




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

Record of Proceedings, 11 December 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Mount Isa Mines

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (1.16 am): I rise again to talk about Mount Isa Mines and copper production and the threat from having a poor corporate citizen out there in Glencore as a miner here in Queensland. I say that again: a poor corporate citizen. This company has said, 'It's getting too tricky for us. We've got six big copper mines around the world and we'd rather invest there.'

The House needs to know—and particularly those members in Townsville—how big an issue this is, not just for Mount Isa and the north-west but for all of North Queensland. This is a really big deal. This affects 1,200 copper jobs and all of the other jobs that flow along with that. If you compromise the copper mine, you compromise the supply to the copper smelter. The copper smelter feeds the acid plant, owned by Incitec Pivot. It takes the sulphur emissions off the copper smelter and creates the acid, and there is a dire national shortage of acid at the moment in Australia.

That acid goes on rail to the Incitec fertiliser plant, and that is another big employer which has mostly Townsville and Brisbane employees. They are the biggest rail user on that rail line and it is fully cost recovered. It is the only piece of rail track in Queensland that is fully cost recovered from all of the customers, so the fewer customers you have on that rail line the less viability you have. The rail costs there right now are three to four times the next highest rail charges in Australia. It has the highest rail charges in Australia already but that will be exacerbated if this copper mine shuts down. Then there is the acid that is sold from Sun Metals Zinc in Townsville. They profit from setting it out to the fertiliser plant, and that compromises their viability now.

The acid plant, the fertiliser plant, Sun Metals Zinc and the copper refinery in Townsville are all compromised because of the smelter. All of this comes back to the port, the rail and the electricity—all of the assets that you build. Everything has this symbiotic relationship and falls back to this copper mine. We cannot control a lot of things, but what we can control is what we do with our mining leases and the environmental impositions we put on these companies if they do not want to play ball. They can say, 'It's getting a bit tricky for us. If we're going to invest \$100 million or \$200 million to get through the next few years, we'd rather do it in Africa or South America where we get a better return on our investment.'

If there are other mining companies that can get in there and use that same asset, we should assert ourselves as a state to say those other ones cannot be on there: 'You either use it or lose it. Get out of there.' Glencore are turning their nose up at Queensland and saying, 'We'll do whatever we want here.' It does not have to be like that. We do not have to compromise the port, the economy of Townsville, the rail and every other asset that relies on having these resources used productively for the people of Queensland.