




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.38 pm): I was happy to take part in the committee's tour. It was very enlightening as I do not have a lot of experience in this area, although the port of Karumba exists in my electorate and I have reasonable knowledge of how that operates and the constraints on industry and how it could be done better. It was a real eye-opener, in particular at Mackay in terms of the introduction and development of RORO, roll-on roll-off. I think there are wonderful opportunities here.

It was also very enlightening to learn about the deregulated labour market and the fluidity of labour in international shipping and how that is impacting on our Australian seafarers in that the quality and conditions on those ships have obviously been compromised through that dynamic. The contribution by Paddy Crumlin in Cairns was excellent in that it was well balanced and enlightened the committee on the issues that need to be addressed, so it is very important that we have that recommendation in the report to protect that part of the industry to ensure there is quality of skills retained in this country for us to partake in such an important part of our transport network.

The other contribution I found most important was by Dr Stuart Ballantyne. He talked a lot about the motorways of the sea and how under-utilised this is as a mode of transport, and I must make reference to a policy of the current government of no more port facilities like those mini ports that have export material. This does not make sense in that you can build small-scale marinas up in the cape now, but even if the draft or the capacity of that boat does not need anything bigger than a marina once you start exporting material it will not be allowed. That is a policy of the government—and I believe that nothing yet has been legislated—but that is something that the House needs to be aware of because that will be a constraint. That will be no more constraining than in places like the gulf and cape where there are amazing opportunities, but there are a lot of stranded resources or stranded assets that would not otherwise be there if you could get them out via the sea.

There are some wonderful innovations in that Sea Transport and Dr Stuart Ballantyne are leaders in the field who can do these things very discreetly with very limited impact on the environment. They have offshore warehousing—transshipping is the common word for it—where it can be done very discreetly with little impact on the environment. There is huge opportunity in that. The government needs to be a bit more enlightened on that and open minded about how it treats that because it will be a constraint going forward. That was touched on in the submission made by Sea Transport. I would ask that that is something that is considered by the government in the future because it is very important.

I turn now to RORO—that is, roll-on roll-off. They are developing that at Mackay and there are wonderful opportunities there in terms of reducing costs and taking vehicles off the road while at the same time dealing with a lot of the congestion on our state roads. As was put in the submission from Sea Transport, we need joint state management including investment in RORO terminal infrastructure and approvals funding to move forward in that space. If there is that concentration on the motorways of the sea agenda, that represents amazing efficiencies that could be achieved from the state in intrastate

shipping. That way we can achieve both agendas of still encouraging industry while maintaining those workers' standards and demanding that the standards be maintained and using Australian seafarers in the industry.

This was a very enlightening inquiry. This is an area where we can do a hell of a lot better. I would respectfully ask that the government reconsider that policy as it pertains to the gulf and cape because, as it says in the report, there is great opportunity for that to play a bigger part in stimulating industry. That can be done with some wonderful resources in the gulf and cape that would help many communities up there that are struggling.