

**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger



## MEDIA RELEASE

January 10, 2019

### COMMERCIAL FISHERS NOW BEING TRACKED

Queensland commercial fishermen are officially being tracked by the State Government, following the introduction of underhanded legislative changes that came in effect on January 1.

In November the State Government quietly passed the Fisheries (Vessel Tracking) Amendment Regulation 2018, which will make mandatory the installation of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) on all net, crab and line fishing boats from the start on 2019.

The laws will be applicable to the rest of the commercial fishing fleet, including charter operators, from 2020.

State KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter met with a number of affected fishermen during a trip up to the Gulf late last year.

He said the general sentiment amongst the fishing community in regards to the laws was frustration.

Mr Katter's office, as well as the offices of his fellow state KAP MPs Shane Knuth and Nick Dametto, have been inundated with complaints about the VMS laws in recent months.

The MP said many were of the opinion that the VMS requirement was "Big Brother" type legislation, which not only unfairly places small operators under greater financial pressure but also tracks their every move.

"The KAP has serious concerns that this forcing of VMS systems onto all net, crab and line commercial fishing boats from the start of this year will see many maritime operators walk away from the industry," he said.

"We introduced a disallowance motion against the laws into the Parliament during the last sitting for the year, but were unable to debate the issue then and there thanks to Labor who used its numbers to deny Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto the opportunity to seek leave of the house to move a motion without notice.

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“The debate will now take place in February when Parliament resumes, more than a month after the laws have become effective.”

Mr Katter said any commercial fishers who needed to discuss their concerns regarding the VMS laws over the coming months, could get in touch with his, Shane Knuth MP's or Nick Dametto MP's offices.

**—ENDS—**

Media inquiries: Morgan Oss, 0428 772 544