

MEDIA RELEASE

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LNP's policy an absolute croc

THE Liberal National Party (LNP) needs to “harden up and show some backbone” on crocodile management, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

The Katter's Australian Party (KAP) MP said recent comments in the media by Shadow Environment Minister David Crisafulli about redirecting State money spent on crocodile monitoring and education into removing problem crocodiles was hardly a solution to what has become a major safety concern for North Queenslanders.

“I'm happy Mr Crisafulli has identified the North has a major problem with crocodiles,” Mr Dametto said.

“But instead of fiddling around the edges with Labor's existing policies, the LNP should back our party's Safer Waterways Bill, which advocates for a controlled crocodile cull and egg harvesting in waterways that surround populated areas.”

The Bill, which was introduced into parliament by Hill MP Shane Knuth earlier this year, also seeks to establish a Cairns-based “Queensland Crocodile Authority” which would be required to remove all rogue crocodiles living in urban areas or waterways used by people for recreation. This would be achieved either through a controlled cull or relocation to an approved crocodile farm.

In addition, authorised landholders will be permitted to decide whether to cull, relocate or retain crocodiles inhabiting their property. If they choose to have a crocodile permanently removed, the landholder can either do this themselves or accept payment from another person who wishes to permanently remove it. By placing a value on crocodiles, landholders are less likely to cull all crocodiles on their land unless necessary for them to safely live and operate on that land.

Mr Dametto said the parliamentary Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee had shown contempt for the people of North Queensland by not recommending the Safer Waterways Bill be passed in a report tabled last month.

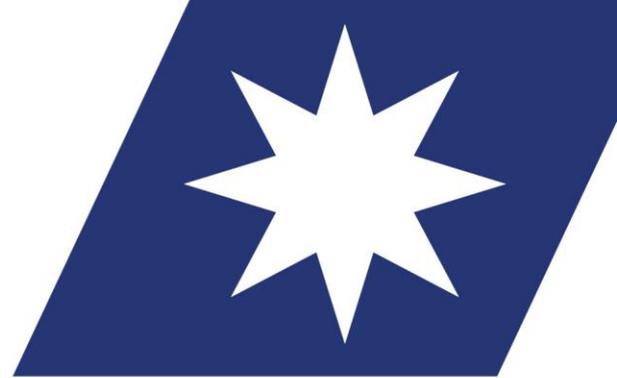
“The committee's rejection of our Bill was based on hysterical misinformation and a number of false assumptions, some of which were made by committee member and the LNP's Member for Whitsunday, Jason Costigan,” Mr Dametto said.

“In his Statement of Reservation, Mr Costigan falsely paints the Bill as “cowboy policy” and wrongly suggests it would lead to the closure of crocodile farms that are not 100 per cent Australian-owned. This is nothing more than scaremongering.

“Rather, the Bill proposes to create an additional industry through egg harvesting, similar to what has been achieved in the Northern Territory.”

NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



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Mr Dametto said Mr Costigan was also wrong to state there would be an “indiscriminate killing of crocodiles” under the Bill.

“Once again, Mr Costigan has been loose with the truth,” he said.

“We are not talking about culling crocodiles in places like the Daintree or the wilds of Cape York, only from waterways in populated areas commonly used by people for recreation or landholders who have crocodiles inhabiting their property.”

Despite the committee’s rejection of the Bill, Mr Dametto said there was still hope it could pass if common sense prevailed in the parliament.

“It’s important to remember the former State Agriculture and Environment Committee rejected the KAP’s sugar marketing Bill in 2015 and yet the KAP was still able to secure its passage in parliament, benefitting hundreds of cane growers in our region,” he said.

“Together with my colleagues Hill MP Shane Knuth and Traeger MP Robbie Katter, I will continue to fight for this Bill and give it every chance of passing through parliament.

“If the LNP really believe our Bill is not an effective solution to crocodile management, then I urge them to detail how their own policy would work better. The KAP is more than happy to listen to their ideas.”

—ENDS—

Photo captions:

HINCHINBROOK MP Nick Dametto has called on the LNP to back Katter’s Australian Party’s Safer Waterways Bill.

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