



Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENTS

RACQ NQ Helicopter Rescue Service; Water Infrastructure; Mining Royalties

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (2.55 pm): The North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service's principal sponsor, RACQ, under the guidance of Alex Dorr, has fixed running costs of about \$1.23 million per year. The service also receives funding from police, ambulance and the fire rescue service on a fee-per-service basis, but this money goes to the owner of the helicopter from whom it is leased: Heliwest. We need the Queensland government to share some of the \$3.57 million allocated for night-vision goggles with the RACQ North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service. The rescue service should receive its portion of that \$3.57 million the government announced to buy night-vision goggles for six helicopter services from Mackay to the Gold Coast because the Mount Isa one raised its own funds to buy its own night-vision goggles more than 12 months ago at no cost to the government. So it would seem only fair that the North Queensland service should be reimbursed for those night-vision goggles purchased to the same value as every other rescue helicopter service in the state.

The government wants to revitalise front-line services, but this does not apply to north-west Queensland, because this certainly is a front-line service that has saved a lot of lives. In the past 22 months the helicopter service has performed 73 rescues and 60 critically ill patients have been airlifted. The workload is 75 per cent primary response—motor vehicle accidents, mine site accidents, station or property accidents—15 per cent search and rescue for the Queensland police and Australian search and rescue authority, and 10 per cent for interhospital transfers. Given its lifesaving workload, I would say it desperately needs some sort of assistance to keep going because it is in trouble at the moment.

I also need to make mention of the Royalties for the Regions program and the lack of funding for the Mount Isa project. I was very pleased that the projects in Cloncurry and McKinlay shires, which I have always strongly supported, will share \$6.3 million for three key projects, but Mount Isa missed out. This is the region which has delivered approximately \$90 million in royalties in 2011-12 to the state government, with Mount Isa's major miner Xstrata Copper winning Miner of the Year in Queensland's 150th year celebrations. A 2011 Infrastructure Australia report said the north-west minerals province is world renowned for its mineral richness, and its contribution to the national economy is best illustrated by comparing the export value per tonne. This region delivers \$1,391, but the Queensland export per tonne is \$208. It is an area that delivers great value to the state, but it is not being rewarded.

The government's failure to support the water recycling project that was partly funded by Xstrata means that the terrible drought conditions which threaten the viability of the mine at the moment make matters even worse. But this is a good, efficient program that can sustainably maintain our water supplies in the north-west and is a smart project that can be income producing for the council and pay back its wealth over the years.