

**NICK DAMETTO**  
Member for Hinchinbrook

---



## MEDIA RELEASE

21/4/2021

### KAP leads the charge to safeguard ag industry

A BILL that will fight back against the State Labor Government's farm-destroying Reef regulations and safeguard the future of the agricultural industry has been introduced into parliament by Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said his Environmental and Other Legislation (Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Amendment Act 2021 would repeal amendments made by Labor in 2019 which effectively painted farmers as "environmental vandals" by the government, threatened the future of local jobs in the sugar milling industry through reduced cane tonnage and risked farmers walking away from sugar entirely.

"The changes made by Labor in 2019 were nothing more than a complete assault on farming, the sugar milling industry and all of the jobs that come with that," Mr Dametto said.

"Labor's laws imposed big brother style supervision over everyday farming decisions and wrapped up our farmers in unworkable green tape. It gave government the power to demand information from any advisor or company working with cane farmers and forced growers to obtain an environmental authority licence to grow cane on their own land that has already been cropped previously.

"All of this was based on the alleged impact farm run-off had on water quality and the Great Barrier Reef, which itself relies on questionable science. That's why Katter's Australian Party has introduced our Bill. We want to restore some common sense and end this demonisation of our farmers by Labor and their inner-city Green extremist friends."

Mr Dametto said Labor was "hell-bent" on equating those who worked in the sugar industry with coal miners.

"This is no different to when former Deputy Premier Jackie Trad attempted to put a line through the coal industry. Labor haven't changed their sentiments when it comes to mining or the agricultural industry and the close to 40,000 direct and indirect jobs that come with that. Sugar mill workers should be up in arms about this assault on farming practices that have led to a continual reduction in cane tonnage through the reduction of application of nitrogen and phosphorous to soil. Less tonnage means less jobs at the mill and I will not stand idle while our sugar towns suffer as a result."

**NICK DAMETTO**

**Member for Hinchinbrook**

---



## MEDIA RELEASE

In a welcome move for growers, the KAP's Bill seeks to cut down the maximum penalties for offences committed under the Environmental Protection Act from over \$220,000 to just over \$13,000 - as they were prior to Labor's amendments in 2019.

Mr Dametto said in addition to repealing Labor's Reef legislation, a number of safeguards had also been added to the Bill.

"We have proposed an independent regulator who will operate at arms-length in an advisory capacity to the Minister," Mr Dametto said.

"The regulator will have an extensive background in both agriculture and science, meaning they will be exceptionally qualified to give advice to the Minister when making a new Environmentally Relevant Activity (ERA) standard that could impact the industry."

The independent regulator will also be free to publish their recommendation on whether a new ERA standard should be issued, regardless of the decision made by the Minister.

"This is to be done in the interests of public transparency, such as in scenarios where the Minister's decision to make an ERA standard may go against the recommendation of the regulator," Mr Dametto said.

"It's important to have an independent voice when government makes decisions that impact farming. We've also mandated that the Minister is now not only responsible for making an ERA standard, but they will be forced to consult with both industry and the regulator before making a new standard."

The Bill will seek to introduce the alternative penalty of an enforceable undertaking for a first offence, as opposed to a financial penalty, for a person who breaches Section 78 of the Environmental Protection Act in relation to fertiliser application.

"We think it's reasonable to give farmers and the people they employ a second chance if they mistakenly breach the Act, instead of just imposing an unpayable fine on them," Mr Dametto said.

"At the end of the day this Bill is about fairness. It's about ensuring that agriculture can continue to thrive in Queensland for decades to come.

"Katter's Australian Party proudly stands with our farmers and mill workers across this great state in fighting to keep this vital industry alive and kicking."

—ENDS—

**NICK DAMETTO**  
Member for Hinchinbrook

---



## MEDIA RELEASE

Click [here](#) to download content.

Photo caption

*Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto has introduced a new Bill into parliament that will repeal Labor's Reef regulations from 2019.*

### **Media Enquiries**

Michael Serenc – 0423 108 848