

**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# COMMUNITY MUST SPEAK UP ON NEW WORKPLACE RULES

Katter's Australian Party Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has called on all Queensland business who use quad bikes and side-by-side vehicles in their line of work to speak up about proposed State Government regulations that will change the way they operate.

The Queensland Office of Industrial Relations announced earlier this year it was investigating the introduction of workplace health and safety (WHS) regulations for quad bikes and side-by-side vehicles, in the aim of improving the safety of workers and others when operating these vehicles in the workplace.

Originally public consultation was due to occur for a period of six weeks only, however following community complaints Mr Katter lobbied for an extension up until August 31.

Mr Katter said local motorsport dealers had expressed their concerns to him regarding the impending introduction of the new rules, which would involve mandatory helmet use, kids being banned from using adult quad bikes and SSVs, certain passenger restrictions for some vehicles and seat belt usage for some SSVs (where they have been installed).

Businesses have complained the proposed new regulations would impact their operations, as well as the agricultural and tourism sectors also.

Mr Katter said he was concerned the new regulations, while well-meaning, could have inadvertent affects.

"The main concern from the public is not necessarily the implementation of the regulations for quad bikes – wearing a helmet on a quad bike is practical and adhering to the manufacturer's recommendations in relation to age and the ability for the vehicle to carry a passenger is practical," he said.

"However, it's not that simple; often agricultural-related activities have a cross over with recreational activities, or may involve children, especially on school holidays where access to childcare is not available.

"So where does the Government draw the line on what is private use versus work-place?"

Mr Katter said industry representatives wanted quad bikes and side-by-side vehicles regulated separately.

"Side-by-side vehicles are often used to undertake many farming jobs, including mustering, delivering lick, checking fence lines and spraying weeds," he said.

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“The heat in many rural and remote places is extreme at most times of the year. The farmers are driving around in a hot vehicle, that has a certified ROPS system and seat belt restraints, and you go and make them wear a helmet with an enforceable safety standard.

“Enforcing impractical standards for side-by-side vehicles, I would assume, would encourage operators to use a different vehicle that does not have the same safety requirements to operate, in many cases one that is not intended for the task at hand.

“We need to ensure we do not make difficult jobs even more difficult, and more unsafe.

“How can these regulations not be applicable to tractors and 4x4 vehicles with the same safety systems, but be enforced for the use of a side-by-side vehicle?

“This is just another example of the Government coming in with a blunt instrument approach.”

Mr Katter said he welcomed the longer consultation period.

“You’ve got people in their offices in Brisbane writing regulations that will directly affect people in the most rural and remote areas of the state, with very little idea of the flow on effect it will have,” he said.

“I am aware of the dangers the incorrect use of such motor vehicles can have; we have seen far too many tragedies over recent years.

“But we don’t necessarily need further regulations, instead I would suggest increased education on the correct use of the vehicles and their safety systems.

“We need regulations that can be applicable for all vehicles with the same safety systems, and regulations that don’t discourage the use of the safer vehicle.”

Written submissions from the public into the proposed quad bike and side-by-side vehicle regulations are being accepted until Wednesday, 31 August.

If you wish to have your say on the proposed regulations, you can do so by emailing [whspolicy@oir.qld.gov.au](mailto:whspolicy@oir.qld.gov.au)

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