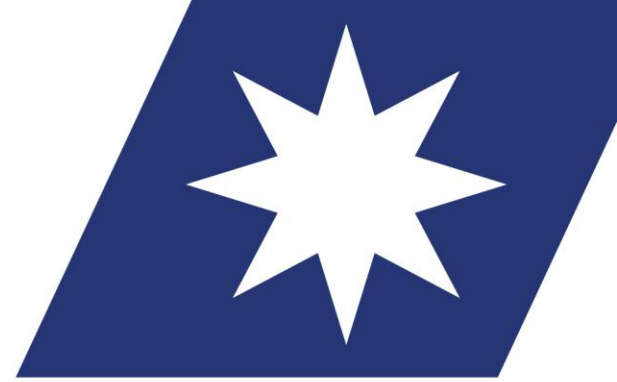


ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

6 March, 2020

SECRECY AROUND FIGURES HURTING NWMP'S FUTURE

The future of Australia's richest mineral-producing region is being eroded due to a lack of transparency around its economic output and workforces, Katter's Australian Party Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has warned.

Mr Katter said the North West Minerals Province (NWMP), centred on Mount Isa, was vital to the North Queensland economy but that the rise in FIFO and contract workers made it nearly impossible to accurately identify how many jobs it supports.

He said the industry propped up an untold number of direct and indirect jobs across the state, with anecdotal figures passed onto him suggesting hundreds of workers in Townsville alone were employed to service the NWMP and its supply chains.

"There is a chronic underestimation in the number of jobs supported by the NWMP, as well as its overall economic output, and that makes it extremely difficult to lobby on this issue and to provide a clear snapshot to everyone as to how important the NWMP is to our future," Mr Katter said.

"The secrecy and lack of transparency around this is very similar to that shrouded around the airline prices issues - we have no quantitative figures to illustrate the issues we know are there, so it just goes in the 'too hard basket' and we remain stuck with the status quo.

"We have never had a definitive study, and I am calling on the State Government today to make sure it happens."

Mr Katter said he and his office had exhausted all their avenues for capturing this data themselves, and said any worthwhile study would have to be commissioned by the State Government and conducted by data analysis specialists.

He said the *Strategic Blueprint for Queensland's North West Minerals Province*, completed in 2017, had touched on some of the necessary data but a more focused and ongoing analysis was needed.

"I would say a conservative estimate would be that 10,000 direct and indirect jobs are created by the NWMP alone – but again, I can't quantify that and I would suggest the number would be higher," Mr Katter said.

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

"Any study done would need to be two-fold; it would need to capture the make-up of the direct and indirect workforce (including FIFO, DIDO and contractors), and it would need to estimate gross economic product across all these workers and their workplaces, including mining royalties paid to the state."

Mr Katter said there was also a need for analysis of the North West region's entire workforce, across both the mining and non-mining sectors.

"This would particularly need to cover public sector jobs, with a very important aspect being to determine how many of these roles were now filled by FIFO workers as anecdotally, I am hearing it is quite a lot," he said.

"FIFO, across all sectors, erodes community connectedness and prosperity – we all know that.

"The State Government undoubtedly has access, or can obtain access, to all this data so they need to make these studies happen."

Mr Katter said the State Government captured and released FIFO figures annually, but only for the coal mining regions of the Bowen, Surat and Galilee Basins and the Gladstone region.

Speaking in Mount Isa late last year, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said the NWMP was critical to the Queensland economy.¹

"My government is committed to ensuring the North West Minerals Province is front and centre of meeting the growing demand for the minerals that we need for the future," the Premier said at the time.

"As the world moves to low emission and renewable energy products such as solar panels, wind turbines, batteries and electric cars, minerals such as copper, lead, zinc, silver, gold, cobalt and rare earths have never been more important."

—ENDS—

Media inquiries: Morgan Oss, 0428772544

¹ "Premier hails North West Minerals Province in parliament", *The North West Star*, November 28, 2019, <https://www.northweststar.com.au/story/6516659/premier-hails-north-west-minerals-province-in-parliament/>