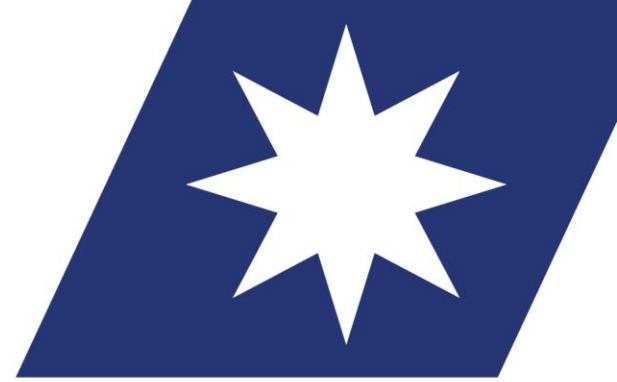


ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

03 July, 2020

ON-COUNTRY PROGRAMS WEAK, BUT WELCOME: KAP

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has acknowledged the awarding of contracts this week in Mount Isa, Townsville and Cairns for the trial of on-country programs to circumvent youth crime.

Mr Katter said the State Government had partially imitated the KAP Relocation Sentencing Policy, but had missed a valuable opportunity to provide a comprehensive response to youth crime across North Queensland.

The State Government has pledged \$5.6 million over four years for trials in three North Queensland youth crime hotspots.

Gr8motive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation has been awarded \$1.5 million in Townsville, while Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation has been awarded \$1.5 million in Cairns.

In Mount Isa, where crime rates are among the highest in the state on a per capita basis, Mona Aboriginal Corporation has been awarded \$2.25 million.

This will enable the organisation to re-start its successful Mona Project, which in previous years offered mentorship programs to local indigenous people who faced challenging issues growing up in Mount Isa.

According to the Palaszczuk Labor Government, under the trials repeat young offenders will spend six to eight weeks in the program.

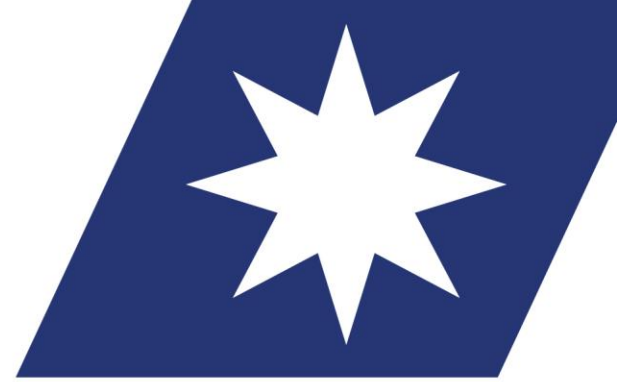
Mr Katter said the scheme was essentially the "lite" version of the KAP's more powerful Relocation Sentencing policy, which would offer an alternative option for magistrates and judges when deciding how to punish and re-direct repeat youth crime offenders.

"The Mona Program is something that we have advocated for many years now however at the same time we recognise that there are other initiatives required," he said.

"It can be a case of horses for courses and some kids who don't suit the bush area will at some time need to be offered other productive activities like fitness or construction type works or many other skills that can keep a person active and busy so they don't return to the streets.

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"I have personally visited the Mona Program (when it was run in the past) in action with kids out of town learning skills on a cattle station and in this way, it is very effective.

"I think getting kids away from the distractions of any city is a good starting point to engage - the difficulty becomes when kids have to go back into the community. "

Mr Katter said the KAP's Relocation Sentencing policy could easily accommodate the Mona Program and other funded initiatives.

"In this way, the policy would draw on these schemes to underpin the alternative sentencing option for magistrates and a facility that can be used for accommodation or simply processing in a remote area.

"This can then send kids to separate programs according to their character and behaviour.

"There still remains a big gap for schemes aimed at strengthening family units at home as well, which means trying to get mums and dads into meaningful work; this is why I have weighted so heavily on issues like Blue Cards that are all too often a barrier to work.

"Whilst I am pleased that the Mona Project, after some years of trying have finally got funding I want people to know that this does let the government 'off the hook' for resolving youth crime issues in the North and North West.

"The current state of affairs is far from a resolution and people living out here deserve the right policy that can deal with these kids effectively while at the same time trying to get them back into the community as contributors."

—ENDS—

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