




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; BETTING TAX BILL**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.11 pm): Today I rise to support the Appropriation Bill handed down with the state budget delivered by the Treasurer earlier this week. It is a great Labor budget. It is a budget that delivers jobs and infrastructure, it delivers for Queensland and it delivers for Thuringowa. As the re-elected member for Thuringowa, there is more that I want to deliver in my patch and I want to share that with the House today. As I said, it is a great budget and builds local infrastructure in my area. To those knockers who did not want me back—possibly some on the other side looking at me now—they probably did not realise that I like to deliver real projects in my patch like the Hervey Range Road project, Riverway Drive, the Kirwan Ambulance Station and the Kirwan hall. These are creating local jobs and are great for our area.

When we came to government in 2015, the good people—my constituents—of Thuringowa sadly suffered job losses under the former LNP government, the mining downturn and of course the QNI closure of the nickel refinery in 2016. We shared the bad times, but the memories are still fresh. I recall talking to some of those sacked workers and their families who were desperate to know how they were going to put food on the table, fuel in the car or just wanting their basic entitlements. Those stories were shared at each of those unemployment forums held at the Riverway precinct in Thuringowa. We now have the recent news of Mr Palmer seeking to reopen the Yabulu nickel refinery. Excuse me if I remain somewhat cynical, like many in Townsville, of promises being peddled out to the media. The wounds are still too raw for many. However, as I have said in this House previously, it would take a strong Labor government led by our Premier, Treasurer, ministers and three dedicated local Townsville Labor members to stand up for Townsville in its time of need.

After hearing the contribution from the member for Burdekin, who said today that there was no infrastructure delivered in Townsville, I urge the member to listen to this: \$250 million to Townsville Stadium; \$225 million for the Haughton water pipeline; a commitment towards the \$1.6 billion Townsville port expansion through the berth 4 upgrade; and \$40 million, \$75 million and now over \$100 million towards the much needed channel widening to come to fruition. What about the \$386 million for Powering North Queensland where we are seeing possible hydro-electricity built at Burdekin Falls Dam and the building of a high-transmission line connecting all of those renewable projects? I know the opposition likes renewable projects like the 124-megawatt Ross River Solar Farm or Clare Solar Farm or the Kidston or Collinsville or the Whitsunday projects. We are going to connect them all up and they are going to support thousands of jobs. That is building infrastructure in North Queensland. We are doing that and we will be doing even more after this state budget.

In Thuringowa one of the major job-generating infrastructure projects—the Riverway Drive duplication stage 1—has received \$14.8 million in this state budget to complete this project. Some 25,000 people use this road every day and they are seeing real progress and it has become a catalyst for private investment, with a company recently submitting a development application to Townsville City Council for a \$60 million shopping centre and medical centre. Through our investment in trunk

infrastructure, people are seeing that they can invest in our area and that is a great sign for our local economy. On the back of delivering the Riverway Drive project and supporting local jobs—and it is only stage 1—I know I have to give the residents a break on Riverway Drive because we want to do stage 2. However, I think we need to give them a rest. They were fatigued with all of that roadwork.

It does not end for another year, but guess what is in the budget? Some \$36 million to start the Townsville Ring Road stage 5, but guess where it starts? You thought you might have heard the last of Riverway Drive! It starts at the Riverway Drive interconnection and runs six kilometres out. It is valued at \$180 million and is going to create a couple of hundred jobs on that major infrastructure project. Our money is on the table. Our contribution of 20 per cent funding for this state and federally funded project is in place, but what is missing? What is missing is the money from the federal government. It did not invest in this ring-road. It did not invest in the port. It did not invest in water. As we heard from the opposition leader this week in her budget reply speech, there was nothing to do with roads in Townsville, nothing to do with water, nothing for Townsville. Those opposite are simply out of touch, much like Malcolm Turnbull. I am working closely with the federal member for Herbert, Cathy O'Toole, to get that important funding to complete that project.

We already know that it is going to take a federally elected Labor government along with our strong Queensland Labor government to build the infrastructure for Townsville to attract more investment in that area. When we get the Townsville Ring Road stage 5 complete, it is going to provide increased connectivity for 1,400 more families moving into the Upper Ross area. It will get an interconnection off Beck Drive just down the road from Riverway Drive connecting on to the ring-road getting them to work, to the Townsville Hospital—our tertiary hospital—James Cook University or perhaps Lavarack Barracks 3rd Brigade that employs 5,000 of our ADF personnel. We need that trunk infrastructure in place to get all of those transport links connecting to the port and further north and south.

I am amazed that the member for Burdekin said that there was nothing in the budget for the rail line. I have the budget paper in front of me and it says that there is \$50 million for the Townsville-Mount Isa rail line. I do not know which budget paper he is reading from, but he is clearly not paying attention. We are investing in North Queensland. We are very clearly investing in Townsville.

Education is key and getting our kids a great education is the key to getting them jobs in the future. I am very happy to see in the budget for Thuringowa \$13 million for Heatley secondary school. Steve Miskin, the principal, and Louise Wilkinson from Heatley primary are counting on new security fences. Thanks to the education minister, they are in the budget and they will get those fences. Willows principal Helen McCullough wanted shade structures for her school. That is in the budget and it is done, as well as \$480,000 for Kirwan State Primary School.

Even better, under the Works for Queensland program there is \$4.2 million for facilities for the Upper Ross Charles Moroney Park. That is great. Those facilities will benefit my local community. Charles Moroney Park is home to the Upper Ross Rams. There would be members who know who comes from the Rams and that is the great Sharks player Valentine Holmes. Hopefully, he will soon be a North Queensland Cowboys player.

Mr Costigan interjected.

Mr HARPER: No. He is a great advocate for sport in my area. I know that a lot of people in my area look up to JT, but Valentine Holmes would be welcome in the Cowboys. He comes from the Upper Ross Rams. I am going to work really hard with the sports minister to deliver those facilities. He is a pretty good bloke. He listens to me. Once we get that \$4.2 million sporting work done under Works for Queensland, we will have a new sports complex.

There is so much more to talk about with this budget. It is a good budget for the Thuringowa electorate. We will get more teachers and more nurses in our hospitals. This budget focuses on infrastructure, jobs and improving services in our local areas.