

**BOB KATTER**

Katter's Australian Party

**Federal Member for Kennedy**



## MEDIA RELEASE

2 June 2021

### **CSIRO jobs ripped from the Tablelands**

INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE MINISTER, Christian Porter has confirmed that the CSIRO Atherton branch will be closed by mid-2022, in what will be a devastating blow for the Tablelands community.

In a letter to Kennedy MP, Bob Katter, Minister Porter confirmed that the jobs will be relocated to Townsville at the CSIRO precinct at James Cook University.

Six full time staff and two part time staff will be relocated under the plan, and a number of other organisations who were co-located in the Atherton CSIRO building could be left without a home, including Terrain NRM, Cape York NRM, Barron River Catchment Care and James Cook University (JCU).

Kennedy MP, Bob Katter is seeking an urgent discussion with Industry and Science Minister, Christian Porter, and will call on the Minister to reverse the decision to remove the Atherton CSIRO branch to Townsville.

"We used to have more than 129 scientists in the Kennedy Electorate, now there's probably under 20," Mr Katter said.

"All that handed down wisdom and knowledge, from over 100 years, will never be retrieved.

"Knowledge of local conditions and history is in people's heads, not written down in books or on the internet.

"This Liberal National Government has destroyed countless industries through deregulation (tobacco, maize, dairy, sugar etc) and now they're taking away more jobs from the regional areas. Shame on them. The thrust of the old Country Party and of Joh's Nationals, put owner-operators into our regional towns and settlements. Now the 'ring-barking right' are draining the population.

"I am now calling the LNP the 'ring-barking right'. Metaphorically speaking, they kill the tree, but they don't take the timber. The tree is the mechanism by which the soil is enriched. Leaves fall on the ground and it enriches the soil.

"Since the Coalition won power off Keating and Hawke, we have watched the disastrous decline of income, population and a plethora of damaged dreams."

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Member for Hill, Shane Knuth said he was gutted by the decision to shut the local CSIRO office in Atherton.

"CSIRO provides a vital service to the region with public reference herbarium, an arboretum and student accommodation and is a well-known hub for research which attracts scientists from around the world," Mr Knuth said.

"Moving this service from the Tablelands to Townsville is a big step backwards considering that we are right in the heart of the rainforest, Great Barrier Reef and an agriculture hub.

"The need for research to combat feral pests and noxious weeds is now greater than ever with feral pigs and the intrusion of the Fall Army Worm, and Electric Ant.

"It is a devastating blow to the community to move this organisation and the flow on effects of moving this facility to Townsville means the Tablelands misses out again.

"I have seen in the past where smaller communities are done over, to centralise work forces into the major cities and we don't want to lose another vital service on the Tablelands."

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