




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Kirwan State High School

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.42 pm): I rise today to share the great news that the 2,300 students, staff, P&C and the broader Kirwan State High School community have been waiting to hear for the last 20 months since I stood in this House on 20 May 2015 and during my maiden speech spoke of the challenging situation of ensuring that the state's second largest high school—second only to Brisbane State High—got its hall that it has been asking for over the years. Yesterday I proudly joined the Minister for Education, Kate Jones, to finally announce that Kirwan State High School will get its multipurpose school hall that its current and past students have all thoroughly deserved, with \$6 million in funding.

To put this into context, I met with former executive principal, Mr John Livingstone, who served for 28 years at Kirwan State High School. I met him in the oncology ward of the Townsville Hospital in late 2014 as a then candidate whilst visiting one of our veteran ambulance officers who was also fighting cancer. Sadly, they have both passed away. I wish John could have seen what we have been able to achieve. I will not forget the words John said to me on one of those occasions. He said, 'Mate, if you get in, look after my school and build them a hall.'

In early 2015 I took a photo of those 2,300 students seated on the grass during an Anzac Day ceremony. I table that image now because this was simply never good enough for one of our state's major North Queensland schools that many a champion has emerged from, such as Sam Thaiday and Jason Taumalolo.

Tabled paper: Photograph, undated, depicting a school in Townsville [\[504\]](#).

I came up with a plan to work with the school community. I would like to pay special mention to Mr Des Morris, the Kirwan State High School P&C President, for his P&C's drive to help deliver this much needed hall. We started joint petitions. I tabled the Kirwan State High School 510 signatures in parliament on Monday, and today I table my 565 signatures in a nonconforming petition.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding funding for the Kirwan State High School Hall [\[505\]](#).

Together that means that we got over 1,000 locals to help support us and deliver this much needed hall. The education minister knows that I have been like a dog with a bone on this issue with multiple representations to the minister. This is a major asset for Kirwan State High School and I know the broader community of Thuringowa will also benefit from this major asset. It will also help create much needed local jobs.

No more will we see Kirwan State High School shell out thousands of dollars to hire private school halls for its annual graduations. Kirwan State High School can now have its very own hall. I must thank the 1,000 locals who supported us by signing our petitions. We could not have done it without them! I look forward to joining this year's students, staff and local families for their annual graduation ceremony in their very own hall, if we can get it built in time. I really cannot tell members what this means to Kirwan State High School. It is enormous news and I have given 110 per cent to help deliver it.

(Time expired)