

**NICK DAMETTO**  
Member for Hinchinbrook

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Misguided inquiry offers false hope to farmers

A Federal Government inquiry into whether there is a link between farming practices and poor water quality which harms the Great Barrier Reef has been dismissed as “nothing more than a political stunt” by Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said the inquiry, which is holding public hearings in Townsville and Cairns on March 18 and 19, wrongly focused on farmers and farming practices instead of the ability to check and replicate Reef science to ensure its accuracy.

“The Federal Coalition had plenty of time to establish a proper audit into Reef science but instead we get something which is a token gesture,” he said.

“We will now have farmers and farming practices once again put under the microscope by a government, this time the Federal Coalition. Farmers have already made great progress in reducing farm runoff. It’s obvious they are not the problem here. This is just the LNP trying to appear like they are doing something when in reality, they have no jurisdiction over the State Labor Government’s destructive Environmental Protection Amendment Act.”

Mr Dametto made a submission to the inquiry last year that urged the Senate committee to focus on the Reef science used to assess the impact of farm runoff instead of applying unnecessary scrutiny to farming practices themselves.

“In my submission to the inquiry, I noted that in September last year Kennedy MP Bob Katter attempted to move a motion in parliament calling on the House to provide for the allocation of resources for the Auditor-General to audit the reef science specific to turbidity and nutrient run off to the Great Barrier Reef to provide quality assurance in the assessment of the current reef studies and a further allocation to audit current and future funding expenditure on the Great Barrier Reef action plans and studies, including the \$120 million for crown-of-thorns starfish,” Mr Dametto said.

“Disgracefully, the motion failed due to the fact Bob was unable to find a seconder and only three Members of Parliament were present at the time this motion was raised in the House. This inquiry is just a very expensive way for the Federal Government to appear to be doing something to help farmers while actually delivering nothing.”

Mr Dametto said Mr Katter’s motion would have satisfied the two requests of Queenslanders and farmers who wished to know how the funding for fighting crown-of-thorns starfish was spent and its effectiveness in combating this so-called threat to the Great Barrier Reef.

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The motion also satisfied the request of agricultural lobby groups in conjunction with farmers that operate within the reef catchment areas by calling for an audit of the existing Reef science.

"The LNP senators who are championing these public hearings as some sort of silver bullet should hang their heads in shame," Mr Dametto said.

"They know full well they have no ability to overturn the State Labor Government's new Reef laws and are only giving farmers false hope.

"If Katter's Australian Party find its itself in a position of power to form government after this year's State election, we will repeal Labor's Reef laws and give our farmers some much needed relief."

—ENDS—

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### *Photo caption*

*Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto has dismissed a Federal Government enquiry into farming practices as nothing more than a political stunt.*

### **Media Enquiries**

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