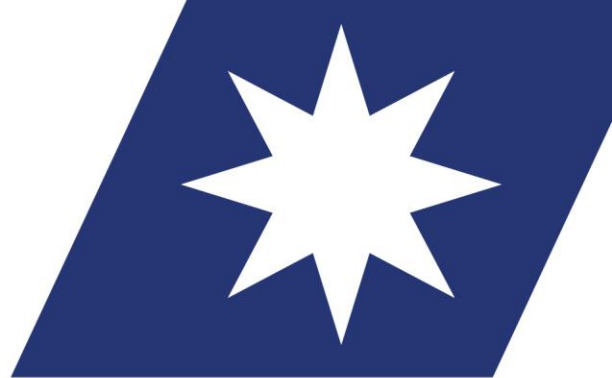


NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

24/10/2018

Opportunity knocks for local eco trail development

LOCAL operators will be well placed to be part of a “once in a lifetime opportunity” in developing an eco-tourism experience on the Thorsborne Trail, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said he was excited by the State Government’s recent call for expressions of interest (EOI) for a commercial operator to be a part of the planned upgrades to the trail and had no doubt there were talented operators within Hinchinbrook who could capitalise.

“Our electorate is already home to several great tourism products with highly capable and experienced operators,” the Katter’s Australian Party MP said.

“The EOI Stage is the first of three stages of the State Government’s market process. Proponents have been asked to submit their plans that will incorporate an upgrade to the existing track and providing short stay facilities that add to the trails experience, with the opportunity to develop and operate eco-accommodation and tour guidance on the Thorsborne Trail.”

The call for EOI’s has also been extended to Cooloola Great Walk and soon-to-be-constructed Whitsunday Island Trail in a bold move to bring commerce to national parks in Queensland.

“This is an essential first step to unlocking our regions full potential. There’s no reason why we can’t be the world’s next must-see adventure tourism destination,” Mr Dametto said.

“However I do have a concern that I have made clear to the State Government in that I would not support this initiative if locals were denied access to the Thorsborne Trail over a commercial operator.

“From my experience in running a water-based tourism business the key to success is all tidal access. This would need to be restored to Dungeness and Cardwell. Simply put, you can’t run a business waiting on the tide.

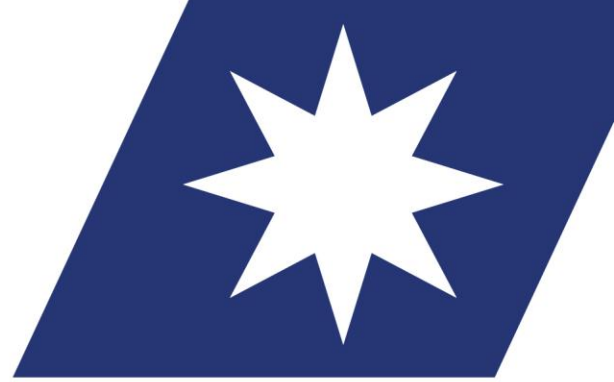
“I have also echoed Hinchinbrook Shire Mayor Ramon Jayo’s call to the State Government to add Wallaman Falls to the list of potential National Park sites that could be commercialised to add to the visitor experience.”

Mr Dametto said it was even possible for businesses to submit a joint venture EOI if they felt it would enhance their chances of being successful.

“The EOI is about attracting local and out of town investment and exploring opportunities that create regional jobs. Revenue generated by the lease charges of such an operation would be returned in the way of maintenance of the track,” he said.

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“Worldwide there is growing demand for new, unique and low-impact eco-tourism products. Tasmania has led the way in Australia, allowing provisions for the building of facilities in national parks that enhance the tourism product. This has been instrumental in attracting more domestic and international visitors and has turned their economy around.

“I believe we can strike the right balance here between management of national park values and visitor attraction. The Thorsborne Trail is already one of the top 10 multi-day hikes in the world and a low-impact, sustainable eco-tourism experience would only enhance this.”

Last month, Mr Dametto called on the government to get serious about getting behind local tourism ventures that would help showcase the best of Hinchinbrook to the world, including Wallaman Falls, Mungalla Station, Tyto Wetlands, Paluma Rainforest Walk and the Thorsborne Trail.

Potential operators have until November 30 to submit an EOI for the Thorsborne Trail, however the closing date to access the EOI document is November 16.

For more information on the EOI, head to www.ditid.qld.gov.au/tourism/special-projects/queensland-ecotourism-trails/thorsborne-coooloola-whitsunday/expressions-of-interest

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