



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2016

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Townsville**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (12.20 pm): I would like to share with the parliament the positive impact that our Premier and cabinet ministers had—and left on the Townsville community—after spending last week governing Queensland from our fine and proud city of Townsville. Last Tuesday I had the pleasure of meeting the Premier and Minister for Education, Kate Jones, at the state's second largest state high school with over 2,200 students—

**Ms Jones:** Kirwan is a great school!

**Mr HARPER:** I will take that interjection; it certainly is. It is also well known as a school of excellence. Indeed, NRL legends Sam Thaiday and Jason Taumaolo attended Kirwan State High. We looked at some recent maintenance work. There was an announcement in the last state budget of \$2 million for shade sales and synthetic turf, for the school's music and art facilities to be upgraded and the parent drop-off area to be improved to ensure safety around this very busy school. The minister knows that I am working very hard with the school community and the P&C to deliver more important facilities at Kirwan State High School. From there we went to Thuringowa's magnificent Riverway precinct, where the Premier and ministers spoke casually with locals. The fact that the Premier and ministers were so approachable left a lasting impression on the locals. In fact, I heard this many times throughout the week wherever I went. We also met with Townsville city councillors and the mayor, Jenny Hill, to discuss local issues. I know that councillors very much enjoyed the opportunity to engage with the Premier and her ministers.

As the local MP, I know that our city has issues around unemployment and youth crime. We also know that, through funding for a \$240 million capital works program, the \$250 million North Queensland stadium, the \$100 million in regional funding for the Back to Work initiative and things like the \$30 million Riverway Drive and the \$6.2 million Hervey Range Road upgrades, we are indeed delivering initiatives to counter our city's challenges and I know they are being well-received. We know that through our initial government strike force response—30 extra police for Queensland Police Service Operation Oscar Merchant—and our Stronger Communities whole-of-government initiative, we are getting on with the challenging job of tackling youth crime. The Palaszczuk government's attention to these matters during the week through engagement, interaction and announcements has left a lasting and positive impression on our city. I commend the Premier for meeting with our Indigenous elders, who are acutely aware of the high percentage of Indigenous youth in detention centres. They want to help, and it was a great opportunity to sit down and discuss ways to go forward.

Only a short time after the Townsville cabinet meeting my electorate of Thuringowa proudly hosted a community leaders' forum at the Tony Ireland Stadium, which is located within the Riverway precinct. Over 170 local leaders from across our city gathered to hear from the Premier on our government's plans to address not only employment issues but a range of other challenges. They also spoke of initiatives which will be delivered throughout the week to help stimulate Townsville's economy. This was perhaps the busiest week I have had since my election, because when the Premier and cabinet come to town there is no rest. The same night we met with over 250 businesspeople who came to hear from Minister Anthony Lynham on state development opportunities like the Queens Wharf development—which, as we heard, is an opportunity for all Queensland—and the Townsville stadium, which we know will begin construction in mid-2017 and bring much-needed jobs to Townsville. Let's not stop there! The Premier also announced co-funding for the Townsville waterfront promenade, which is a \$28 million development that will connect our beautiful Strand to the stadium and create more jobs.

The Premier give a stirring State of the State address at the CEDA lunch, where we also heard of Sun Metals' bold plans to expand and invest over \$400 million in the Townsville Sun Metals plant, which means more jobs. This is another demonstration of positivity and confidence. Together we are getting on with turning Townsville's economy around. Best of all were the positive comments we heard concerning the Adani and Galilee Basin development. We know the importance of job creation in the mining sector, and the nearly 200,000 people of Townsville and I welcomed the Premier's positive comments around Adani. We are indeed getting on with job creation in Townsville.

The Premier chose to stay on in Townsville on Friday night to attend the Cowboys presentation ball and I know she also had the opportunity to attend the Broncos NRL presentation dinner, so it was a great way to end the week. She also spoke to over 800 people about the Adani and Galilee Basin project.