 3-4 year-old Dugong about 1.2m long washed up dead on Main Beach.

27.8.07 Large seas from gale force winds battered us for four days. An Elegant Sea Snake and a large Common Seahorse washed up on Frenchmans Beach – both alive.

5.9.07 Cape Petrel ashore on Main Beach, was alive when found but soon died.

Jennie Truman



Cylinder Beach still in limbo

In January 2004, a large Save Cylinder rally took place. (Autumn 2007 SIMO Newsletter tells the story in detail.) The rally was an expression of frustration at RSC's failure to acknowledge community wishes for a natural approach to the beach. It is telling that the RSC-



approved scheme for a car park on the foreshore has not changed from the initial design drawn up in September 2002 – three months before community consultation even took place. What a waste of everyone's energy.

SIMO takes the view that no amount of parking provision on the beach would be enough. Cylinder will hardly suffer in popularity if people have to walk to it – as they must do to get to Main, Frenchman's and Deadman's Beaches. We hope the Council will scrap the plan to put cars on the beach and instead look at the new alternative parking opportunities surrounding Cylinder: the public car park in front of the hotel, and curbside parking available along the Mooloomba Road following reduction in the speed to 50kph.

SIMO does not wish to promote driving over walking, but if the remainder of Mooloomba/East Coast Road were slowed to 50kph, even more parking would be instantly available throughout Point Lookout without spoiling valuable beaches.

Slower island?

Why did councillors vote against Cr Ogilvie's motion for a 50kph speed limit all along East Coast/Mooloomba Road, despite traffic conflict with pedestrians and a recent petition?

The western German town of Bohmte is taking a lateral approach to the matter of traffic and pedestrians. 'In a bid to improve road safety, Bohmte Council removed all traffic lights, footpaths, street signs and road markings to create a "shared space" where cars – 13,500 a day – and pedestrians have equal right of way. "Traffic will no longer be dominant," the Mayor told Reuters. These controversial traffic controls have been implemented with great success in the town of Drachten in the Netherlands, earning the idea the support of the European Union. The EU has agreed to pay half the \$1.66 million bill to remove the signals.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13.9.2007. Imagine if RSC possessed similar vision...

Koalas: going, going...

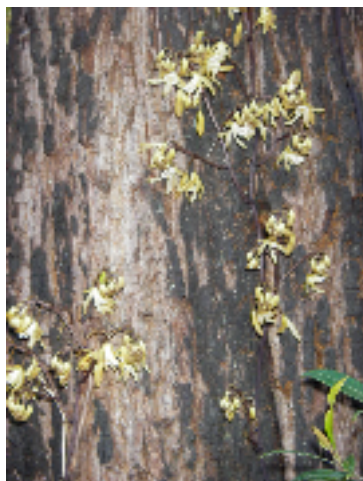
The koala population of the Koala Coast is down by 26% since the 1996-99 survey. The SEQ Regional Plan Urban Footprint sustained 42% of the population in the 1996-99 survey period. In the 2005-06 survey, this area supported only 33% – and 68.5% of the koala losses were in the Redlands. The koala is the world's fourth most iconic animal.

Springtime on the island

means that the orchids are flowering. This little Climbing Orchid (*Galeola cassythoides*) was found growing in behind Brown Lake.



The flowers are tinier than a little fingernail. The vine, which appears lifeless, grows up the side of a tree and seems to prefer burnt bark. With no leaves of its own, it depends on a root fungus.



SIMO membership 2007/08

Thanks to everyone who has already renewed their membership. SIMO is grateful for the interest and support we receive from members.

If you have not yet renewed your 2007-08 membership, please do so by sending your details to the treasurer:

Name

Address

Membership fee (please identify which type):

Single \$11.00

Family \$13.20

Concession/student \$5.50

SIMO ABN 89 682 323 435

Email address if you would like the Newsletter emailed.

The SIMO Treasurer
PO Box 4
Point Lookout 4183

The continuing saga of the disoriented Ibis dune, or what EPA did next

The mining regulatory body – the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) – has finally made two momentous decisions regarding the disoriented Ibis dune and CRL's proposed Landform Criteria.

But given the nature of these long-awaited decisions, perhaps we should we rename the government body the *Mining Protection Agency*, since its decisions allow CRL to continue to return post-mine landform in whatever form is economical to its operations.

Neither decision protects the environment surrounding a mining lease by mandating any continuity of function or form.

The EPA accepted wholesale CRL's report on the disoriented Ibis dune, which contends that no environmental harm is to be caused by placing a dune across a valley, boxing in a lagoon, and thereby creating a distinct and unnatural H-shaped landform.

The EPA also swallowed CRL's Landform Criteria, despite not being able to know the appearance of the final landform, and even though EPA officers could not explain the Criteria to SIMO and FOSI members at a meeting held in July for that express purpose.

At the meeting, which took place in the EPA's office in the city, EPA officers were to have explained the accepted Criteria and the new conditions in the Environmental Authority relating to the Criteria. However, they were obviously lacking both a grasp of the mathematical equations and implications in the Criteria, and also an understanding of how the mined landform was to be integrated into the surrounding topography.

The new EA conditions consider post-mined landform in terms of mining blocks of 100m intervals along the mine path. Each 100m block is evaluated separately. The conditions do not allow for judging the post-mine landform of each block in terms of its similarity with either the pre-existing landform or with the existing surrounding landform as a whole.

The primary fault of the methodology used to generate the Criteria is that it allows one pre-mine landform to be compared with an infinite number of possible post-mine landforms. As a consequence, the new EA conditions do not guarantee any particular outcome, except to prevent a uniform mound.

It is very disheartening that the government body responsible for regulating the island sandmining industry could not stand behind its own proposed alternative landform criteria. Instead it folded under pressure, and in the face of the inadequate technical knowledge of its staff, to accept Criteria that give CRL carte blanche on post-mine landform.

SIMO and FOSI are still pursuing legal options in an effort to ensure that Stradbroke Island's unique landforms are at the very least to be replaced in the correct location and orientation after being ploughed down by sandmining operations. *Jennie Truman*



CRL's Yarraman mine, June 2007. Huge tracts of the island are churned up by mining operations, and vast areas remain open while post-mine formation and revegetation programs proceed glacially. This leaves long-term open areas at more than double allowed by EPA, but with no action taken against CRL.