

NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

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Island clean-up bill thanks to Labor's laziness

THE Labor State Government's failure to ensure there was a current insurance policy over the lease of Hinchinbrook Island's dilapidated Cape Richards resort will now cost taxpayers big time to clean it up, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said the oversight had left him dumbfounded after the government announced it would accept an offer by the liquidator to take back the lease over the resort, formerly known as Hinchinbrook Island Wilderness Lodge, and spend \$1.3 million to clean it up and rehabilitate it back into national park.

"This situation demonstrates gross incompetence by Labor in not making sure the leasee of the resort had an insurance policy to the government's benefit in the event the resort collapsed, which it did in 2010. The Bligh Labor Government was in charge then," he said.

"After being destroyed by Cyclone Yasi, fire and vandalism, there's no doubt I welcome efforts to clean up the resort. But it should never been left to the taxpayers to foot the bill."

Mr Dametto said local contractors from the Cardwell area should be given preference to tender for clean-up works but ultimately that decision would be made by the State Government.

"If Labor is going to spend this money, the least they could do is make sure it goes back into the local economy," he said.

"I am aware of several local contractors who are more than capable of performing these works and have extensive knowledge of the resort's infrastructure."

Mr Dametto also criticised the government's decision to take back the resort's lease as "premature" after recent media reports revealed it was not due to expire until 2052.

"Since the resort's collapse, there has been commercial interest in the property but opportunities have slipped away as investors couldn't see the commercial viability in the project, having to settle debts owed to both the State Government and council before commencing clean-up and restoration of the resort," he said.

"It's an absolute travesty to think that we have lost one of our island resorts forever. But it's clear successive Labor and LNP governments in the years since have failed in what Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen set out to do by creating these island resort leases which were to become economic boosters for small towns like Cardwell, in a time where they were set to see a rollback of traditional industries like timber and commercial fishing."

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