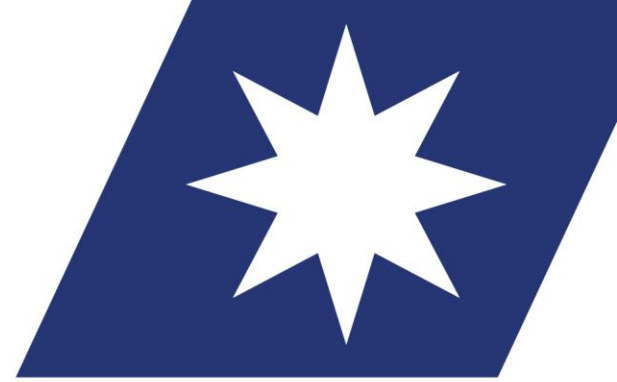


BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy



MEDIA RELEASE

20 March 2020

Katter calls for protection for quarantining of NQ

KAP Federal Member for Kennedy Bob Katter fronted media in Townsville today to urge the state and federal governments to lock down north Queensland to preserve the vital fruit and vegetable industry from being impacted by coronavirus.

“The figures out of northern Italy, a very sophisticated and arguably one of the most advanced civilised countries in the world have now 41035 confirmed cases. In northern Italy 3405 people have died. That’s nearly 10 per cent of the infected.”

Mr Katter said the full implications of the coronavirus were brought home to him with a hammer blow when a person he is very close to sat beside an infected coronavirus casualty who mingled with hundreds of people while unconfirmed.

“So far in north Queensland we’ve only had six cases but that is not a reason for complacency but it is a reason for immediate action.

“Should we wait until we’ve got a thousand cases so a hundred people can die in north Queensland? There is no point acting then. The horse has well and truly bolted by then.

“On the medical advice I have received, from a wide range of doctors and other medical sources, north Queensland does not have the adequate medical equipment to deal with the peak of Coronavirus cases anticipated.

“Specifically, we only have a third of the number of ventilators required, which means people would be left to die.”

Mr Katter said he came to the decision to quarantine the north prior to hearing the announcements that Tasmania is moving to complete quarantine and according to media reports, that Western Australia, the Northern Territory soon follow suit.

“Quarantining the region is easy to do in a line south of Sarina and Winton where there are only four roads leading into north Queensland. So quarantine is very easy. There is already a quarantine point at the sea ports and there would have to be quarantine at half dozen airports in the region.

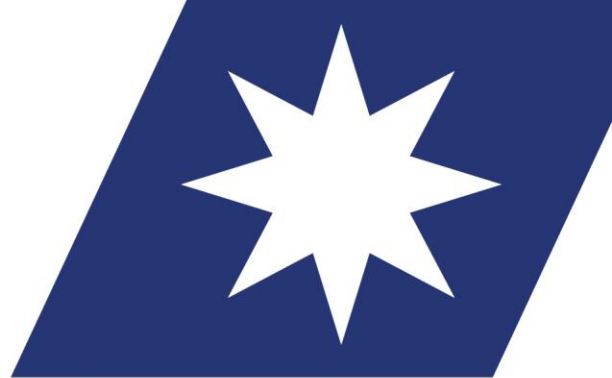
“The urgent demand must be predicated by the provision of a \$1000 million of loan moneys at 1% with no repayments over two years, and quite frankly 90% of the tourism industry need that desperately for their survival whether we do quarantine now or not.

“Obviously we can do the ostrich act but my experience of life; ostriches end up with a quiver of Indian arrows in their backsides.

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“But I warn the federal and state governments, if north Queensland goes down, so does nearly 10% of your fruit and vegetables, and a quarter of your mining industry goes down with it.

“If we go down in north Queensland, there will be no one to pick your fruit and vegetables. And so this goes with an urgent demand that all backpackers that are already here are given a time extension on their visa to continue to fruit pick.

“Now as for fly-in mining and those people coming from Brisbane, New South Wales and Victoria to work in the mines in north Queensland – well too bloody bad. You take the resource from north Queensland, you live in north.

“Our overseas visitor numbers have dropped to virtually nil. The Australian motoring public has dropped by 80%. At a hotel I was recently, they had a staff of five, now they have a staff of none. Multiply that by 500 across north Queensland and you can see the impact our hotels are suffering.

“By quarantining north Queensland we lose nothing and there is a very real possibility this action will save 300-400 lives.”

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