

MP Nick Dametto blasted as dismissive during Hinchinbrook Island protest in Cardwell



Cameron Bates, The Herbert River Express
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A respected conservationist and veteran protester has blasted Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto's "dismissive attitude" during a protest in Cardwell this morning.

Ken Parker, a Cardwell resident and veteran protester, said he organised an 18 person-strong demonstration to rally against what he believed was Mr Dametto's vocal support for the [development of Hinchinbrook Island](#).

Mr Parker, a close friend of the late conservationist Margaret Thorsborne for whom the world-class trail on the island is named, claimed Mr Dametto did not take the group seriously.

He claimed Mr Dametto also laughed in the faces of three women who were airing their concerns about the proposed development.

"He laughed at the three women and they recorded what he said, he knew they were recording him and I've heard it back and it is very disdainful," Mr Parker said.

Mr Parker said the group was simply concerned about preserving the pristine, world-heritage listed Hinchinbrook Island National Park.

"It's one of the most special places on the planet ... the Thorsborne Trail is not for sale," Mr Parker said.

"This is just beyond the pale: the hikers that come and walk the trail, it changes people's lives, forever."

Townsville's Toby Rowan, Daniel Lyne, Chris Newton and Andrew Rowan on the Thorsborne Trail last month. An unrepentant Mr Dametto said he had been warned that protesters were likely to gather in Cardwell during his meetings with constituents this morning.

"I had an inkling about it on the weekend and then it was confirmed on Monday that they were planning an ambush or an attack," Mr Dametto said.

He conceded he was dismissive but said most of the group's concerns were "unfounded" and based on "hysteria whipped up by certain people in the community".



“What I stressed to everyone I met today concerning the Thorsborne Trail was is that we are at the expressions of interest stage, there is no documentation, no paperwork, nothing gone across anyone’s desk saying that they’re going to have helicopters on the island,” he said.

Mr Dametto said once the EOI process was complete, people would have the opportunity to have their say.

The State Government has called for expressions of interest for a commercial operator to be a part of the planned upgrades to the trail.

Mr Dametto said he did not “set out to antagonise” the environmentalists, including the three women, one of whom he claims has been waging a social media battle against him.

“Her line of questioning was so ridiculous that I started laughing and I said ‘I cannot take you seriously when you put me on the stand with these got-you moments’,” he said.

“I said ‘if you want to ask some real questions about what is going on in the EOI process, I’m more than happy to answer them’.

“If I didn’t laugh I would just have gotten cranky with the ridiculous nature of the questions so I thought I have to dismiss this person.”