

BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy



MEDIA RELEASE

5 June 2019

Katter's predictions of Telstra sell-off fallout come true as telco announces job cuts, residents report more outages

KAP Leader and Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter is seeing dire predictions he made 14 years ago of Telstra's demise fulfilled, as the telco announces job cuts followed closely by more network outages.

Today, residents from Hughenden to Pentland reported a widespread outage and residents from the wider Brisbane region shared reports of long-running landline failures less than 24 hours after the telco announced it would slash 10,000 jobs by 2020, a move heavily criticised by Mr Katter.

"This is not just a bush problem, this is a universal problem," he said.

This morning, he shared the transcript of an interview he did with the ABC's Tony Jones in 2005 detailing his spot-on forecasts of the damaging sell-off of the Government's stake in Telstra.

In it, Mr Katter said, "...the proposition that is being put forward here is that Mary Murgatroyd, in Julia Creek, when her telephone breaks down, they're going to fly a technician out from Townsville or Brisbane to fix her telephone.

"Now, if (then Senator) Barnaby (Joyce) thinks he's going to sell that proposition to the people of Australia or that the people in the cities are not going to wait weeks and weeks for their telephone to be fixed and he thinks he's going to sell that proposition to Australia, then he's really treating the Australian public as gullible and my statement to him would be that they're not, and the fact that his party has lost a quarter of their representation is the reason why."

When the sale of Telstra was proposed in the 1990s, Mr Katter demanded time in the party room.

"I was enraged," he said.

"There was simply no way we were going to get services in country towns."

Yesterday, he slammed Telstra's decision to cut 10,000 jobs by 2020 as a "bloody joke".

He said the telco giant was considered an emergency service throughout rural and regional Queensland and that it was imperative jobs remained in order to service the outages which occurred frequently.

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Recently, Mr Katter wrote a widely-published letter to the editor about the issue, stating that “when you sell off your assets, you’re selling Australians out”.

It came after he successfully lobbied to reconnect phone services to Julia Creek hospital and Tully Meals on Wheels after lengthy dangerous outages.

“The Telstra reports keep failing and it gives me no joy to say ‘I told you so’,” he wrote in the letter to the editor.

While poor network connection was a major problem in rural and regional areas, it also presented a significant issue closer to cities.

Many constituents, both rural and metropolitan, shared their outrage and experiences on social media today.

Two wrote that their elderly parents, who lived just 20 minutes outside Brisbane, had to buy mobile phones in case of emergencies because their landlines didn’t work.

Mr Katter warned there would be public outrage should the Government consider ever privatising the NBN.

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