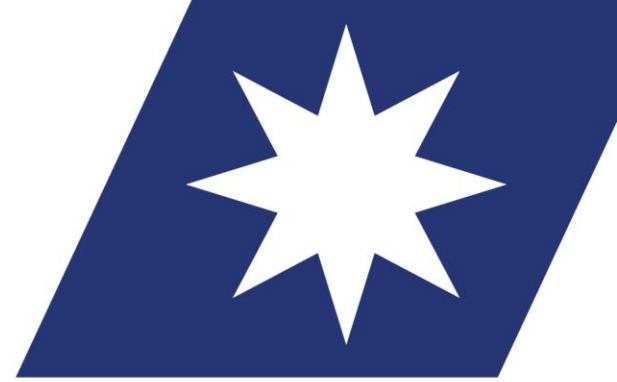


ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

02 April, 2020

POWER COMPANIES MUST SHOULDER VIRUS LOAD

KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has today called on the State Government to ensure electricity providers shoulder some of the load and develop a crucial lifeline package for businesses struggling to survive due to the COVID-19 situation.

Mr Katter said businesses across the state were at breaking point and despite a raft of state and federal assistance measures, would likely be forced into insolvency if utilities bills continued to roll in as per normal.

He said the State Government's one-off \$500 power bill rebate for small and medium businesses was welcome, but vastly inadequate for most across regional Queensland whose monthly power bills were in the thousands of dollars.

"Many impacted businesses, including hotels, motels and caravan parks, are still able to operate in rural and regional areas in a reduced capacity and in some cases are offering a community service for people who need supplies or shelter," Mr Katter said.

"For this reason, they still need to keep a lot of lights on and the fridges and so on running – they are not able to cut their power usage completely.

"Their power bills are still rolling in and within the current climate, it is nonsense to even think they will be in a position to pay them."

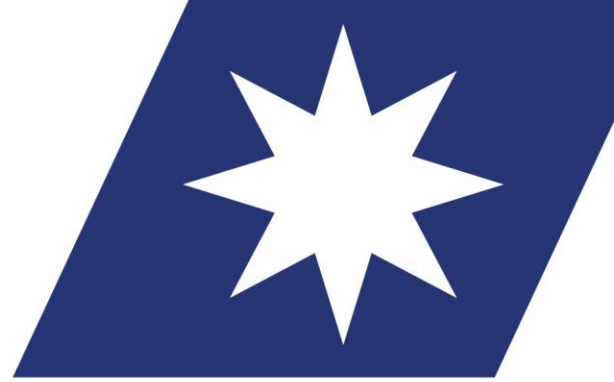
Mr Katter will today write to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy Dr Anthony Lynham calling for a support strategy to be devised immediately.

Key points that will be raised include:

- Providers must stop automated notices for disconnection (as this directly creates unnecessary stress and mental health issues for struggling business owners).
- Flexibility around payments, and increased payment times are needed for all businesses. There is a responsibility for large corporations to shoulder some of the load and be lenient.
- Network charges ought to be waived or reduced where possible. These charges are the killer and the major component of the bills; however electricity companies are saying they have no control over this, only the State Government.

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- Pubs, hotels, motels and caravan parks in rural and regional areas in particular need to be considered at this time, as they operate routinely on very slim profits but perform vital community services to outback areas.

—ENDS—

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