

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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HIGHWAY HORRORS PROMPTS KAP'S CALLS FOR ACTION

Katter's Australian Party Leader Robbie Katter has slammed the Brisbane-based Labor State Government for not acting to address the state of North Queensland's highways and roads following a horror death toll during the last financial year.

The number of fatalities on Townsville roads was up 30 percent from 16 deaths in 2018/19, to 21 deaths in 2019/20, and similarly on outback Queensland roads the number of deaths were up nearly 25 per cent.

Shockingly, deaths in the Mackay/Isaac/Whitsunday region have increased by almost twofold, with 21 fatalities recorded in the 2019-20 year compared to 12 the year before.

Mr Katter said it was important for people to remember that each of these deaths were not simply a statistic, but a person's life and a grieving family.

"Every week we hear news of somebody's loved one taken away too soon due to a road accident in North Queensland," he said.

"I wonder how many lives have to be lost before our highways and roads are brought up to standard?"

"I am in receipt of repeat appeals for action on the Flinders Highway, between Charters Towers and Townsville, where there is a chronic lack of overtaking lanes.

"This, coupled with increased congestion on the highway, is a recipe for disaster.

"Similarly, a recent report by economist Colin Dwyer, found the stretch of the Bruce Highway between Bowen and Ayr was the worst in the state.

"I must ask, If Brisbane was seeing a 25 to 30 per cent increase in annual road deaths would the state government be sitting on their hands?"

"North Queenslanders don't want to hear of plans or studies to upgrade our roads, we want to see works underway."

KAP Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto said that the quality of roads wasn't the sole contributor to accidents, and that better education of young North Queensland drivers on the Fatal 5 (speed, drugs and alcohol, seat belts, fatigue and distraction) was essential.

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"The State Government has dragged their heels on supporting the DriveIt NQ motor sport and driver training facility just outside Townsville," he said.

"The closest drive training facility is in Gympie more than 1,000km away - I believe our children deserve better and should not be disadvantaged and put at risk on the road due to their postcode."

The KAP has proposed that the Driveit NQ facility be funded, and promoted as a driver training facility, immediately as a way to address the increasing number of highway accidents. It is also advocating that a similar facility, known as North Queensland Motor Sports, in Charters Towers be funded and supported to develop its off-road driver training capabilities.

Statistics according to the Australian Road Deaths Database:

| SA4 | Fatalities | No. of crashes |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------------|
| 2019/20 | | |
| Cairns | 18 | 16 |
| Central Queensland | 16 | 14 |
| Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday | 21 | 19 |
| Queensland - Outback | 16 | 15 |
| Townsville | 21 | 17 |
| 2018/19 | | |
| Cairns | 21 | 16 |
| Central Queensland | 14 | 12 |
| Mackay - Isaac - Whitsunday | 12 | 9 |
| Queensland - Outback | 13 | 13 |
| Townsville | 16 | 15 |

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