



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

TOURISM BASICS IGNORED AT MISSION BEACH

Hinchinbrook MP, Andrew Cripps, has continued to highlight the failure of the Bligh Labor Government to address a number of fundamental issues holding back the recovery of the tourism industry at Mission Beach ahead of the one year anniversary of Cyclone Yasi.

Mr Cripps said he had written to Premier Anna Bligh to express his concern and disappointment that basic issues such as the failure to re-establish the day use area on Dunk Island and the uncertainty facing efforts to plan for new, modern marine infrastructure.

"I'm concerned because these issues are stalling the recovery of the tourism industry, which is a critical part of the economy at Mission Beach and I'm disappointed because I have put these issues in front of the Bligh Labor Government more than once already" said Mr Cripps.

"The Premier took on the extra job of being Minister for Reconstruction, so the buck stops with her. The downturn in trade because of the lack of progress is impacting on the wider community in terms of employment and the future viability of tourism operators" he said.

"One of the major issues facing tourism at Mission Beach is the absence of modern marine infrastructure. For some time, the need for a private investor to come forward and deliver a facility within the Clump Point Boat Harbour Reserve has been pressing" said Mr Cripps.

"Local residents and Mission Beach tourism operators were shocked when the Bligh Labor Government unilaterally removed the Marine Development Area designation from Boat Bay last year in conjunction with the release of the new Queensland Coastal Plan" he said.

"This occurred without any consultation with the local community. It will complicate the planning process for any private project proposed at this location. This has created significant uncertainty, despite the MDA having been in place for decades" said Mr Cripps.

"I wrote to Tourism Minister, Jan Jarratt, in August last year, about the need to develop a plan for the recovery of tourism at Mission Beach, stressing the need to re-establish day trip tourism to Dunk Island, a cornerstone of the industry at Mission Beach" said Mr Cripps.

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“While the resort on Dunk Island is privately owned, the day use area on the Dunk Island spit is a public area. It is covered by a lease involving DERM, the council and the resort owners. It can and should be re-established for day use tourism as soon as possible” he said.

“It’s a crying shame the day use area on Dunk Island remains a complete mess, with no facilities or services for recreational use by tourists or locals. DERM has failed to ensure this area was re-established after Cyclone Yasi, under the terms of the lease” said Mr Cripps.

This is a real disappointment, because the QPWS has re-established the walking tracks to Mt Kootaloo within the National Park on Dunk Island, but without the support of basic day use facilities on the Dunk Island spit, tourist visitors are unlikely to return” he said.

“The day use area on Dunk Island is also very popular with locals and they are also concerned about the lack of services and facilities on Dunk Island, which they have enjoyed access to for decades. These are basic issues which need to be addressed” said Mr Cripps.

“I have spoken in parliament and written to relevant Ministers about these issues on several occasions. These Ministers have failed to understand them, or chosen to ignore them. Either way, the Bligh Labor Government needs to address these matters urgently” he said.

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