




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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ADJOURNMENT

North Queensland, Crime and Services; Mount Isa, Health Services

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.24 pm): I rise again, regrettably, to talk about crime in the north-west and perhaps just the north in general. The rate of offences in Mount Isa is 3,148 per 100,000 people—which is five times the crime rate in north Brisbane, which is at 653. We can bury ourselves in the data and it is easy to demonstrate how big a problem we have. However, it is about the things we hear on the ground. People come to the territory saying, ‘You are starting to look like Tenant Creek and Alice Springs, guys. You really have to get a hold of this.’ Meek and mild people who have been there for 50 or 60 years are saying, ‘Robbie, it was never like this. My mother has been attacked five times.’ People are begging for some help. We come in here in good faith to talk to ministers and talk to people, and we hear, ‘What else do you want us to do?’ There are things to do. There is relocation sentencing to try. It is a remote type of sentencing that can work and has to at least be tried.

What about the business owners? A young girl started up a coffee shop. Everyone gets to experience a beautiful thing when someone starts a small business in a place like Mount Isa. She had windows smashed and dirt bombs in the first three months, multiple break-ins and harassment. Now she is forced to put up a \$10,000 roller door; that is the only answer left. She should not have to do that. That is what they are saying, ‘You are starting to look like the Northern Territory. You have to put up roller doors.’ We do not want that. If they do need to put that in place, the government should assist. They do in the Northern Territory; there is a fund there in the name of tourism to do it. That is what we are asking. That is another thing the government could do to help, and these people are begging for help. We have had people bashed, stabbed and assaulted. A friend of mine, a lady, was assaulted a couple of weeks ago only a few days after giving birth to a baby. She was assaulted in the middle of the afternoon near McDonald’s.

All these things are happening, and it is not media hype. It is not the newspapers creating something for the sake of it. That is why we called this week for the ministers to base themselves up there for the next three months. They should go until Christmas; they should stay up there. We are sick of coming here and talking about it. There are too many layers of bureaucracy presumably saying what they want to hear. They need to hear it for themselves from people on the ground. They need to engage people on the ground consistently. They cannot spend time on the ground and not hear this stuff. That is very important.

Dialysis is another issue I would like to raise. They are desperate for it in Mount Isa. It is a \$10 million solution. We have been talking about health and the disparities in health, and this is desperately needed. I talked about a bloke from Mount Isa who said, ‘I would rather die and not get access to a chair and move back to Mount Isa.’ It would cost \$10 million to solve that issue; is not hard.

The last thing that I want to bring to the House’s attention is that things are getting pretty hard; we do not have papers any more to tell us what is going on. News Ltd is going to stop delivering them out west, so we will we lose connectivity in a way, especially in the case of many of the older people. Also Goodman Fielder have now indicated they are going to stop delivering fresh bread out west. We are desperate for some help and attention from the government.