



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

BLIGH & LABOR HYPOCRITICAL OVER REEF THREATS

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, has joined his LNP colleagues in accusing the Bligh Labor Government of hypocrisy over its persecution of North Queensland farmers through unfounded accusations that they are damaging the Great Barrier Reef, when it has been ignoring other more serious threats posed by poorly regulated shipping lanes.

Mr Cripps said the so – called reef protection measures rushed through state parliament last year were an unnecessary burden on North Queensland farmers and graziers, when it had been clearly demonstrated this week there are other more pressing issues that need to be addressed by the Bligh Labor Government if it is genuinely interested in protecting the reef.

“Suddenly, the media and public focus is on the regulation of shipping channels through the reef. Premier Bligh has jumped on the band wagon saying she hopes maritime safety and environmental authorities “throw the book” at the shipping company involved in the Shen Neng 1 crisis, currently unfolding in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park” said Mr Cripps.

“If the Bligh Labor Government hadn’t been so busy persecuting easy targets like the sugar industry and the beef industry, it might have been awake to the fact that there were other more pressing threats to the reef and done something about the poor regulation of foreign shipping companies that make hundreds of trips through the reef every year” he said.

“The Bligh Labor Government didn’t want to rock the boat in the resources sector, which delivers billions of dollars in royalties directly to the state every year, so it targeted farmers and graziers, without any real evidence, despite the fact that the sugar industry and the beef industry are major export earners for Queensland and Australia” said Mr Cripps.

“You can’t blame farmers for getting angry when this sort of blatant hypocrisy is on show. In front of all the cameras and microphones this week, Premier Bligh has expressed concern for the “pristine Great Barrier Reef”, but isn’t this the same reef that Labor told us last year has been damaged by decades of farming activity in North Queensland?” he said.

“The Bligh Labor Government can’t have it both ways. It needs to get its priorities right. Farmers have been burdened with more bureaucracy and red tape as a result of Labor’s unnecessary reef protection regulations, while these foreign shipping companies are obviously traversing the Great Barrier Reef without proper supervision” said Mr Cripps.

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