

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

November 1, 2018

BRISBANE 'BIG BROTHER' BEING FORCED ONTO VESSELS

Katter's Australian Party State MPs have launched a scathing attack on the Palaszczuk Government's push to force tracking systems on all vessels as part of the Fisheries (Sustainable Fisheries Strategy) Amendment Bill 2018.

Mr Katter said demanding that vessel monitoring systems (VMS) be fitted on every single vessel, including tiny dinghies, would be a huge financial imposition to the Gulf seafood industry and also reflected the ongoing encroachment of the government into people's everyday lives.

"The people out on the water don't need 'Big Brother' in Brisbane watching their every move – most of these small vessels have already got radios, satellite phones and regular phones and can easily be contacted," he said.

"The suggestion that safety is the main concern is also flawed – we have had trawlers fitted with VMS sadly go down and not been able to be located through the tracker."

He said KAP offices had been flooded with complaints from fishing businesses, seafood operators and other boat users about the proposed laws, with the January 1, 2019 deadline to have VMS installed looming despite the laws still being before the Parliament.

"The laws haven't even passed the Parliament, but the Palaszczuk Government has pre-empted the outcome of the committee's process and the outcome of the parliamentary debate on the bill and are enforcing it already," he said.

"This is not democracy in action – Labor is making a mockery of our parliamentary processes."

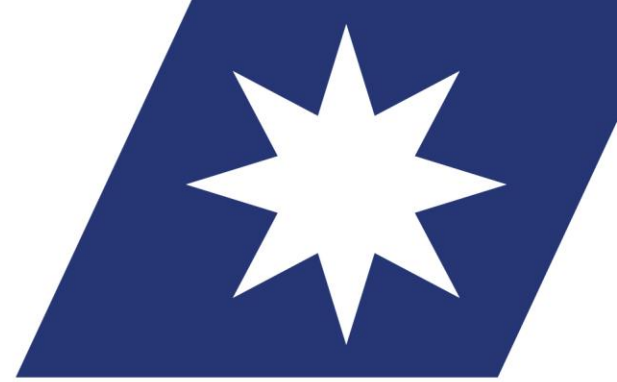
Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto said the VMS laws were draconian.

"Anything that hinders smaller vessel operators out there from carrying out their day-to-day duties as a small business owner needs to be addressed," he said.

"We shouldn't be viewing our smaller, less predictable operators in the same light as the larger commercial operators.

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

That's why a quota cut off would have been beneficial in reducing financial pressures with running a VMS on their vessel. This would reduce the amount of people needing to own and operate a VMS.

"I believe it would also have been beneficial to game fishing and tourism operations if they were excluded from this regulation.

"To think that we're monitoring tourism operators the same way we're looking to monitor commercial fisherman seems ludicrous and not only a waste of taxpayer dollars but another inconvenience for operators already under increasing pressure from government and financial struggles.

"Once again, the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee's process has failed to listen to people affected and the introduction of these regulations mirrors the way the committee treated primary producers when pleading their case about vegetation management legislation."

Member for Hill Shane Knuth said the economic and social losses these proposed laws would cause could not be underestimated.

"This is going to impact the entire east coast fishing industry, their families and the cost of seafood in our region," he warned.

"The reality is the State Government is gradually closing down our seafood industry.

"This is at the expense of people who are willing to put their lives at risk and are at sea weeks on end."

—ENDS—

Media inquiries: Morgan Oss, 0428 772 544