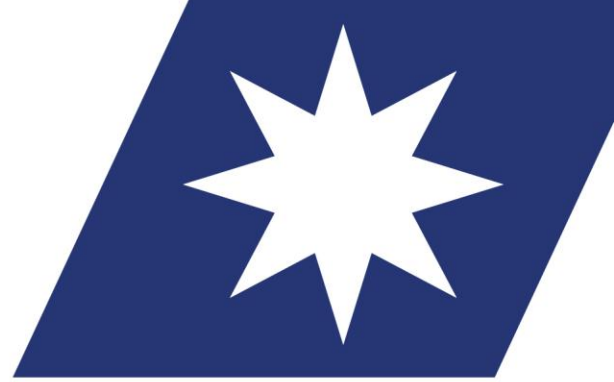


ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

16 April, 2020

RENTAL LAWS MUST NOT PUNISH BATTLERS: KAP

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) MPs will vehemently oppose the Palaszczuk Government's Special COVID-19 Protections for Residential Tenants and Owners, unless significant changes are made that ensure the rights of property owners are also protected.

The special measures, which are understood to be due before the Queensland Parliament next Wednesday, contain a raft of protections for renters in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The most contentious of which are: that rent can be waived (with no requirement to pay it back), landlords cannot ask tenants for proof of financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 and that tenants can refuse any entry to the property (including virtual inspections).

KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter said the government's measures were reckless, potentially detrimental to the savings of many hardworking Queenslanders and could create a dangerous and unnecessary "culture war" between renters and property owners.

"We support the principle of protecting coronavirus-impacted renters from eviction and homelessness - this simply cannot happen, but it can't be the owners who are left to foot all the bills at the end of the day," he said.

"The Federal Government has been generous in ensuring there are financial safety nets in place for people who have lost their jobs or their income, such as the \$1,500 a fortnight JobKeeper and the expanded JobSeeker payments.

"It's mostly the small business owners and the self-funded retirees who are finding themselves ineligible for this income support; the State Government has done next to nothing for these groups, and now they are trying to punish those of them who might own a rental property."

The KAP has called on the Palaszczuk Government to suspend the introduction of the special measures into the Parliament, until further consultation can be undertaken to ensure a fair balance is struck that protects all parties.

Possible solutions could include striking a deal with the Federal Government to co-fund tax incentives to landowners who accept, in good faith, reduced rental income during the COVID-19 crisis.

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The KAP also believes it is pertinent that those renters seeking a reduction or waiving of their rent provide evidence of their current financial situation.

“At the end of the day the mortgage, the rates and the insurance for all these properties still have to be paid – unless the State Government is enforcing a holiday on these costs too, it needs to back down and be reasonable on this,” Mr Katter said.

KAP Member for Hinchinbrook Nick Dametto said everyone was suffering, but that we need to ensure renters and landlords are both protected.

“The Queensland economy rides on the back of private investment. During this time, the State Labor government has bent over backwards to help renters in their time of need, and rightly so, but there’s always two sides to any situation,” he said.

“Landlords have been forgotten here and will be shouldering all the risk and expense under these proposed legislative changes.

“Mum and dad investors who have worked their guts out to get ahead have now been dumped into a pit of uncertainty on how they pay their second mortgage.

“Self-funded retirees are terrified of the prospect that a lifetime of hard work and sacrifice is about to be taken from them as they lose their rights to managing their investment.”

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