

**ROBBIE KATTER**

**Member for Traeger**



## MEDIA RELEASE

August 20, 2019

### QANTAS FARE "CAP" A WELCOME REPRIEVE

Qantas's new discount measure, which will introduce capped fares in 16 rural towns including Mount Isa and Cloncurry, is a welcome reprieve but doesn't go far enough to fix long-term structural problems, State KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has said.

In a move to appease frustrated communities, Qantas has announced overnight it will offer further ticket discounts – worth up to \$10 million a year – to residents living in certain towns across Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia.

The new measure will cap tickets booked during busy periods or at the last minute at around \$800, but it will only be available to local residents, will only apply to return flights to capital cities and customers will have to sign up to Qantas' Frequent Flyer Program to be eligible.

This means Mount Isa and Cloncurry residents (as well as those in Longreach, Barcaldine and Blackall) will be able to access \$800 return flights to Brisbane only.

"I am very pleased to hear of Qantas' new efforts to address the chronic pricing problems we have on rural air routes, particularly in North West Queensland," he said.

"It should be noted that both levels of government have played no role in this - this is a welcome market response to community outcry and it is the community that has done all the heavy lifting here.

"The Federal Senate Inquiry into Rural Airfares was as effective as slapping the airlines over the head with a piece of wet lettuce, but at least that was better than what the State Government has done – which has been provide a cheer squad for the airlines"

"I would like to congratulate and thank the residents in the North West and Gulf for this win and for making their loud voices heard; I am also pleased to have been able to play a role in advocating for the changes we need."

Mr Katter said while the discount was a step in the right direction as it addressed immediate pricing concerns for locals, it did little to address the systemic issues in the long-term on the rural air routes which hampered liveability, tourism and investment in rural economies.

It also ignores Mount Isa's social, political and economic connectedness to the capital of the North, Townsville, and Cairns as fares to these centres would remain as is.

**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger

---



## MEDIA RELEASE

He is now demanding that the State or Federal Government invest in price tracking software, so that there is full visibility on what all major airlines are charging on struggling routes, and also consider regulating routes where there is chronic weak market tension, such as Mount Isa to Townsville.

“We now need a visual on the pricing inventories of all major airlines, which I have demanded from the government on numerous occasions, and we need a regulated route to Townsville and Cairns.

“It is time the government actually step up now – the community has carried the load for far too long.”

KAP Federal Leader and Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter said Mount Isa was now considered a major centre of Northern Australia, and it needed to be treated as such.

He said it wasn't all that long ago that entire families, as part of the award at the Mount Isa Mines, got a free trip to Brisbane and back and that the city has grown to rival coastal cities like Townsville and deserved the same reasonable fares that the metropolitan regions enjoy.

“It seems to me that these days Mount Isa is much more like Townsville - kids are at university, we have specialist medical care, relatives are in the army – yet it is still very sadly fly-in mining based.

“But I am working closely with the State Member on that and that is very real work – negotiating with other operators has brought fruit here.

“The fact is, you can go to Vanuatu or Bali or to America more cheaply than Mount Isa people can go to Brisbane and once again, sadly, the planes are chock-a-block with fly-in mining.

“So Qantas, the price to me is still outrageous even at \$400.”

**—ENDS—**

Media inquiries: Morgan Oss, 0428 772 544