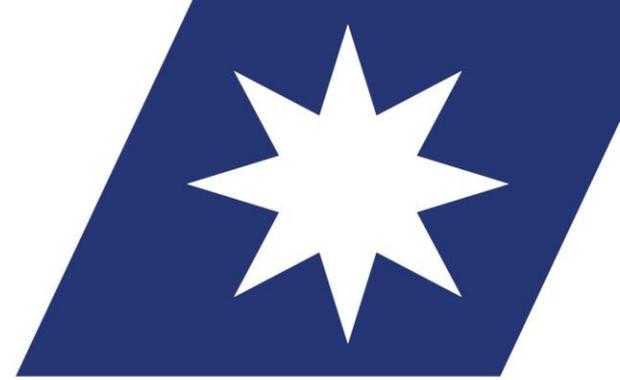


BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy



MEDIA RELEASE

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Katter thankful for extended flood assistance, but warns the effects are far from over

KAP Leader and Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter is pleased flood disaster categories have been extended to include flood zones previously neglected, however warns some areas may still be left out.

KAP offices have been inundated with calls from people denied disaster recovery and hardship payments through Centrelink under the initial funding relief which only included Burdekin, Cook, Douglas, Townsville and Wujal Wujal, despite most of the Kennedy Electorate being under water.

Mr Katter discussed the issue with the Prime Minister today and has contacted the Minister for Human Services urging the criteria for hardship payments be broadened to include all the areas affected by the flooding, and those unable to return to work due to extensively damaged and flooded roads.

"I've had discussions with the PM today and raised a number of issues and made formal representations in other areas. People have got to understand the enormous hardship people are suffering, the loss of income, they're losing weeks of work. That alone is devastating; people have mortgages and cars to pay off," he said.

"Our constituents in the North West were becoming the forgotten victims in this rare catastrophic weather event and while we hear from a few of these hard working Australians we understand there are many more who are too busy shooting their dying livestock to worry about sitting on a disaster recovery line to be told they are not eligible. These people are always the very last people to put their hands up for assistance... and I don't think it is extreme to talk about at least a hundred thousand dead cattle – one person driving through from Kajabbi near Cloncurry counted 200 dead from the road alone. The fifth biggest employer in Qld is the meat processing industry.

"We have constituents who have been stranded in centres many kilometres away from their homes and could take weeks to be able to travel home. We have been advised of constituents in Kajabbi who have no electricity, are running out of fuel for their generators which are starting to have problems due to the length of time needing to be run. Food is running low in many areas and they are running out of money.

"We have constituents who have paid for accommodation because they have been stranded but don't have money left for food. We were advised one constituent in the flooded area was down to \$1.50 and even a packet of noodles at the supermarket was over \$2. Another family drove through 300mm of flood water to get to the local service station to buy four loaves of bread and four litres of milk for \$32.

"The extent of damage in these situations is enormous and affects more than just the immediate towns, and so long as there are people struggling throughout the electorate, we will continue to fight for them and their fair share of help," Mr Katter said.

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For more information or a comment from Bob Katter,
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