

**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger



## MEDIA RELEASE

February 18, 2021

### CLONCURRY AURIZON JOB LOST TO THE COAST

The haemorrhaging of North West Queensland jobs to the coast continues with the delegation of another local, skilled rail management job to a FIFO position for the first time, Katter's Australian Party Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has said.

Mr Katter said he was extremely disappointed that rail-user Aurizon had chosen to accept fly-in-fly-out applicants to its recently-advertised Regional Operations Leader role in Cloncurry.

It's understood the position has now been filled by an out-of-towner who will work in a FIFO capacity.

"I was alerted back in December that Aurizon was asking for people based in Brisbane or Townsville to apply for the job, and that a FIFO arrangement would be acceptable," he said.

"Aurizon is a private company and they can do what they want with their workforce, however my support for them – and any other business operator in the North West region – has always been contingent on the benefits their existence provides to our local communities.

"This is largely demonstrated by the work opportunities they offer to locals, or through the new people they attract to our town.

"Failing to meet this this basic threshold is pretty disappointing."

Mr Katter said he'd engaged with Aurizon representatives on the issue, who had explained that there were no local candidates suitable for the job.

The Traeger MP said that while he acknowledged there were challenges with filling skilled positions in rural and remote communities, relying on FIFO workers was not a good enough solution.

"I must acknowledge though that Aurizon have been much better as a local contributor than their rival Pacific National, which treats this area with contempt by not placing one piece of infrastructure or one single employee west of Townsville," he said.

Mr Katter has implored that Aurizon, and other major employers including the mines, ensure their workforces are based locally as much as possible.

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"The negative impacts on outback towns by the repeated out-sourcing of employment opportunities to out-of-town workers cannot be overstated," he said.

"We have seen the social fabric of communities like Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Julia Creek and Hughenden eroded and development stifled by this very practice over the last 10 years.

"Once of my biggest priorities in this term of government will be working to turn the tide on this damaging trend."

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**Media inquiries: Morgan Oss, 0428 772 544**