



Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**


**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Thalanga Mine, Closure; Dugald River Mine, Deaths**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.40 pm): I rise initially to speak of the death of a mine—Thalanga Mine in Charters Towers. Kerry Hyde, a close friend of mine, worked there for years and I have known many people who have worked there for years. It has operated for roughly 30 years and two forces combined—the receivers and government department—to ensure that it shut down. There will be no more mining of copper, lead or zinc in that region forever. It was a viable mine that had a processing plant. It was a big enough mine to sustain the processing plant. Now Waterloo, Liontown and many other leases that in the future would have been prosperous for Charters Towers have no chance because they do not have the plant there to deliver it to. The next closest is out in the north-west where I live.

That mine was closed down, but it was curious how it happened. There were 130 permanent employees plus contractors with 30 years of history and a good, viable outlook. FTI Consulting—from the infamy of Kagara zinc after it did a terrible job there and left all of the local workers and contractors unpaid—has come in again and, not surprisingly, has ripped out its big fee and none of the creditors will get paid and the mine is put straightaway as an abandoned mine. Even more curiously, Abandoned Mines within the department said, 'Thanks very much. Here's the access to that rehabilitation bond money that we've got. Let's just cancel the lease straightaway.' There were two viable buyers for that mine. Think about that: we are now going to be taking taxpayers' money to pay out the workers at Thalanga. There is not enough environmental bond to clean it up, so we will all again be paying for that. Instead, we could have had a mine. Two viable buyers did not even get a chance to make an offer before the consultants gave it to the Department of Resources as an abandoned mine. Now there is no mine and no processing plant—I am told that it is going to be ripped to pieces and sold for scrap—and it is moving straight into rehabilitation. Again, we cannot develop any more of those products in Charters Towers in the future.

Some might think that 120 jobs is not very significant, but in Charters Towers it is. It is like a game of Jenga: when you pull one of the blocks out the whole economy can be unstable and a mine can be just the sort of thing that carries it through a down time. It is very significant and it is either real incompetence or undermining of an industry or just a government department callously grabbing hold of that money to the disbenefit of industry and Queenslanders. That needs an inquiry, an investigation and some scrutiny to analyse what has happened between FTI Consulting and Abandoned Mines within the department.

On a much more sombre note, I want to pay tribute after the loss of the two miners at Dugald River mine last week—Trevor Davis, who was 36, and Dylan Langridge, who was 33—who were fatally injured in the accident at Dugald River mine outside of Cloncurry in the Traeger electorate. On behalf of the people of Cloncurry and Traeger, my deepest condolences to their families, friends and colleagues. I know it has rattled many people. We have had other deaths before, but this has really

rattled people. Many people are saying, 'I went home to hug my husband because I can't help but think.' Again, another of my good friends said that they had worked the shift before that. They had just come off shift right before that accident.

We all know people down there and a lot of people are now thinking, 'Crikey, this is a risky industry.' I think it behoves all Queenslanders to be grateful for the jobs those miners do, because a lot of them are going to go back down that hole and other holes around Queensland this week knowing that those risks are there and that they may not go home to their families, and that is a big deal. They contribute a lot to our economy, so we should all be grateful for the job they do and all wish that they are safe. All of us individually promote safe attitudes in our workplace and those around us and within our electorates.

I want to thank the mines minister, who has been very responsive and gracious in keeping me well informed throughout the process of what was happening. I really appreciate that and I think it helped the whole situation. I again want to pay tribute to not just those two miners but all those miners who have lost their lives over the years contributing greatly to the state of Queensland. We have our 100-year celebration in Mount Isa this week. A great part of what Mount Isa has always been is mining and many lives have been lost in creating the wealth that has come out of there. In Queensland's 150-year celebrations Mount Isa Mines was voted the most significant business in Queensland history, and that was not just about a company but all those workers who kept going down that hole to make the state that we have today. We should be grateful for that and hope more of them come home safely.