



31 JUL, 2025

## Smelter closure 'isn't an option' as delegation heads to Canberra

North West Weekly, Mount Isa

Page 1 of 2

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By MATT NICHOLLS

SHUTTING the copper smelter isn't an option, says Mount Isa mayor Peta MacRae, who will this week try to convince powerbrokers on both sides of the fence in Canberra about the value of the North West's processing capability.

Asked if Mount Isa had a plan if the smelter were to close, which Glencore is threatening should it not receive financial support to prevent it operating at a loss, Cr MacRae was steadfast.

"That's not an option," she said matter-of-factly.

The thoughts were echoed by the CEO of Townsville Enterprise Limited, Claudia Brumme-Smith, who is leading the Canberra delegation.

"For us, the most important thing is that those jobs are being taken care of," she said in front of the copper smelter on Monday.

Joining Ms Brumme-Smith and Cr MacRae in Canberra will be Member for Kennedy Bob Katter, Traeger MP Robbie Katter, MITEZ CEO Maria James, and the Townsville and Hinchinbrook mayors, Ann-Maree Greaney and Ramon Jayo.

A representative of the Australian Workers' Union is also expected to take part in some meetings.

While there is no face-to-face scheduled with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who will ultimately make the decision on whether or not to provide a support package for the smelter, the delegation hopes it will get a brief moment with the PM.

Ms Brumme-Smith said she had

a concise understanding of what she would say to Mr Albanese.

"The message is clear, the deal needs to be done and it needs to be done now," she said.

"Copper is what his government has been prioritising – his decarbonisation has been a priority – and copper is the absolute most critical mineral when it comes to decarbonisation.

"We don't want to see another manufacturing site or industry going into China, India or Indonesia.

"We want to protect what we've got. And right now, that's a federal government job because, ultimately, this is national significance and it will protect not only jobs here in the north, but it will actually help us to keep manufacturing industry and technology in our country.

"Every EV car, every battery, every computer, every phone needs copper and that's what we are manufacturing right here behind me and we want to protect it."

Cr MacRae said the federal government had the chance to back up their policies with action.

Asked the same question, what would she say to Mr Albanese if she got the chance while in Canberra, the mayor said she had a clear message.

"I'm saying that his Future Made in Australia agenda rests with the smelter," she said.

"We don't need smelting in this country to go the same way as the nickel industry and the automotive industry.

"The smelter is vitally important for our sovereign capability moving forward if we are going to be a player on the world stage."

Townsville Enterprise claims that 17,000 supply chain jobs were on the line with the future of the smelter in doubt, with positions at Phosphate Hill, the rail line and the Townsville refinery all at risk, as well as indirect roles.

"While the Mount Isa copper mine is at end of life, copper's future is only just beginning," Ms Brumme-Smith said.

"Demand is booming due to the global race to decarbonate and foreign powers like China are working to control supply.

"Australia can't afford to step away now. Our smelter and refinery are the only assets in the country that can process copper from any mine, anywhere. They're critical to keeping Australia in the global copper game."

### DELEGATION SNAPSHOT

#### Wednesday, July 30

● Meeting with the Opposition, hosted by Senator Matt Cavanan. Attendees include Andrew Wilcox, the Shadow Minister for Manufacturing and Sovereign Capability, and Shari Laphorne, the senior advisor to Opposition Leader Sussan Ley.

● Ministerial meeting with Senator Nita Green (Assistant Minister for Northern Australia) and Senator Anthony Chisholm (Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Resources).

● Ministerial meeting with Rebecca Colbrook, senior advisor



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Page 2 of 2

to Senator Tim Ayres (Minister for Industry).

**Thursday, July 31**

- Press conference and *Keep Our Copper* docuseries screening at the Parliamentary Theatre.

- Speaker's event, hosted with Member for Kennedy Bob Katter.
- Question Time appearance.
- Ministerial meeting with Minister for Industry Tim Ayres and Minister for Northern

Australia Madeline King.  
*\* Subject to change \**



Townsville Enterprise CEO Claudia Brumme-Smith and Mount Isa mayor Peta MacRae ahead of their Canberra trip.