



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

WATER ACT STILL CLEAR AS MUD

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, says amendments to the *Water Act* to allow for Resource Operations Plans (ROP) to remain in place while Water Resource Plans (WRP) are reviewed, have failed to deliver more transparency in the public consultation process.

Speaking in the Queensland Parliament during the debate, Mr Cripps said the Bligh Labor Government ought to develop WRP's, such as the Wet Tropics WRP currently being developed, based on transparent scientific evidence that is available to the public.

"I support the amendments to ensure there is stability in terms of the provisions of an ROP while a WRP is being reviewed. It could take many years for a review to be completed. This would otherwise expose water entitlement holders to substantial risk" said Mr Cripps.

"I have canvassed this issue in terms of the development of the Wet Tropics WRP which threatens to keep the water entitlements of landowners in limbo across seven individual catchments, from the Herbert in the south to the Daintree in the north, for years" he said.

"I have been advocating for months now for the Wet Tropics WRP to be progressed on an individual catchment basis instead of across several catchments at once. There is a real threat the process in one or two catchments could run into problems, including legal problems, which would see the finalisation of the WRP delayed for years" said Mr Cripps.

"Water entitlement holders would be held to ransom while these problems are sorted out. We know that legal problems can happen, because it happened in the Condamine-Balonne catchment, where the WRP took 10 years to develop. We need to minimise the risk of this happening in the Wet Tropics, but the Bligh Labor Government is not listening" he said.

"DERM has been conducting public consultation recently on the development of the Wet Tropics WRP. It is still not presenting to the public, the data and evidence it used to justify its claim when it declared the moratorium that the reliability of ground and surface water is declining. It is only trying to explain the process, which is as clear as mud" said Mr Cripps.

"I have asked for that data and evidence from the Minister for Natural Resources in the interests of transparency. The public is entitled to see that information during the drafting of the Wet Tropics WRP. So far the Minister has not being forthcoming" he said.

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