

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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Labor Govt. stunting the Far North's growth with Barron River Bridge plan

KENNEDY MP, Bob Katter, says the Labor State Government is stunting Far North Queensland's growth by pushing ahead with plans to upgrade the Barron River Bridge, rather than building a new superfast highway (known as the Bridle Track or Kuranda Bypass) from the Tablelands to Cairns, which would cut travel times in half and allow for more freight carrying capacity.

The *Cairns Post* reports that the Barron River Bridge will reopen to two lanes from next Wednesday (October 27) but will operate with a 50.5 tonne load limit.^[1] The State Government is also conducting a \$2.1m study which is looking into replacing the bridge.

"The 50 tonne load limit stops any serious industrial or agricultural development in the Cairns Hinterland because we simply can't get our product out through a nearby port," Mr Katter said.

"The greater Cairns region, including the Tablelands and Innisfail, has 300,000 people. We are a quarter of the size of Brisbane, and yet Brisbane has got \$30b in tunnel upgrades and we've got none. I'm sick and tired of Far North Queenslanders saying we'll never get the money, but with that attitude you will never get the money.

"It's time to stand up and fight and demand the funding. Peter Piccone, Fran Lindsay (the Edmonton Traders) and Brett Moller (Gordonvale Chamber of Commerce) stood up and fought for a better highway between Cairns and Gordonvale and now we've got more than \$2b being spent on a divided highway.

"If we get the same money for the Bridle Track (Kuranda Bypass) then it will build us 15km of highway and a tunnel from Davies Creek through to the Cairns CBD. So, if you're a fairy-wimp get out of the way. If you are a Far North Queensland fighter come and stand with us. We want to open up the mining and agricultural potential in the Cairns Hinterland that is being restricted by the current road situation."

Bob Katter said Barron River MP, Craig Crawford, was a spokesman for Brisbane who is trying to keep his job as a Minister rather than improve Far North Queensland.

^[1] <https://www.cairnspost.com.au/news/cairns/barron-river-bridge-to-open-to-two-lanes-later-this-month/news-story/bbe504ee3ebf722b92367eb113647462>

BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy

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"All ALP and LNP members must serve their masters in Brisbane and Canberra," he said.

"So long as you toe the Brisbane line you will get a ministry. He's a great success story in his own mind, but he's holding the region back by not fighting for a better road - which will increase the region's economic activity by billions of dollars.

"We have one of the world's greatest, undeveloped minerals provinces to the west of Cairns, and we can also increase our agricultural undertakings on the Tablelands with the North Johnstone Transfer. But both these projects depend on the Bridle Track (Kuranda Bypass) highway."

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