




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Transport and Public Works Committee, Report

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.40 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the estimates hearing of the Transport and Public Works Committee, firstly addressing those issues raised with the transport minister. The major issue I raised which is still a burning issue in Mount Isa and the north-west is the cost of passenger service flights. A review has been done by the government that has not been released. There are some answers out there for the government to address this issue to help people in this regard, but it was disappointing to have no response on that. That was a dissatisfactory part of the process for the people in my electorate. There does need to be intervention on those routes and knowing that we are leaving it to market forces is not the desirable outcome.

There was a favourable response on the port of Karumba dredging. We achieved that dredging money in the previous parliament and there was good news with New Century kicking along this term in that New Century Mine is continuing the dredging which creates another arterial route out of the north-west and the Traeger electorate by port. That is a positive result for the area that was addressed in that process. It was reported by the minister that there have been six boats now out of that port and some 5,000 head of cattle have gone through that port since, so that is the transport network at work.

One other really disappointing issue that we still seem to be addressing is the rail line from Mount Isa to Townsville. There has been a lot of attention on the maintenance, but there needs to be attention in terms of the QCA regulations and pricing on that network. That needs to be completely unpacked. There is still a strong degree of frustration for industry users in that respect, and that asset is a very big industry tool for this government and for the taxpayers of Queensland. It is just sitting there being inefficiently used at the moment, so something needs to be addressed.

I made that a big point in that estimates hearing and, again, we still need satisfaction on that. There has been money spent on maintenance, but unfortunately the money for maintenance goes straight back on the price and price is one of the biggest issues on the line at the moment that is forcing trucks on the road and creating all sorts of issues in terms of wear and tear on the roads and safety. There have been a number of deaths in the last 12 months because of trucks colliding with trailers and light vehicles. That is very unfortunate to report, but you would have to draw some correlation with the increased truck volume on the roads and the level of safety for passengers. That was something that was left unsatisfied as well through that line of questioning in estimates.

With regard to roads and tourism, I put questions to the minister about those tourism roads which continue to be an enormous burden for some of the great tourist attractions in our part of the world such as Boodjamulla National Park, Adels Grove and Cobbold Gorge. These are tiny shires that are managing roads. Adels Grove had 4,000 visitors a year 18 years ago and now has 40,000 visitors. The national parks have been increased which has decreased the number of ratepayers for the council but increased the burden on it to try to maintain these roads. There is a real role for government to play in that. I was made aware of the \$10 million for tourism roads. That is good to know, but there needs to

be some big investment in that area. If we are told that tourism is one of the answers for industry in those areas, we need to have roads to those tourist attractions that we work hard on trying to promote. That was another issue that came out of that process.

(Time expired)