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Canberra pitch

North West Weekly, Mount Isa

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Local voices heading to parliament Canberra pitch

By MATT NICHOLLS

MOUNT Isa mayor Peta MacRae will join a delegation of North Queensland leaders in Canberra to lobby for federal government action on the copper smelter.

Led by Townsville Enterprise Limited, Cr MacRae will be joined by TEL chief executive officer Claudia Brumme-Smith, MITEZ CEO Maria James, as well as the

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mayors of Townsville and Hin-chinbrook, Ann-Maree Greaney and Ramon Jayo.

“We’ll be in Canberra to fight for the future of copper processing in North Queensland,” Ms Brumme-Smith said.

“This isn’t just about two cities – or even just Queensland – it’s about protecting Australia’s ability

to process its own critical minerals. If we let these facilities close, we’re not just losing jobs, we’re sending our copper, our value-add, and our sovereign capability offshore.”

To date, there has been no sign of a commitment from Canberra in regards to supporting Mount Isa.

Delegation to fight for copper smelter

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Ms Brumme-Smith said the purpose of the delegation was to reinforce the impact of the copper smelter closure.

Glencore says it will close the facility this year if support is not forthcoming.

On Tuesday, *The Australian* reported that Glencore had been offered several secretive financial incentives, including a deferral of payroll tax for its workforce, by the state government.

However, Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Dale Last has publicly ruled out any financial relief or deferral on the company’s royalties.

TEL this month launched a Keep Our Copper campaign, highlighting the house of cards that would tumble if the unique smelter were to shut.

“The response to our campaign has been powerful and continues to grow,” she said.

“From workers and businesses to community leaders, the message has been crystal clear – we must keep our copper in North

Queensland, protect the 17,000 jobs at stake, and safeguard these strategic industrial assets before it’s too late.

“If governments are stepping in to support foreign-owned smelters in other states, why should North Queensland be left behind?

“The copper ecosystem in North Queensland is a delicate house of cards.

“Remove the smelter or refinery, and the whole structure collapses – from regional communities and emerging mines to critical operations like Phosphate Hill’s fertiliser production.”

The CEO said the figures were alarming for the region if the smelter were to close.

“North Queensland could be bracing for unemployment to soar past 18 per cent in a worst-case scenario if Mount Isa’s copper smelter and Townsville’s refinery are shut down,” Ms Brumme-Smith said.

“The scale of the potential economic fallout is deeply alarming – and that’s exactly why this issue will be front and centre in every conversation we have in Canberra.”