



MEDIA RELEASE

Date: Thursday 5th August 2010

For immediate release

LABOR SQUEEZES LANDHOLDERS FOR RENTS

The Bligh Labor Government is once again squeezing landholders across Queensland by increasing Crown Land rents by approximately 500 per cent without any justification.

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, said he had been inundated by complaints from landholders in his electorate after they received their latest land rent invoices, revealing an increase of 493 per cent from \$82.50 to \$407 without any justification from DERM.

Mr Cripps said it looked very much like Natural Resources Minister, Stephen Robertson, had increased the minimum lease charges on landholders, irrespective of valuation, purely to gouge extra cash out of Queenslanders to cover Labor's soaring \$85 billion debt.

"These increases are a Bligh Labor Government decision to impose a massive increase in the minimum land rents for Crown Land titles in Queensland. The rent increases are not related to valuation increases. This is just a greedy, selfish, grab for cash" said Mr Cripps.

"The Bligh Labor Government is in such a bad financial way, it has been forced to dream up new ways of raising money off easy targets like landholders. The debt is huge, the borrowings are high, the waste is appalling and the spending is free under Labor" he said.

"Landholders are being ripped-off across the state. Most of the leases provide access to roads, power and water services. Until now, farmers have worked along side these Crown Land titles without too much of a problem and without incurring high costs" said Mr Cripps.

"However, a number in my electorate are used for production purposes, especially in the sugar industry. The increase in land rent has made some leases unviable and therefore, production may be lost, which is another blow to North Queensland under Labor" he said.

"These Crown Land titles, in many cases, would otherwise be unused and unproductive. Some of the valuations on these leases have changed, but others have remained unchanged for several years. Despite this, the land rents have all increased" said Mr Cripps.

"The Bligh Labor Government is an expert rip-off merchant. This blatant money making exercise has been revealed only after the recent budget process was completed" he said.

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