

**From:** LNP Media [LNP.Media@opposition.qld.gov.au]  
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**Subject:** MEDIA RELEASE - Rat-running ships remain biggest threat to reef

**Andrew Cripps MP**

Shadow Minister for North Queensland, Reef Protection and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Economic Development  
Shadow Minister for Public Works  
Member for Hinchinbrook

24 January 2011

**Rat-running ships remain biggest threat to reef**

POORLY regulated shipping lanes in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park continue to pose the biggest threat to the reef, the State Opposition said today.

LNP Shadow Minister for Reef Protection Andrew Cripps said while the Bligh government focussed on alleged run-off from farms along Queensland's east coast as the main threat to the reef, the biggest risks were cyclones and rat-running ships.

Mr Cripps said yet another bulk carrier, the Hong-Kong based *Signe Bulker*, had been caught dangerously off course north-east of Gladstone and close to the location where the Chinese bulk carrier, the *Sheng Neng 1*, ran aground on Douglas Shoal in April 2010.

"The Federal Labor Government has still not finalised the extension of the mandatory ship reporting system to cover the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, despite its mock outrage and chest beating following the *Sheng Neng 1* incident," Mr Cripps said.

"I note the officers in charge of the *Signe Bulker* have been charged, but the serious risk to the reef from this vessel being so dangerously off course in an area with a recent history of severe incidents, shows the Federal Labor Government has failed to act."

Mr Cripps said he expected the Bligh Labor Government to run a mile from any responsibility regarding the *Signe Bulker* incident, despite the Premier and several Ministers scrambling to secure the media limelight following the *Sheng Neng 1* debacle in April 2010.

"Continued rat-running by huge bulk carriers through the Great Barrier Reef demonstrates that poorly regulated shipping lanes are a more serious threat to the reef than any alleged farm run-off from the rural sector on Queensland's east coast," Mr Cripps said.

"If the Bligh Labor Government hadn't been so busy persecuting farmers, it might have been awake to the fact that there were other, more pressing threats to the reef and done something about the poorly regulated operations of foreign shipping companies."

Mr Cripps repeated his condemnation of the Bligh Labor Government's so called reef-runoff regulations on farmers in North Queensland and called on government agencies to put more effort into regulating shipping lanes through the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

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