

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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KATTER ISSUES TRAEGER PRIORITIES AHEAD OF QLD BUDGET

Katter's Australian Party Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has announced his Traeger electorate funding and project priorities ahead of the Queensland Budget's release next week, with a continued heavy focus on health, crime, and energy production.

1. Health

Addressing the rural health emergency and delivering fair and adequate healthcare to all Queenslanders remains one of Mr Katter's top priorities.

He has recently written several letters to Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Yvette D'Ath outlining alarming reports of sub-standard care, and requested a plan of action to address the crisis to ensure the safety and wellbeing of rural communities.

Acute staffing and funding shortages, the failure of the North West Hospital and Health Service, and media investigations linking Indigenous deaths in Doomadgee to negligent healthcare have failed to spark the change needed to restore an adequate standard of care.

Mr Katter called on the Queensland Government to create a \$15 million workforce attraction fund to recruit and retain doctors, nurses and specialists to rural communities, specifically to reinstate full ophthalmology services to Mount Isa; allocate CT scanners to Charters Towers and Mount Isa; and reinstate birthing services at Charters Towers Hospital.

2. Crime

As the North's crime crisis persists in eroding the liveability of regional communities, the KAP is unrelenting in requesting the Queensland Government to spend \$15 million to trial its Relocation Sentencing model as an alternative to jail for recidivist youths.

A precedent for this approach has been recently set in Western Australia through its proposed 'on-country sentencing' model. It is also backed by recent community protests against establishing residential care homes for offenders and at-risk youths in the middle of city centres.

Mr Katter said the Government's priorities when it came to youth crime were astonishing.

"Even in the midst of a crime wave of inexplicable proportions – more than 550 cars stolen this year in Cairns, about 500 in Townsville and about 50 alone in little old Mount Isa, a town of

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20,000 people – the Palaszczuk Labor Government is refusing to acknowledge alternate solutions to the problem unless they are their own,” he said in May.

3. Energy

In delivering the highly-anticipated CopperString 2.0 power transmission line to the North West, Mr Katter called on the Queensland Government to advance its support by engaging with new major stakeholders.

He urged the Government to work together with Spanish infrastructure giant Iberdrola, which recently bought the rights to the \$2 billion Mount James wind farm near Hughenden, which sits in the path of CopperString, to seal the deal on the transmission line.

CopperString would bring down the region’s astronomical power prices, enable major mining and renewable energy investments, and allow mining to commence on decades’ worth of increasingly valuable minerals.

The Queensland Government has continued to indicate strong support for the project, fortified earlier this year by a \$45 million subsidy scheme to boost sales of electric vehicles (EV), which require minerals mined in the North West Minerals Province (NWMP).

Mr Katter has lobbied the Queensland Treasurer to overcome barriers, namely power-related, in the NWMP ahead of a forecast minerals boom set to double copper consumption and almost quadruple nickel consumption by 2050.

4. Roadworks

Mr Katter is demanding immediate construction on potentially life-saving overtaking lanes on the Flinders Highway between Charters Towers and Townsville, warning he will take action if nothing has been commenced by 1st July.

The upgrades have been in the works for two years and the Department of Transport and Main Roads has advised it will start building in June.

“The Flinders Highway is notoriously bad for fatal traffic accidents ... safety issues are compounded by high numbers of caravans during tourist season and large amounts of road haulage vehicles ... we’ve seen tragedies time and time again along this road,” Mr Katter said, adding that the State Labor Government continued to pour billions into tunnels in Brisbane and the south-east corner.

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