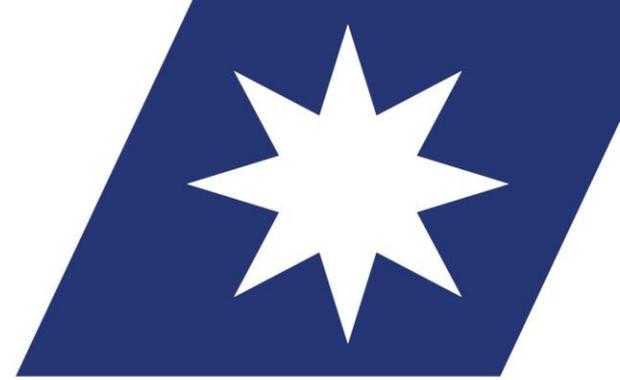


BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy



MEDIA RELEASE

06 November 2019

Drought tour: Mulga scrub would save the herd

GRAZIERS in drought-stricken inland southern Queensland could see immediate benefit should the State Government support KAP Leader and Member for Traeger Robbie Katter's Vegetation Management Bill which would allow farmers to trim the region's 61 million acres of mulga vegetation and feed their starving cattle.

KAP Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter, who is currently visiting the region on a special tour with Pauline Hanson, said there was overwhelming support for Robbie's Vegetation Management (Clearing for Relevant Purposes) Amendment, which was introduced before the State Government made its changes to the relevant Act last year.

"It's quite obvious from the visit to Charleville that mulga vegetation is an issue that concerns 61 million acres in the drought area – mulga country", Mr Katter said.

"The mulga scrub will feed the cattle without destroying the trees. It is a coppicing tree, which means the more you cut it down or trim it back, the thicker it becomes with its branches and roots.

"The most immediate issue for the farmers is fodder and it just seems to me that there is no other way except if the fodder is purchased and taken to the farmer to preserve the herd.

"The cattle numbers are collapsing. We have gone from 24.6million last year to 22.2 million this year, and next year I anticipate this number will be well below 20 million. Heaven-only-knowns how many others we've lost in the drought or in the floods up north.

"So it is the preservation of the herd which is the main issue out here and it needs to be addressed and how do you address it? First with Robbie Katter's vegetation management bill and then with the establishment of a Government Reconstruction Bank which significantly improves a farmers' ability to repay his loans. "

Robbie Katter said that it is currently illegal for farmers to trim the mulga trees and that people like Charleville grazier Dan McDonald have been fined hundreds of thousands of dollars for doing so in a matter of desperation.

Robbie Katter said, "These people purchased this land for its ability to provide fodder during the drought, but the government robbed them of that right without compensation.

"The good news is that this is immediate and renewable fodder ready to go that will be of no cost to the taxpayer. It just requires swift action from the government who have sat on my bill throughout the duration of this drought. If they care for these people they will fast track this bill."

Should the bill be supported, an obligation on the Chief Executive would be created to issue an information notice where an application for clearing, as assessed under section 22A of the Act, has been rejected; and "grazing activities" would be removed from the definition of high value agriculture clearing to ensure that it is considered a relevant purpose in the Chief Executive's consideration of an application to clear under the Act.

—ENDS—

A video has been supplied showing Dan McDonald and dozens of local farmers with Bob and Pauline in Charleville this week voicing their support of Robbie Katter's bill.

For more information or a comment from Bob Katter, please contact the media phone: 0418 840 243

