




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Thuringowa Electorate

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (12.24 pm): Thuringowa is an expansive, youthful electorate with a number of growth corridors like the North Shore and Hervey Range, which is currently undergoing a \$6.17 million road upgrade. One of the other major corridors is the Upper Ross. It is an area comprising some 24,000 residents across the three suburbs of Condon, Rasmussen and Kelso. It is an area that I have chosen to live in and raise my family in for the last 15 years. It is undergoing an exciting period of growth, with a number of developers progressing with their projects. Despite tough economic times, they have a lot of confidence in the future of the Upper Ross. For too long this vital and central area of Townsville has been neglected.

Helping to stimulate these projects was the recently announced \$30 million duplication of Riverway Drive stage 1, committed to and funded by this Queensland Labor government. It is proving to be a catalyst for our area. There is \$4 million in investment by the Lancini Group for Riverway Express. They are also committing \$15 million to the Brookstone development. After its completion, it will be a \$55 million investment in the Upper Ross area.

Not only that, it has helped trigger the early design stage of an exciting, new 1,500-lot master planned community situated off Beck Drive. The developer, Wingate Properties, is now moving ahead with a preworks phase of a \$250 million development that will create over 250 much needed jobs for Townsville. Wingate Properties is finalising its infrastructure agreement with the council and is also working with the department of main roads on the construction of a new interchange off Beck Drive onto the ring-road.

What is even more exciting for our community is that we are now seeing developers in the Upper Ross working together to deliver solutions that will have huge benefits for our community. An example of that is Celestino, the proponents of a \$2 billion master planned community in Kelso at the foothills of the Pinnacles. They are working with Wingate Properties to identify, plan for and fund traffic solutions for the Upper Ross that I believe will help reduce the need for the government—the taxpayers—to provide this type of infrastructure. This is the type of innovation that we need to deliver better outcomes for people in our communities. Celestino is a proponent of a 5,100-lot Pinnacles project and is currently working through the planning and environment courts to progress the development to approval stage.

This project has the support of not only me—I want investment in the area and I want jobs in the area as do the thousands of people who live there—but also the newly elected councillor for division 4, Mark Molochino. He joins Mayor Jenny Hill's team. The community overwhelmingly voted him in.

The handbrake is off. We are seeing the local council and the state government working together to deliver for Thuringowa. This new council has already demonstrated it is far more forward thinking than the past LNP dominated council, which for too long ignored the pleas of the Upper Ross community

which wanted to see more development and more jobs in our area. The previous council had the view that the Upper Ross was too far out—out of the way. They thought it did not deserve the attention and focus that Townsville's northern growth corridor receives.

That is now changing. No longer will the wants of the people of the Upper Ross be ignored. We believe that with our close proximity and connectivity to the ring-road and close links to James Cook University, Lavarack Barracks and our tertiary hospital we are now positioned as the next logical sequence in development for Townsville. We can be the new economic driver for Townsville with projects by Wingate, Pinnacles and the Lancini Group leading the way.

Celestino's CEO, John Vassallo, is now working to deliver with the Sydney Science Park in western Sydney. This is a place that has huge similarities with the Upper Ross—a place that was for a long time unfairly derided as backward and rural. It is now the engine for growth for Sydney. The Upper Ross Pinnacles project is going to be exactly like that. It is an exciting project for the area. They are proposing a sister science park as the epicentre of the Pinnacles project. I am looking forward to seeing this development as many people are. We need jobs in the area. I am working with these developers to help them do that.