




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

Record of Proceedings, 28 October 2021

ADJOURNMENT

World Teachers' Day; Traeger Electorate, Withdrawal of Services

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.18 pm): I also give a shout-out to the teachers. It has been a pleasure to meet so many teachers throughout my life. I acknowledge the wonderful things that they have achieved by dedicating their lives to informing students in the Traeger electorate. I give a shout-out to them tonight.

What I really want to talk about tonight is the decision by Goodman Fielder to stop sending bread throughout the Traeger electorate on the western line. They have done that without giving any notice at all to the independent grocers. They will still supply Coles and Woolworths but not the independent grocers. Basically that means that all the way out to Mount Isa, only Coles and Woolworths will be supplied. They have just stopped. They did not give any notice and had no consultation. One of the independent stores in Mount Isa said, 'I would've done a deal and maybe paid extra for the freight if I knew I was going to lose it, but no-one even consulted.' When we contacted Goodman Fielder, they did not engage at all. They said, 'Oh, yeah, well, it's happened. Tough luck.' That is what you get with multinationals that have no social responsibility to those areas and get to dominate the markets now. There are laissez-faire attitudes and no regulations on anything. In these remote areas, we feel the pinch.

Newspapers do not get delivered out there anymore. That results in disconnection. Particularly for the older people who love going to the newsagent, it is a really big deal. There are not many people out there who do it—that is why they stopped delivering the newspapers—but it is a really big deal to those people. They now do not know about funerals and so on. It has a massive impact. I probably cannot convey the impact of that on all the towns in my electorate. It is really hurting people. Again, a big corporation said, 'There's no money in it for us. Why would we do it?' I really want to come back to talking about these big corporations.

I have to mention the Minister for Rural Communities. We sent a letter to him, but all we got back was a hopeless reply saying, 'It's a federal issue. Go and talk to them.' I mention the Treasurer's office, because they reached out and at least made some attempt to help. However, when we reached out for help to the Minister for Rural Communities, the response was very disappointing.

These are big problems. You have to look back at the genesis of some of these issues. Seven-day trading is coming in. Julia Creek Hospital will remain downgraded as a level 1 hospital. Privatisation of the rail network by the Labor government throughout the 1990s saw the loss of 800 rail jobs. That had an impact. Before that, we got rail deliveries of newspapers, groceries and so on. Once you lose that ability, you lose your bargaining power with big corporations. Now we are talking about more deregulation and seven-day trading. In those areas where Coles and Woolworths dominate the market, you have less choice so they do not have to deliver on social responsibility. It is degrading our quality of life.