



**Andrew  
CRIPPS MP**  
Member for Hinchinbrook



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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### MINISTER HIDING WATER MORATORIUM EVIDENCE

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, has accused the Bligh Labor Government of hiding the evidence used by the Department of Environment and Resource Management to support its claim that the reliability of surface and ground water supplies have declined in the Wet Tropics and justify the imposition of its water resources moratorium.

Mr Cripps said he wrote to Natural Resources Minister, Stephen Robertson, after the moratorium was announced in mid January, requesting the body of documented evidence used by DERM to support its assertion. His request has been refused by the Minister.

"Instead of providing the evidence, the Minister has referred me to the DERM website which has new information on it about the development of a Water Resources Plan for the Wet Tropics, which is the next step in the process following the moratorium" said Mr Cripps.

"The website has a draft WRP and a consultants report attached to it. The draft WRP repeats the claim that the reliability of ground and surface water supplies has declined in the Wet Tropics, but once again, provides no evidence to support that claim" he said.

"The website also has a consultants report on it that talks about existing water entitlements, estimated surface water use and estimated ground water use, but does not contain any evidence that reliability of ground and surface water supplies has declined" said Mr Cripps.

"There needs to be some transparency in this process if the public is going to have any confidence in it. The Bligh Labor Government can not expect water users, landowners and other stakeholders to participate in the consultation process without this evidence" he said.

"This is a perfectly reasonable request. Minister Robertson and DERM should not make claims about a supposed decline in the reliability of ground and surface water supplies in the Wet Tropics unless they can substantiate those claims. If they can't or won't provide the evidence, then the moratorium can not be justified in the Wet Tropics" said Mr Cripps.

Mr Cripps said while he accepted that water resource plans were being developed across the state, the imposition of the water moratorium in the Wet Tropics had created great uncertainty and angst across the region and was hurting small businesses and industry.

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