



Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**


**MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Aurizon, Job Cuts

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (10.09 pm): We received devastating news and confirmation yesterday that some 60 or 70 jobs from Aurizon will be lost along the line from Charters Towers to Mount Isa. Some people I know personally who have been in the business for 20 or 30 years have been tapped on the shoulder. They thought they would finish their days in Hughenden but they no longer have that opportunity. I called a town meeting to discuss this with the residents of Hughenden. Surprisingly, most of the people who attended were actually the businesspeople in town. There were some graziers and others but certainly the majority were not rail workers, because everyone in the town knows what these sorts of cuts mean to a town like Hughenden. It is far too fragile to weather these sorts of cuts.

We come back to the reason for doing this. The reason is that Aurizon believes it has to be competitive with Pacific National on that route. None of us out there wanted that second carrier on the line. We believe the efficiencies could be reached in many other ways. If members talk to people who work in these sheds, they will realise that they can see a lot more efficiencies that can be gained, not to mention the 34 per cent increase in salary that the CEO received last financial year, bringing it to \$6.1 million. These people—those in the OSD shed in Hughenden in particular—proved that it was one of the most efficient operations in Queensland and they are repaid by being told they are being shut down and those jobs will no longer be available in Hughenden. That will precipitate the closure of other businesses in the surrounding area which will probably result in some 20 or 30 jobs going from Hughenden. That is a devastating blow.

On top of that, the Flinders Shire Council said that approximately 60 per cent of their total revenue comes from roadworks. However, they can look forward to no capital works in their shire for the next four years. They have to put together a budget based on no capital roadworks and a reduced rate base due to the rural crisis and on top of that the loss of these 30 families from Hughenden. These are devastating impacts. The government must stand in to reverse this. In effect, we only need eight Aurizon jobs to stay and they have proven that they have a profitable, efficient OSD shed and operational service depot, which I referred to. They desperately need these jobs to stay there to keep that community alive.

The problems with efficiency stem back to the lack of maintenance on that track over the last 20 or 30 years. Gangers who used to keep the trains running at 80 kilometres per hour were taken off the line. The trains now run at 40 kilometres per hour. That is where the problem can be traced back to. Those unsafe methods regarding relay carriages in which people are driving longer and drivers are not getting proper sleep and are driving behind the locos need to stop. They are unsafe practices. They should not be allowed. Pacific National is allowed to do it and Aurizon are trying to do it as well. It will have a poor result.

*(Time expired)*