




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

ADJOURNMENT

Cattle Industry

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (11.36 pm): I rise in the House to provide a picture for honourable members of the desperate situation that the majority of western grazing families are facing at present. It is not just about seasonal conditions or the atrocious decision that the member alluded to earlier relating to the live export ban or to BJD; it is also about deep structural issues in the industry. It is not about digging them out of a hole temporarily but driving reforms that will provide them with the ability to stay alive. We do not have time to go through agricultural policy that genuinely addresses the terminal illness in the industry. It has been argued by economic rationalists that the industry needs to be competitive. Then they say they simply need temporary assistance to weather seasonal conditions. Then they change tack to say there needs to be rationalisation of the industry—to get big or get out. All of these attempts have failed to address the loss of profitability and the rising level of debt. None of this can change with the dollar above parity. Whilst this is not a state issue, there is a growing voice, which has long been the call of the KAP, to lower the Aussie dollar. It is a complex proposition and a discussion for another day.

Recently I was informed of a pen of cattle at Charters Towers that achieved 10c to 15c per kilogram. Many people who are desperately trying to destock and cannot find agistment are now sometimes not even able to sell their cattle at the saleyards and are bereft of options. Perhaps some of this stock will perish; perhaps some will survive. Either option does not augur well for the producers. One practical option that I alluded to last sitting that will cost the taxpayer not a cent is to provide temporary access to national parks for graziers in trouble. I find it pertinent at this point to relate to the House correspondence I received recently from one of the desperate graziers who brought forward this initiative. He states—

My name is John Gilmore and my family have held Cranford Station for the last seventy five years. Cranford is seventy kilometres south of Torrens Creek on the Torrens Creek/Aramac Road and adjoins the Moorrinya National Park.

Point of fact Seasonal Conditions

- We are currently experiencing the driest first quarter in the 75 years the family has operated Cranford station.

On top of the low rainfall—the average is 410 millimetres; they have had 61 millimetres—they had a heavy frost last year as well as dry conditions leading into this year.

The first quarter is traditionally their wet season. They have had little rain now, so there is little hope of any further rain for them. The correspondence continues—

Due to the circumstances outlined above I would like to apply for a 3885 hectare paddock in the Moorrinya National Park adjoining our property (see attached map).

I table a copy of that map.

Tabled paper: Cranford/Moorrinya National Park Drought Proposal Map [\[2554\]](#).

It continues—

As there is no water on the National Park, if successful, I intend to supply and maintain my own water facility and also fence the area off from the Torrens Creek/Aramac road reserve.

Unfortunately this has become my only option to keep cattle alive because adjustment is unavailable and selling further stock is not an immediate operation either. It is currently nearly impossible to sell cattle (July is the earliest date available at the Townsville Meatworks) and store cattle are going at giveaway prices.

(Time expired)