




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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ADJOURNMENT

Queensland Economy

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (7.19 pm): Do my ears deceive me? I recently read of the Gold Coast mayors—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! Member for Redlands and member for Oodgeroo, no cross-chamber banter, please. You are very close to a warning, member for Redlands.

Mr KATTER: I recently read about the mayors of the south-east corner's \$29 billion proposal for fast rail between the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, Brisbane and Toowoomba. As I understand it, our Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, committed \$8 million to a business case for this same proposal in the lead-up to the last election. We saw the same talk before we embarked on the \$12 billion white elephant that is going to be built in Brisbane. Perhaps white elephant is too harsh a word. When we look at the priorities in this state, surely it is not about getting people in the cities from A to B faster.

For the next few years at least, the economy is going to be driven by agriculture and mining. Here is a newsflash: those industries do not exist in the cities. They are out where there are not many votes, unfortunately. They are not going to win members many votes in here if they like flashing things around, but those industries need to be invested in. That is the problem we have. We do not have many MPs representing those areas where we need the infrastructure to make us the money to build things once we have made the money. We should not built those things when we do not have the money.

It is outrageous that we are talking about a \$12 billion rail project in the city. Everyone is going to get excited about the \$28 billion or \$29 billion rail project the mayors are talking about and the Prime Minister is plugging, but we do not have dialysis in North Queensland. We do not have dialysis in Charters Towers and Ingham. They do not have chemo treatment and CT scanners. It literally means people can die. People are making the choice not to go to Townsville two or three times a week to get treatment, but rather stay in Charters Towers to die because we cannot provide the service. The priority seems to be that people down here get to work five or 10 minutes faster.

How about this one? A 25 per cent decrease in water pricing—a \$200 million saving—would result in an economic benefit, according to studies released recently, equivalent to 11 AFL grand finals. What are we going to do? Are we going to have an AFL grand final or do we want to release water out there? There are not many votes in it, but it will help the economy of Queensland recover.

Agriculture and mining will be the salvation in terms of the prosperity of people in this state. It is not going to happen without a concerted effort from this parliament. It is not going to happen if members keep trying to win votes here in the city. The people in the city are relying on this as much as anyone. A healthy economy means as much to them. There is dissent in the regions and there will be a reckoning at the election if we do not address this.