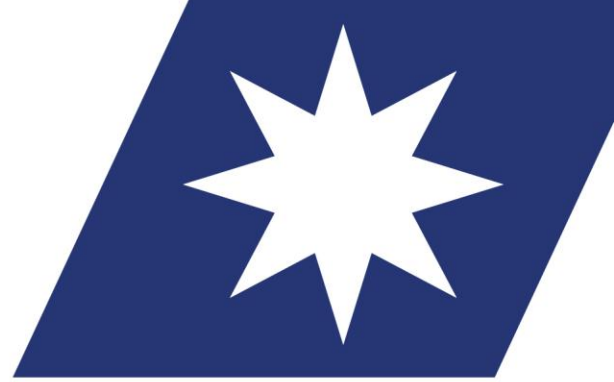


ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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KAP'S BLUE CARD BILL DUE FOR DEBATE

Labor and the Opposition will be tested on their commitment to indigenous Queenslanders next week when a KAP bill designed to get First Australians back into work is debated in Parliament, KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has said.

Mr Katter's Blue Card Bill, formally known as the Working with Children Legislation (Indigenous Communities) Amendment Bill 2018, aims to rectify a tragic side-effect of state's Blue Card system that currently prevents many indigenous Queenslanders securing work.

If passed, the bill would create a referral mechanism that allows Local Justice Groups (LJG) to consider an applicant - who would otherwise be rejected - for a restricted Blue Card.

The bill applies to indigenous communities only, such as Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Aurukun where unemployment rates often sit at above 20 per cent.

Applicants with 'Disqualifying Offences' recorded against their name would not be eligible for referral to a LJG, and would remain ineligible for a Blue Card under the KAP's proposal.

Mr Katter said the inclusion of LJG in the Blue Card approval process would change lives by removing barriers to work and empowering decision-making in indigenous communities.

"The fact is that these communities are invariably so small that the LJG has a good handle on the all the risks in the community better than some bureaucratic officer in Brisbane," Mr Katter said.

"I am of the view that to think the system is better served by these decisions being made from the city is both paternalistic and condescending.

"Under the current set-up you can have a person with a 10 or 20-year-old assault charge recorded against their name who has completely reformed their lifestyle, only to find that they cannot get work in their community due to some officer in Brisbane putting a cross next to their names.

"It breaks your heart having to listen over and over again to First Australians in communities that are trying desperately to break out of a cycle of unemployment and substance and alcohol abuse, only to be told 'no, not without a Blue Card'.

Mr Katter said due to the high level of government work on offer in indigenous communities, around 80 per cent of local jobs can require a Blue Card."

—ENDS—

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