



MEDIA RELEASE

Date: Thursday 13th January 2011

For immediate release

MEETING DEMANDS RETHINK ON FISHING HUT REMOVALS

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, says the people of the Herbert River district have sent a loud and clear message to the Bligh Labor Government about its plans to declare a new National Park near Ingham that will force the removal of a number of local fishing huts.

Mr Cripps said a crowd of well over 100 locals and visitors from North Queensland communities concerned that their huts will be next to go, attended the public meeting in Ingham last night, to tell senior officers from the Department of Environment and Resource Management that they were strongly opposed to the plan and demanded a policy rethink.

"I organised the public meeting last night to give the people of the Herbert River district the opportunity to have their say. There was no consultation with the local community prior to the Bligh Labor Government announcing the new national park in 2008" said Mr Cripps.

"North Queenslanders with huts located inside the new National Park and on the adjacent recreational reserve controlled by the Hinchinbrook Shire Council, should be left alone by DERM to continue to enjoy a basic part of our local lifestyle, fishing and camping" he said.

At the public meeting last night, Mr Cripps said he believed there was an opportunity for a reasonable resolution to the issue, if DERM was willing to give serious consideration to working with hut owners to accommodate them in a new National Park management plan.

"As the Halifax Bay Wetlands National Park is yet to be gazetted, a management plan has not yet been developed. I proposed that DERM work with hut owners in the area to develop a code of conduct for maintaining the huts inside the National Park. Other suggestions from the floor of the meeting were to provide permits to occupy for existing huts" said Mr Cripps.

"No one is saying that more fishing huts should be established inside or adjacent to the National Park. All that is required is for the Bligh Labor Government to demonstrate that it can be fair and reasonable, and not held to ransom by the extreme Greens" he said.

Mr Cripps said the meeting had unanimously supported a resolution to reject the proposal to declare the new National Park and remove the huts, resolved to form an association to represent the local community and would prepare a range of proposals to be presented to the State Government that would allow the existing huts and to be preserved.

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