

CAN OUR COMMUNITY MEET THE CHALLENGE?

In June 1994 organisations and individuals who are resisting the mounting pressures on our coast set up the **HUNTER COAST CARE FORUM.**

The Forum now includes:

Australian Conservation Foundation

Port Stephens Eco-Network

Hunter Region Community Forum

Newcastle Trades Hall Council

Northern Parks and Playgrounds Movement

Newcastle Greens

United Residents Group for the Env. of Lake Macquarie

Surfrider Foundation

Redhead Progress Association

Jewells Total Catchment Management Landcare Group

Friends of the Earth

Green Point Action Committee

Dudley Progress Association

Newcastle Civic Association

Regional Recreational Fishing Advisory Council

Newcastle Eight Coastal Park Coalition

Wallarah Peninsula & Southlakes Coalition

Caves Beach Progress Association

The principal aims of the FORUM are:

To ensure that Hunter People are aware of the threats to their coast from accelerated population growth.

To hold the Commonwealth, NSW and local governments responsible for maintaining the natural quality of our coastal environment for future generations.

To campaign for the preservation of a continuous natural coastal corridor linking Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Wallarah Peninsula.

All public lands along this corridor must be protected in perpetuity by immediate dedication as public reserves.

If you care for your coast, send a message to the politicians in Sydney by:

❖ *Attending ~~POSTPONED~~ HUNTER COAST CARE CONCERT at Newcastle Workers Club on Saturday 26th August at 8.00pm.*

❖ *Coming to our COASTAL CRISIS Public Meeting in Newcastle City Hall on Tuesday 6th September at 7.30pm.*

Bring your friends

Speakers will be:

Mr Peter Jacklin of ABC Radio's GREEN & PRACTICAL

Ms Pam Allan MLA, Shadow Minister for the Environment

A representative of the Minister for the Environment

Dr Howard Dick, Senior Lecturer in Economics, N'cle Uni

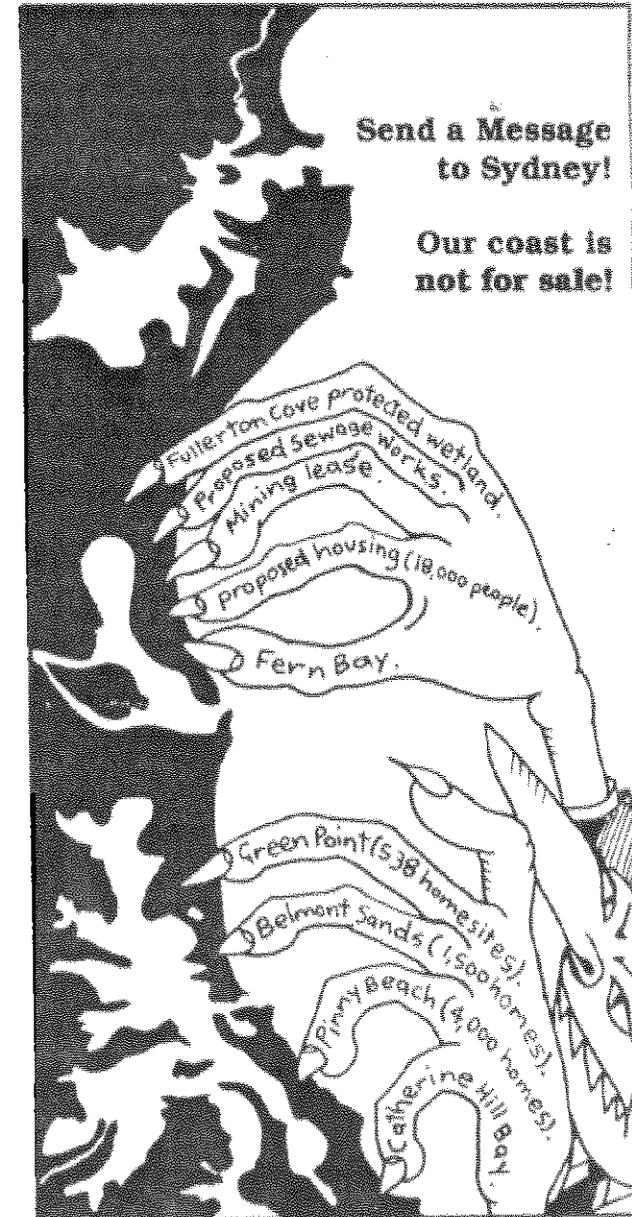
Mr Bob Horne MHR, Member for Paterson

For more information ph 291162 or 450002

COASTAL CRISIS PUBLIC RALLY

Newcastle City Hall

Tue 6th September 7.30pm



Our COASTAL DUNES and BUSHLAND UNDER THREAT!



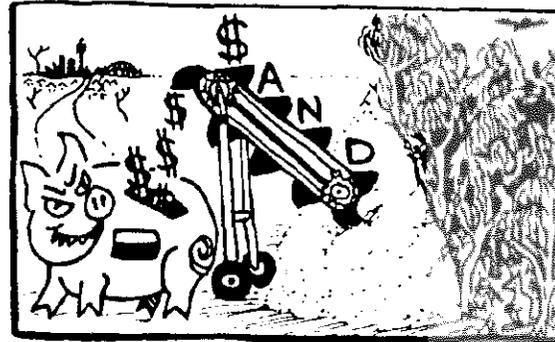
Do you look forward to living in the Hunter with our beautiful coastal areas smothered by suburban development and congested traffic?

Are you aware that plans for such developments already exist?

Do you know that the NSW Government wants to ease the population pressure in Western Sydney by accelerating the already rapid population growth in the Hunter.

We all know that people like to live close to the coast. That is why developers are snapping up land all along the coast and applying for rezonings. **They are targeting our best coastal bushland!**

The NSW Government recently ruled out offshore sand mining at Sydney beaches. **Why haven't they shown opposition to sand mining and quarrying along Newcastle Bight?**



Nobody wants to stop people moving to the Hunter, but we should all demand environmentally responsible planning.

**Our beaches, lakes
and bushland must
be protected!**

THE BIG THREATS



TO OUR COAST

NEWCASTLE BIGHT

⊗ **Port Stephens Shire Council** has approved rezoning for a subdivision which would house 15,000 people in Fern Bay.

⊗ **Hunter Water Corporation** has proposed to service this new suburb with a sewage treatment works which could pollute the groundwater.

⊗ **The NSW Government** could allow the new suburb's polluted run-off to discharge into Fullerton Cove. This is a protected breeding area for fish, prawns and birdlife.

⊗ **Boral Resources** has been quarrying sand from vegetated dunes without environmental assessment. It has now applied to double sand extraction to 500,000 tonnes yearly.

PINNY BEACH

⊗ **James Mullin Pty Ltd** wants to build an "integrated community" just south of Caves Beach. Bushland would be destroyed to make way for 4,000 houses, a golf course, marina and shopping centre.

⊗ **Lake Macquarie City Council**, if it approves the development, would be opening the way for more "ribbon development" along the highway south of Swansea.

WALLARAH PENINSULA

⊗ The whole area of bushland between Swansea and Munmorah has an uncertain future.

JEWELLS WETLAND

⊗ **BHP's Belmont Sands** proposal includes 1,500 homesites plus tourist and commercial facilities. This would destroy an area currently zoned Scenic Protection and diminish the opportunity to create a Coastal Wetland Park.

LAKE MACQUARIE

⊗ **The NSW Government** has failed to protect any of Green Point, parts of which now face impending development of 538 houses.

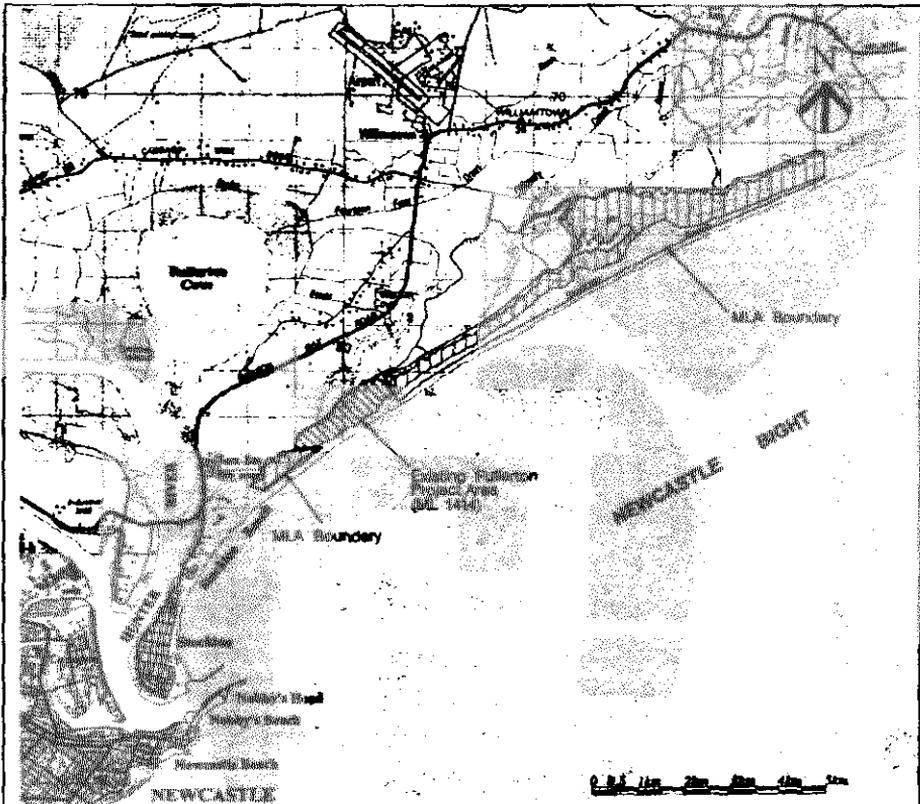
⊗ **The NSW Government** has opposed the creation of a State Recreation Area.

2

P. Gesling, General Manager
PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL
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Raymond Terrace NSW 2324
Phone 4980-0255
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Web: http://www.portstephens.infohunt.nsw.gov.au

...a community partnership

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL



Pursuant to Section 79(1) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979, notice is hereby given that Port Stephens Council being the Consent Authority is in receipt of the following Designated Development.

Development Proposal:

Mineral Sand Mining - Extension of Rutile and Zircon Mining, Fullerton Project and associated haul roads.

Site:

Lots 4 and 5 DP 233358; Lot 16 DP 258848; Pt Water Reserves 61307 and 52573; Pt Public Reserve 91676; Pt 3 DP 753194; Pt 71, Pt 72, Pt 77, Pt 91, Pt 93, Pt 100 DP 753192, Road Reserves over Pt 71, Pt 72, Pt 77 and Pt 100 DP 753192; Pt 172 and Pt 173 DP 753192; Mining Leases 759, 769, 788, 965, 1110, 1111, 1198, 1413 and 1414; MC 185.

Applicant:

Mineral Deposits (Operations) Pty Ltd (MDL)
Level 20/459 Collins Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000.

Application Number:

16.2000.749.1

Public Exhibition:

The application and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement may be inspected at the following place:

Port Stephens Council
116 Pacific Highway
RAYMOND TERRACE

Push for a park on the Bight

From BRYCE GAUDRY

THE frustration of the public at the long wait for the declaration of Stockton Bight Coastal Park is understandable.

As the State Member most involved in trying to bring the park proposal to completion, I feel that frustration as well.

However, when *The Newcastle Herald* ('Bombs away' 21/4) and Keith Parsons ('This must be a park' Letters 29/4) misinterpret the State Government's position on creating a National Park on Stockton Bight it's time to set the record straight.

The facts are these: Labor came to government in 1995

with the promise of 'establishing 24 new National Parks in NSW in its first year of office, including the Stockton Bight Coastal Park'.

The Government clearly recognises the environmental, recreational and tourist values of the Stockton Bight. The fact that we are still working to achieve this goal underlines the complexity of the issues that have had to be dealt with.

These include:

● The resolution of the Aboriginal land claims lodged over Crown lands on the Stockton Bight by the Worimi Land Council since 1995.

These land claims must be properly assessed and determined before a national park

can be declared. To act otherwise would be to deny the rights of the Worimi Land Council.

● The Crown water reserves on the Bight, essential for the Hunter's future water supply.

● Longstanding recreational use of the Bight for walking, fishing, surfing, four-wheel driving and environmental tourism.

● Existing and proposed sand and mineral mining reserves.

● Problems associated with sand drift inland.

● The pattern of private and public land ownership along the Bight.

For my part I have contin-

ued to push for the earliest possible establishment of a Stockton Bight Coastal Park, bringing together a series of meetings of representatives from Land & Water Conservation, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Fisheries, Minerals and the Premier's Department to try to overcome remaining conflicts and to design a park system to best serve the environment and the people of the region.

I am confident that a satisfactory resolution can be reached that will deliver the protection that the Stockton Bight deserves.

Bryce Gaudry is the State Member for Newcastle.

This must be a park

From Keith Parsons
THE NSW Government deserves commendation for its recent announcement of 100 new national parks on the South Coast.

It deserves utter condemnation for its failure to honour its 1995 election promise of a Stockton Bight National Park.

The area continues to be degraded while vague excuses are made about Aboriginal land rights claims.

The latest ministerial suggestion to downgrade the area to 'nature reserve' status is insulting.

The public has a right to know why the national park has not been created. If the latest sand-mining application is approved the national

park concept will be destroyed.

Mr Carr has publicly opposed mining in national parks in the past.

A good example was the goldmine at Lake Cowal. He now cynically seeks to avoid the problem in a Stockton Bight National Park by simply not creating it.

It's ironic that the Federal ALP released a tough environmental policy recently, designed to court the green vote, which states that Labor does not support mining or other resource extraction in national parks.

Fine words, while not binding on state parks, it will still make Mr Carr's stance here look hypocritical.

The arguments for

declaring Stockton Bight a national park are overwhelming.

Its magnificent coastal dune system is one of Australia's finest and must be protected.

Back in 1972 the National Trust and NSW State Planning Commission identified the area in their landmark publication *Hunter 2000*.

Let's make 2000 the year of declaration. It's been a long wait.

The area is vital to the job-creating eco-tourism and film industries.

If the problem is not fixed, Mr Carr's 'Labor heartland' will certainly remember at the 2003 State election.

Keith Parsons
Cooks Hill
April 28

Aborigines attack mining licence

The State Government's decision to grant more mining licences on Stockton Bight has been condemned by an Aboriginal group.

The Department of Mineral Resources last week granted a Hawks Nest company an exploration licence for mineral deposits in the bight.

Carol Ridgeway-Bissett from the Maaiangal Aboriginal Heritage group said the Aboriginal owners of the area, the Worimi people, had not given their consent and the action would destroy the sensitive environment.

"The dunes comprising Stockton Bight are over 6000 years old," she said.

"This is area is a significant cultural area to my people. It was a hub of life for my ancestors. It is covered with midden sites and burials. The sensitive environment will not be able to endure this type of development."



■ Carol Ridgeway-Bissett - deal done behind closed doors.

She condemned the government for not taking Aboriginal heritage interests into account when making the decision.

"The NSW Government promised two years ago that there would only be another 12 months of mining on Stockton Bight," she said.

"Secret deals like this one done behind closed doors do not give Aboriginal people much faith in the NSW Government's commitment to reconciliation."

Sand mining plan attacked

A new State Government proposal to mine literally half of Stockton Beach is, according to a local lobby group, far too destructive and too extensive.

Parks and Playgrounds Movement president Doug Lithgow claims the people have been "conned" by the State Government with the latest proposal.

"The government's clearing the way for the approval of the mining of Stockton Bight closes off options for intergenerational equity and exposes the double dealing and cynical attitude of the Carr Government to local people and their environment," he said.

"Prior to the election Bob Carr promised the establishment of the Stockton Bight National Park and even as late as last week remained committed to the establishment of conservation reserves in the Bight.

BIGGEST

"Now it has been revealed that State Cabinet on March 31 removed a number of Reserves that restricted mining of the promised National Park."

Mr Lithgow said the new proposal would be the largest sand mining ever undertaken along the NSW coast.

"They want to mine a domain covering 1,000 ha over a 21-year period," he said.

Unless people protested, the Stockton Bight could lose a most spectacular sand dune barrier system.

PORT STEPHENS EXAMINER MAY 10, 2000. P. 11

THE COAST

Newcastle Bight

Weedy vegetated dunes or magnificent natural area?

DOUG LITHGOW, President, Northern Parks and Playgrounds Movement

The Minister for the Environment, Chris Hatcher MP, acted precipitately in banning the sand extraction from the ocean floor off Sydney before the impact of the proposal could be assessed.

He did not solve an environmental problem or curtail Sydney's need for sand. What he did was shift the problem to Newcastle Bight and other places where the sand will be extracted with only cursory assessment and with much greater environmental damage.

Metromix Pty Ltd offshore sand

The Organisation of South Sydney Councils opposed the Metromix off-

shore proposal and claimed that Sydney's estimated 4.1 million tonnes per annum sand requirement by the year 2010 could come from north of Newcastle on Stockton Bight (Newcastle Bight).

The Sydney councils asserted that *Stockton Bight, a weedy vegetated dune area, damaged by army use, is not regarded as an environmentally sensitive area.*

Sand dune wilderness

This description is outrageously wrong. The Bight is, in fact, a magnificent sand dune wilderness and water catchment aquifer backed by forested hind dunes. It is a glorious wildflower area and wild place. It was proposed by the National Trust as a nature reserve in its publication *Hunter 2000*, 1972. The National Parks Association NSW and the Newcastle Flora and Fauna Society and others have published park proposals for the Bight.

Foisting Sydney's environmental problems onto other areas only extends and compounds the problems. It does not solve them.

How many 20-40 tonne trucks are needed to shift 4.1 million tonnes of sand per year? What effect will all those truck movements have on local roads and who restores the forested dune system and the associated wetland and heath lands? What about the energy used and the pollution produced, let alone the mess that is left in the Bight?

Comprehensive analysis needed

A much more comprehensive analysis of the environmental problems that confront us on this issue is urgently needed.

Newcastle Bight aquifer

The Newcastle Bight is an aquifer nominally controlled by the Hunter Water Corporation. (The Hunter District Water Board has been corporatised but has not yet been privatised.) Most of the Bight is vacant crown land and is Newcastle's reserve water supply.

Threats

Threats to the area are not new. The heavy minerals of the Tomago Sand Beds have been mined since 1974 and some areas are now being re-mined. Boral Resources Country Quarries are ripping the forest cover off their 240 ha estate at the southern end of the Bight and have been extracting the high dunes for a couple of years without any envi-

ronmental assessment. A number of other companies are also extracting sand from the Bight in an indiscriminate and haphazard way.

Urbanisation

Boral no doubt hopes to be able to subdivide and sell for urban uses when the sand is exhausted on its holding and the natural ecology has been obliterated.

The high dune on an adjacent small crown land Public Reserve No 170039 mysteriously disappeared without trace early last year and an area zoned Special Purposes (World War II radar site) was mined away without consent.

A draft amendment to the Local Environmental Plan to rezone adjacent public and private land is currently awaiting determination by the Minister for Planning, Robert Webster. The subdivision could house 1700 people. Disposal of sewage effluent into the Newcastle Bight aquifer and groundwater is already to be fast-tracked.

The Newcastle Bight is a magnificent coastal area and, like other coastal lands that have little or no management, it is subjected to indiscriminate use, too much fire and too little care. In November 1983 the Hunter District Water Board proposed the extension of the crown land water reserve under its control north to Birubi Point and proposed that the surface be managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as a nature reserve.

This proposition, which was a step in the right direction, was never made public and unfortunately disappeared in the rush for offshore coal loaders and a possible new artificial inshore harbour in the Newcastle Bight to replace Newcastle Harbour.

National park

Total Environment Centre and the Northern Parks and Playgrounds Movement want a re-examination of all the crown land and the Water Corporation land in the Bight and Tomago Sand Beds, bringing the wildlife and botanic values of the area under the protection of the NPWS as a national park.

We also want to see a stop to the existing pollution of the Port Stephens/Newcastle Bight aquifer and protection of groundwater supplies and the curtailment of developments that threaten these water reserves.

It is extraordinary to think that a major national park has not yet been dedicated over this scenic and wild area which is relatively close to the dense urban region of Newcastle. ■

May 1994

EXTRACT
from T.E.C. Newsletter
MAY 1994

NORTHERN PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS MOVEMENT

Stockton licence decision blasted

By TOM CRYSTAL

ENVIRONMENTAL and Aboriginal groups have condemned the State Government's move to grant an exploration licence for mineral deposits at Stockton Bight.

Maaiangal Aboriginal Heritage Inc said the decision was a desecration of Koori cultural heritage.

Newcastle environmentalist Doug Lithgow labelled it a betrayal of the Government's pledge to preserve the area as a national park.

The Northern Parks and Playgrounds Movement president was responding to the granting of the licence to Mineral Deposits (Operations) Pty Ltd.

The decision gives the Hawks Nest company licence to explore about 36 sq km of Stockton Bight at Fullerton Cove.

Mr Lithgow said the State Government's promise to protect the sensitive coastal area in its first term of office appeared to have been 'hollow'.

The granting of the licence followed negotiations involving the State Government and Port Stephens Council.

The Maaiangal group said the State Government had ignored traditional owners in the decision.

Group spokeswoman Carol Ridgeway-Bissett said the Worimi people, the owners of part of the area, had not given their consent for the plan.

'Stockton Bight is a significant cultural area to my people,' she said.

'It is an area covered in midden sites and burials.'

Ms Ridgeway-Bissett said the Government had promised two years ago that there would only be another 12 months of mining on Stockton Bight.

A mineral resources spokesman said Aboriginal heritage sites and relics known to be near the area would be treated sensitively, according to strict National Parks and Wildlife Service guidelines.

Attended By Cindy Johnson (2)
Researcher NT Unit
and Danny Chapman - Assistant
manager of NTU, NSW.
Funding was not available for
them to attend this meeting
Worimi Traditional Owners were
not present at this meeting

PORT STEPHENS, Examiner Weds APRIL 26, 2000. P.6.

Worimis row over who speaks for them

Activist claims
plan to muzzle
her over sale of
Aboriginal land

by PETER KELLY

A public row has erupted between Worimi elders and high-profile Aboriginal activist Carol Ridgeway-Bissett over who should speak publicly for the tribe.

The Worimis created history this month when they held their first meeting as a nation in recent times at Tanilba Bay.

The meeting which was chaired by Worimi elder Les Ridgeway, who travelled from the North Coast, was called to bar high-profile local Aboriginal, Carol Ridgeway-Bissett from speaking as a representative for the Worimi tribe.

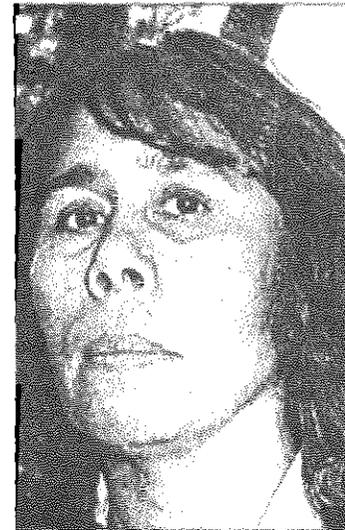
Ms Ridgeway-Bissett did not attend the meeting at the Land Council on Tuesday.

She dismissed the meeting as being of no importance and claimed it was aimed at muzzling her from speaking out about plans to sell Worimi land.

She claimed she had not been informed that the meeting was to be held.

Herself and elder Viola Brown were signatories for the entire Worimi nation and nothing could change that, according to Ms Ridgeway-Bissett.

"We have information that some of the people claiming to be Worimis are not Worimis at all," she said.



■ Ms Ridgeway-Bissett - the meeting was of no importance.

"What is happening is that the land council has about \$30million worth of land and it wants to sell some of it and people such as I will not agree to any sale.

"Traditional land owners not only here but in other areas as

well are having trouble with land councils.

"My family are Worimi elders and I have a right to speak which I will continue to do."

The co-ordinator of the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council, Lennie Anderson, said the National Native Title Tribunal had told him Ms Ridgeway-Bissett was not registered as "a person having native title rights."

The tribunal said an application was made by her but it had failed to pass the registration test on December 2, 1999.

Mr Ridgeway said the meeting was called because of Worimi concerns that Ms Ridgeway-Bissett was constantly misleading the media as the sole spokesperson for the tribe.

"At the meeting she was voted off the signatory list of the Worimi nation. She can no longer speak for the Worimi people."

He said four members of the Worimi people would be named as spokespeople for the Worimis.

NOT
TRUE

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Newcastle Herald, Thurs. Jan. 20, 2000. P. 6

The granting of the licence followed negotiations involving the State Government and Port Stephens Council.

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'It is an area covered in midden sites and burials.'

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Stockton Bight park

In 1999 Newcastle City Council resolved to support the creation of a Stockton Bight National Park and to convey its policy position by letter to the State Government. Is the new council aware of this? What was the Government's response to the council's letters outlining its policy of support for the national park?

Keith Parsons, Cooks Hill

*Newcastle Herald,
April 22, 2000. P. 10.*

Push for sandmining approval

By ALEXANDRA SMITH

MORE than 50 jobs will be axed immediately unless the State Government steps in and approves an extension of sandmining on Stockton Bight, according to the Australian Workers Union.

Union members and their families rallied outside the Premier's Department offices in Newcastle yesterday, demanding the Government take a stand to save Hunter jobs.

Mineral Deposits Pty Ltd (MDL) is seeking concurrence from the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) for an extension to mine rutile on 595ha of Stockton Bight.

Port Stephens Council unanimously approved an application by MDL to continue mining on

the bight in September and agreed to seek the concurrence of the department.

But the union said the Government was dragging the chain on guaranteeing at least seven years of work for the company's employees.

Union organiser John Boyd slammed the delay yesterday, saying the Government had an obligation to the workers.

'It is an absolute disgrace,' Mr Boyd said.

'Mineral Deposits have been mining in the Fullerton Cove area for a long time and the Government has been so slow in getting their act together.'

'It has become a big concern for their families because they don't know if they will have a job in six weeks.'

The low Australian dollar

made it viable for MDL to restart mining at its Viney Creek operation, near Tea Gardens, in October. The Viney Creek site closed in April, 1999, after 13 years.

But company spokeswoman Kate Hobbs said Viney Creek was only a short-term solution and conceded employees would be laid off in the coming weeks.

'We have done everything we can to save these jobs,' she said.

'We slowed down the Fullerton operation and we reopened the Viney Creek operation but it is now critical for the State Government to grant concurrence.'

Ms Hobbs said MDL was pinning its hopes on a timely decision by the State Government.

The *Newcastle Herald* contacted DUAP yesterday but was told the department could not provide any information.

INTERESTING

January 18, 2001

PAID WITH BHT

Newcastle Herald

p. 4

Helping little terns survive battle of the beaches

James Woodford
Environment Writer

A little tern that leaves the nest is one of the luckiest animals on Earth.

Survival for the endangered birds, which migrate every spring from the furthest reaches of the Northern Hemisphere to Australian beaches, has virtually nothing to do with planning and everything to do with chance.

This year the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is fencing off huge areas of sand on the coast to help the birds overcome their biggest problem: appalling taste in safe real estate. Volunteer wardens are also being appointed to guard the eggs, and beach fox baiting is underway to reduce the number of feral predators.

Little terns lay their eggs in the sand, without any protection, preferably in the open and unfathomably close to the reach of high tides. At the very best they may deposit their eggs in the lee of a twig-sized piece of driftwood or on top of a little pile of shell grit.

During the big summer tides, colonies of eggs are frequently swept away by the sea.

Fencing is being placed around colonies at locations including Tuross Head and Tathra on the



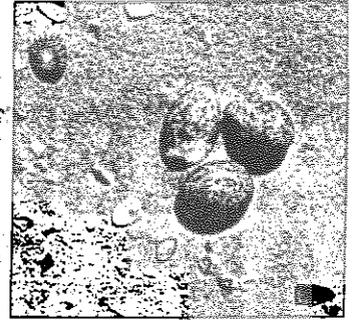
south coast, and a number of north coast sites. The main aim is to prevent people walking through the nesting sites. The eggs, which resemble a pumice stone, are so well camouflaged they are almost impossible for a human to see.

At Tathra, the parks and wildlife service little tern recovery co-ordinator, Mr Mark Westwood, will also put in place

500 metres of electric fences to stop ferals getting to the eggs. Mr Westwood, who is responsible for about 400 of the birds, said most people who walked through the colonies did not know they were traversing the habitat of an endangered species. "They breed at the worst time of the year. Summer is when you get the big storms and the tourists," he said

If they survive attacks by rogue seagulls, crows, kestrels, sea eagles, foxes or dogs, they then risk having their eggs picked up by children or run over by four-wheel drives. Fishermen or sunbakers who unwittingly spend too long near a nest can drive the parent birds away, leaving eggs to overheat or chill.

A volunteer warden guarding the birds' colonies, Mr John Liney,



Their own worst enemy... a little tern at a Tuross Head beach, and a nest of eggs, open to the elements and predators. Photos: Andrew Taylor

said: "They are their own worst enemy." He has seen the birds make their nests in four-wheel-drive tracks on the sand.

It takes three weeks for a little tern egg to hatch. Two days later the chick - known as a runner - is able to flee trouble. In another three weeks it is able to fly.

If eggs are destroyed, the parent birds re-lay more until summer is over. But if chicks are not flying by the end of the breeding season when little terns return to the Arctic, the young are left to die.

"It's scary isn't it?" Mr Westwood said. "What chance would you give them of successfully breeding, but somehow every year some of them do it?"

Syd Morn Herald 4/12/00 p.2