

ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

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KATTER ASKS LOCAL SHOPPERS “WHY LEAVE TOWN”?

“Shop local” is a catch-cry familiar to all those living in small Australian towns, however with local businesses, economies, and supply chains under unprecedented threat the mantra has taken on greater importance since 2020.

Katter’s Australian Party Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter said with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shutdowns turning life upside-down for all, it had never been more important to support local businesses.

He has applauded an innovative concept aimed at encouraging locals to spend money in their own towns, in turn supporting small businesses, stabilising employment levels, and fostering regional economic growth.

The unique “Why Leave Town” community gift card program is the gift that keeps on giving for local communities.

It has operated in Cloncurry since 2018 thanks to the Cloncurry Local Business Network and Cloncurry Shire Council.

In 2020, more than 450 Cloncurry community-designated gift cards were loaded with a total value of \$52,695. A total of \$154,410 has been delivered to local businesses in the last three years.

With more than 30 participating businesses in Cloncurry – including a couple of hotels, the local pharmacy and Brodie’s Hardware – gift card recipients have long been spoiled for choice as to where to spend their cash.

Mr Katter said the Why Leave Town initiative was genius.

He commended Cloncurry for being ahead of the eight-ball and putting into practice what so many preach.

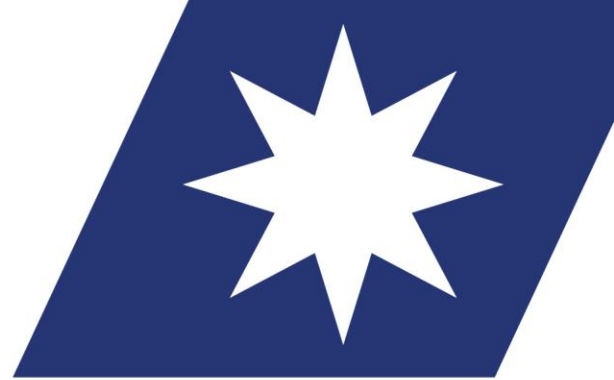
“I’d love to see this initiative picked up all across Traeger and indeed in other parts of rural Queensland,” he said.

“So many people in small towns support the intention behind ‘shop local’ but sometimes fail to put it into practice for various reasons.

“Getting one of these gift cards can help them along the way and the benefits to the community, in both the short and long-term, could be huge.

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“If we had people in places like Mount Isa and Charters Towers spending an extra \$250 locally each year, instead of shopping online, that would equate local cash injections well into the millions of dollars.”

Why Leave Town is a business that helps communities keep money locally.

Its first community gift card program launched in Narrabri in 2010, but has since expanded all across Australia and now reaches more than 60 different communities across 170 postcodes.

The Why Leave Town community gift card program taps into the existing EFTPOS network, meaning there’s no additional hardware or software needed for a small business to take part.

Why Leave Town activates small business EFTPOS terminals so they’re ready to accept the local gift cards.

The commissioning body of the program – usually a Council or Chamber of Commerce – is provided with their own unique gift cards, as well as monthly reporting on where the money is being loaded and spent.

Why Leave Town Promotions Founder Ashley Watt said the ‘shop local’ message was more important now than ever.

“With COVID-19 restrictions disrupting life as we know it, communities and businesses have relied on the support of their local customers more than ever before,” he said.

“On the other hand, the pandemic has illustrated to consumers just how integral local supply chains are in building and maintaining a strong region.”

For more information about the initiative, go to: <https://www.whyleavetown.com/>

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