

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT MUST MAKE EXTREMISTS ACCOUNTABLE

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) Queensland MPs have re-ignited their fight for new Chain of Responsibility (CoR) laws to be investigated and enacted at the state-level after an eruption this week of vegan vigilantism across Australia.

State KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter first pitched the laws last year in response to a spate of illegal protests aimed at disrupting Queensland's major industries, such as mining.

Mr Katter said while the issuing of on-the-spot fines was a fair punishment to protest attendees who break the law, harsher penalties needed to be handed out to rally organisers and green non-government organisations who facilitate illegal activities.

"Everyone has the right to protest and speak out on issues they feel compelled to, but these extremists are a law unto themselves – their aim is to shock and disrupt, and they have little regard for who gets affected along the way," he said.

"The arrogance with which they break the law, trespassing onto private properties and harassing others while costing taxpayers a fortune, is outrageous.

"We've seen CoR laws used recently by Labor to put more obligations on individuals involved in running and owning mining and transport businesses.

"After the escalation of events this week, we believe it is hypocritical not to apply these same standards to the people running the groups who illegally target our industries and innocent people with their protests."

Mr Katter said changes to the Environmental Protection Act in 2016 enacted a CoR for "responsible persons" involved in resource companies that couldn't meet financial liabilities for environmental damage.

During the Bill's introduction, then-Minister for the Environment Hon. Dr Steven Miles said the changes were required to better protect "the community and taxpayers from the decisions and actions of businesses that fail to take steps to meet their proper responsibilities".

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Mr Katter said extreme green groups that persisted in disrupting agricultural and mining operations in pursuit of their political agendas should be subject to the same treatment.

Mr Katter said he was looking into the application of a CoR that ensured the people running these extreme groups and organising their illegal protests bear responsibility for the cost to taxpayers and the community.

Under these laws, relevant organisers, executives and donors that don't take steps to discourage illegal behaviour would be liable for punishment.

"We have been looking into this for some time and now, following the events of this week, will escalate this work to see what the feasibility is of CoR laws specifically targeted at these green groups," he said.

"The outrage that has been felt by the majority of Australians in response to these extremists is example enough of how unacceptable their behaviour is.

"However we don't want this outrage and anger to continue to divide our communities and impact on our industries.

"This is where the government must support the push for a CoR that would call out all those who facilitate, coordinate and encourage this illegal behaviour, and send a message to any else thinking they have the moral authority to disrupt others in the aim of gaining political traction."

Mr Katter said any CoR laws devised by the KAP at the state-level would correlate with similar legislation being considered by Federal KAP Leader Bob Katter.

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