

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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TAX CUTS KEY TO HELPING JOBLESS YOUTHS

State KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has called for temporary tax cuts for regional businesses that take on new employees in a bid to reduce the bush's shocking youth unemployment rates.

A report released last week by national anti-poverty group the Brotherhood of St Laurence revealed that more than a quarter of young people in the labour force are unemployed in the 'Queensland Outback' region.

This is the highest rate in the state and in Australia overall.

According to the report Queensland's overall youth unemployment rate is at 12.8 per cent, which is above the national rate of 11.2 per cent.

Youth unemployment is at a worrying 25.7 per cent in the 'Queensland Outback' region, which includes Mount Isa, Longreach, Cape York and Weipa.

Mr Katter said the issue of youth unemployment, and employment in general, was a constant concern in the North and especially when you get out into rural and remote areas.

"In my electorate Charters Towers is facing an issue with the figure sitting at 17.3 per cent but further west at Mount Isa we are on 25.7 per cent unemployment – that's one in four kids who can't get a job," he said.

"We need to make sure our big industries, like mining and agriculture, stay alive and stay profitable so that employment opportunities only increase."

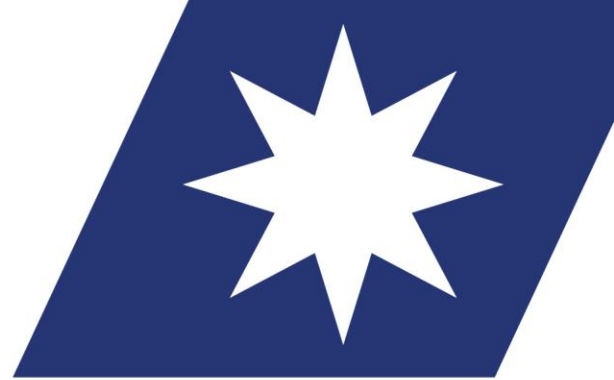
Mr Katter said attracting people to live in and staying living in regional, rural and remote towns was crucial.

"Governments can skill youth all they want but if there are no genuine jobs for them to go to then we are all wasting our time," he said.

"Last year the KAP proposed immediate reduction in the payroll tax from 4.75 per cent to 2.4 per cent for all regional Queensland businesses and a five year payroll tax 'holiday' for any new employment of permanent residents of regional Queensland.

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“After five years the payroll tax would revert to 2.4 per cent.

“The payroll tax changes are similar to a policy introduced by the Victorian Government and the idea is to help stimulate regional business and employment growth.”

Mr Katter estimated that between 2,000 and 3,000 businesses in regional Queensland would be eligible for the reduced rate, which equals a lot of jobs created.

He said the timing of the calls were pertinent considering the devastation caused in Northern regional areas by the recent floods.

“We would be looking at some lost revenue for the government for sure but we have seen increased royalties in the last 18 months on the back of coal prices into the hundreds of millions of dollars coming from Queensland’s regional areas,” Mr Katter said.

“We would like to see some of this wealth invested back into regional Queensland to help boost employment.”

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