

**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger



## MEDIA RELEASE

July 2, 2019

### ANTI-RURAL GOVERNMENT DELIVERS ANOTHER BLOW

The Palaszczuk Government has again proven its disdain for the bush, ripping vital water, fodder and livestock freight subsidies from the hands of drought-stricken producers, State KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has said.

Mr Katter said it was telling that the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development, Mark Furner, had revoked the subsidies only months after the North West cattle industry was decimated by almost 10 years of drought followed by extreme torrential rain.

The Minister announced on Friday that the subsidies would end due to the “poor management decisions” of those farmers who accessed the scheme.

Minister Furner said producers who already live in drought-declared areas — around 65 per cent of the state — would not immediately be affected by the changes, but they will when their drought declarations are lifted.

Mr Katter said the recent partial revocation of drought declarations in the Flinders Shire and Charters Towers Regional Council areas meant producers in these parts would never receive the subsidies again.

“If you’re going to take away something then what is the alternative to try stabilise a critical rural industry through prolonged drought?” Mr Katter said.

“This doesn’t just hit the producers themselves, but all of the contractors built around that industry as well – this is an industry-crippling decision targeting people who are already on their knees.

“I mean no disrespect, but the fact is that this has been signed off by a Minister who lives in Brisbane, has always live in Brisbane, and would find it very difficult to understand how these natural events can rip through otherwise well-performing battlers in the industry that we need to retain in the future.

“I almost choked on my cup of tea when I heard the Premier refer to Minister Furner as the ‘Farmer’s Friend’ in Parliament a few weeks ago; we are all being taken for a ride here.

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"I am unsure as to how bad things need to get before our governments realise the actual value of our food production industries.

"We'll likely be spooning processed foreign meat out of tin by then, because it is getting near on impossible to achieve sustainability in our food production industries in this state.

"My recommendation, and the recommendation of many, has long been the establishment of a government-owned and run Rural Reconstruction Board.

"This would mean the government could utilise its advantageous borrowing rates to provide new credit to the well-performing primary producers who are struggling on their balance sheets.

"This is not about propping up inefficient business, but about increasing self-sufficiency and negating the need for government subsidies and handouts altogether.

"Overall it would save the state money, but I note this is something neither Labor nor the LNP has given the time of day."

**—ENDS—**

Media inquiries: Morgan Oss, 0428 772 544