




Speech By
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Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2020

ADJOURNMENT

Advanced Manufacturing; Traeger Electorate, Small Business

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (7.17 pm): I rise to talk about advanced manufacturing. There is a lot of talk in the wake of coronavirus about how we need to refocus. It is really interesting for someone who has rejected a lot of the ideals of monetarism. What was also interesting for me was hearing Paul Keating on Alan Jones saying that monetarism has run its course—that is to say, you cannot sit back complacently and say the market will solve everything, it is the job of business to drive the economy, government has to get its hands dirty and make things happen. That is in complete contrast to the approach of the Liberal and Labor parties in this House to economics—or in any parliament in Australia for that matter—for the last 10 or 20 years. We need to refocus.

If we are talking about advanced manufacturing we had better start to recalibrate. There is no better example of this than in Mount Isa. If you are standing in Mount Isa you are standing on millions of tonnes of copper under the ground. It gets turned into ingots and 90 per cent goes on rail to the refinery at Townsville and is turned into copper sheet at 99.9 per cent. Then it is sent over to China on a ship where it gets plastic put around as insulation and sent back as copper wire to Australia. In the wake of coronavirus electricians are saying there is a four to six week wait for the copper wire to come back into the country. People said you cannot prop up a car industry—you do not do that, that is against the rules of monetarism and market economies—but now everyone is saying it would be good to produce some things though, would it not? We should produce something. That is a real conflict. One has to have a position one way or the other.

It is interesting that people are now talking about advanced manufacturing, but we had better start recalibrating because everything that has been done one way needs to change. There is no better example to give than that of copper wire. We have a shortage of wire, but we can produce it. All we have to do is put a plastic coating around the copper wire in Townsville and we can sell that copper wire in Australia, but we do not do that. There is a copper smelter and refinery that are on the verge of shutting down. Not only are we not promoting advanced manufacturing but also we are losing it. It is declining at the moment. The North West Minerals Province is paying the highest electricity prices in the world yet we expect them to compete with the world. We say we have advanced manufacturing, but we had better go back and look at this stuff because it is under threat. We welcome the news from the government and are very grateful for the \$15 million for CopperString. That is a great start, but there needs to be a lot more of it.

I want to talk about small business in my electorate. Outback small businesses hit by the coronavirus need to be looked at separately from those in the cities, because some of the tourism businesses such as outback pubs that have closed down may never come back. They do not have the critical mass to weather the storm. Businesses will not be able to start trading immediately to make up their losses. With some of those buildings, they do not have the fluidity of other markets where things

are propped back up. We need to look at those businesses separately. The Karumba caravan park, Jim Molloy's Central Hotel in Cloncurry, and Kate Downie in Hughenden are all waiting for this rescue package. I hope what has been offered now is enough.

(Time expired)