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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Date: Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

**For immediate release**

### MEETING TO DISCUSS FISHING HUTS FUTURE

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, has organised a public meeting in relation to the proposed removal of fishing huts from the Halifax Bay Wetland National Park and the adjacent recreational reserve, and has encouraged all interested persons to attend.

Mr Cripps said the public meeting would be held at the Tyto Conference Centre, Macrossan Street, Ingham, commencing at 6pm on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2011, and would be attended by officers from the Department of Environment and Resource Management.

"I am strongly opposed to the proposal by the Bligh Labor Government to force the removal of these fishing huts inside and adjacent to the Halifax Bay Wetlands National Park. This is a special part of our lifestyle in North Queensland and I will fight to defend it" said Mr Cripps.

"There was absolutely no consultation with the local community prior to the Bligh Labor Government announcing the new national park in 2008, so I have organised this public meeting to give the people of the Herbert River district the right to have their say" he said.

Mr Cripps said he had assisted local hut owners to draft a petition opposing the removal of the fishing huts, which is currently circulating throughout North Queensland, and had objected to the proposed declaration of the Halifax Bay Wetlands National Park in 2008.

"I was concerned the declaration of the national park would mean the recreational activities of my constituents would be impacted upon. Unfortunately, I was right. I argued with the former Environment Minister, Andrew McNamara in 2008 about this issue" said Mr Cripps.

"At that time, Minister McNamara stated that huts on the recreational reserve adjacent to the national park would not be affected, but more recently, this advice had changed. These hut owners have been double crossed and have a right to be very angry indeed" he said.

Mr Cripps said all of the fishing hut owners, including those inside the Halifax Bay Wetlands National Park, should be left in peace by DERM to enjoy a basic recreational activity, camping and fishing, which had been part of the North Queensland lifestyle for generations.

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