




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

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ADJOURNMENT

Inlander Passenger Service

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (12.13 am): I rise tonight to talk once again about the *Inlander* passenger service between Townsville and Mount Isa. There is a petition containing over 1,000 signatures in relation to the service, which was affected late last year when the government decided to remove the sleeper car and the cafe cart. Most of the people who travel on the service are elderly. They now have to undertake a 20-hour journey without a sleeper carriage or a cafe cart which almost renders the service useless. It is a service that I myself have used a few times. The number of passengers who use the service is not large, but those people rely on it. We do not have many modes of transport. For an elderly person living in Julia Creek who wants to visit family or get to hospital but who is not suited to bus or air travel, this is a very affordable service they can access. This passenger service needs to be kept alive for the people who have helped build the wealth of our state. They live in hot, remote areas doing jobs that keep industry going which in turn keeps our state going. Keeping that passenger service alive is a small thing that we can do for those people.

There has obviously been a concerted effort from previous governments of both political persuasions to get rid of this service because it is not considered important and 'not many people are using it anymore so who cares?' The flipside is that when passenger numbers on trains in Brisbane diminish media releases are put out to incentivise people to use them, but unfortunately we do not apply the same standard to western services. Once numbers decline, ways of getting rid of the service are made up and that has happened with the *Inlander* service.

Much to my surprise, a large number of people have signed this petition because they feel very strongly about it. We do not have many modes of transport in our area and it is very isolated. If a service is removed it will never come back. Removing the sleeper car and the cafe cart is one step towards getting rid of the service altogether. It is a service that these people deserve. It is lower income and elderly people who use it. They deserve it. It is a small thing for the state to give back to those people who create a lot of wealth that we all benefit from. I think it is something they deserve and that the government should deliver. It is something that I certainly will keep on the back of government about so that it is delivered to those people and they get to continue to enjoy that service.