



MEDIA RELEASE

Date: Tuesday 2nd November 2010

For immediate release

ECO TOURISM DRIVE BREAKS DOWN UNDER BLIGH LABOR

A year after the Bligh Labor Government announced its intention to encourage several low impact eco-tourism accommodation developments inside National Parks, nothing has been done to progress the projects while Queensland's tourism industry continues to languish.

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, said Premier Anna Bligh, Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor and Environment Minister Kate Jones had announced a new eco-tourism plan in November 2009 designed to boost visitor numbers to Queensland's National Parks.

Mr Cripps said he feared that the expressions of interest called for from private investors to pursue the eco-tourism projects were sitting in the bottom draw of a desk somewhere because the Bligh Labor Government was too busy with the fire sale of state owned assets.

"Seven project sites were nominated, two of which were in my electorate of Hinchinbrook - Ninny Rise at Mission Beach and Wallaman Falls, north-west of Ingham. So I took particular notice of this announcement by the Bligh Labor Government and have been waiting patiently ever since. Not surprisingly, nothing has happened" said Mr Cripps.

"The Bligh Labor Government talked up this plan in November last year but as usual it has not followed up with any action. It has failed to show any leadership and progress these projects at a time when our tourism industry, especially our tourism industry in North Queensland, needed to be supported with new initiatives and new ideas" he said.

"The Bligh Labor Government has a "lock out" mentality when it comes to National Parks. However, in 2010, there is no doubt that a higher level of access and use by a larger number of visitors can be managed carefully to deliver growth in the eco-tourism industry without compromising the conservation values of these protected areas" said Mr Cripps.

"In my electorate of Hinchinbrook alone, we already have the Ma Mu Canopy Walk at East Palmerston, but there could be so many more successful eco-tourism projects inside our National Parks in addition to Ninny Rise and Wallaman Falls, including the old Cardstone village site, north - west of Tully and Blancoe falls, north -west of Cardwell" he said.

Mr Cripps called on Tourism Minister, Peter Lawlor and Environment Minister, Kate Jones to get serious about eco-tourism projects in National Parks by offering at least 25 year leases to provide security of tenure, attract private capital and ensure a return on investment.

Contact:	Andrew Cripps MP Member for Hinchinbrook	Address: PO Box 1515 Ingham Qld 4850	Ph: 07 4776 1428 Fax: 07 4776 3503
E-mail: Hinchinbrook@parliament.qld.gov.au			
