



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 September 2018

**MOTION**

**Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.38 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I have to ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition: who writes your material?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr HARPER:** The LNP want to talk about the least popular state government. They want to talk about unemployment and economic records. This reads like a script from Seinfeld: it is a show about nothing. Seriously, here is a tip: bring back the former premier, Campbell Newman, and sack your writers because that is hopeless.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I will tell you about the proud economic history we have in Townsville and the legacy that was left by the former member for Mundingburra, the survivor—14 per cent unemployment is what you left us. We have nine per cent unemployment. You sunk in \$100 million in investment in your time. We have invested over \$1 billion in infrastructure. You left us with absolutely nothing.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Thuringowa! Pause the clock. I realise there is some to-and-fro happening. Member for Thuringowa, I ask you to put your comments through the chair. It will assist with the order of the House. Leader of the Opposition, I need you to cease your interjections. You could be heard above all others.

**Mr HARPER:** Obviously I touched a nerve in terms of the legacy that they left for Townsville, but we have a proud economic record of delivering for North Queensland. We are growing our economy and creating jobs. Under Labor, we are building the infrastructure that North Queensland needs to support a growing population. Perhaps some of the overinflated egos on the other side need to pop, because in their time in government they let down themselves, they let down Queensland and they certainly let down Townsville. We have reversed the savage cuts of the LNP and restored front-line services.

On any day in this House I will proudly stand up and talk about our investment in North Queensland. Thanks to that lot over there, we had 14 per cent unemployment. We are getting on with job creation by investing \$840 million in infrastructure and \$980 million in health. We have provided nearly \$30 million for capital works and maintenance for schools. I have yet to talk about Thuringowa and I am not even sure that five minutes is long enough to talk about all of the great projects underway in Townsville, but I will give it a red-hot go.

We have the Haughton water pipeline and \$225 million in funding, under Labor. We have the new home of the mighty North Queensland Cowboys, the Townsville stadium, under Labor. Works for Queensland is providing \$66 million worth of projects, under Labor. Pimlico TAFE is having a \$26 million upgrade, under Labor. The Townsville port channel widening project worth \$75 million is Labor funded.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** They are starting to get the drift of it. Under Labor we build things and we create jobs. In my electorate of Thuringowa, I am proud to have delivered \$5.5 million for a new school hall at Kirwan State High School and \$5 million for a new ambulance station, Labor funded. Riverway Drive—I am always going to talk about Riverway Drive—is a \$35 million job-creating project that is Labor funded. That project was promised by the LNP but never delivered.

We have programs such as Back to Work and Skilling Queenslanders for Work. When I speak to small business operators in Thuringowa, they tell me that they are very thankful for the Back to Work Youth Boost payments, which mean that people can be employed. In our time in government, we have created 10,000 jobs; the LNP sacked people. That is their legacy.

What do they have to say about Townsville? The member for Nanango says that it is not a livable city. She should go and tell that to the people of Townsville. We are proud of our city and everything we are doing to build jobs. Do not talk our city down! They come to my home town of Townsville, where I have raised my family, and they insult everyone who lives there. The Leader of the Opposition says that she wants to make it a livable city; you should have invested in your time. You lost all of your members—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Thuringowa, put your comments through the chair.

**Mr HARPER:** I say to the Leader of the Opposition: I live there, I love it and I am not the only one. Respectfully, back off talking down our city, please! The LNP should know better than to ridicule the people of Townsville. We have a great lifestyle and it is only going to get better under Labor, because we keep building, delivering and investing. For us, it is all about jobs, jobs, jobs. All the LNP has is a legacy of cut, sack and sell.