

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

17 August, 2020

HIDDEN HEALTH EMERGENCY AT CRISIS POINT: KAP

KAP Leader and Member for Traeger Robbie Katter MP has addressed media today calling for a State Government pledge to fund critical dialysis services for rural patients.

Despite a \$4.8 million investment in Townsville University Hospital's renal unit earlier this year, which funded an extra 13 dialysis chairs, critically-unwell patients in rural towns across the North are still being forced to travel hundreds of kilometres to Townsville for life-saving care.

"This chronic underfunding has led to an acute problem that is sacrificing lives right now," Mr Katter said.

"There are people saying, 'I'd rather not travel to Townsville every day, I'd rather sit here and die'.

"If this was a problem in Brisbane, it would be resolved tomorrow."

Mr Katter said ongoing negotiations for dialysis services in Charters Towers and Ingham had gone unresolved, and Mount Isa was still 15 chairs short.

"The stories of patients, especially in Mount Isa, are enough to break your heart," Mr Katter said.

"One deaf gentleman who only communicates with his family and had never been away from them was forced to relocate to Townsville for treatment for four months.

"He needed a family member with him because he couldn't talk with staff, but he struggled to communicate with anyone and keep in touch with other family members and became deeply depressed."

Fortunately, the constituent has now been allocated a chair in Mount Isa, but more patients remain in desperate need.

"We are urging the State Government to provide certainty to these patients and their families and immediately pledge to fund dialysis services in rural locations where there is a demonstrated need," Mr Katter said.

Member for Hinchinbrook Nick Dametto MP fronted the media alongside Mr Katter, calling for critical dialysis service for patients in Ingham who were being forced to travel to Townsville.

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

“To think you’ve got these people that I say are dying slowly out on the highway, three times a week, eight hours a day they’re spending between dialysis treatment and getting backwards and forwards from Ingham, and that’s just not good enough,” he said.

Mr Dametto said he was also lobbying hard for a 24-slice CT scanner in Ingham.

—ENDS—

For all media enquiries contact Morgan Oss on 0428 772 544 or Michael Serenc on 0423 108 848.