

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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SUPPORT GROWS FOR ON-COUNTRY ALTERNATIVE TO JUVIE

A North Queensland football coach and first aid officer who has spent his life working with troubled youth has put his hand up to assist in rehabilitation of criminal offenders through a trial of Katter's Australian Party's Relocation Sentencing policy.

Relocation Sentencing, which has long been touted by the North Queensland-based party as "circuit-breaker solution" to the unrelenting youth crime crisis, would involve repeat offenders being sent to remote properties to work the land while completing compulsory therapeutic programs over a 6-12 month period.

The KAP is now actively pushing for the Palaszczuk Labor Government to fund a trial of the scheme, calling for an initial investment of about \$15 million.

Atherton's Des Pascoe, 65, has coached and been a Sports Trainer with junior and senior rugby league and union for more than two decades said he supported to idea behind the program.

Mr Pascoe said with the escalating crime rate, he agreed with the KAP that it was "time to think outside the box" and provide offenders with an opportunity to realise the effects of their actions, develop life skills and become better members of society.

"The current system... the crime is increasing so I'm not sure you can say the current system is working," Mr Pascoe said.

"Perhaps these kids believe what they're doing is their right and they can't see any other way."

Mr Pascoe said as a coach he had dealt with "wild" and "ill-disciplined" kids who he mentored by providing skills and benefits.

"Sending them to jail doesn't give them any benefit when they come out; in league, we did activities that gave them skills, we spoke to them about what careers they wanted and how they could get there, what they had to study," he said.

"I think relocation will take them out of their comfort zone and that will help break the cycle; we can get them into courses.

"Sometimes when kids are being naughty, you have to stop punishing them and I think they need encouragement.

"You can't praise them for stealing, but if they were to be able to cook a meal, and you say 'thanks for that!'"

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Mr Pascoe said he had been indirectly affected by crime with his son losing \$40,000 worth of equipment in recent weeks to theft and a tradie friend of his losing his ute and tools.

"The kid they caught, he was looking at my friend and smirking at him, this wasn't his first rodeo; and for them to end up back in jail again, it's horrific, because as an adult, they just continue that same lifestyle."

Mr Pascoe said if a relocation facility was established he would be highly motivated to assist in skills training and mentoring.

"Our kids are our future, they're our next politicians, our next police officers, our next tradies.

"You've got to have the morals and principles and scruples of knowing when you're getting off track, without getting jailed and that comes from being mentored."

KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter welcomed Mr Pascoe's support.

"Relocation sentencing – which by design has to be long-term, mandatory and centred on a remote location – has been a cornerstone KAP policy for years," the Traeger MP said.

"The Palaszczuk Labor Government has refused to take our proposal seriously, even though it is backed up by research and has wide-ranging community support, such as people at the coal face so-to-speak like Des.

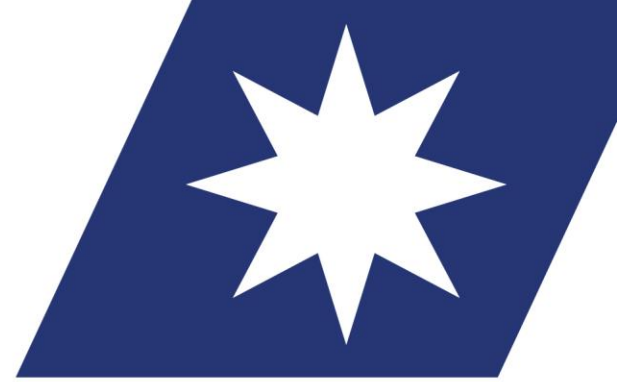
"Every day the excuses given not to trial this as an alternative approach are wearing more and more thin."

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
5. The goal of Relocation Sentencing is to break the crime cycle while providing children with life skills, education, and an ability to reintegrate as a productive member of society on release

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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.

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