

NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook

MEDIA RELEASE



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Funding cut bad news for local environment

A STATE Government decision to slash funding to the Herbert River Improvement Trust (HRIT) could put the protection of the Great Barrier Reef in jeopardy, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said he was stunned at the government's decision to cut \$300,000 from the State Council of River Trusts Queensland (SCRTQ), which allocates funding to river trusts across state.

"This is a disgraceful decision that ignores the incredible amount of hard work the Herbert River Improvement Trust has put into remediating stream erosion and reducing sediment runoff that ultimately benefits the Great Barrier Reef," he said.

"I have requested a meeting with Natural Resources Minister Anthony Lynham and will be urging him to reverse this misguided and grossly irresponsible funding cut.

"The Minister needs to step in here or I fear the HRIT's capacity to carry out remediation works on erosion will be severely compromised."

The move means the SCRTQ is now left with a funding pool of only \$300,000 for its river trusts, forcing them to allocate a fixed amount of only about \$36,000 to the HRIT.

Previously, the HRIT was able to bid for their own amount of funding from a pool available to the six northern river trusts within the SCRTQ, depending on the level of remediation works needed to be carried out in rivers and creeks across the North.

The HRIT conducts works across the Herbert River district, including in Stone River, Cattle Creek, Frances Creek, Ripple Creek, Seymour River, Crystal Creek and the Herbert River itself.

It also plays a valuable role in cleaning out and repairing river and creek systems after heavy flooding in order to ensure minimal stream erosion.

The HRIT is jointly funded by Hinchinbrook Shire Council, the State Government and adjoining landowners, with occasional access to Federal funding.

Mr Dametto said he stood with Hinchinbrook Shire Mayor Ramon Jayo in calling on the State Government to pay its fair share to help improve overall water quality and protect the Great Barrier Reef.

"It is vital our local river systems are adequately maintained but by the same token there needs to be sufficient funding from the State Government to help organisations like the HRIT to do this," he said.

"Let's hope common sense prevails with the government."

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