




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

Record of Proceedings, 17 April 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Great Artesian Basin

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (10.04 pm.): I rise to talk about the threats to the Great Artesian Basin. I am talking about an asset that is 65 million megalitres—that is oceans of water underground. It has been touted as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, potable water source on the planet. It is a natural pristine waterway worth \$13 billion a year to the state economy, yet at the moment Glencore is proposing to pump CO₂ into it. There would certainly be a lot of people in this room who would say that it is just pumping in CO₂ like we do with soft drink bottles—except for the fact that there are some scientists saying that it could activate lead and arsenic in the water. This is not just about Glencore pumping their waste in there; it is about them then doing it for every other coalmining company. The perverse nature of this is that we pay them for the privilege, so they get carbon credits. We pay them to dump industrial waste from their process of coal-fired power which will risk this asset that underlies \$13 billion to the Australian economy, and predominantly the impact will be on Queensland. This will risk that.

At this point I come back to the precautionary principle. Remember those words that we use a lot in this House—the precautionary principle? We brought in all of these draconian laws for the sugarcane industry in terms of reef regulation laws based on this precautionary principle. We cannot show that there is any nitrogen on the reef or any silt, but on the precautionary principle we cut their use of fertiliser just about in half, by 40 per cent. That was the precautionary principle. We keep applying it every time we try to build a dam or a river—do anything in the environment. We apply it except for this. I cannot help but wonder because this stuff affects people out there. We are so often forgotten out there in so many other areas. It is not hard to think, 'This just doesn't matter, let's dump it and let's use our climate change ideologies. Let's apply that and park our guilt over the Great Artesian Basin and threaten that area,' and a lot of people here do not think that that is a problem. I just cannot believe that it has even got this far. I cannot believe it got through Canberra and it is up here. I want to table this petition from the Queensland Farmers' Federation with 15,000 signatures.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding carbon and capture storage in the Great Artesian Basin [609](#).

There is a petition in my name and we have already managed to get 10,000 people to sign it in one week. AgForce and a lot of farmers have contributed and now have a \$2 million war chest to fight this. They should not have to. This is a natural pristine waterway. Glencore is an altruistic mining company that just sent 1,200 copper mining jobs offshore when they did not need to. We are letting them dictate what goes into this aquifer and risking this \$13 billion because they said it was all right and that they have done some desktop modelling on this and it is all right. If we cannot stop this, I do not know what the hell we are doing here in parliament talking about environmental assets.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I will just take some advice before I call the next speaker. Member for Traeger, you used some unparliamentary language. I would ask you to withdraw please.

Mr KATTER: My apologies, Mr Deputy Speaker. I withdraw.