

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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STATE MUST SUPPORT BUSINESSES ON THE ROPES

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) MPs have heard the call of thousands of Queensland businesses and sole traders in the fight for their survival, and are today calling on the State Government to throw a life-line by providing cash grants to help those struggling with mounting costs.

KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter, and his fellow KAP MPs, are urging the State Government to follow the example of southern states and offer one-off grants of upto \$20,000 to assist with business cashflow.

The grants would be available to businesses and sole traders that are exempt from payroll tax, and that can demonstrate a 70 per cent reduction in trade as a result of the COVID-19 situation.

"We know that all industries and sectors are crying out for support right now but if we cannot do something to help these small businesses survive, Queensland's economy will be permanently impacted – businesses will close, and they will not re-open," Mr Katter said.

"The knock-on effect for the closure of even one small business, particularly in rural and regional Queensland, cannot be overstated.

"The State Government has the capacity to do some heavy-lifting for business right now and we have seen some good work with the deferral of pay roll and gaming tax, but it's grossly inadequate.

"There are unrelenting ongoing costs for businesses that they are simply unable to meet without cash flow – think of utilities, insurances, professional memberships, taxes, leases, maintenance etc.

"These bills still need to be paid, but how can they pay them?"

Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto said the Federal Government's JobKeeper package would go a long way to help cover the costs of wages for employers, but said that the state had fallen short when compared to others when it came to providing financial assistance to small business.

"We are calling for a one-off \$20,000 grant to be made available for small businesses. This should be made available to those that can demonstrate a 70 per cent reduction in trade and are currently exempt from payroll tax. This would assist those struggling with the costs of insurance, electricity, gas and other outgoings in order to keep their doors open during this time.

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"Whether you're a sole trader, partnership or any small business structure, you're doing it tough right now and you've still got bills to pay, they just keep rolling in.

"A grant like this would help take the pressure off those small businesses so they can keep the power on, their doors open."

Mr Dametto said similar schemes existed in New South Wales and Victoria but the KAP's proposal was more generous and applied to a broader range of small businesses to accommodate the extra cost of doing business in Queensland and the variety of business structures.

"This proposal is about supporting our 'mum and dad' operators while they are forced into business hibernation and the State Labor Government should not be ignoring them in their darkest hour," he said.

"Our offices have been inundated with calls from small business who have missed out on substantial financial assistance from the State or Federal Governments because they fall outside the current criteria. Bars, restaurants, cafes, beauty salons, day care providers and tourism operators are just a small example of the types of businesses that are feeling the pinch right now.

"The State Government has the ability to provide that much-needed assistance."

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