

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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DON'T POKE THE BEAR ON DAYLIGHT SAVINGS

Any moves towards implementing daylight savings across Queensland could be the 'straw that breaks the camel's back' for forgotten North Queenslanders, State KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has said.

Responding to recent calls from the Brisbane Lord Mayor for the State Government to implement a daylight savings trial, Mr Katter said few issues roused as much fire in the bellies of North and western Queenslanders as this one.

He said it was likely because daylight savings was symbolic of ongoing political tensions between the south-east corner and state's more rural and regional areas, largely in the North.

So far Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory (some of the hottest parts of Australia) have rejected daylight savings, most recently in Queensland in 1992 when a referendum was held.

"The reality is that the hottest parts of Australia would do nothing but suffer under daylight savings," Mr Katter said.

"The winding back of the clock by an hour in summer in Queensland represents something of convenience and leisure for the south-east, but it would come at a huge cost to the North and also the state's other rural and regional areas and that is the whole point.

"It's hard enough already to entice people to live in remote areas of Queensland to fill roles in even our primary services.

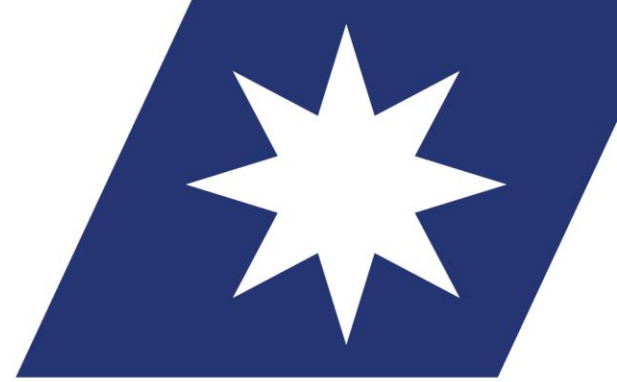
"If you change the time zones again so that we are drawing the curtains at 8:30pm, you will be delivering extra hours of stifling heat (40 degrees plus) to our communities.

"For example, it can take until 7.30pm in summer in Mount Isa to get dark and for things to start and try cool down.

"When the heat is near intolerable throughout most of the day you are trying to cool down and get kids to bed and such.

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"This places enormous burdens then on the liveability and practicality of working in these areas."

Mr Katter said he acknowledged the arguments in favour of daylight savings, and that some were rational.

"The economic arguments are valid but we all know it is more about the convenience factor for the large masses perpetually gravitating more towards the south-east," he said.

"The problem for the south-east corner when considering these outcomes is that you still need someone to occupy the North and the regions – someone to run the mines, the agricultural and construction industries and all the associated services.

"Life in the regional, rural and remote areas is already hard enough - all our metrics show strong evidence of that adversity.

"I expect the usual counter argument for this will be that – 'If you don't like it out there, then leave' - but I'm not sure that policy would be a luxury that the government or the taxpayer could tolerate.

"We can handle the many adversities that naturally occur from living in these remote areas but we don't need more artificial adversity applied to what have now become very fragile communities."

Mr Katter said the daylight savings dilemma was the lightning rod for the belief that Queensland was too large was one set of rules, and that the North needed greater independence.

"I find this a very profound statement that shows we should be considering from a strategic level in State Parliament how we can make the decision making more effective for all the state and not just the big voting centre," he said.

"This is where calls for more autonomy in the North arise.

"It goes straight to the heart of the real question: are we willing to see the inland continually depopulated or do we want to proactively maintain some viability in western areas?"

"This doesn't necessarily mean at any cost, but it does mean driving towards some equity when forming policy.

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“We punch well above our weight in terms of productivity for the state in these remote areas; we are very good providers despite the fact there is a large deficit in services as compared to our city cousins.

“This is all tolerable until you start poking the bear on issues like daylight savings so my advice is: ‘don’t poke the bear’.”

Mr Katter said the daylight savings issue was one of many that would underpin the North Queensland Separation Rally, which will be held in Townsville on September 3.

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