




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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ADJOURNMENT

Traeger Electorate

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (9.43 pm): This is probably my last adjournment speech in this House. I have reflected on the fact that every time I stand up to speak I seem to be cranky.

Government members interjected.

Mr KATTER: It is not really funny, actually, because Mount Isa, which I represent, is facing a really tough time. Having 1,200 jobs on the chopping block is nothing to laugh about. They are copper-producing jobs. Everyone says how critical minerals will take us through to the next century, but the third biggest copper mine is about to shut down and no-one in here has done anything about it. A \$20 million rescue package is not going to save a copper mine; nor will it compensate for the near \$200 million a year in wages from those 1,200 jobs. Excuse me if I get a little bit upset every time I come in here.

Last week, Mayor Peta MacRae, who is doing a great job in Mount Isa, had her newsagency smashed into by a car for the second time. She said something good in her Mayoral Minute the other week—that a \$20 million package for Mount Isa does not compensate for the 1,200 jobs, because no-one wants to do anything about the fact that Glencore just wants to land-bank this copper and sit on it. There is \$20 million to save Mount Isa, but for Rio Tinto to keep jobs in Gladstone they estimate they need \$300 million to help continue aluminium smelting there. I am not saying that is a bad thing. That could actually be a good thing. I am not criticising that, but it makes me wonder why Mount Isa gets a \$20 million package when there are 1,200 jobs at risk there and Gladstone gets more for a thousand jobs. It is no wonder I get a little bit angry.

The federal government makes about \$800 million a year from Mount Isa. Some \$3 billion to \$4 billion in economic activity comes out of there. We are very grateful for the announcement of CopperString but we need certainty about that, not equivocation and conditions before an election or using it as a political football. You need to lock those announcements in. CopperString does not make the power at my house cheaper. It does not help me get to work faster. It does not give me a 50-cent fare. It helps the government to make more money to build more infrastructure down here. CopperString will help the government to make money—the same way the Great Northern Railway helped to make more money out of the North West Minerals Province. I am not asking for things that will help me and my lifestyle in Mount Isa; I am asking for things to help the government make more money for the state.

We need to look beyond that. We have the Meeting of the Mines Cloncurry coming up. We need to start talking about a new copper smelter in Queensland. There are only three left in Australia. Without a copper smelter, a lot of the future of the north-west will be wiped out. Glencore want to get rid of their smelter beyond 2030. They have been emphatic about that position.

A lot needs to be done. We can sit here comfortably and say that things will just keep ticking over, but they do not. The only reason those opportunities exist out there is because the government was highly proactive. CopperString is a good start but it is not the end of the story. A lot still needs to happen or the wealth will not be generated and cities and towns will vanish.