

**BOB KATTER**

Katter's Australian Party

**Federal Member for Kennedy**



## MEDIA RELEASE

10 April 2019

# Katter worried Hells Gates Dam will “descend into farce” under TEL

KAP Leader and Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter has expressed major concern with today's announcement that Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL) has been tasked to carry out the business case for Hells Gates Dam.

It comes just months after Prime Minister Scott Morrison pledged \$54 million in a personal letter to Mr Katter for Stage One of the Hells Gates Dam Irrigation Scheme.

“I doubt whether Mr Caravan (*sic*) (Minister for Resources and Northern Australia Matt Canavan) knows where Hells Gates is but we've sent him a map so he can find out,” Mr Katter said of the plan, announced by the Federal Government today.

“If TEL and SMEC (engineering company commissioned by TEL) were to do it the way they proposed, then I think the whole thing will descend into farce.

“These schemes were dreamed up by people who have fought all of their lives to see them happen, and to see them taken away and put under the control of high-flying businessmen (TEL)... (it's one of three) big golden handshakes to approve of very rich and very power businessmen who know absolutely nothing about the scheme or the requirements for the people of North Queensland.”

The first report presented good figures, according to Mr Katter, costing the project at approximately \$1,000 million to dam and transport the water to where it could be used properly and converting 120,000 hectares to usable farmland.

As well, it would provide seven per cent of Australia's petrol as ethanol, 1.5 per cent of Australia's electricity, and fatten nearly one million cattle a year, all with zero emissions.

However, Mr Katter said the “magnificent scheme” was reduced into a “pygmy nothingness” comprising only 50-70 farms and a giant pump hydro scheme costing \$5.5 billion that would suffer great losses from Australia's exorbitant power prices.

To put it in comparison, there are more than 900 farms in the Ayr region and more than 660 around Ingham.

“What it does for Townsville or North Queensland I'm buggered if I know – it's a bloody joke,” Mr Katter said.

The work being done today comes off the back of the major work done on the revised Bradfield Scheme, of which Mr Katter was an architect and which was accepted by the State and Federal Governments.

In discussing ongoing developments, Mr Katter said he was disappointed with the lack of communication with TEL.

For more information or a comment from Bob Katter, please contact the media phone: 0418 840 243



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“TEL, which has a couple of very good people, gave the project to SMEC and a very young fella was dealing with it and I endeavoured to talk to he and others and the best I got was 20 minutes with (two people),” he said.

“So here was a person who was one of the three architects of the revised Bradfield Scheme (me) and he can’t get to speak to the SMEC bloke and the young engineer bloke, who seemed to know Buckley’s about Australia.”

Whatever the next step for the Hells Gates Dam business case, Mr Katter assured local stakeholders they would be acknowledged.

He said the Big Rocks Agriculture Group would be recognised as a key stakeholder in the progression of Stage One of the Dam.

In ensuring the creation of local job opportunities, Mr Katter asked TEL to make a commitment to allocate a percentage of work to local contractors and facilitate collaborative local tenders if the need arose.

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