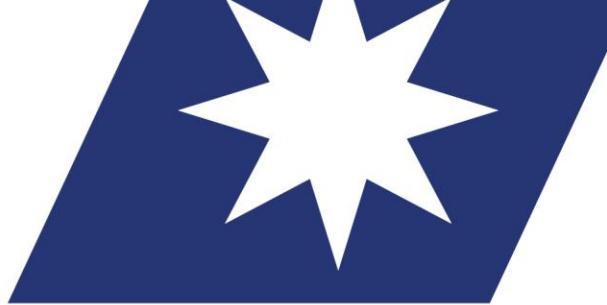


MEDIA RELEASE

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Plan for 20,000 cheap housing blocks without 'government intervention'

THE national housing crisis will only worsen under the Federal Government's plans to increase demand for property while ignoring land supply issues in an "empty country".

Kennedy MP Bob Katter has blamed the "cancer of government intervention" for the lack of affordable land to build on, while rental vacancies of less than 1 per cent are being reported across the nation.

Responding to Federal Housing Minister Julie Collins' announcement that Labor brought forward its Regional First Home Buyer Support Scheme to October 1, Mr Katter said everything the government proposed as a "solution" was counterintuitive.

Labor's scheme aims to allow 10,000 first-home buyers to purchase property in regional Australia with just a 5 per cent deposit.

"Unfortunately minister, all you talked about was increasing demand. You're going to help them get deposits so that'll increase demand," Mr Katter said.

"This is not a demand problem, this is a supply problem.

"You live in a country where the average price of land is \$400 a hectare, why are we paying \$400,000 a hectare?

"I'll tell you why - it's because of the cancer of government intervention. In Charters Towers, we were under the mining act and under the mining act we walked in and spoke with a local bloke: 'Can I have that piece of land, divide into three', and he said 'yes'. We signed a form, walked out, and sold the land the next day. That was the process of subdivision."

Mr Katter said there were now up to \$100,000 in "government barriers" slowing the subdivision process.

He said with just \$2bn to construct the Bridle Track Tunnel connecting Mareeba and Cairns, up to 20,000 housing blocks could be opened within 20 minutes of the major Far North city.

"So give us the infrastructure, we'll give you the cheap land. But take away the restrictions on land," Mr Katter said.

For more information or a comment from Bob Katter, please contact the media phone: 0418 840 243