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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**For immediate release**

### **NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT A JOKE UNDER LABOR**

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, has slammed the management of Queensland's National Parks under the Bligh Labor Government as a joke and warned the recent announcement of an additional 9,339 hectares of National Park estate in the Hinchinbrook electorate would not mean the environmental values of those areas would be protected.

Mr Cripps said given that about two thirds of his electorate was covered by some form of protected area (World Heritage, National Park or State Forest), he was keenly aware of the lack of funds provided by the Bligh Labor Government to the QPWS to employ enough rangers and maintain the conservation values of the existing National Park estate.

"I have no doubt these additional areas added to the Paluma, Girringun and Clump Point National Parks in my electorate have conservation value, but I have no confidence in the Bligh Labor Government to deliver the additional resources to properly manage the extra land, because it doesn't even look after the existing National Park estate" said Mr Cripps.

"The walking track through the Licuala National Park which connects the Tully – Mission Beach and El Arish - Mission Beach Roads has been closed for over 12 months. It was damaged when Cyclone Ellie hit North Queensland in February 2009, but has not been repaired. Yet more National Park has been declared in the Mission Beach area" he said.

"A new QPWS ranger station for Cardwell was announced by the Bligh Labor Government two budgets ago, but construction has not even been started. That project is 12 months late and yet the Girringun National Park has been expanded. This is a typical example of our QPWS rangers being under resourced to manage our National Parks" said Mr Cripps.

"There continues to be reports of increased feral pig numbers and pest weed infestations in catchments across the Hinchinbrook electorate, including large areas of National Park estate in which they are poorly controlled. This gives National Parks reputations as bad neighbours. Yet more area is being added to the Paluma National Park" he said.

"The Bligh Labor Government loves running around announcing new National Parks, but its commitment to proper management of National Parks is a joke. The announcement of these new protected areas will not necessarily do anything to conserve their environmental values, because it's more about media spin than policy substance" said Mr Cripps.

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