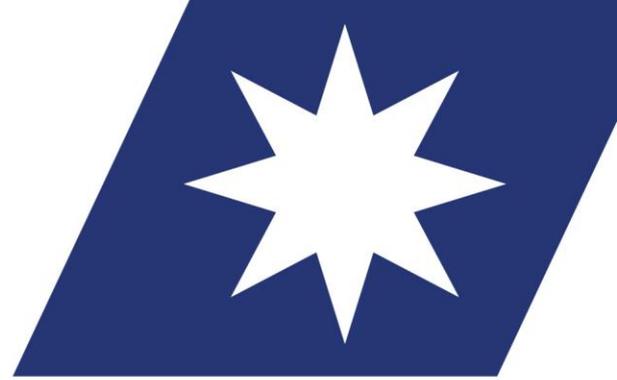


ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

August 19, 2019

PRICKLY ACACIA PROBLEM HIGHLIGHTS HYPOCRISY FROM LABOR AND THE GREENS

State KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has labelled the State Government and the Queensland Greens hypocrites for posing as environmental champions while at the same time chronically ignoring of the wave of prickly acacia engulfing the state.

Mr Katter said it was outrageous that Labor, and the Greens who have so far been silent on the issue, were sitting idle and refusing to make more funds available while the African weed was destroying the north and mid-west plains.

The Traeger MP said he was at a loss to understand why the Palaszczuk State Government had refused to adhere to a supposed 'agreement' made with the Federal Government in March that would see a \$10 million 'war chest' unlocked to fight the highly-invasive weed.

The funds were due to see action on the ground from last month, but the Palaszczuk Government has denied it agreed to provide the money.

It has made clear it will not allocate the \$5 million share that a joint media release circulated by the two governments had promised it would.

Mr Katter said the anticipated \$10 million in State and Federal funding was welcomed, but at the end of the day it was grossly insufficient to deal with the weeds crisis.

He said Queensland landholders desperately needed support in controlling prickly acacia on their properties, and there were many ways the State Government could assist with this.

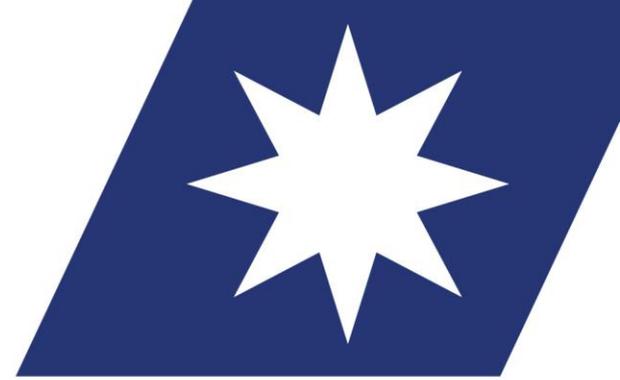
This could include providing land rent rebates to those who proved they were successfully controlling the weed on their properties, Mr Katter said.

"The most current estimates we have say that prickly acacia is costing our agricultural industries more than \$4 billion dollars a year in costs and lost productivity, with the most affected area the Mitchell Grass Downs region in central Queensland," he said.

"You may not be able to see the problem from the cities, but believe me a large portion of our environment is in an unnatural and unhealthy state because of this weed.

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“The problem is thrown into the laps of our graziers every year, and they fork our millions of dollars trying to contain prickly acacia with little assistance from government.

“Prickly acacia infestation has increased from around 6.6 million hectares 20 years ago to around 33 million hectares today – it’s a cancer in the bush.

“It is important also that we focus on the weed control activity in the Gulf where the problem is the worst.

“I have great concerns that the former Federal Minister for Agriculture wanted to pork barrel all the federal funds into just his electorate in the central west when the majority of the problem is in the Southern Gulf.

“Regardless, no one is interested in the particulars of what deal may or may not have been struck by the government, and this is not an issue that should be politicised by either levels of Government.”

Mr Katter said the north and mid-west was desperate to see some genuine leadership from the State Government on prickly acacia.

The Palaszczuk Government has only spent \$2.7 million on dealing with the weed since it gained government in 2014.

In comparison, Labor has given \$3.5 billion to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation for reef protection and preservation activities in the same amount of time.

Prickly acacia is a highly-invasive, thorny African weed that was brought to Australia as a shade and fodder tree.

It strips land productivity by causing erosion, decreasing pasture and out-competing other native vegetation for water, and is hugely problematic in that it can transform natural grasslands into desolate thorny scrub.

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