



The Hon Simon Crean MP
Minister for Regional Australia,
Regional Development and Local Government
Minister for the Arts

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Entsch chooses politics, not partnerships on seawalls

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Joint Media Release

The Hon Simon Crean MP
Minister for Regional Australia,
Regional Development and Local Government
Minister for the Arts

Senator Jan McLucas
Senator for Queensland
Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and
Carers

Regional Development Minister Simon Crean has urged the Member for Leichhardt Warren Entsch to stop playing politics with the future of the Torres Strait Islands and start pressuring the Queensland Government to commit to funding the restoration of the seawalls.

Mr Crean said he was disappointed that Mr Entsch voted against a motion of the Parliament that called on the Queensland Government to join the investment partnership and fund the rebuilding of the Torres Strait seawalls.

"Today in Parliament, Mr Entsch voted against funding the restoration of the seawalls," Mr Crean said.

"Entsch couldn't bring himself to back a motion that replaced politics with progress—he's more interested in political point-scoring than getting on with rebuilding the seawalls in the Torres Strait."

Mr Crean said the motion acknowledged the Federal Government's \$12 million investment to rebuild the seawalls and noted the support for the project from the Torres Strait Island Regional Council.

"It called on the Queensland Government to recognise the seriousness of the issue and at least match the Federal Government's \$12 million investment in the project," he said.

"When faced with a choice between politics and progress—Mr Entsch chose to play politics and vote against the motion.

"Entsch is a member of a Coalition that in 1998 established a partnership program that entrenched the principal of matched funding between the Commonwealth and Queensland Government for major infrastructure projects in the Torres Strait.

"I visited the Torres Strait in July to see the urgent action required to rebuild the seawalls to prevent damage caused by coastal erosion and inundation.

"The Federal Government is contributing \$12 million, which is half of the cost. But it's a project that requires a partnership approach, between the Commonwealth and the Queensland Government."

Senator McLucas said the Federal Government's \$12 million investment meant work would commence on the islands in the most need.

"But if we are to complete the job, the Queensland Government has to stump up its share," Senator McLucas said.

"Entsch needs to adopt a 'Can-Do' attitude, put politics aside, and join the Federal Government in calling on Campbell Newman's Government to support the seawalls project.

"Entsch knows that buck-passing, blame games and partisan politics won't get the result that the Torres Strait communities urgently need."

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