




Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA**

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Record of Proceedings, 29 October 2014

### MOTION

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.07 pm): I rise to make a contribution in this debate on the Queensland Plan ratification motion. I was engaged in many aspects of the plan myself. I took people from my area down to the summit and they were very pleased to be a part of the process. A lot of things that were discussed there were very productive. That is all well and good, but we cannot escape the fact that the funding and delivery of the plan is inextricably linked to the Strong Choices plan, which I inherently disagree with. So it makes it very difficult for me to support the rest of these ideas when the two are so inextricably linked.

What came out in my engagement process was that there was certainly an impetus to develop regional Queensland and to put the people of Queensland into regional areas, which is something that I value very strongly. Whether we like it or not, regional Queensland will always suffer from a geographical or political bias in that respect. Plans like this create hope when people are told, 'This is what we want to deliver to you.' That raises an expectation, but when the delivery of all of these outcomes is linked to the Strong Choices plan—which the public have so clearly said to us that they do not want—it is something that I just cannot agree with. Quite clearly, we said last week that those of us on the crossbenches had signed an accord to prevent that from happening. We are bitterly opposed to that. It is very unfortunate that asset sales are linked in and are an intrinsic part of the plan because that is something I cannot support.

It is often said that that is the only option to fund this. I fundamentally disagree. I think that the funding model for a plan like this is ideologically driven. It is neoliberal economics that is opposed to the policies and economics that were applied to this state and this country by Ted Theodore, Jack McEwan, Robert Menzies and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen—people who were nation builders and built this state. We are still riding off the back of the projects that they debt funded. They plunged this state and this nation into debt to carry it forward. Without using those tools, these things will be not happen. It often comes up in discussions I have with mining industry people and just about anyone in North-West Queensland, which is a very rich industry and resource area. People know that if government does not lead that development, it will not happen. There is no current business case for many of those things that are nation-building activities. That is the answer to everything—there is no business case for it. That is not aspirational and that is not true leadership. The government owes the people of Queensland and Australia a lot more than that. They owe them a vision. They have to have the intestinal fortitude to accept that debt and apply it to fund these infrastructure and industry-building projects that are in regional areas where there are no votes. That is the pathway forward. That is how Australia and Queensland were built.

The happy news is that there is still so much development potential in Queensland. We still have hundreds of thousands of acres of vast blackoil plains that have major river systems going through them that are untouched which could be farmed tomorrow. We have one of the richest minerals provinces in the world in the North West Minerals Province. It has a variety of different minerals and base metals. It is not just related to one single industry like coal or gas.

There are so many opportunities out there for the government if it debt funds some infrastructure to take the state forward rather than selling off assets. Unfortunately, that is intrinsically linked in this plan, which makes it very difficult for us to support the motion. In light of that, despite all the great contributions that were made by many people in formulating this plan and the good work that the minister, the member for Glass House, has done in bringing this together, unfortunately that link is such a strong part of it that I cannot support the motion.