



25 JUL, 2025

GLENCORE 'RIPPLE EFFECT'

Townsville Bulletin, Townsville

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Leighton Smith

A shockwave is reverberating across North Queensland after Glencore revealed its intention to put operations at its Mount Isa copper smelter and Townsville refinery on pause until conditions improved, prompting affected businesses and stakeholders to blast the decision.

The Swiss mining giant justified the decision saying the

state government’s intervention measures fell “well short” of their modelling losses, which were projected to be \$2.2bn over the next seven years.

Business leaders say there will be “ripple effects” through the entire community from traders on the main street to other mining operations.

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Albo faces panda-monium over China trip COPPER-TUNITY LOST

Leighton Smith

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has been lashed for his failure to confront China about its role in disrupting Australia’s metal manufacturing industries during his “panda cuddling trip”, given North Queensland’s copper industry hangs by a thread.

A shockwave has reverberated across North Queensland after Glencore revealed on Wednesday its intention to pause operations at its Mount Isa copper smelter and Townsville refinery until conditions improved.

The Swiss mining giant justified the decision saying the state government’s intervention measures fell “well short” of their modelling losses,

which were projected to be \$2.2bn over the next seven years.

Speaking from Mount Isa, where he had just toured Glencore’s smelter with Mount Isa Mayor Peta MacRae, Queensland Treasurer David Janetzki acknowledged the staff’s visible uncertainty and emotions, and those of the wider community.

“It’s real and it’s tangible and I strongly believe that Glencore should have more to give back,” Mr Janetzki said.

“Queensland’s been very good to Glencore and Glencore should think carefully about that as they’re considering their way forward.”

He said the state government put a “genuine and responsible offer” on the table and would continue to negotiate in good faith with Glencore and the federal government.

“We know (the federal government) must support the short-term fix while they develop a long-term strategy to address melting pressures across the country,” he said.

Mount Isa Mayor Peta MacRae said their smelter was worthy federal government’s support given its Future Made in Australia, Northern Australia Action Plan, and Critical Minerals Strategies.

“We understand there needs to be a national strategy but time is running out for our

community. Keeping this smelter is vital to the livelihoods of around 17,000 people across our corridor,” Ms MacRae said.

“I’ve met with the treasurer and the premier previously, everybody reassures me that there will be a solution and I trust that will happen.”

But Queensland Senator Susan McDonald said it was clear the federal government was not taking the issue seriously and that other smelters that had been bailed out, like in Tasmania, were politically motivated given it was during their state election.

“This government ... is sitting on its hands and watching while our nationally important



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copper industry and copper region are threatening to fail,” Senator McDonald said.

“This is bigger than Glencore. This is the North West minerals province and Australia’s copper industry, which is being threatened by Chinese investment into smelters, the Australian government has the decision as to whether or not they back Australian workers or they back Chinese workers.

“I want to know why the Prime Minister didn’t raise this on his recent panda cuddling trip to China.”

Senator Tim Ayres said in parliament that he was working in close co-operation with the state government and Resources Minister Dale Last to engage with Glencore.

“I did meet with representatives of Glencore again today, and have been closely co-ordinating ... about the approach

the Queensland Government has taken to that set of issues,” Senator Ayers said.

“(We’re) very conscious of the importance of that facility – for Mount Isa, for the region, for the copper industry, for the facilities that rely upon it, for the Queensland economy, and for Australia’s broader strategic and economic resilience – national interest.”

Her federal LNP colleague, member for Herbert Philip Thompson said he was terrified for local families.

“With the closure of Yabulu we saw that our city’s economy was destroyed, but also, more importantly, families lost jobs, and people had to leave town,” he said.

“People couldn’t put food on the table, and now, with this happening with Glencore, I am terrified that we’re going to be in the same position, and we must see action from both the

state government and the federal government.

Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie put pressure on the federal government to become more involved in protecting workers.

“The Queensland government has put an offer on the table, but it would be a national disgrace if a deal could not be done with the federal government involved,” he said.

Townsville Enterprise chief executive Claudia Brumme-Smith warned that NQ’s copper ecosystem was 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,” Ms Brumme-Smith said.

“This region and our communities are asking for no more or no less than what we

have seen in other parts of the country, recognising that in those cases hundreds of jobs were at risk verses 17,000 jobs linked to the copper supply chain here.

“Copper is critical to the national interest and critical to our future economies.”

However, Mr Bleijie also repeated his demand for Glencore not to abandon the people of regional Queensland.

“This is a multibillion-dollar company that answers to shareholders but Mount Isa and the people of Mount Isa and the North West have been very good to Glencore and Glencore needs to step up and step in,” he said.



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Mount Isa Mayor Peta MacRae and Queensland Treasurer David Janetzki look towards Glencore's troubled Mount Isa Mines site.