

## MEDIA RELEASE

7/3/2019

### Labor abandons Townsville tradies

TOWNSVILLE'S solar and battery installers are missing out on hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of work due to a silly restriction on the State Labor Government's renewable energy schemes.

Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto said he had been approached by several Townsville tradies over the government preferencing southern contractors for local work due to the fact they are members of the Clean Energy Council (CEC).

The condition means Townsville solar and battery storage installers who are members of the Smart Energy Council have been frozen out of the government's interest-free loans and grants for solar and storage and the recently announced "Solar for rentals" trial.

"This is a ridiculous situation that should never been allowed to happen," Mr Dametto said.

"At a time when the State Government's message to the people of Townsville has been to use local tradespeople to rebuild our city after flooding, the government should heed their own advice when it comes employing local tradies instead of locking them out."

Mr Dametto said one local solar and battery storage company had lost no fewer than 18 jobs in Townsville and 10 jobs in Cairns due to the government preferencing contractors who were members of the CEC.

Another local contractor, Matt Bellinger of Bellingers Electrical, said the situation was extremely frustrating.

"We can't understand why we as locals have been excluded from winning local Queensland Government solar and battery storage jobs, when we have all the tickets and accreditations you can get. Yet companies based from as far away as Sydney can win jobs in our neck of the woods," he said.

"Lets face it. Out of town companies do not have the best track record or best incentives to do good work and how can they carry out service and warrantee calls as well as a local can? It does not make sense."

Pinnacle Power owner David Keir said he would "love the opportunity to quote on these works and keep supplying our existing customers who are interested in this initiative".

Mr Dametto said Labor liked to talk a good game when it came to spruiking local jobs but it was time "to put their money where their mouth is".

"If this government is serious about local jobs, then it should give local tradies the chance to quote for work on these sorts of schemes," he said.

"Fundamentally, this comes down to fairness and making sure we look after North Queenslanders first."

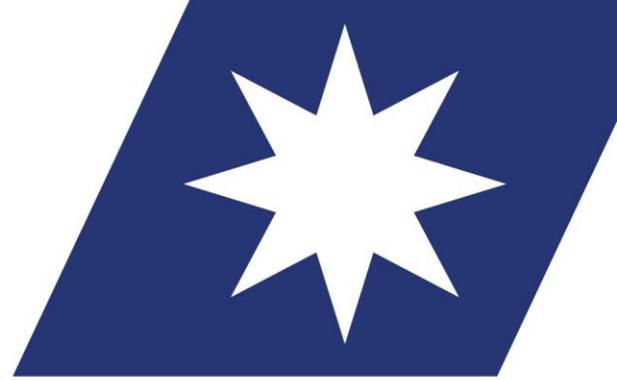
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**NICK DAMETTO**

**Member for Hinchinbrook**

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