

**NICK DAMETTO**  
Member for Hinchinbrook

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## MEDIA RELEASE

22/4/2020

### Cardwell dredge project needs priority funding

DREDGING for Cardwell's One Mile Creek will be fully funded if Katter's Australian Party (KAP) finds itself in a position of power to form government after this year's State election, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said the people of Cardwell were "sick and tired" of the years of neglect shown by consecutive State governments when it came to delivering necessary funding needed to clean up and maintain the vital waterway which is "key to the town's economy".

"After three years of lobbying the State Labor Government, they have refused to budge an inch when it comes to financially supporting dredging at Port Hinchinbrook," Mr Dametto said.

"I can say hand on heart I've left no stone unturned. I've knocked on every ministerial door possible. This dredging crusade has taken me as far as Canberra where, through the Honourable Bob Katter's office, I was able to secure a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister to force the Federal Coalition to cough up on a \$1.5 million commitment made by the LNP leading up to last year's Federal election.

"The Coalition later invited the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to apply for the \$1.5 million through grant funding and they are currently working through that approvals process.

"It's taken a lot of work to get us to this stage but we're not there yet. An extraordinary lobbying effort from the Cardwell community has been a big part of the reason we have gotten this far.

"We all know that \$1.5 million is not enough for the project to see its full completion and ongoing maintenance. My commitment to Hinchinbrook is that if the KAP finds itself in a position of power after this year's State election, funding for the complete dredging of One Mile Creek will be one of my non-negotiable conditions."

Earlier this year, Port Hinchinbrook liquidator Offermans agreed to allow Cassowary Coast Regional Council to use their existing dredging permits after attending a meeting in January.

Mr Dametto said delivering all-tidal access to One Mile Creek would not only revitalise tourism and kickstart Cardwell's economy, but would also give the Coast Guard the ability to respond to vessels in distress at any time of day.

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"It's an unacceptable safety risk when the Cardwell Coast Guard is unable to respond to emergencies because of a low tide and all the more reason why we need this dredge project to be fully funded and maintained," he said.

"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 there is no longer a developer and I don't see some white knight coming to rescue this community. We need government intervention on all three levels.

"Every time we have come close to getting some movement on dredging, the State Labor Government has put up another roadblock. The responsibility of maintaining waterways such as this usually falls to council's responsibility, 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 said during his term in office, there had been some positive responses from the State government when it came to some of Port Hinchinbrook's other pressing problems.

"\$300,000 has been made available to the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to bring the sewage treatment plant up to specification and the latest conversations have indicated there was a real appetite from the State to support the council through the process of resuming and maintaining the roads and sewage treatment plant," he said.

"Wouldn't it be great if that conversation was as fruitful when it came to the D word. It's becoming quite clear that a Labor government will not support dredging.

"I promised Cardwell in 2017 that I would do everything in my power to deliver a long-term all-tidal solution for Port Hinchinbrook and now more than ever, I would like to reaffirm my commitment to ensuring this happens."

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Photo captions

*Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto, pictured here at Cardwell's One Mile Creek, says the dredging of the waterway will be fully funded if Katter's Australian Party finds itself in a position of power to form the next government after this year's State election.*

*One Mile Creek and Port Hinchinbrook at low tide.*

### **Media Enquiries**

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