

PO Box 1968  
Mount Isa QLD 4825

**Mount Isa**  
74 Camooweal Street  
P: 07 4730 1100

**Charters Towers**  
Stock Exchange Arcade  
2/76 Mosman Street  
P: 07 4787 2139



## Robbie Katter MP Member for Traeger



REF: MO

October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Kim Richards MP  
Chair of the Education, Employment and Training Committee  
Via email: [eetc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:eetc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

**Dear Chair,**

**RE: Submission to the inquiry into the operation of the *Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990***

Thank you for this opportunity to provide a submission to the Education, Employment and Training Committee's inquiry into the operation of the *Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990*.

As a regional MP who represents a largely rural swathe of North-West Queensland – an area comprised of communities with fragile economies that are underpinned by independent, locally-owned businesses – the issues being considered by this inquiry are very important to me.

Most pertinently from my perspective, the laws you are being asked to review determine the legal opening hours of all shops in Queensland which includes the ban (until August, 2022) on larger retailers (known as non-exempt shops) operating on Sundays and on public holidays in certain rural and regional communities.

These communities include, but are not limited to, towns such as Ayr, Blackwater, Bowen, Charleville, Charters Towers, Childers, Chinchilla, Cloncurry, Goondiwindi, Home Hill, Kingaroy, Longreach, Mission Beach, Mt Isa, Nanango, Oakey, Pittsworth, Proserpine, Roma and Weipa.

These are all towns listed as outside Schedule 1AB as per the legislation.

The laws you are reviewing also restrict the power of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) to consider applications by most individual shops to alter their trading hours outside permitted hours, also up until August, 2022.

The crux of my submission is that the Committee should:

- 1) Retain trading law restrictions for non-exempt shops based on geographical location and/or types of goods sold in the shop;
- 2) Recommend the extension of the moratorium on trading hours orders and the restriction on making applications for trading hours outside of those already permitted.




I am of the firm belief that an entirely deregulated trading hours model, such as in Victoria, simply would not work for regional and rural Queensland and in the long-term would be to its detriment.

The state's trading hours laws were reformed by the Palaszczuk Labor Government in 2017.

Katter's Australian Party, lead by myself, fought hard at this time to ensure that the integrity and viability of small and medium-sized businesses in rural and regional communities was protected as much as possible.

I am asking that the Committee support a continuation of these protections.

Email [traeger@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:traeger@parliament.qld.gov.au) | Free call within the electorate 1800 801 569

 [www.RobKatter.com.au](http://www.RobKatter.com.au) |  Facebook.com/RobkatterMP |  @RobKatter3

The ban on Sunday, and public holiday, trading for major retailers in regional communities provides crucial trading opportunities to small businesses who are otherwise constantly out-competed and undermined by the buying power of major corporations such as Woolworths and Coles.

Any changes to these restrictions would, undoubtedly, undermine the viability of these small businesses in the long-term. In rural and regional communities, where there are already limited retail options, this would lead to a monopolisation of the market by the larger operators. It is my view, based on real-life experience, that this would further stifle development in the regions as opposed to advance it. As an example of this, I can point to the closure of IGA in Mount Isa 2012, which subsequently led to the closure of the city's second Woolworths outlet (which was situated nearby the IGA) as there was no longer a need for Woolworths to attempt to provide nearby competition. Ultimately this led to an overall loss of choice and convenience for the consumers of the Mount Isa community.

While larger operators undoubtedly provide great employment opportunities in the towns and cities they trade, they typically fall far short of independent, locally-owned businesses in terms of re-investment of profits back into the local economy. Specifically, independent local operators often provide significant financial contributions in sponsorship and support to the sporting and cultural organisations in small towns. The owners often also choose to live locally, subsequently supporting population stability and growth as well as our local real estate sector.

The regions have "held the line" against Sunday trading for years now, freeing up most workers to enjoy recreation and social events on this day and protecting important trade opportunities for the component of our local economy that is comprised of independent, smaller operators.

As was the case in 2017, I continue to be of the strong view that any adjustment of the trading hours, particularly to the benefits of major retail stores like the supermarket giants, would threaten the way of life that I believe permanent residents who care about the future of rural and regional communities enjoy.

I ask that the Committee give careful consideration to the issues I have raised in this submission, and encourage you to contact my office if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,



**Robbie Katter**  
Member for Traeger