

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

23 March, 2020

KAP CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE SHUT DOWN OF REGIONS

Policed road closures and strict fever testing at airports arrival gates would be enforced as part of an urgent plan to quarantine North, north-west and south-west Queensland from the rest of the state.

Following a decision today by the Queensland Cabinet to close down Queensland borders to inter-state travel, KAP Leader and Trager MP Robbie Katter said failing to segregate regional, rural and remote Queensland from the south-east at this time would lead to catastrophe.

As of this morning, Queensland has reported 319 confirmed cases of COVID-19, the vast majority of which are confined to the heavily-populated south-east corner.

Only a handful of cases have been confirmed in the North, and Mr Katter said the only way to prevent a wide-spread outbreak for which the state is not prepared would be intra-state quarantine.

Freight and essential travel (for medical or vital work-related reasons) would be excluded from the shut-down.

“The Premier’s call today to shut down Queensland’s borders isn’t enough – we need the North and the other regions largely unaffected by COVID-19 quarantined now,” Mr Katter said.

“Rest assured, this isn’t about playing politics and it’s not something we call for lightly, this is about giving us all a fighting chance.

“We know this illness will come to all of our communities, however we may still be able to stage its spread.

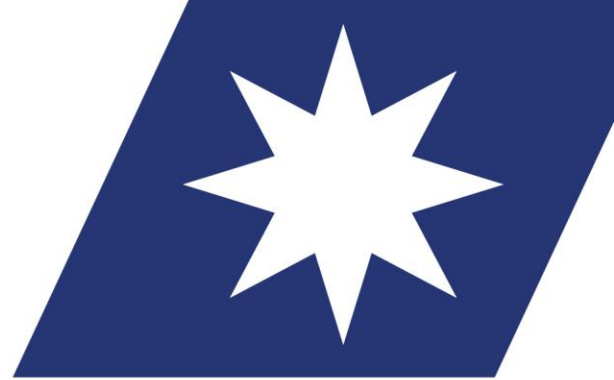
“We have the advantage of geographic isolation - an asymmetric hit of this virus across Queensland and Australia gives us a chance to distribute critical care resources, such as mechanical ventilators.

“Once the wave of the virus has gone through the south-east and medical demands down there have lessened, we can gradually re-open access to the ‘exclusion zone’ so that we can utilise available resources from other communities.”

Mr Katter said, where necessary, the Australian Defence Force ought to be engaged to monitor road closures to ensure complete compliance.

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Kennedy MP Bob Katter reiterated his call from last Friday for North Queensland to be isolated and quarantined as soon as possible.

“We do not have a mass outbreak of the virus up here, south-east Queensland does,” Mr Katter said.

“Our hospitals are not equipped and resourced for a mass outbreak with a critical shortage of items like ventilators.

“This is particularly concerning given our elderly population, with the Hinchinbrook area the oldest electorate in the state.

“The closure of Queensland’s borders doesn’t protect us from the high number of cases that are spreading in the south-east.”

The Kennedy MP has proposed a border cut off point from Marlborough in the east to Boulia in the west.

Mr Katter said the North and south-west must be isolated immediately.

—ENDS—

Media inquiries:

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