




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Townsville, Infrastructure

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.42 am): I rise to talk about the great news that was on the front page of yesterday's *Townsville Bulletin*, which I table.

Tabled paper: Front page of the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 13 June 2016, with the headline 'It's Ours: Prime Minister guarantees CBD stadium with \$100m pledge that will transform Townsville' [\[865\]](#).

The headline reads 'It's ours'. I talk of course about the Townsville stadium. Monday, 13 June will go down in Townsville's history books as the day everything changed for a city that has been doing it tough. To use a boxing analogy, it is the day our city lifted itself off the canvas. In recent times we have taken some hits in terms of job losses in the minerals and mining sector and other sectors involving Aurizon and Telstra.

We took a low blow, a hit to the guts, no thanks to Mr Palmer and the sad tale of QNI. Not only were 800 jobs lost; literally thousands of others across our city in supply and logistics were affected. This affected many small and medium businesses in our fine city. Of course, our city was left reeling from job losses in the public sector, and business confidence was also smashed from the previous LNP government. These conditions contributed to a perfect storm when we came to government.

The member for Townsville, Scott Stewart; our champion Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland and member for Mundingburra, Coralee O'Rourke; and I never threw in the towel. Collectively, we fight on. We remain determined to deliver for Townsville. We knew that we had to build upon our government's \$100 million election commitment for the stadium in order to deliver this major infrastructure project. We know that it will provide a real and tangible lift in confidence, to pick up our great city and deliver much needed jobs in a transitioning economy.

We three local state members continued our strong representations to a range of ministers over the last year and applied more pressure to our senior executive to deliver. We thank the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer for not only hearing us but also delivering a win for all of Townsville. We responded with a combination of strikes to try to fell our opponents' doom and gloom: \$248 million in accelerated Capital Works Program projects, delivering 400 jobs; \$55 million spent on the berth 4 redevelopment; \$6.17 million to widen and resurface Hervey Range Road; and many other projects in the Townsville area.

Then there is the State Infrastructure Fund. I mention \$150 million of real money in today's budget. There is \$30 million for stage 1 of the duplication of Riverway Drive and \$6.6 million for the redevelopment of the paediatric unit at Townsville Hospital. Our thanks again go to Minister O'Rourke.

We also had the Treasurer's recent and welcomed announcement of an extra \$40 million for the stadium, taking our total investment to \$140 million. That is another investment in Townsville. I believe it was a show of much needed confidence which also spurred on the NRL North Queensland Cowboys, who also committed \$10 million to the project. As we know, \$100 million is on the table from federal Labor's Bill Shorten, direct to stadium construction. At the eleventh hour our Prime Minister finally heard the Townsville community call and also pledged \$100 million, albeit with conditions. No matter who wins the day on 2 July in the federal election, Townsville will be the clear winner.

We have said all along that we needed a collaborative approach. We have a local government committed, with \$9 million invested in the priority development area. We must acknowledge Mayor Jenny Hill and the council for their strong desire to see the stadium built. We also had the business sector in our corner: Troy Popham from the chamber of commerce; Townsville Enterprise CEO Patricia O'Callaghan; and the *Townsville Bulletin*, which pushed at every opportunity to see this project delivered.

I will finish with a few positive reflections from Townsville locals. The chair of the REIQ, Damien Keyes, said that the news had renewed confidence in the city's property market. Peter Tapiolas, a developer in Townsville, said that the stadium guarantee was a catalyst for CBD renewal. Chair of the North Queensland Cowboys and developer Laurence Lancini said that this is an important junction in Townsville's history. Mr Peter Honeycombe, with CQ University looking to put a campus on-site in the PDA, is a great supporter. I love this one: Pete Rowling, publican of the Ross Creek Hotel, said that this will be the best thing to happen to Townsville in its living memory.