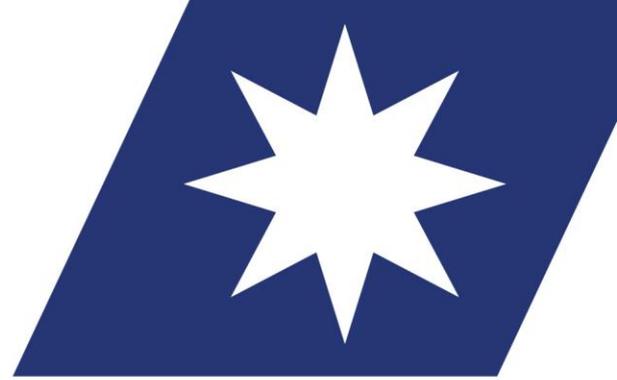


**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger



## MEDIA RELEASE

5<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### “INSANE” PALASZCZUK GOVT NEEDS NEW DETENTION DIRECTION

The Palaszczuk Labor Government must look at alternate solutions to the youth crime crisis eroding life in North Queensland instead of wasting \$500 million of taxpayer monies on repeated mistakes, Katter’s Australian Party MPs have said.

Yesterday, during a visit to North Queensland, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk revealed that her Government’s response to youth crime was extra police and to “look at” expanding youth justice detention, including the possibility of a youth detention centre in Cairns.

This announcement was the first time the public had been made aware of a potential new North Queensland youth detention centre.

Katter’s Australian Party Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter said it was deeply alarming that the State Government had indicated its commitment to the same old trajectory on youth crime.

Any indication by the Government that it intends to further invest in a system that has led to incarcerated teens re-offending at a rate of up to 95 per cent was deeply alarming, Mr Katter said.

“They say the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results – does this mean the Palaszczuk Labor Government is due for such a diagnosis?” he said.

“While we welcome funding and efforts to expand the State’s capacity to deal with youth crime, we cannot support a continuation of the same old, tired system.

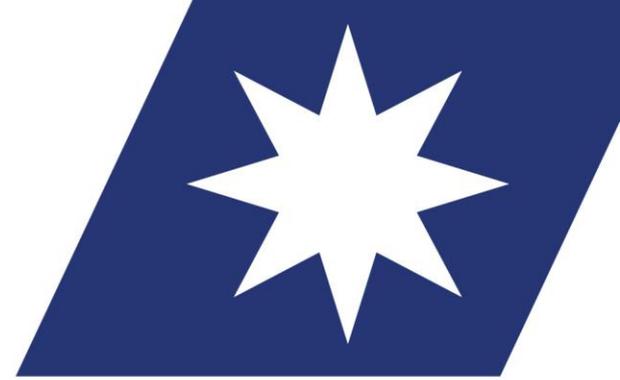
“We need stronger sentencing tools for violent and recidivist youth offenders and we need alternative sentencing models, including Relocation Sentencing that gets them out of town in the long-term and enables them to reform.”

Recent data revealed through a Parliamentary Question on Notice indicated that 95 per cent of child offenders released from North Queensland’s only youth jail – the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre – in the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 reoffended within 12 months of their release.

“If the Premier truly understood the concerns of Queenslanders and the gravity of the current situation, she wouldn’t be proposing to throw good money after bad on youth crime strategy that has been proven a failure,” KAP Deputy Leader and Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto said.

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## MEDIA RELEASE

"Youth offenders must not be allowed to terrorise our streets, they need to be locked up to protect our community; if you're breaking into homes and stealing cars you must be incarcerated.

"But in saying that, if we are going to look at genuine long-term rehabilitation for these kids, first there must be a harsh deterrent for committing the crime or reoffending and to do this a different strategy needs to be tested.

"Queensland should be afforded the opportunity to trial the KAP's Relocation Sentencing policy – a trial is currently under way in Western Australia, so it's time we too tried a new approach."

If adopted, the KAP's Relocation Sentencing policy would see recidivist youth offenders sent via court order to a remote, rural location for a minimum of six months to serve their time.

There, they would work closely with youth workers, educators, and Indigenous Elders to develop key life skills and partake in intensive programs aimed at breaking the crime cycle.

This policy is designed to act as a harsh deterrent for recidivist offending, this place won't be like the holiday camp known as "Club Cleveland" that North Queensland youth offenders have come to know, Mr Dametto said.

"You can't hide from the fact that the current strategy isn't working; the Government has nothing to lose beside their ego if they trial our Relocation Policy," he said.

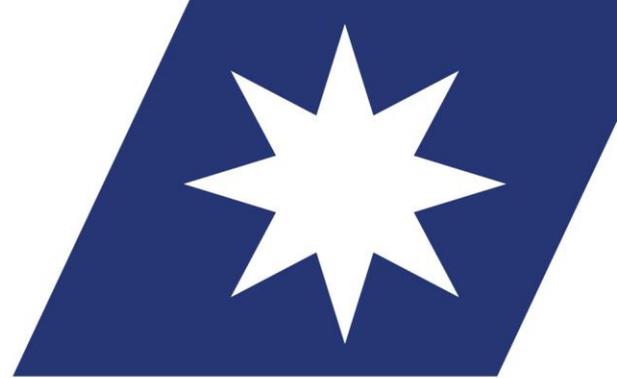
### **Keys points of the KAP Relocation Sentencing Policy:**

1. Applies to young repeat offenders aged 10-17 who have been identified as 'at-risk' of recidivism and have a demonstrated history of escalating criminality
2. Provides alternative harsh sentencing (and/or bail arrangement) options to magistrates/judges when dealing with these offenders
3. These alternative sentencing options include 'on country' programs in a remote and approved location. Ankle bracelets would be used for added security, but security would largely be maintained through distance and isolation
4. On site training would go towards qualifications in fields such as a windmill technician, rural operations, butcher, or stockman, but would not be limited to primary industries

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

5. The goal of Relocation Sentencing is to break the crime cycle while providing these children with life skills, education, and an ability to reintegrate as a productive member of society on release
6. It would be available to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children
7. The KAP has identified a series of possible facility locations in North West Queensland such as Lake Julius (north of Mount Isa). It is envisioned multiple locations will be established across the State in strategic areas
8. The program is designed to be the ultimate 'circuit-breaker' for repeat young offenders who are likely to re-offend if returned to the streets and are at-risk of further "criminalisation" if incarcerated at juvenile detention centres.

**ENDS**

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