

**NICK DAMETTO**

**Member for Hinchinbrook**



## MEDIA RELEASE

12/9/2018

### Dametto backs biofuel industry for North

HINCHINBROOK MP Nick Dametto has called on Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk to back the biofuel industry in North Queensland with a game-changing local project.

The proposed \$640 million North Queensland Bio-Energy (NQBE) plant came to a halt in May due to several factors, including an unstable electricity pricing market. The project would have brought some 250 jobs to Ingham while turbocharging Queensland's biofuels industry.

Mr Dametto has since personally met with Energy Minister Anthony Lynham, representatives of the Department of State Development and NQBE Chairman Robert Carey to discuss what leavers the State Government could pull to see the project come to fruition.

"At the moment the wholesale price of renewable electricity is disrupting the market but a project like this would add system strength and dispatchable power to the North Queensland grid," Mr Dametto said.

"A commitment by the State Government to underwrite the wholesale price of electricity that could be sold on the market by NQBE would help get this project off the ground."

Mr Dametto said he was encouraged by Ms Palaszczuk's recent comments about developing the biofuel industry in Queensland after she visited Brisbane Airport yesterday with State Development Minister Cameron Dick to celebrate airline Virgin Australia's use of biofuels on 195 domestic and international flights.

The Premier was quoted in articles yesterday saying her government supported a "home grown biofuels industry" and was "working with a range of national and international bio-industry proponents".

"I think this presents the perfect opportunity for something like NQBE," Mr Dametto said.

"You also had Virgin Australia's general manager of group sustainability Rob Wood admit that it was difficult to get commercial volumes of biofuel in Australia. NQBE could provide a solution. You've got a supply chain ready to go."

Mr Dametto said Katter's Australian Party (KAP) had always backed NQBE "100 per cent" and committed to working with all stakeholders to realise the project.

While he welcomed the State Budget's allocation of \$878,000 in 2018-19 out of a total \$1.1 million to assist with the "construction of a fully integrated bio-refinery near Ingham", Mr Dametto urged the government to take the next step.

"You've got a major airline on-board with this fuel technology and the State Government has a biofuel partnership with the US Navy that has been ongoing since 2016," he said.

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“It’s clear the demand is there. Let’s make NQBE happen.”

Mr Dametto said NQBE would be a flagship project to showcase to the rest of Australia the future of ethanol, power generation and bioplastics production.

In the last Queensland parliament, the KAP was able to achieve a mandate requiring four per cent of the total volume of regular unleaded petrol sales and ethanol-blended fuel sales by liable retailers to be ethanol-based fuel.

The ethanol mandate took effect on July 1, but the KAP is calling for a 10 per cent mandate by 2025.

“With cane the predominate crop in Hinchinbrook, I know just how beneficial a 10 per cent ethanol mandate would be to farmers in my electorate,” Mr Dametto said.

“There is huge potential to grow that market and I urge the State Government to consider our party’s proposal.”

—ENDS—

**Media Enquiries**

Michael Serenc – 0423 108 848