

**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger



## MEDIA RELEASE

August 2, 2019

### BUSH WILL TAKE BRUNT OF SCHOOL 'BANDING' CHANGES

Schools, principals and students in regional, rural and remote parts of Queensland will be penalised if an unfair enterprise bargaining agreement between the Queensland Teachers Union and the State Government is formalised, State KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has said.

The State Government and QTU have been at loggerheads for months but after a union ballot this week, the two could be close to a consensus on a new EBA.

However under this new deal many rural western and northern schools, particularly those who are P-10 and P-12, could face unfair 'banding' changes that will rip resources and funding from them, Mr Katter warned.

"My office has been advised that, to push through other elements of the EBA including pay rises, concessions have to be made and the bush will once again be the sacrificial lamb," he said.

"As I understand it, under the new agreement a number of rural schools – including some in my electorate – will be 'downgraded' to sit within a new band.

"As a result we could lose resources, staff and remuneration packages that recognise experience and can attract quality educators to the bush.

"On the ground this will mean less teachers, less funding and overall poorer outcomes for rural kids."

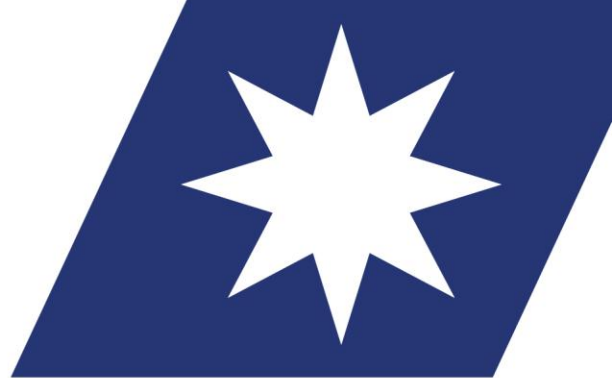
Mr Katter said he was particularly concerned about the impact zoning band changes could have on the current remuneration packages offered for principals at bush schools.

"If anything, the pay rates for principals in our rural areas should be going up as a reflection of the many challenges and complexities of their jobs," he said.

"Good leaders are hard to come by, and even harder to come by out in the bush – and in small towns school principals wear many hats and are called upon not only professionally but also personally as part of our close-knit communities."

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Mr Katter said it was likely the zoning band changes would cause or at least contribute to ongoing population decline in rural Queensland.

“Without a doubt this is going to hurt rural and regional communities and economies,” he said.

“People in the bush don’t ask for much but a good, well-resourced, well-funded school is one thing that we do need to attract and retain families to keep our communities alive.

“I get that ‘majority rules’ with the union ballot but there is no genuine equity in any of this and the State Government should be ashamed to be a part of this further persecution of the bush.

“If our schools and education facilities are not able to attract the very best people for the job, what hope do our kids have?”

After months of tense negotiations between the two parties, Queensland’s 45,000 state school teachers have voted this week on a \$1 billion pay offer from the State Government.

The *Courier Mail* has reported the results of the ballot will be delivered to the QTU on Monday.

The State Government denied the QTU’s initial demands of 4.5 per cent pay rise each year, and instead has offered a 2.5 per cent pay rise each year for three years.

The current EBA would see the state’s “executive principals...become the highest paid in Australia, earning \$211,398 a year”.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Katter said it was disappointing that today even union movements had become south-east centric at the expense of rural and regional Queensland.

—ENDS—

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<sup>1</sup> The Courier Mail, “Music teachers in one voice for more holidays”, August 1, 2019 - <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/queensland-government/music-teachers-in-one-voice-for-more-holidays/news-story/818f8af6f46f15f05632b9d92d28c41e>