




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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PRIVATE MEMBER STATEMENT

North-West Queensland

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.55 pm): At the moment in the north-west we are at a 'break glass' moment—I do not say that lightly—and I include the Burke shire and Mayor Ernie Camp. Recently with the mayor and the federal MP, my father, we declared an economic crisis requiring an emergency special economic zone. There is not just one thing that needs fixing; there are a number of things at once.

To put some context around this, a copper mine that has been mining in the area for 100 years has closed. This has resulted in 1,200 job cuts. In 2016 in Townsville 787 jobs went, and people in Townsville have just recently said to me, 'We're only just starting to recover from Queensland Nickel'—that is, a population of almost 200,000 losing 787 jobs. Mount Isa, with 18,000 people, has lost 1,200 jobs, and that is from a mine that should not have closed down and has no right to close down.

With regard to the phosphate mine and the fertiliser plant, we import 80 per cent of our fertiliser at the moment. There is one fertiliser plant that requires a gas reserve policy but, in our pig-headedness and with the blindness that we have in our economic ideologies in Australia, no-one can comprehend or fathom having a gas reserve policy, so it is forced to the vagaries of the global gas reserve. The issue with CopperString cannot be resolved. It does not need words; it needs to be committed to—an absolute commitment that says, 'It'll be built by this state at this cost and this is what the power will cost you.' Until then, we cannot build anything around that with any security. With regard to the performance of utilities such as rail, water, roads—mainly rail and water—and electricity charging, the way that is done is just so inefficient and it is done against the principles of how the whole western regional area was built.

There are now 17,000 jobs on the line—let me repeat that: 17,000 jobs on the line—at the third largest industrial facility in Australia. I am having trouble comprehending why there is not more panic around this. There are a lot of nice, supportive words, but supportive words are not going to keep that open. We have to take some of these global traders around the neck and say, 'We run this country. We will determine the future of copper production in this country, not you from a boardroom in Switzerland,' and that takes some courage. That will take some standing up to the resource bodies or whoever else wants to defend the likes of Glencore.

If we want to pay for the Olympics, we need to fight like our life depends on these industrial facilities. We do not need to hear flowery words like, 'We support this and we don't want to see it close down.' That does not cut it. If this thing is closed down, it will be on this government. That is the reality. It might be a tough gig, but that is where we are at. I am crying out on behalf of people from the north-west. We need some help, because without that help the state is in trouble. It is a problem for not just us; it is a problem for the entire state.