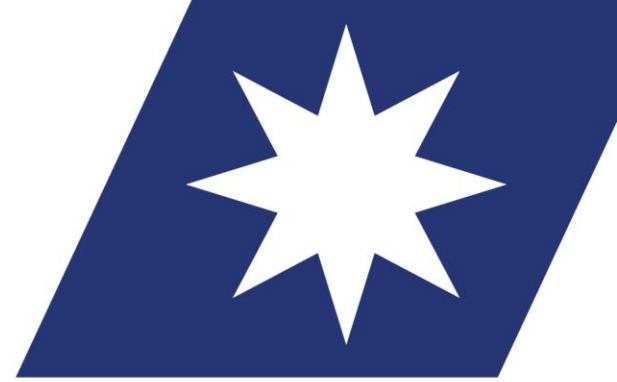


ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



MEDIA RELEASE

March 26, 2021

WAR ON LICENSED GUN OWNERS NO HELP TO SAFETY

Community safety is being compromised as political elites and ideologues continue their war on licensed firearm owners, Katter's Australian Party Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter has told the Queensland Parliament.

Mr Katter said he and his fellow KAP colleague's offices had received an unprecedented number of complaints and pleas for assistance from the public following changes made the definition of "Fit and Proper Person" in December.

The new criteria, spawn out of the Queensland Audit Office's review into the regulation of firearms in the state, now places greater scrutiny on an applicant's traffic history, health status and ability to successfully participate in bureaucratic processes.

This includes broad and ambiguous questioning that can result in a rejected license if an applicant makes a mistake or accidentally omits personal information.

Mr Katter said while the Weapon's Licencing Branch was part of the Queensland Police Service, it was the Labor State Government who had to take responsibility for the system.

He said their political obsession with punishing those with a genuine need for a gun was risking community safety.

"I would challenge anyone to name a group that is more discriminated against than licensed firearm owners, and these laws are not doing anything," he said.

"After looking at the evidence, the only thing being achieved by all this effort from the Government is people like me and farmers are writing more letters regarding the constraints around us.

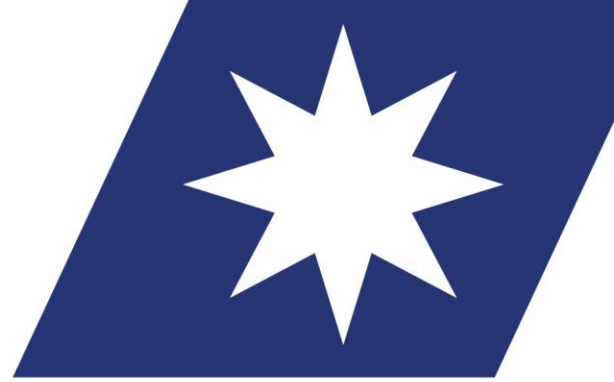
"We are not the problem; it is the illegal gun owners that the Government should be focusing on."

Mr Katter said the decision-makers, including politicians and uniformed police from the Weapon's Licencing Branch, were too far removed from the day-to-day reality of most licensed gun-users.

"These decisions are being made from an office from Brisbane but they have very real consequences for the people on the ground - there are people who need to use these things as tools," he said.

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"In most cases those deciding on applications do not even have a weapon's licence, so outside of being a uniformed police officer they do not have any real-life experience with how this all operates in practice.

"The focus should always be on community safety, but this needs to be in terms of the evidence of where firearms are genuinely needed".

The Traeger MP said the goal posts for weapon's licence applicants were constantly being changed and were now essentially limitless.

"It used to be that five years was the limit where a person applying had to reveal anything on their record; now it is indefinite," he said.

"A traffic offence from 20 years ago is now relevant and is counting against people.

"For those people who were getting their firearms licence, it is now either held up or they are just not getting it – all this thanks to a 20-year-old traffic offence that never counted before.

"It's mischievous because the authorities already have all of that information, but they force people applying into admitting it.

"If they forget or make a mistake, they can be forced into a corner that results in the immediate rejection of their application through no genuine fault of their own."

Mr Katter said while the current situation for licensed weapon-holders was dire, he'd had some preliminary and positive discussions with the State Government.

He said from these talks, there'd been an indication the Government was prepared to take action to restore some common sense to the system.

—ENDS—

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