

**NICK DAMETTO**  
Member for Hinchinbrook

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## MEDIA RELEASE

10/1/2020

### Farm reef runoff issue overblown: Dametto

FARMERS are being needlessly demonised by the State Labor Government for soil erosion that is having little impact on the health of the Great Barrier Reef, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said the passing of Labor's farm-destroying Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill last year had attacked agriculture in Queensland's six reef catchment areas and blamed farmers there for the so-called poor health of the Reef.

"Many people, including scientists like Professor Peter Ridd, would argue that what little soil erosion does takes place on Queensland cane farms is almost unmeasurable in terms of the amount that actually makes it to the Reef, thus having no effect on coral reef health," he said.

"Even if we assume that some soil is making it to the reef, photographs I took recently up at Abergowrie along the Herbert River show a substantial amount of riverbank erosion. A screenshot taken from Google Maps gives an indication of where the tree line and riverbank used to run. From looking at historical records and talking to landholders, the evidence shows that over time, what could be described as tens of football fields of soil have washed into the river and out to sea over the years.

"Previously, the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and the Department of Environment and Science have dismissed this as nature and the river taking its course."

Mr Dametto said it stood to reason that "the State government is responsible for substantial soil run off".

"But unfortunately, when it comes to spending money on riverbank improvements and rectification works, it's just written off as collateral damage," he said.

"It seems to be a lot easier to blame farmers for all of the reef's problems."

Mr Dametto said he would continue to work with the with the Herbert River Improvement Trust and landholders to lobby the State government for funding to fix riverbanks that were partly a State responsibility.

"Should we find ourselves in a position of power in forming the next government after this year's State election, Katter's Australian Party is committed to repealing Labor's draconian Reef legislation," he said.

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Photo captions:

*Photographs taken recently at Abergowrie by Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto showing substantial riverbank erosion along the Herbert River.*

*A screenshot taken from Google Maps gives an indication of where the tree line and riverbank used to run at Abergowrie.*

*Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto says farmers are being needlessly demonised by the State Labor Government for soil erosion that is having little impact on the health of the Great Barrier Reef.*

### **Media Enquiries**

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