

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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‘Into a jungle’: Industrial relations bill ‘has no feeling’ for small business

The in-decline farming industry and small businesses need to be protected and therefore excluded from the legislative ambit of the Federal Government’s Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill, Kennedy MP Bob Katter says.

While Mr Katter supported the intent of the 27-part Fair Work Legislation Amendment Bill, he said its implementation would severely impact small businesses and farmers.

On Thursday he moved an amendment calling for businesses that employed under 50 full-time equivalent employees in rural, regional, or remote Australia to be exempt from the legislation’s provisions.

Mr Katter said the complexities of meeting industrialised wages and negotiating in enterprise bargaining agreements could not be imposed upon farmers or small business employers, who often do not have the necessary resources to engage in such matters.

While he agreed elements of the bill, which seeks to boost wage bargaining, limit fixed-term contracts to create job security, and boost workplace conditions such as flexible work were of vital importance in other industries, he said they were too onerous for employers and employees in small business and farming.

Mr Katter said when GST was first introduced, it reduced a “tough-as-nails” small hardware business owner in his electorate to tears at the thought of additional complex paperwork.

“She said ‘I work until 6pm at night, I race home and cook dinner, and then I do the books for my husband’s business and mine, and I’m up to well after midnight’. So she said she just burst out crying at the thought of another hour of paperwork.

“But (in this bill) there really isn’t a feeling for small business. It’s interesting that four of us (from the crossbench) are moving to exclude small business.

“Without protection, farmers and small business just won’t be able to meet their requirements of proper industrial demands.”

However, Mr Katter said he supported competitive wages for farm and small business employees.

BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy

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“If they want some overall catch-all base wage, I think everyone here would agree with that. But to turn small business into a jungle in which they're the little guys—I think that's what's going to happen here,” he said.

For more information or a comment from Bob Katter,
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