




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

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VALEDICTORY

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (3.00 pm): I rise to make a contribution from the crossbench. With the type of parliament that we have it has been a very interesting year for us. Firstly, I would like to say that we are very appreciative of the quality of the debate of the parliament as a whole and the way the debates have been conducted. It is rare to think of examples when it was not conducted in the spirit which is intended in this place. I do not think it has lost any of the robustness or, at times, aggression that is expected of members. I think there has been a healthy balance in the battle of ideologies, ideas and people's positions. I think there has been strong evidence of decent debate here this year which we certainly appreciate.

Recently we have spoken about rural MPs—which account for all of us on the crossbench—spending a lot of time driving, but that is not to in any way devalue the time that everyone in this House spends. We certainly do not have the mortgage on hard work just because we drive long distances. We acknowledge everyone in this House works very hard, often at substantial cost to their own personal lives and that of their families. I acknowledge that at the outset.

In relation to the government and its leadership in the last 12 months, we are very appreciative of the way the Premier has conducted her team and in particular her dealings towards us on the crossbench and those in the community. We are very appreciative of her and her leadership team and we are very grateful for that.

The contributions of the opposition leadership to debates and the way that the team has conducted itself this year has been very much appreciated and been in the spirit of this place. Further to that, the way we have been engaged by both leadership teams has been very much appreciated. It has given us the ability to engage in the debate in a meaningful manner and in almost all cases to the point where we feel we have a good understanding of the issues and what is behind the issues up for debate. I would like to think that that has helped contribute to strong, robust debate.

I would briefly like to acknowledge the precinct staff. It almost goes without saying, because since my time here the standard of service has always been exceptional. It comes as no surprise to me that many of the staff here remember when I was running around as a little kid when my dad was here. I bring that up because many of the staff have been here a long time. They are retained because they are good and they stay because they like working here. The way we treat them is probably a reflection of the way the staff treat us. I find the level of service and standard of this workplace excellent.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr KATTER: To my colleagues on the crossbenches, it is a funny position we are in. We often have the benefit of a bit more freedom or liberty to speak, but it also comes with its limitations. We are often flying by the seat of our pants. The effort and the work that has gone into us working together as best we can to try to get across the many issues that come before this place is very much appreciated.

The latitude we are afforded in terms of committees and the various events that are on around the place that we try to get to is appreciated. I feel that we are applied a certain amount of latitude given that there can be often very heavy workloads in this area.

I quickly acknowledge our office staff. We both have terrific electorate staff and very effective office staff here in Brisbane. They have done a wonderful job for us this year. I would like to publicly thank them for that and mention in particular one staffer, Sarah Harvey, who received a letter from Peter Morris about her 10 years of service, which is something we are very proud of.

I acknowledge the media's presence here. I very much appreciate the tough moments and the interest and effort that they go to. Whilst we might not always be happy with the result, I am satisfied that they put a lot of effort and work into trying to cover the events and the activities that we have and acknowledge the very important role they play reporting in this place.

I would like to also mention the past members of the House. I think we all benefit from visits and interaction with them. A number of past members are quite happy to engage and off-load some of their quiet wisdom over the years. Many of those past members still contribute and I acknowledge that.

I have mentioned it briefly already, but I acknowledge people's families. Growing up in a political family I know the cost. Members spend much time here. To those members with families waiting for you at home, I am thankful and grateful for the time that you spend here. The public do not realise the sacrifices that you make and the cost to your personal life and family. Whatever background or political party we belong to, it has become more apparent to me now as a sitting member what the real cost of that is. It should be especially acknowledged at this time; it is a priority because it is one of the burdens that we have as a representative. With that, I wish all members a happy and holy Christmas. I hope that all members spend valuable time with family and loved ones in this break.