



Autumn 2009

# Newsletter

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## Please join us for the

### **SIMO 2009 AGM**

**Saturday 8 August,  
10am-12 noon,  
Point Lookout Hall**

**ALL WELCOME**

## **New MP for Cleveland**

Phil Weightman was not returned as Member for Cleveland in the March 2009 State election.

The SIMO Committee wishes to pay tribute to Phil's outstanding work for the island.

He helped reverse the government's plan to extract extra water from NSI, supported extension of National Parks, lobbied for protection for island koalas and for upgrading Point Lookout's Community Hall. Phil also publicly opposed CRL/QCM's plan to export sand.

We call on the new Member, LNP's Mark Robinson, to take up the island's significant environmental causes and wholeheartedly represent Stradbroke.

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

## **Government commits to environmental future for NSI**

During the State election campaign in March, the government gave a clear commitment to National Parks on Stradbroke Island. Government policy was spelt out in a letter to island constituents in response to emails sent to the Premier expressing concerns about the proposal to export sand: *'...The Bligh Government recognises that Stradbroke Island is a valuable natural asset to the people of south east Queensland. The Bligh Government also recognises that this is an area that needs to be protected and preserved for future generations.*

*'...The Bligh Government supports Redland Shire [sic] Council's decision to refuse Development Approval to remove and sell sand from Stradbroke Island...'*

*'...the Bligh Government is committed to implementing a new National Park target of 7.5% of Queensland by 2020 and North Stradbroke Island will be a key to achieving this goal.*

*'The Bligh Government supports the development of eco-tourism as a future industry on Stradbroke Island.'*

SIMO welcomes the government's solidarity with the RCC in rejecting the removal of sand from NSI. We also welcome the government's recognition of Stradbroke's significance as a natural asset, and its vital support for National Parks and eco-tourism on the island.

However, the longstanding plans to gazette most of Stradbroke as National Park need to be made concrete within the current term of government: 2020 is too far away for any certainty to be attached to delivery of this commitment. New National Park has been deferred for too long already – since 1992. Every additional day of delay now in implementing the island's progressive conservation is a day of further destruction of the landscape on which Stradbroke's environmental wellbeing and future tourism economy depend. Magnificent forests have been and continue to be obliterated by mining operations due to end soon, yet which still devastate very large tracts. Only by rapidly translating its commitment to National Park into action will the government ensure that what still remains of Stradbroke today will be intact for public enjoyment in the future.

**Footnote:** In August 2008, the RCC voted unanimously to reject CRL's application to export sand from mining leases. CRL is appealing the Council's decision in the Planning and Environment Court. SIMO and FOSI are among 11 co-respondents. Preliminary points were heard in court in April. No decision has been handed down yet. SIMO and FOSI continue to call for the government to revoke the Sales Permit to sell sand – granted in secret to CRL and undisclosed to the public – and to support RCC's decision to reject sand export from NSI.

### **Unimin holds first ML1108 Community Consultative Committee meeting**

As a consequence of a Federal Government requirement, Unimin recently convened community consultative meetings in relation to operations at its Vance mine, ML1108. This is the company's first initiative to engage with the island community. (Unimin bought out ACI in 2000.) Like CRL's Environmental Working Group meetings, the CCC meetings are attended by stakeholders SIMO and FOSI, along with representatives of Quandamooka and a newly re-formed Dunwich Progress Association. State and Federal government regulatory agencies and Redland City Council are also invited. Meetings discuss licensing conditions and compliance, operational matters, environmental monitoring and legislative issues. CCC meetings are to be held twice a year.



*SIMO attended a site visit to Unimin's lease 1108, with representatives of the Commonwealth government and (former) EPA, in August 2008. The lease is situated in beautiful high country.*



### **Unimin bid to take over CRL**

In April, Unimin Australia made a takeover bid for Consolidated Rutile Limited. Unimin mines silica sand on NSI (used mainly for glass-making and foundry purposes) on a mining lease north of Dunwich beside Cooroon Cooroonpah Creek. The company recently has begun mining in an area known as Vance (Mining Lease 1108), which Unimin bought from CRL in 2003. CRL's mining operations are much larger than Unimin's, using wet dredges as well as dry mining to mine for heavy minerals such as ilmenite, zircon and rutile. CRL operates two mines on NSI, Enterprise and Yarraman. CRL recently announced it is downgrading operations on NSI, with Yarraman mine shutting down in 2013 and the dredge to be dismantled and relocated off-island, leaving only one active mine, Enterprise.

#### **CRL's and Unimin's mining leases cover 70 per cent of the island.**

SIMO has been monitoring the progress of both companies' mining operations over the past 30 years. Some of our concerns regarding Unimin are poor community consultation; excessive noise and safety hazards along the trucking route through Dunwich township; poor rehabilitation of postmine landforms, resulting in erosion areas and depressions alongside creeks; and poor understanding of hydrological processes in the mine area. Unimin has mining lease applications over areas of the pine plantation along the TAZI road, an area covering a Wildflower Reserve and an area of land and sea adjacent to CRL's loading facility at Dunwich.

An obvious question is why does Unimin want to buy CRL when CRL has only limited mineral resources left to mine? Will Unimin re-mine CRL leases for silica? SIMO asked these questions at the first Unimin Community Consultative Committee meeting. The answer was that CRL operations are worth more than the leases, which suggests that Unimin might be interested in the plant and equipment; the two dredges alone would be worth millions of dollars. But this still leaves a few questions: Will jobs be lost? Will Unimin keep using its Hospital Point loading facility?

One thing is certain: Unimin, a private company, will be less transparent than CRL, which is a publicly-listed company and required to make available its reports and submissions. Therefore it will be much harder for stakeholders like SIMO to access information on Unimin's operations and to monitor its activities.



## SIMO now online

SIMO's new website is [simo-stradbroke.org](http://simo-stradbroke.org)

Six pages are up: About SIMO, About Stradbroke, SIMO Newsletters, SIMO Fact Sheets, SIMO Archives and SIMO Membership.

We will progressively add information, Fact Sheets and material from our archives.

SIMO has a strong educational objective, and we see the website as an ideal central place to locate historical, scientific and cultural material about NSI.

We look forward to posting pages on Flora, Land Fauna, Sea Fauna and a SIMO News page with updates about events, current campaigns and other island news.

SIMO is indebted to Haig Beck for designing and commissioning the SIMO website and ensuring the project is under way.



SIMO's interests encompass environmental and social issues on the island.

Top: Unimin sand loading facility, Dunwich

Below: Dale Ruska at the first celebration of Invasion Day held on Stradbroke, 26 January 2009

## Wildlife encounters Jennie Truman

# AUTUMN

  
Procession Caterpillars - begin leaving nests at base of wattle trees. Will stay dormant in pupae form in cocoons through winter - then emerge as moths in Spring to lay eggs.



Black-necked Stork (Jabiru) 120 cm tall seen at Flinders

April - spotted 2 Bryde's Whales off Frenchmans. Live, breed and feed in tropical waters, they do not migrate

Juvenile gannets arrive from N.Z

lots of Whaler sharks - seen daily chasing pilchards & tuna



good Spanish Mackerel season



*Dens are usually discreetly tucked away. This den was noticed recently beside a disused track behind Deadman's Beach, Point Lookout.*



*Michael Dickinson photographs foxes and other animals – using movement-activated cameras – as part of his extensive preliminary research into their habits and population numbers.*

*He says that the fox has a level of intelligence close to that of pigs: they are very smart.*

*Foxes eat everything: marine, avian, mammals, fruits, berries, insects, turtle eggs, snakes, lizards goannas. They may even be capable of pulling down wallabies.*

*We don't know yet how many foxes there are on Stradbroke, but it's probably a large number. They have been spotted everywhere. To date Michael has successfully trapped ten foxes.*

**DOB in a FOX: 3829 8665**

## How to outfox foxes

If you missed this talk at the Moreton Bay Marine Research Station at Dunwich, you missed something quite fascinating to anyone who's interested in wildlife. Michael Dickinson, of Wildlife & Feral Management, gave some marvellous insights into the fox world. He is on Stradbroke to establish a fox and feral animal eradication program, commissioned by Redland City Council and the mining companies.

It might seem obvious, but foxes need access to water, and they prefer flowing water to other sources. So on Stradbroke, Michael has initially been observing around water areas, and his approach is to fully understand where the foxes are operating before he sets his traps. He also needs to know where the dens are. So far he's finding them dug into escarpments, preferably with yellow sand; but they also den in white sand. The entrance to a den is cathedral-shaped and you could fit a football into it, and the tunnel behind can be 5-10m long. **Foxes prefer disturbed areas for denning such as old quarries and erosion banks alongside old tracks.**

If there's a dog in a household, this doesn't necessarily deter foxes from making a den nearby, perhaps even under the house; but a cat will deter foxes.

Fox prints are dainty, similar to those of a small dog. There are claws visible on the hind footprints but not on the front ones. Fox tracks form a wavering line because they sniff in various directions along the way. Fox prints sometimes overlap, whereas dogs' prints don't. Foxes are soft-footed and prefer soft walking areas like man-made tracks. They can walk eight kilometres a night.

Mating season is June-July. By August there are eight to ten pups in the den. In September, fox parents leave food at the mouth of the dens to attract the young outside. Fox mothers teach their young the territory, and how to kill. When animals are found killed en masse but not eaten, Michael thinks this indicates a mother fox has been training her brood. Only two of the ten pups will survive to maturity.

Foxes operate mostly at night and rest in dens during the day.

**Eradication is either by fumigation of the dens or the use of soft-jaw traps. Caged traps don't work well because foxes are too wary.** Fumigation is effective, once the fox presence in a den has been confirmed by filling in the den opening one day and next day finding that it's been cleared.

Soft-jaw traps are placed slightly off a path, food is buried nearby (no poison), and sticks are placed over the trap. Written signs are also placed so that human walkers keep to the track. Michael also often sets up cameras to record animal behaviour around the trap.

**Michael's methods are impressively humane, so much so that he wears a beeper which sounds when any trap is activated so that he can go to that trap straight away and check it.** He will use his light calibre rifle when he has to, and the local police have been informed about the eradication program. No poisons are being used.

Interesting facts to note: foxes can climb trees; and they have a memory of two months and ten days.

There are some wild dogs on Stradbroke which Michael is photographing for identification. (If anyone sees a wild dog or fox, please contact Michael: [straddiefoxes@live.com.au](mailto:straddiefoxes@live.com.au), or SIMO.)

We also have feral cats on the island. If all the foxes were eradicated, the feral cats would boom. If cats are taken out, the rats would boom...

**This feral animal eradication program has got to be continuous. If it stops, the foxes will be back in force by the next breeding season.**

The ultimate aim is to return the island to a native environmental balance and give the top position back to the goanna. *Fran Quinn*

**What locals want:  
some responses to the  
architect's questionnaire:**

- Natural ventilation
- Storage for chairs and equipment
- Stage/raised platform
- Indoors opening to outside
- Landscape gardens
- Commercial kitchen
- Upgraded toilets
- Performance area
- Change rooms
- Fixtures for stage lighting
- Meeting rooms/workshops
- Art gallery
- Changeable signage
- Theatre/amphitheatre
- Walkway to beach

*Right: Site plan. The existing building, with the Library, is retained. Translucent Tilt-A-Doors on the east and north walls allow the Hall to open up to the outside when required. New ventilation openings and skylights provide air and light inside. The existing toilets are to be upgraded to include a disabled facility. The playground is retained.*

*The kitchen is relocated from the main building to a new structure underneath the existing barbecue pavilion; it serves outdoors via a counter on the east. A new barbecue is located under trees.*

*The front area, where cars currently park, is landscaped as an outdoor room. This space is defined by the new kitchen pavilion and the long spine that runs all the way to the skate bowl, across the wetland swale.*

*Lower image: The spine is like a long verandah, running east-west. Towards the skate bowl end is a small building to house a flexible art space that divides into thirds or can be opened as a large space and used as a gallery, for example. A beach path/boardwalk runs from the spine to Home Beach, terminating in a beach deck. The spine is designed to support solar collectors for electricity and hot water.*

## Point Lookout to get new Community Hall

The Point Lookout Community Hall is to have a facelift at last. In May, the Minister for Local Government, Desley Boyle, announced State government funding of \$284,520 for the Hall, which is part of the \$10 million Rural Living Infrastructure Program aimed at improving community facilities and ensuring the sustainability of rural towns.

The new funding will be added to \$600,000 already budgeted by Redland City Council for the Hall's refurbishment. **The existing building has poor natural light, ventilation and acoustics. The community has been waiting for the Council to find the necessary money to provide a substantial upgrade to the Hall rather than just a minor refit.** Architect Brian Donovan, of Donovan Hill, has designed the new Hall. Brian, who has a house on the island and knows Point Lookout well, consulted widely with locals beforehand. His design incorporates facilities for the markets, artists' spaces, storage and a new kitchen. Retention of the original building is essential in order to keep down costs. The new design provides the community with the maximum degree of flexible indoor and outdoor spaces for a range of uses.



## Join SIMO

**Help SIMO fight for more National Park and koala protection on Stradbroke.**

Receive the SIMO Newsletter quarterly by email, or post.

### SIMO membership

Single \$11.00

Family \$13.20

Concession/student \$5.50

Please send your membership application with contact details, mailing address and payment to:

**The SIMO Treasurer**

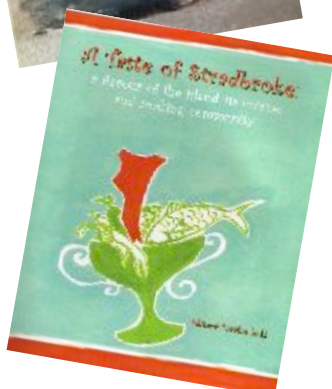
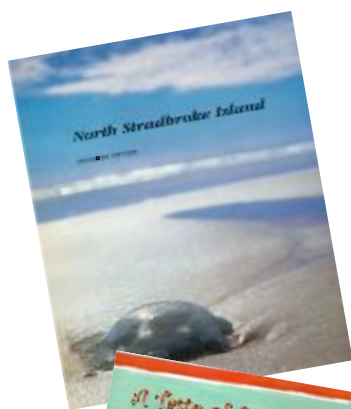
**PO Box 4**

**Point Lookout 4183**

or pay by EFT: BSB 064138

Acc no: 064138 10137450

and let us know by email.



### **North Stradbroke Island:**

\$25.80, inc GST

### **A Taste of Stradbroke:**

\$15, inc GST, or \$10 each for three copies

## The Museum built on jam

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the North Stradbroke Island Historical Society Museum for winning the 2009 ABC Radio National's Marvellous Regional Museums award.

Support the Museum by buying some excellent seasonal cumquat jam made from island fruit. Purchase either at the Museum or direct from Judy Hines, 3409 8567.

## SPOT a KOALA: the spotter's checklist

SIMO committee member Jan Aldenhoven has designed a koala sightings record sheet with key categories for information:

*Koala sightings on North Stradbroke Island*

*Date/time:*

*Recorder contact details:* Name, address, phone/email address of person who sighted koala

*Koala's location:* As accurate as possible, eg, street number or GPS mark (indicate GPS type: eg, WGS80) or use Referdex: eg, Brown Lake picnic area is Map 333 E 17; or if using eastings and northings on that page, reference is 542375 (half-way along the square of 750m) and 6959125. Or draw a mud map.

*Tree type:* Provide if possible, or note tree for later identification by expert. Blue Gum, *Eucalyptus tereticornis*; Swamp Mahogany, *E. robusta*; Blackbutt, *E. pilularis*; Paperbark, *Melaleuca quinquenervia*; Scribbly Gum, *E. racemosa*; Red Stringybark, *E. resinifera*; Needlebark, *E. planchoniana*; Brushbox, *Lophostemon confertus*; Swamp Box, *Lophostemon sauveolens*; Island Cyprus, *Callatris coumellaris*; Mango tree, etc

*Sex:* Mature males have a brown stain in crease of their chest.

*Maturity:* Can be difficult to know; small or large is helpful. Mother with baby

*Condition:* Healthy, sick, injured, dead. Note: please report injured or sick koalas to our local island animal rescue team: 0407 766 052.

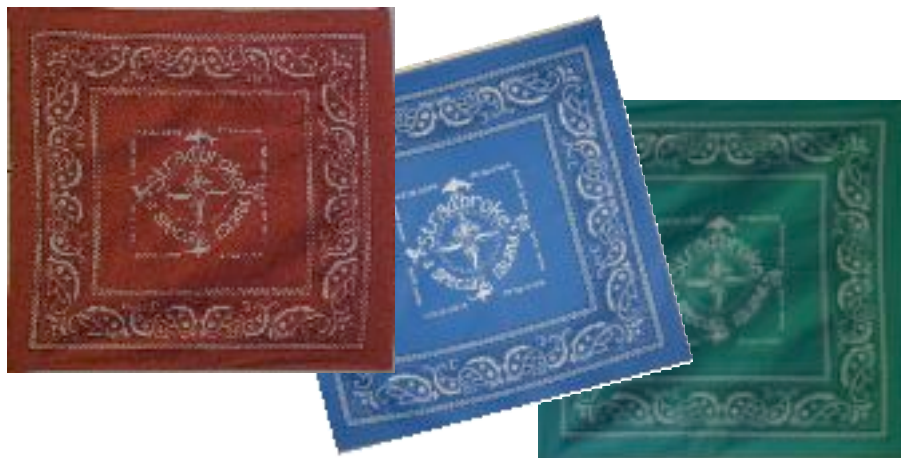
*Comments:* Resting, feeding, climbing, on ground, or even just a record of the call. If feeding, would be extremely useful to identify the tree or at least note the exact tree for later identification.

To obtain koala sighting sheets, please contact Jan Aldenhoven, PO Box 255, Point Lookout Qld 4183; [jan@wildlifefilms.com.au](mailto:jan@wildlifefilms.com.au); phone 07 3409 8899; fax 07 3409 8886. Or download from SIMO's website. All data collected are referred to Redland City Council and Wildnet.



## Bandannas and books

SIMO derives a steady income from the sale of two great books, *North Stradbroke Island* and *A Taste of Stradbroke. A flavour of the island, its cuisine and cooking community*. If you would like to support our work, buying the books and bandannas is a good way.



*SIMO's pure cotton bandannas come in five colours: aqua, royal blue, burnt orange, pale orange and teal. \$8.00 each (inc GST). To order, contact Jennie Truman, 3409 8523*