




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

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ADJOURNMENT

Mount Isa Electorate

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (9.46 pm): Earlier this week parliament played host to BUSHkids, which is celebrating its 80th year of service recognition. This is a significant milestone for the group, which offers a wide range of free allied health services and early intervention programs to children and families living in rural Queensland. Mount Isa is lucky enough to have had such a service since 1996. It works alongside the families and schools in the Mount Isa region. Tackling issues before they become problems in young lives is pivotal in the front-line work that the BUSHkids team does across Queensland. Empowering children and families with the tools they need to better manage such issues before they become a problem is such a valuable service to our area and extremely relevant in the current context. I would like to personally congratulate BUSHkids' general manager, Carlton Meyn, and all of the staff for their commitment to this service and to health and mental health in the bush.

I want to draw the attention of the House to the gas pipeline about which an announcement is due in a few weeks. There has been some talk of the federal government supporting the pipeline going down through Moomba in South Australia. That represents an extra \$400 million cost to the public. I am afraid that there may be some politics being played. If it goes from Tennant Creek to Mount Isa it saves \$400 million because it is about a 400- to 500-kilometre shorter route. In doing that it goes past a heap of mining development in the north-west so there could be trunk lines bolted into that gas pipeline that would come through from the Territory and provide an affordable energy supply to those mines. If we are serious about developing Northern Australia the gas pipeline has to come from Tennant Creek to Mount Isa, not down to South Australia through Moomba which will cost an extra \$400 million to solve issues down in New South Wales and Victoria. If we are serious about Northern Australia that valuable piece of infrastructure belongs there.

Last week we had a visit from the Treasurer to the Hann Highway at Hughenden. This is a nationally significant project. Ninety per cent of the banana industry in Australia, which is worth \$1 billion, is in Far North Queensland. Growers can get their bananas to market eight hours earlier on the inland route. One triple road train going down that route takes two B-doubles off the Bruce Highway, saving traffic and maintenance and is an alternative route, not to mention the benefits to the cattle industry. Absolute top dollar is \$100 million for the 100 kilometres of sealed bitumen. That is a wonderful piece of infrastructure for the government to invest in. Most of the beneficiaries would be Far North Queensland. However, the road does go through my electorate. It would benefit most of those industries in the Far North and would be a great project for the state government to support.