

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

7/4/2020

COVID-19 has small business on the ropes

STATE Katter's Australian Party MP's have heard the call of thousands of Queensland businesses in desperate need for financial assistance, urging the State Government to chip in by opening up grants to help small businesses struggling with mounting outgoing costs.

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 Queensland had fallen short when compared to other states and territories who were providing financial assistance to small business.

"The KAP is 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.

"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 going."

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 office has 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."

KAP leader and Member for Traeger Robbie Katter said if something could not be done to help small businesses survive, Queensland's economy will be permanently impacted.

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"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 payroll 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?"

—ENDS—

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