



**Andrew
CRIPPS MP**
Member for Hinchinbrook



for a new Queensland

INNISFAIL ADVOCATE COLUMN FOR 13.1.10

Date: Friday 8th January 2010

For immediate release

2010 WILL BE FULL OF CHALLENGES

I would like to wish the people of the Cassowary Coast region a safe and prosperous New Year. I hope you all had a holy and Merry Christmas and spent some quality time with family and friends. I think 2010 will be full of challenges for the Cassowary Coast region and for North Queensland. These challenges will require strong representation to secure a fair outcome for local communities. I am committed to working hard on behalf of my constituents and North Queensland as a whole.

As always, it will be a challenge to keep up the pressure on the Bligh Labor Government to deliver better services and facilities and protect existing services and facilities in the Hinchinbrook electorate and to North Queensland. Too much of my work involves trying to prevent the Bligh Labor Government from withdrawing existing services and facilities from communities in my electorate and from across North Queensland, let alone improving them, or securing more of them.

Sometimes you have to work hard to ensure existing funding and resources are not reduced to local schools, like losing a teacher, or the current battle I'm fighting to keep the instrumental music program in smaller rural schools. Sometimes you have to fight for funds to get existing local roads maintained to a decent standard (like the Canecutter Way), or be part of the campaign to question why QR rail freight charges on fertilizer (gypsum) have suddenly increased by 400 per cent.

Sadly, a great deal of effort is invested in fighting for the basics, to keep what you have got. It is also a constant battle to try and make the Bligh Labor Government understand the full impact of its impractical and ineffective policies that demonstrate a total lack of understanding about the conditions, lifestyle and circumstances of people living in North Queensland. There is an identical lack of understanding demonstrated by the Rudd Labor Government, but more on that in a moment.

I will continue to speak out against the Bligh Labor Government's ridiculous policies on crocodile, flying fox, pest weed and feral animal management and point to the adverse impact they have on people and industries that I represent in the Hinchinbrook electorate and across North Queensland.

This year is a federal election year. I hope there will be a change of government in Canberra and the Liberal-National Coalition defeat the Rudd Labor Government. I hope that the people of the Cassowary Coast region help secure that change and protect future generations from the heavy burden of decades of debt. I feel Australia needs a conservative government to get us out of the serious levels of debt we find ourselves in, thanks to Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan.

Less than three years ago, the Australian Government had no debt, thanks to the good economic management of the former Coalition Government. The people of Australia face decades of tax increases to pay back this huge debt. We can't afford another Rudd Labor Government.