




Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**

**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE, REPORT**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (8.12 pm): Attending at estimates representing the KAP I focused on areas of policy or issues that we feel could give best bang for buck or real grunt to the economy for the people of Queensland. I had a focus on my area in relation to natural resources and mines in the North West Minerals Province. I started off with the gas supply. In terms of enabling wealth generation, we will just keep talking about the gas reservation policy. The study that was done many years ago when this all rolled out said that for every dollar we earn off the selling of gas and exporting it overseas we forego \$22 of lost industrial output. Those predictions are playing out. The gas price has risen from \$3 to \$4 a gigajoule. It soared up to \$20 to \$30 a gigajoule and then settled back down to \$16 a gigajoule. It is constraining manufacturing and development throughout our state. That requires adjustment from our government, just like it did in Western Australia to enable billions of dollars of manufacturing development over there. We call for that again and we will continue to.

We called for advocacy from the minister towards CopperString and the impact it has on mines. If we do not have the copper smelter there is no point to the nation-building projects everyone has been patting themselves on the back about, like CopperString, which has been a great commitment from this and the previous government. There are very big stakes at play if those things do not go ahead. We talked about the copper mine in Mount Isa where 1,200 jobs have gone because Glencore, the mine owner, has said they are better off spending their money in copper mines in other countries and they will come back to this when it suits them—not when it suits the people of Queensland. It suits us to have 1,200 copper-producing jobs right now, but it does not suit them so they just walk away. They have left 150 million tonnes of copper in the ground when the copper price is at an all-time high. There is a great future in copper. I have counted now eight parties coming to my door saying they want to buy it and keep it operating. In this state under our legislation Glencore are allowed to walk away from that resource and leave it untouched, generating nothing for the people of Queensland. That is unacceptable. I think our laws should reflect what most people in Queensland think. They did not buy the freehold over that land. It is a mining lease, and as long as they are operating those mining activities they can be there. If they are not, go away and let someone else mine it and extract that resource. They will pay good money for it. The government does not have to give it to them. Sell it. I prosecuted that in the time that we had.

Moving on to primary industries, we were trying to look at constraints and opportunities. In relation to Flinders River irrigation, it is a sad joke that there are 3.8 million megalitres flowing down the Flinders River every year and we are taking about one or two per cent. We are calling out for opportunities for prosperity. Towns are dying. We want to be able to take water out of the river. You do not have to build a dam. Just let us take the water out. It is being fumbled with. It seems we are no closer than 13 years ago when I entered this job. Other people in that area were saying the same 20 or 30 years ago. There are environmental constraints. People say, 'No way, you can't take any water out of that.' I focused on Andrew Pauli, a bloke who is having a real crack. He could not afford country down south so he thought

he would be a pioneer in the mid-west area and start farming. He just needs a little bit of water out of that river and he could make his crops sing and provide wealth for the whole state. He is battling away up there and we cannot even give Andrew Pauli water. I asked what can we do to get Andrew Pauli water out of the Flinders River. Every year 98 per cent of it flows out to sea. As a good government you should be able to effect something that allows him to take some water out to produce wealth for this state.

We talked about pigs, weeds, cats, biosecurity—that is a big deal if left unattended. I also identified more buying in national parks. In terms of cattle production they are hidden constraints. Everyone down here says how great it is they are preserving them, but I do not know what is being preserved because most of those national parks are in a pretty poor state. Often they are the biggest harbinger of weeds and pests and causes of fires. There seems to be more of them proliferating. That has been a constraint on prosperity. They are the sorts of things we tried to concentrate on. I think the session was handled reasonably well, but we did not get the answers we were after.