

BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy



MEDIA RELEASE

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Yarrabah the untapped economic engine room for troubled Cairns region

KAP Leader and Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter has slammed the State and Federal Governments for failing to intervene as Cairns suffers a string of restaurant closures, hoteliers put up their businesses for sale and now a \$176 million exporter has ceased its operation in the city.

"I am quite staggered at what is going on in Cairns," Mr Katter said.

"The dimensions of the collapse cannot be overestimated. Barnacle Bills – the social, I might even say the intellectual, heart of FNQ – the biggest, oldest and most famous restaurant in the northern half of Australia is no more.

"The biggest owner of motel units in northern Australia based in Cairns, I've heard is putting everything up for sale.

"I have been taken to streets and entire suburbs where shops were all closed and the houses are up for sale."

Mr Katter said he had been working around the clock to build wealth and secure jobs for the people in North Queensland, starting with the Mitchell River Dam.

"It is the biggest river in Australia. A tiny dam on the Barron River or a medium-sized dam on the Upper Mitchell can produce the wealth and a plethora of productivity that rivals a major dam producing ethanol, and a stockfeed industry.

"We are delineating the dam site and working on it as we talk."

Mr Katter also said the neighbouring town of Yarrabah could become an economic engine room benefiting the Cairns and wider region and that the newly re-elected Prime Minister and change in Opposition Leader brought a fresh optimism and passion for the North.

"I think there is capacity here to build to develop to provide opportunities work and prosperity for our people.

"There are major sugar interests in Yarrabah and I've scheduled meetings with the people of Yarrabah to progress these interests.

"We will be throwing our full weight behind the proposals for the deepening of the harbour and commencement of work on Port Yarrabah, which people over there have been demanding for 30 years.

"It is an absolute disgrace to the Governments, State and Federal, that these people have had their timber rights taken off them, their water rights taken off them, and land rights taken away. There is no such thing as a title deed at Yarrabah and yet despite being allowed to own acreage, they own absolutely nothing."

Mr Katter indicated that could change with a different climate in Canberra now.

"There is a much different attitude in Canberra with Morrison and with Albanese. These men are as far away from Turnbull and Shorten as we are from the moon."

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Media Enquiries
Kahla Kruger (nee Pike)
0418 840 243



For more information or a comment from Bob Katter,
please contact the media phone: 0418 840 243

