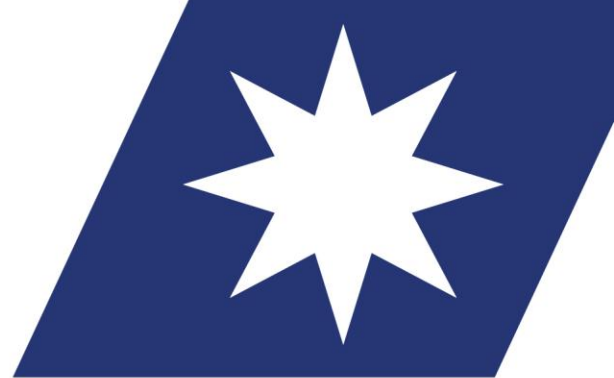


BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy



MEDIA RELEASE

1 April 2019

Joyce feeds dairy farmers to the sharks

OFF the back of his most recent visit to the dairying areas of the Atherton Tablelands, KAP Leader and Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter has again lashed out at the Member for New England for failing the industry, failing farmers and failing Australia when he voted against a minimum price for milk at the last Parliamentary sitting.

The fallout from several showdowns in the Chamber continues to reverberate around rural areas and in particular, with dairy farmers who are livid that the Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, voted down a motion to suspend standing orders introduced by the ALP that would recognise *“Government intervention is needed to save our dairy sector and our dairy farmers; and therefore, calls on the Government to task the ACCC with testing the efficacy of a minimum farm gate milk price and to make recommendations on the best design options.”*

Mr Katter said once he had recovered from his initial shock that the ALP, who are largely pro-free-trade, made a positive move for protecting the dairy industry, he was equally as shocked when the National Party took a strong stance against it citing international free trade.

“It is deeply, deeply disappointing that Mr Joyce voted against a fair price for our dairy farmers,” Mr Katter said.

“The ALP, because of the situation in three marginal electorates, moved for a minimum price scheme for dairy farmers. I listened to each of the National Party members stand up and say *‘we can't have minimum price because this would be seen by our free trade treaty partners as breaches of our free trade agreements’*. In other words, farmers must accept getting the lowest prices in the world for their products, competing against all the rest of the world's farmers who get 41 per cent of their income from the Government.”

Mr Katter said that when the Federal LNP enforced National Competition Policy and the state governments would not stand up against the LNP deregulation, it meant that one of the biggest dairy farming areas in Australia, the Atherton Tablelands, was ripped to shreds.

“The day before deregulation, our farmers were on 59c a litre. The day after, we were on 41c a litre. In fact this very day (today) dairy farmers are on less money on the fresh milk market than they were in the year 2000 when deregulated. 58c a litre is considered a reasonable price for milk in terms of today's money; that is nearly 90 c a litre.”

“I have always defended Mr Joyce and I have always felt he was on the farmers side. I urged him to stay on through his family traumas, both in private and publicly, but whilst he may have done nothing for us while

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he was in there, at least he had the one true faith; that the Country Party was actually formed to deliver arbitration; a minimum price in the dairy, wheat and grain industries.

“Now it (the Nationals), and he (Joyce) stands for the exact opposite position - let the merchants carve us up and feed us to the sharks,” Mr Katter said.

Mr Katter said that the arguments put forward by Joyce, the National Party and the Liberals that Australia will breach their free trade treaties are weak and that the same arguments were thrown up against Jack McEwan in the 1930s against Doug Anthony, but he introduced the wool minimum price scheme.

“That argument is always there, and always will be. It doesn't worry any of our trade competitors. The Brazilians introduced ethanol at a 23 per cent cross subsidy for their sugar farmers, did they lose a single trade deal? No.

“And when the Liberal's John Howard reversed the decision by Nationals leader John Anderson on bananas, the Philippines squealed for two weeks and as Robert Mackay, the banana king told John Howard, *'in the end they will buy Australian milk and Australian beef. You can have all the treaties in the world but you have got the better and cheaper product - you will do the deal.* And he was dead right.

“Would it be that he was running the National Party and not Joyce or that bloke whose name I can't remember, things would be a whole lot different.”

—ENDS—

Hansard links to the motion in question are below.

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Hansard/Hansard_Display?bid=chamber/hansardr/e0e7b3e2-2c86-47b4-8de2-de9e8f0f224b/&sid=0000

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