

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

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National Parks free one day and taxed the next: Dametto

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) Deputy Leader and Hinchinbrook MP, Nick Dametto has rubbished a potential tourist tax, saying it could hinder the recovery of tourism operators that have already hit rock bottom resulting from the impacts of the pandemic.

The proposal from the Queensland Tourism Industry Reference Panel could see local councils or tourism bodies introduce visitor taxes or levies to create additional funding streams.¹

"With the cost-of-living skyrocketing, a tourism tax will only deter travelers from exploring Queensland's beautiful natural assets such as National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef," Mr Dametto said.

"Over the past few years with social distancing requirements and travel restrictions Queensland's National Parks have been our 'hero' attractions and now the State Labor Government is considering introducing taxes or levies.

"With the opening of international borders this proposal would only make holidaying at home more expensive and have the potential to drive Australians overseas instead of encouraging them to explore our own backyard.

"The State Government and tourism bodies should be focusing on innovative strategies to rebuild our tourism industry and support our operators.

"Both land and water based operators are already paying a levy to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, so this would mean a user pays tax which would include locals and visitors, similar to the regime in Victoria."

The Hinchinbrook MP said the COVID-19 pandemic had affected people's travelling patterns and behaviours, lengthy holidays were now perceived as more of a safety risk, with people tending to book shorter and interstate holidays.

¹ <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/tourist-tax-flagged-as-potential-revenue-raiser-for-tourism-industry/news-story/6a4f631a7fa71db357cfb665ba5925a2>

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"There's definitely a higher level of fear associated with travel and introducing a tourism tax is not the solution to restoring our damaged industry," Mr Dametto said.

"Hinchinbrook is home to some of our country's most beautiful natural assets like Australia's highest single drop waterfall Wallaman Falls, and I can guarantee if there was a tax or levy imposed to visit this National Park, we would see our visitor statistics decrease which would negatively impact our local economy and small businesses.

"The fairy tale conceived by those coming up with those grandiose ideas would have you believe the tourism tax and levies generated by those visiting our National Parks and Great Barrier Reef would be reinvested into infrastructure that improves the visitor experience, but sadly most of that would be redirected by the State Government to pay for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics infrastructure."

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Photo: State Member for Hinchinbrook and KAP Deputy Leader, Nick Dametto.

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