

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

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Dametto welcomes dredge funding for One Mile Creek

A RELENTLESS lobbying effort by Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto has forced the Federal Coalition Government to come good on their election promise to allocate funding to go toward the dredging of Cardwell's One Mile Creek.

Mr Dametto said this morning's expected announcement of \$1.5 million for dredging was an important step forward in solving the multiple longstanding problems at Port Hinchinbrook.

It is understood Cassowary Coast Regional Council will be the proponent for the project.

"Today's announcement is the result of a combination of relentless lobbying by community groups and myself. It is very disappointing it has taken this long for the Federal Government to commit to helping Cardwell," Mr Dametto said.

"It was clear that the Coalition had no real intention of following through on their original election promise of up to \$1.5 million to dredge One Mile Creek until I made a personal representation on behalf of the community in Canberra when I met with Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack.

"During that meeting, he refused to commit to that promise, only for him to succumb and publicly commit in the media just days later after fierce backlash from the Cardwell community. Unfortunately, this is an example of how governments conduct themselves - they never act unless someone is there to force their hand.

"Let's hope this funding is fully utilised for actual dredging and not chewed up in feasibility studies and consultancy fees, and is delivered without delay."

Despite the politics behind the announcement, Mr Dametto said dredging had been "a long time coming for the people of Cardwell".

"I am happy for the local residents that we are finally seeing some movement here. They have had to watch their town wither away through successive governments who have done nothing but sit on their hands. With the continued popularity and growth of Katter's Australian Party, it's safe to say we have both major parties on the run in the North.

"I think this also says something about what minor party MPs can do when they work proactively together with all stakeholders to find a solution. Today is a good step forward and I want to see a long-term plan from all levels of government into how we maintain One Mile Creek after the initial dredging is done."

Mr Dametto challenged the State Labor Government to match the Federal government's funding commitment after years of "stalling" on dredging.

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“For too long all levels of government have been hiding behind Port Hinchinbrook’s conformed deed which states that dredging One Mile Creek is the responsibility of the developer, which is pointless because the developer is in liquidation,” he said.

“Every time we have tried to get some movement on this issue, the Department of State Development puts up a roadblock. The responsibility of maintaining waterways such as this usually falls to councils but I have always maintained that the State has a civic responsibility to maintain or provide funding to clean up this State-owned waterway.”

Mr Dametto hoped Cassowary Coast Regional Council would now take on the responsibility to do future maintenance dredging at One Mile Creek, or else risk another funding spat with governments in a few years’ time.

“It’s now necessary to rework the conformed deed and for the council and State to work together to find the mechanisms needed to future proof this development so that all stakeholders can move forward with their lives,” he said.

“A solution would be for council to consider a way to levy Port Hinchinbrook residents to help fund future maintenance dredging.

“Cardwell deserves long-term all-tidal access and I will fight to make sure that happens.”

—ENDS—

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Photo caption

Photos and video of One Mile Creek and the Port Hinchinbrook Marina at low tide.

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