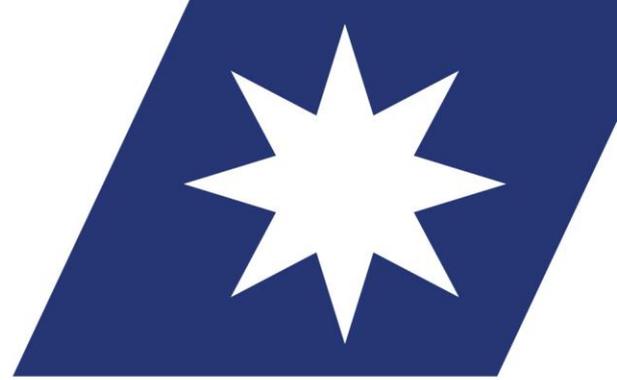


**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger

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## MEDIA RELEASE



November 26, 2019

### KATTERS FRONT JONES' DUBBO FARM FORUM WITH RECONSTRUCTION MESSAGE

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) State Leader and Member for Traeger Robbie Katter, alongside Member for Kennedy Bob Katter, flew to Dubbo on Monday to support Alan Jones at a public meeting attended by hundreds of farmers at the mercy of drought.

The talkback legend had been dominating headlines on the topic of 'saving the breeding herd' since early November when a listener from Bourke called his radio program and pleaded with the Prime Minister to give "a bit of hope" and that small towns were dying.

Mr Katter Senior said it was a cry for help that could not be ignored and was the catalyst for teaming up with Pauline Hanson to tour drought stricken inland south-west Queensland last month.

"Alan Jones was dead right in saying it's about preserving the cattle herd and the herders. This package announced by the LNP doesn't," he said.

"The beef herd was 33 million in the pre-1980s. By 2017 it had fallen to 25 million. Our sheep herd was 173 million before Paul Keating deregulated wool. Now it is just 69 million.

"Debt is killing us, the Queensland Government is killing us and farmers are in deep trouble.

"So what is the Federal Government's drought policy? It is simply "more debt" (albeit at low interest rates).

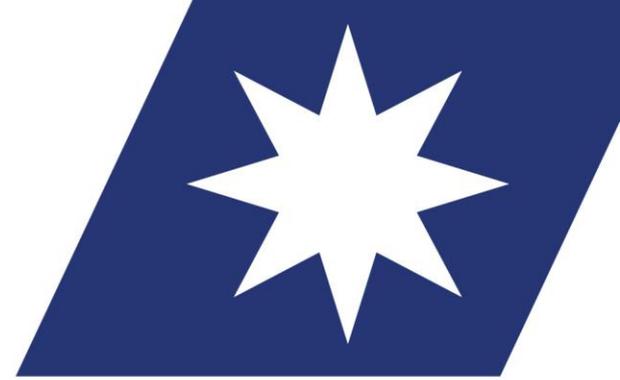
"It gives responsibility for fodder and transportation to the Queensland and NSW governments, and it provides low interest loans (to be administered by the state governments).

"But there is no policy for retiring or reconstructing the farmers "existing" debt."

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**Member for Traeger**

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## MEDIA RELEASE

Mr Katter Junior agreed that small rural towns were staring at a bleak future and that generational farming was being phased out as it becomes harder to finance and operate farms through the weather and economic troughs.

“Every town in my electorate is projecting a decline in population outside of the First Australian communities,” he said.

“We are seeing more and more corporate farming and less and less kids coming into the industry with generational farming.

“Cattle, cane, dairy: it’s the same problem as everywhere and we need some pretty big tools to turn it around.

“They once offered assistance to young people to ride the waves of peaks and troughs. I grew up in town (Charters Towers) and I would have loved to own a cattle station but I could just never see how to get there – there was just too much risk.

“So now there are less and less people in the towns and, looking forward, I am very focused on this issue.

“As terrible as it is now, it’s a good time to hit the reset button because we have got some immediate problems to look at like saving the cattle industry but there are secondary problems like, how do we save the farmer and the farmer’s family?”

“Reconstructing those loans through a Development Bank or similar is the most effective option out there.

“Governments don’t have access to cheap molasses, cheap fodder, cheap tyres or equipment but they do have access to cheap money.

“It is the most cost effective way for the tax payers to help in a meaningful way.”

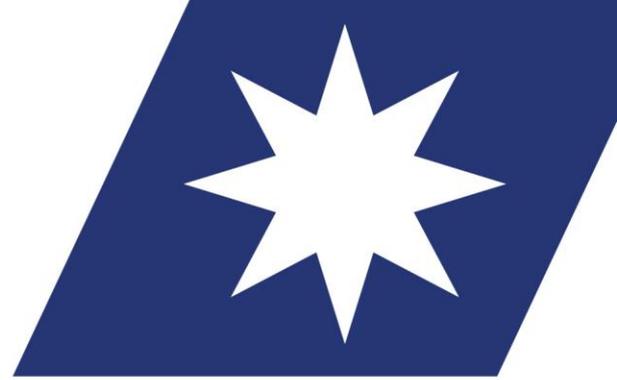
Mr Katter Junior said the reduction of red tape around fodder harvesting could also immediately alleviate pressure on drought-stricken farmers in Queensland.

“Everyone is talking about fodder at the moment and there is 45 million acres of fodder (Mulga) just waiting to be properly harvested in Queensland,” he said.

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**Member for Traeger**

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## MEDIA RELEASE

“The mulga trees in these parts are over 12ft high after two years of drought and they are renewable, free, just sitting there and it costs nothing to utilise them.”

Mr Katter Junior said he would be introducing an amendment to the state’s Vegetation Management Act tonight that would allow farmers in drought-declared areas to harvest Mulga trees to feed their stock.

The Traeger MP is calling on all those in the Government and the Opposition who claim to care about farmers to support his amendment.

**—ENDS—**

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