

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

21 September 2022

ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES OF SICK HEALTH SYSTEM: KAP

Pressure on Queensland's public health system – including ambulance ramping, bed blockages and staff shortages, could be reduced if the Palaszczuk Labor Government funded computed tomography (CT) scanners in all district hospitals, Katter's Australian Party (KAP) Leader Robbie Katter has said.

None of the Townsville region's district hospitals, Charters Towers, Ingham and Ayr, currently have the ability to conduct a CT scan with patients needing them being transferred by ambulance to the Townsville University Hospital or, in some cases, private local clinics during business hours.

Other district hospitals without CT scanners include Dalby, Stanthorpe, Moranbah, Charleville and St George – all 12 others across the State are fully-equipped.

Mr Katter said chronic underinvestment in rural and regional health facilities had led to a centralisation of services at tertiary-level hospitals that were already struggling to keep up with demand.

He said the frequency of "code yellows" – which indicate demand for the hospital's service has exceeded capacity – being called at the Townsville University Hospital¹ showed the current situation was unsustainable.

"Every single district hospital in Queensland needs a CT scanner, and today we are calling for the first investments to occur in the North," he said.

"In the Townsville region, none of our district hospitals – which service populations of well above 10,000 people – have this important yet basic medical infrastructure.

"Patients are constantly being referred to Townsville as a result of this deficit, even though this places an unbearable burden on resources and can pose a threat to patients due to inevitable delay in treatment.

¹ <https://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/townsville/capacity-issues-plague-townsville-hospital/news-story/d6b7807db46c5913e198c9ea160a8a9d>

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

“When addressing the health crises our public system is facing, we need to look at the causes and not just the symptoms – we can start by reducing the bottle-necking that’s occurring as a result of funneling everyone to major hospitals at the cost of their local facilities.”

Deputy Leader of the KAP and Hinchinbrook MP, Nick Dametto, has lobbied for a CT scanner to be installed at the Ingham Hospital in recent years.

He said hospital transfers tied up significant ambulance and hospital staffing resources across the Townsville region.

Earlier this year, Queensland Health and Ambulance Services Minister Yvette D’Ath confirmed Ingham’s private CT scan provider received 392 requests of imaging from the Ingham Hospital from January to December 2021.

This figure excluded CT scans requested by GPs and CT scans that were transferred from Ingham Hospital to Townsville Hospital after hours, so the real figure for that period was likely to be much higher.

“In Ingham, when you take those factors into consideration, we may be looking at closer to 600-plus CT scans a year for the district,” Mr Dametto said.

“I would imagine there would be similar figures for places like Charters Towers and Ayr, so you could suggest that there are approximately 1,500 scans a year that could be conducted by the local public providers.”

Mr Dametto said the drain on resources that the transfers incurred could not be understated.

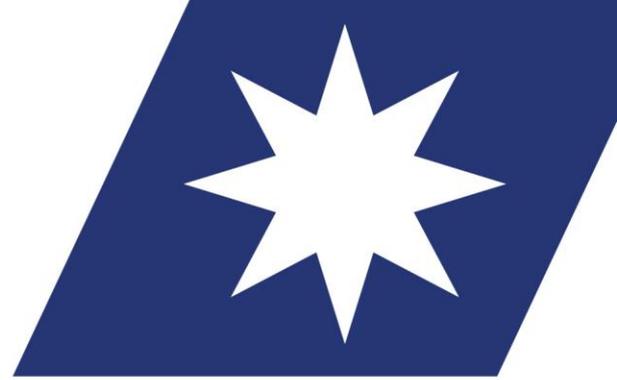
“If a patient is to be transferred to Townville or a local provider for a scan, then not only can this tie up an ambulance but a nurse is required to travel as well,” he said.

“Our paramedics, nurses, doctors and medical staff should be utilized as efficiently as possible during a time of staff shortages and having the right medical services and equipment locally would help relieve these pressures.”

KAP Hill MP Shane Knuth said two hospitals in his electorate had CT scanners, but Tully Hospital still needed one – he said the addition would provide an invaluable service to the community.

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

“This sort of medical service should be included in all our regional hospitals by default, and we should not have to beg, borrow and steal in order to get the same treatment as the city centres,” he said.

“We would like to see the State Government move immediately to address this shortcoming, not only to potentially save the lives of those in need of a scan in these communities but to take pressure off the larger hospitals – it just makes sense.”

It is estimated that the delivery of new CT scanners to the state’s currently un-serviced district hospitals would be between \$4-6 million per facility, to equal an approximate \$45 million total spend.

—ENDS—

Media inquiries: Morgan Oss, 0428 772 544