

**NICK DAMETTO**

**Member for Hinchinbrook**

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## MEDIA RELEASE



31/10/2018

### Fed Govt stagnates on sugar dumping

HINCHINBROOK MP Nick Dametto says the Federal Coalition Government needs to “stop sitting on their hands” or face a backlash by sugar cane growers over its reluctance to take action against Indian sugar dumping.

Mr Dametto said it beggared belief that the government had so far refused to do anything substantial other than have Federal Trade Minister Simon Birmingham complain to the Indian High Commission after India decided to dump five million tonnes of subsidised sugar onto the world market in late September.

“I am astounded at the lack of action taken by the government on this issue,” he said.

“Senator Birmingham has previously said he reserves the right to take India and Pakistan to the World Trade Organisation over sugar subsidies. I urge him to follow through on that threat and prove his government has some intestinal fortitude when it comes to standing up for Australian farmers.

“India and the rest of the world must be laughing at us right now as we make idle threats all the while growers in the North continue to suffer from a dismal world market price for sugar.”

India’s sugar industry is getting the equivalent of an \$850 million government assistance package, including help to export their product.

According to Canegrowers, in the past ten months to September, the sugar price fell the equivalent of \$156 Australian per tonne as a surplus market anticipated Indian subsidised exports. When the Indian government confirmed in late September that exports would take place, the market fell by a further \$14 per tonne overnight to be just on \$300 per tonne.

Meanwhile, Hinchinbrook is home to a sugar industry worth more than \$300 million a year.

Mr Dametto said if the government did not join with other affected countries of the Global Sugar Alliance and hold India accountable before the World Trade Organisation (WTO), it will have betrayed thousands of growers.

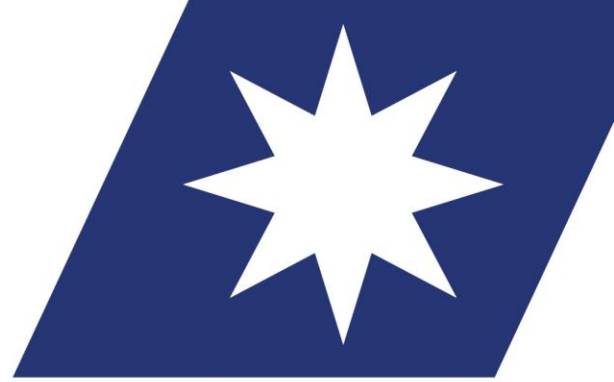
“Empty threats only mean so much and the clock is ticking. The Federal Government is making us look softer than a cooked piece of spaghetti,” he said.

“As I’ve said before, the government has the power to take real action here and preliminary analysis done by Canegrowers indicates that India is in breach of WTO rules.”

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Mr Dametto said the government was in a “precarious position” being in minority and needed to be listening closely to the concerns of North Queenslanders if they have any chance of self-preservation at the next election.

“Our party leader, Kennedy MP Bob Katter, is in an exceptionally strong position as one of six crossbenchers who hold the fate of the government in their hands,” he said.

“The Coalition would be wise to take some real action on this issue or face oblivion at the ballot box from growers who are angered by their refusal to stand up for them.

“Katter’s Australian Party will be sure to hold them to account.”

—ENDS—

*Photo captions:*

*HINCHINBROOK MP Nick Dametto has urged the Federal Government to stand up for Australian cane farmers after India’s decision to dump millions of tonnes of subsidised sugar on the world market.*

**Media Enquiries**

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