




Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Thursday, 1 December 2011

HALIFAX BAY WETLANDS NATIONAL PARK, FISHING HUTS

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (3.56 pm): In March this year I tabled a petition supported by 1,151 petitioners in my electorate opposing the removal of fishing huts from the Halifax Bay Wetlands National Park in the Palm, Cattle and Orient Creek areas of the Herbert River district. I said that I would continue to strongly advocate on behalf of my constituents in relation to this issue. I have continued to support my local community, working alongside the Halifax Bay Recreation and Lifestyle Association.

I have also been pleased to work alongside the association in relation to the draft Hinchinbrook Area Island Management Plan, which is another seriously flawed policy of the Bligh Labor government. On 25 October a similar e-petition, supported by 491 individuals, was tabled. Another identical e-petition closed last week, supported by another 422 individuals. Today I tabled a further identical paper petition, supported by 3,324 people.

Taking the two paper petitions and the two e-petitions together, 5,388 people have supported the work of the association and me to seek a reconsideration by the Bligh Labor government of its plans to forcibly remove these fishing huts from within the national park. We have appealed to the Bligh Labor government to give consideration to a reasonable resolution by accommodating the fishing huts within the national park's yet-to-be-developed management plan. Fishing huts are a special part of our lifestyle in North Queensland. There was no consultation with the local community prior to the Bligh Labor government announcing the new national park in 2008.

I have been extremely disappointed by the bloody-mindedness of DERM and the Bligh Labor government on this issue. Both the department and the current government have continued to ignore the local community, despite its ongoing and sustained opposition to the plan. I will continue to support my local community, which has spoken out loudly about this issue. If the Bligh Labor government continues to ignore my community, it just reinforces its contempt for North Queensland.