

From the Office of the Mayor
Cr Peta MacRae



Industry Briefing and Meet the Buyer Networking Event

Mayoral Welcome Address | Wednesday, 19 November 2025

“Good evening, everyone, and welcome to Mount Isa.

Thanks Aunty Ros for that heartfelt welcome to country. I follow her at many events and she always does an amazing job of making everyone feel welcome while educating us about culture at the same time. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners.

I would like to thank the department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning for making tonight possible.

To our visiting guests – from government, from mining, from heavy industry – thank you for making the journey to Mount Isa. Tonight is about more than networking. It's about recognising potential. It's about building the partnerships that will shape the next chapter of this region's story.

Mount Isa, as you are all aware, sits at the heart of the North West Minerals Province – one of the most significant mineral-rich regions in Australia. We're not just talking about copper, lead, and zinc, the minerals that built this city. We're talking about critical minerals essential to the energy transition, to advanced manufacturing, to national security, and to the technologies that will define the 21st century.

The world is searching for reliable sources of cobalt, rare earths, vanadium, and other critical minerals. We have them. The question isn't whether the North West Minerals Province has value – it's how quickly we can unlock it, and who we partner with to do it responsibly and sustainably.

This is where events like tonight matter. The suppliers, the innovators, the local businesses you'll meet this evening – they're not just service providers. They're problem-solvers who understand the unique challenges of operating in remote environments. They know how to deliver under pressure. They've built their businesses on reliability, ingenuity, and grit.

Of course, unlocking this potential requires addressing the fundamentals: energy, connectivity, and certainty.

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CopperString is a transformative project for this region. Reliable, affordable, renewable energy isn't a luxury for industry – it's essential. We're hopeful for clarity on energy policy and timeframes, because investment decisions are waiting on those answers. Industry needs to know when, not if. We also need to examine the methodology that is used to access the value of projects. Not the ROI period and over how many years – but the royalties this enabling infrastructure unlocks, the jobs it creates and the value it creates for our communities. We are currently seeing a classic example of how policy shifts and election cycles effect local business and investment confidence. After numerous meetings and supplier engagement sessions on how to maximise the benefit of copperstring for our local businesses, we are now left with uncertainty and unclear timeframes. If I was an operator that had invested in ramping up my capacity to take advantage of Copperstring – as I had been encouraged to do, I would be rightfully frustrated. The benefit however is that they are now skilled for other major projects as they come online.

The Reserve Gas Policy is another critical piece of the puzzle. Certainty around gas supply gives industry the confidence to commit. We need policies that recognize the realities of operating in regional Queensland and support, rather than constrain, industrial growth.

There's another conversation I believe we need to have openly and seriously: uranium.

Queensland currently has a ban on uranium mining. But the world is changing. Nuclear energy is being reconsidered globally as part of the clean energy mix. Countries that were once opposed are now building new reactors. Australia exports uranium from other states, supplying nations that depend on it for reliable baseload power.

The North West Minerals Province has uranium deposits. We have the geological advantage, the mining expertise, and the regulatory frameworks that could support responsible extraction. Perhaps it's time to ask whether Queensland's ban still serves our interests, or whether it's holding back a region that could contribute to national prosperity and global energy security.

I'm not suggesting we rush into this. But I am suggesting it's time to start the conversation. It's time to lobby for a review based on contemporary evidence, modern technology, and the economic opportunities that responsible uranium mining could deliver to regional communities like ours.

If we're serious about critical minerals, if we're serious about energy, if we're serious about the North West being more than a footnote in Queensland's future – then we need to be willing to have the hard conversations.

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So why partner with Mount Isa? Why engage with the businesses and suppliers in this room?

Because we're proven. We've been mining here for nearly a century. We understand risk. We understand remoteness. We understand what it takes to deliver when the stakes are high.

Because we're strategic. We're connected by road, rail, and air. We're a gateway to the Gulf, to the Northern Territory, and to northern Australia's development corridor.

And because we're ready. Ready to grow. Ready to diversify. Ready to be part of the solution to Australia's critical minerals challenge.

Tonight is your chance to discover what local capability looks like. To meet the businesses that can support your projects, your supply chains, your operations. To build relationships that go beyond transactional.

The buyers in this room represent significant opportunities for local business. The local businesses in this room represent capability that can deliver for you. My hope is that you leave tonight with new contacts, new ideas, and new partnerships.

We're building something here. Not just a mining town – though we're proud of that legacy – but a diversified regional economy that can adapt, innovate, and thrive for generations to come.

Thank you for being part of that story. Enjoy the evening, make connections, and let's work together to unlock the extraordinary potential of this region.

Welcome to Mount Isa."