

News

MP seeks dams debate with conservation group

Maverick MP Bob Katter has challenged members of the North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) to a debate over whether more dams, like the proposed Big Rocks Weir, should be built on the Burdekin River system.

[Trudy Brown](#) Follow

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Supplied video obtained Tuesday, February 5, 2019, showing drone footage of the Burdekin River in flood over Macrossan Bridge, west of Townsville. (AAP VIDEO/Supplied/Bureau of Meteorology)

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MAVERICK MP Bob Katter has challenged members of the North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) to a debate over whether more dams, like the proposed Big Rocks Weir, should be built on the Burdekin

River system.

Mr Katter's challenge follows a 7News report in which NQCC's John Connell said there were many other opportunities to use the money that was being set aside for dams.

The Member for Kennedy said Katter's Australian Party had long advocated for the building of Hells Gates Dam and the Big Rocks Weir on the Burdekin River, representing the views of people in the North.

He said the NQCC and its views represented the people of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and not North Queensland.

"They are the voice of people who have never set foot off a pavement," he said.

"Their towering ignorance knocks nature out of balance, and here they are at it again.

"Building Hells Gates Dam will mean all the underground aquifers up the Burdekin River will be fully charged all of the time.

"There will be a much greater run and stream flow in the Burdekin. Most of your rainfall goes straight into the aquifers, but if your aquifers are fully charged then it will go down the river.

"This has been the experience on the Leichhardt River in North West Queensland. The stream flow has increased since they built Lake Julius at Kajabbi."

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A digital impression of what Big Rocks Weir on the Burdekin River north of Charters Towers could look like once constructed.

NQCC co-ordinator Crystal Falknau said it was important to future generations that the river remained healthy and there was another Murray-Darling catastrophe.

She said the NQCC hoped that with the Burdekin Basin Water Plan due for review in the next few years that the plan would outline a sustainable future that had ecological, social and economic benefits for people, communities and nature.

“It is important that the Burdekin Basin Water Plan reflects the current and future needs of all North Queenslanders in a way that is innovative and fair,” she said.

“All major projects proposed for the Burdekin Basin not yet considered in the plan should be put on hold until the review is complete, to ensure the best long-term outcomes.

“This remarkable river belongs to all of us and its future affects us all.”

The NQCC is calling on the state and federal governments to support the modernisation of irrigation and farming practices to future proof the region’s agricultural industry, while allowing the Upper Burdekin to flow freely.”





The site of the proposed Big Rocks Weir on the Burdekin River, north of Charters Towers. Picture: Trudy Brown

Mr Katter said not developing North Queensland’s water resources would be an act of stupidity as the region would be one of the wettest countries on Earth if it was a separate nation.

“There are 1.3 billion people who go to bed hungry every night on this planet and many are starving and dying of malnutrition,” he said.

“If you sit on these water resources and don’t use them, then they will come and rightly take them off you. As the truism goes, ‘a people without land will seek a land without people’.

“I don’t know how these lily-pad lefties think we’ll make ends meet? The economy of Queensland is totally and exclusively based on cane, cattle, copper, aluminium and coal. They want the coal industry closed because it’s destroying the planet. Now you can’t smelt copper or aluminium without burning huge amounts of coal.

“They want to close the cane industry because it’s destroying the Great Barrier Reef, and they want the cattle industry closed because it ruins the surface cohesion and patina of the land. So, the ‘gangreens’ need to pull their heads out of their backsides.”

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