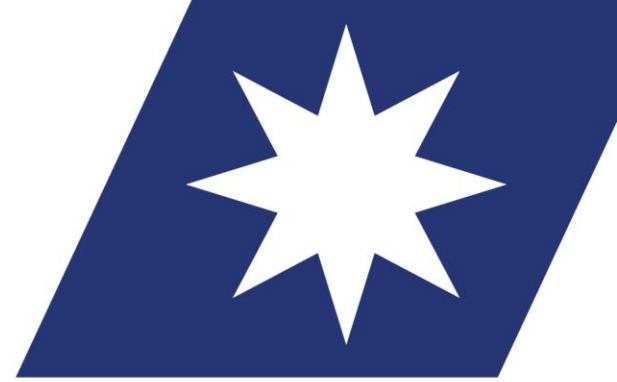


ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

29 July, 2020

SAPUTO DOES FIRST AUSTRALIANS NO FAVOURS

Canadian dairy company Saputo's decision to bow to misguided political pressure over the name of a much-loved brand of cheese will do nothing to advance the interests of indigenous Australians, Katter's Australian Party Leader Robbie Katter has said.

Traeger MP Robbie Katter said Saputo's decision to retire the "Coon" cheese brand, named after founder Edward William Coon, after 94 years was virtue-signalling at its most grotesque.

He said the decision, which disregards the true origins of the name, was an insult to history and to those working on solutions to the real struggles facing indigenous Australians in 2020.

Mr Katter, who represents a vast Queensland state electorate with an indigenous population of more than 20 per cent, said the challenges facing First Australians today were real and complex but had nothing to do with cheese.

He said unemployment, high crime rates and chronic and systemic issues with access to fresh food and affordable groceries were among the day-to-day struggles people were facing.

"Twitter activists might go to bed at night thinking they've done something worthwhile by changing the name of a cheese brand," Mr Katter said.

"But the truth is First Australians in the country's most remote communities are still going to be paying more than double to buy that cheese when compared to capital cities.

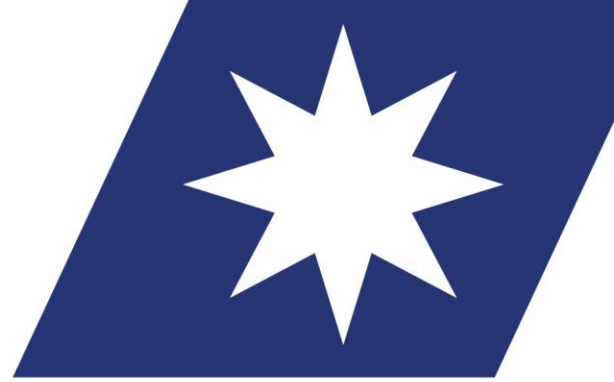
"Chronically high food prices and a lack of food security is one of the most acute issues impacting health and well-being and liveability in indigenous areas, including at Doomadgee in my electorate."

In his letter to Saputo president, Mr Richard Wallace, Mr Katter highlighted the fact that the "Coon" family name had no racist origins.

"You know as well as I do that the name Coon cheese does not, and never has, had anything to do with racism," he wrote.

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"The growing tendency in the corporate world to buckle to the current trend in which truth has become an optional extra and history ignored or used as just another propaganda tool does not serve the interests of society well.

"This 'political correctness' makes more difficult the task of those who care about the plight of Australia's First Nation people and work to help them to improve their circumstances.

"If Saputo were genuinely concerned about the pain and suffering which Australia's First Nation people experience, it would not take the easy option and trash history for the sake of a cheap headline."

Mr Katter said the KAP believed that deeds and not words, were what First Australians needed from governments of all levels.

Last month the KAP released a five-point policy for urgently addressing quality of life, employment and health outcome issues for Queensland's indigenous people. These are:

1. **Addressing title deed issues** in Aboriginal communities (at present people cannot own homes in places like Doomadgee)
2. Breaking down barriers for First Australians accessing work due to **Blue Card system over-reach** and other systemic issues
3. Immediately **acting on youth crime** across the state, by circuit breaking the current cycle and amending the Youth Justice Act where needed (including enacting Relocation Sentencing as an alternative option)
4. Moving to **control the cost of food and groceries** in indigenous communities (where goods are often double the cost of regional centres and major cities)
5. Analysing, acknowledging and addressing the failings of the state's **Alcohol Management Plans** (AMP), which have in most instances negatively impacted local health outcomes and safety in these communities rather than improve them.

—ENDS—

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