



**Andrew  
CRIPPS MP**  
Member for Hinchinbrook



for a new Queensland

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

### **New frontline officers to fight pests and weeds in North Queensland**

Member for Hinchinbrook Andrew Cripps has welcomed the Newman Government's announcement of two Pest and Weeds Officers to be based in Charters Towers and Mareeba, and a Fisheries Extension Officer to be based in Ayr in North Queensland.

Mr Cripps said the commitment delivered on the Government's promise to revitalise frontline services in the stand-alone Agriculture Department.

"Producers in North Queensland have been fighting pests such as wild pigs and weeds such as hymenachne, Singapore daisy and prickly acacia for many years, and this announcement will help them win this battle," he said.

"A Fisheries Extension Officer in Ayr will provide a major boost to the industry in that area, and will give the support that workers in that industry need."

"I have been advocating for more support for producers at the farm gate and in the paddock and I'm very pleased to see these frontline officer positions established in our region as it is an area of high need and risk.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, John McVeigh, announced the positions along with 12 other frontline officer positions around the state last week.

Mr McVeigh said the officers were a key part of the LNP Government's commitment to making Agriculture one of the four pillars of Queensland's economy and to double food production by 2040.

"I'm under no illusions that this will be an easy task, but it's a challenge I and my team are relishing," he said.

"Mr Cripps has spoken to me about the issue of pests and weeds in North Queensland, and about the need to give the fisheries industry a boost, and after consultation, we have decided it will be most effective to have a Fisheries Officer based in Ayr and Pest and Weeds Officers based in Charters Towers and Mareeba.

"DAFF will be getting back on the front foot to help farmers, not hinder them.

“Hopefully this is just the start. I’ve told my Director-General to find more savings so more staff can be put on the frontline.”

Mr Cripps said after so many years of Labor, it was heartening to see a standalone department committed to delivering not only research but practical assistance to producers.

“Labor simply forgot about the farmers and fishermen in North Queensland, but together we fought hard and long for this and we won’t give up now. We’ll keep going so we can get more hands on the ground to help improve our production capacity, and win this battle against pests and weeds.”

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