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Robbie Katter MP Member for Traeger

REF: MO

2nd July, 2021

To whom it may concern,

RE: KAP submission to the Queensland Action Plan for Tourism Recovery regarding geo-tourism

As the Queensland Member for Traeger, I provide this submission to the *Action Plan for Tourism Recovery* with regards to the prospects surround the development of the state's geo-tourism industry and the benefits it presents for outback Queensland.

In line with Katter's Australian Party's own Core Values & Principles 11 and 12, I strongly support community advocates for the recreational prospecting community who seek:

- To gain **fair and protected access to public lands** like State Forests, Stock Routes and Council reserves for recreational prospecting and fossicking activities (also known as geo-tourism);
- For government to **address broken public access laws** under the *Fossicking Act*, which lock prospectors and fossickers out of these public lands;
- To gain political and legislative support for Local and State government to develop **geo-tourism** as a new tourism experience for the regions.

As a well-established and increasingly popular activity, recreational prospecting and fossicking provides many social and economic benefits. For example, it:

- Attracts large numbers of recurrent visitors to regional Queensland with accessible, suitably mineralised areas like Clermont and Charters Towers which complements economies dependant on mining and agriculture;
- Supports the physical and mental health of a wide range of age groups, interest and abilities, especially important during COVID-recovery;
- Is a popular recreational activity for resource industry workforce in Central and North Queensland mining regions, particularly vulnerable to the effects of occupational and relationship stresses through extended shifts away from regular family and friendship networks;
- Provides an important historic connection to our proud resource heritage through inter-generational exchange of knowledge and skills.

Further, I note that there is a significant and growing interest in this activity as demonstrated by sales of Queensland Fossicking Licences in 2019-2020, with 9,100-plus issued in that period alone representing a 45 per cent increase over a five year period.

Unfortunately, with this increasing popularity has come greater scrutiny on the regulation of the activity on public land tenures.

This has culminated in the closure of certain popular fossicking areas due to the complex and conflicting laws governing permitted activities and public land access.

Naturally this is a deterrent to the growth of geo-tourism as a sector and an impediment to the wide-ranging benefits it can offer to individuals, communities and broader Queensland.

Further, due to the lack of public prospecting and fossicking areas around the state there are many North Queenslanders who have to travel all the way to Clermont (where the majority of Queensland's General Permission Areas exist) just to enjoy a prospecting trip.

Ultimately the State Government needs to make more public mineralised lands available for these activities in order to foster the growth of this popular recreational activity in their own local historic gold and gemfields, where these exist on suitable public lands.

While these actions may be somewhat outside the scope of the Discussion Paper underpinning the *Action Plan for Tourism Recovery*, they are pertinent to enabling and developing the state's geo-tourism for locals and visitors alike to enjoy.

I implore the Queensland Government to be open to engaging and ultimately acting on the matters discussed in this submission in order to facilitate a prosperous and sustainable future for geo-tourism in this state.

Yours sincerely,



Robbie Katter
Member for Traeger