



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Land 400**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.21 pm): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Everton. Clearly he still has no idea. What a great contribution! What an absolute load of rubbish.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Members, we need to retain some respect for the speakers on their feet.

**Mr HARPER:** It was indeed very exciting news for our proud Queensland state in relation to last week's announcement of the Rheinmetall Defence Australia's Land 400 phase 2 deal. This defence deal is worth \$5 billion to our state's economy here in Queensland. Queensland will manufacture the next generation of combat reconnaissance vehicles, the Boxer CRV, direct to the Australian Army.

It is also outstanding news for our regions, with Townsville being a major benefactor in an economic sense with respect to this exciting announcement. Yes, Queensland won the day against what was a pretty aggressive Victorian bid where they spent some \$600,000 in full-page advertising to woo over the decision-makers to ensure that their state would be the recipient of this \$5 billion worth of defence infrastructure for our nation. Well, they were wrong. When will they ever learn? Queenslanders never give up. We are always up for a challenge.

**Mr Costigan:** You should.

**Mr HARPER:** In September last year at the Townsville RSL—I did not see the member for Whitsunday there—I was lucky enough to join 20 business leaders—

**Mr Costigan:** They're still looking for a refund.

**Mr HARPER:** I did not see you there, mate. We joined those local businesspeople and we were lucky enough to be given a presentation from the Rheinmetall representatives on the Boxer CRV and its capabilities and information on the Land 400 bid in relation to the exciting opportunities that lay ahead for our city's businesses. I thought it was a great machine. It might have come in handy for my 2017 campaign because it is strong, reliable and supports our troops!

Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, on a more serious note, it is undoubtedly one impressive piece of kit. It was paraded down The Strand, as you know, where many of our garrison city families and ADF personnel present were able to inspect it as well. I noted at the time that it had maroon Queensland numberplates and thought, 'We've got this.' These vehicles were publicly championed by Victoria Cross recipient Ben Roberts Smith—undoubtedly one of this nation's most highly respected veterans. The Boxer will provide the men and women of our ADF the most protection when they put themselves in harm's way.

The strength and safety aspect of these vehicles was one of the Commonwealth's key criteria during the tender process. Our Palaszczuk Labor government was always confident that the Rheinmetall Boxer was the best vehicle for our diggers and that Queensland was the best location for modern, military vehicle manufacturing projects. That is why we did not give up. Our Labor government did not give up on our three-year bid to land this deal for Queensland. We must acknowledge Minister Cameron Dick and former minister Dr Anthony Lynham for their work.

We know that winning this contract will drive high-tech innovation, boost investment and create global export opportunities for everyone along the extensive supply chain. It is an economic game changer. Townsville Enterprise agrees, stating that, whilst the vehicles will be built in Ipswich, a third of them will be based at Townsville, requiring additional infrastructure and services towards maintenance, creating jobs in our region.

It is great news for regional Queensland and Townsville in particular. The 3rd Brigade is based at Townsville's Lavarack Barracks. It is indeed home to this nation's 5,000 ADF personnel. It makes entire sense for our city to benefit from logistical support, maintenance and supply of the Boxer CRV, of which over 50 will be based in our city.

Just last Friday I spoke with Darren James, the local manager of Penske Power Systems in Bohle, Townsville. This local company currently supplies, installs and maintains service of the 45 Army's ASLAVs, Australian light armoured vehicles. They have a proud association with 3rd Brigade. I know that Penske has the capacity, local knowledge and expertise to be part of the opportunities that lie ahead for the Boxer CRV Land 400 project.

Importantly, we have many opportunities ahead of us. By landing this deal we have set ourselves on a known trajectory going forward in relation to the Singapore defence deal, worth some \$2 billion. There are 600 vehicles coming to Townsville. They will need maintenance, logistics and supply and we have industry ready to go. Well done to Queensland. We nailed it.