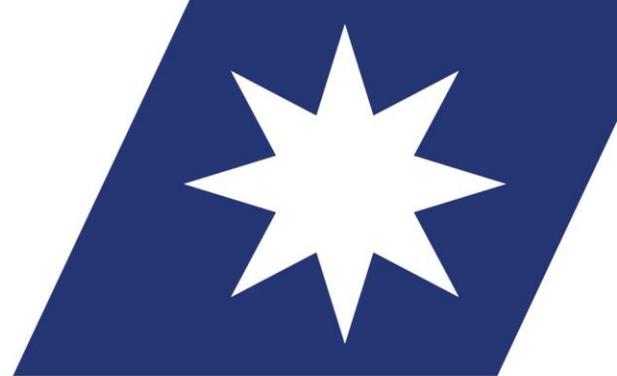


BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy



MEDIA RELEASE

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Katter joins Tully sugar farmers in China fight for fair go

KAP Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter has told cane farmers in Tully today that he will throw the full weight of the KAP behind them in their fight with Chinese-owned Tully Sugar after local farmers rejected several unfair conditions outlined in the 2020-22 supply agreement.

Mr Katter said the farmers' right to arbitration and minimum pricing was vitally important to the ongoing survival of the industry.

"The Australia we knew 30 years ago had, per head of population, probably made us the greatest agriculture nation on earth. Arbitration and the Snowy Mountains Scheme which enabled irrigation over one fifth of the nation's lands were the critical factors.

"But the single most important event in agricultural history was arbitration, minimum pricing, being introduced to the wool industry.

"Wool rose over the next 20 years maintaining its lead over coal which is our major export until Paul Keating undermined the scheme, refused to continue it and then abolished it. This was the first removal of arbitration from agriculture. It was then removed from maize, peanuts, fishing, tobacco, sugar and lastly and arguably the most disastrous, was milk.

"The removal of arbitration rights from the farmers by the LNP by the brutal enforcement of the National Competition Policy agreements resulted in our price of 60c per litre for milk the day before deregulation, becoming 41c per litre the day after. And the LNP is now the only political party in Australia refusing arbitration."

Tully has remained one of Australia's biggest sugar producing towns since its inception in 1865 and today sees more than 300 growers supply over two million tonnes of cane to the mill annually. Mr Katter said the local cane grower would be unrelenting in their fight for protecting their industry and livelihoods, and that the Chinese owners would not likely appreciate their opposition to the supply agreements.

"The battle at Tully, I think is the most important battle being undertaken, along with milk in the last half century.

"We have no idea what the price is of refined sugar sold in China. Heaven-only-knows what their mark-up of the sugar they produce in Tully is when sold to the consumers in China.

"Arbitration for their workers and farmers is a concept that doesn't exist in communist countries. And there is no doubt that China is still a communist country. Their governance is primitive and completely out of step and we will win this battle.

"The KAP triggered the introduction of arbitration and ethanol in Queensland. Our Party, whilst small in the national arena, no one would deny our influence in our heartland, North Queensland and the full weight of the Party will be thrown behind the farmers who are standing united in this battle."

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