




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 2 April 2019

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Townsville, Resources

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.39 pm): Obviously I had some effect last week when I got up and yelled and screamed about Canberra not listening because, as we know, yesterday was April Fools' Day and I thought surely the LNP Morrison government would not try to fool Townsville by delivering the news yesterday. I heard a whisper they were going to drop the story of the ring-road to the *Townsville Bulletin*, as reported today. You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, that Townsville will not be taken as fools. We have heard it before; just like with the Townsville stadium, the announcement was made at the eleventh hour. It is an act of pure political desperation by a government about to go to an election. Malcolm Turnbull did it at the 11th hour and 59th minute with the North Queensland stadium and, again, they did it at the eleventh hour with the channel widening at the Townsville port where we only got the co-funding.

I ask: why could they not have made the announcement in June last year when I got \$36 million for the Townsville Ring Road? Why have they waited until now to announce this funding? It has put a significant development, a half a billion dollar development, behind by a year; it is putting politics before people. We will not cop that in Townsville because we know that we need to create jobs. Now with the announcement of the Townsville Ring Road, that Riverstone residential development can get underway. It could have been started last year, but no, we will wait as the federal government plays politics with the people. They will not cop it and we will see that come the federal election. We will not be taken for fools in Townsville.

This is not good enough for Townsville. As I have said before, I have a record of delivering. Last week—it feels like just yesterday—I was here yelling and screaming about delivering \$7.6 million for Harvey Range Road and \$36 million for the Riverway Drive duplication, which is a catalyst for development. The Townsville Ring Road will be—

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr HARPER: Did the member say police? I take that interjection—excellent—because we also have a record of delivering more police in Townsville. The legacy of the LNP under Sam Cox and the likes of the member for Broadwater left us with half a Rapid Action Patrol hub; it was half staffed with 20 officers. It took a Labor government member to go and fully fund that and deliver a further 20 officers. We got that done, and I am also just weeks away from opening a brand-new police facility in the Upper Ross with an additional 10 officers.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr HARPER: I take the member's interjection. We also have a commitment of 53 additional officers coming to Townsville. Only recently we saw an 18 per cent reduction in property offending and an 18 per cent reduction in stolen motor vehicles. We are getting on with the job of delivering more police for Townsville and making our community safe. We know we have more work to do, but we are

doing a hell of a lot better job than the LNP did, whose only legacy was a failed boot camp and helicopter rides. All they had to show from that was increased recidivism. They could do a hell of a lot better because it is Labor governments that deliver for Townsville. We deliver on infrastructure, we deliver more nurses, we deliver more paramedics and we deliver more police. We are getting on with the job. They seriously have nothing. The LNP have nothing but a bad record of letting Townsville down. They are absolute fools.

We can talk about health cuts. Let's hope the \$20 million owed to the Townsville Hospital is mentioned in tonight's federal budget; \$300 million is owed to the people of Queensland for health. We are getting on with delivering more nurses.

Ms Bates: Sign the national partnership agreement.

Mr HARPER: The member for Mudgeeraba has a terrible legacy of cutting, sacking and selling. All she did was sack nurses. We are getting on with delivering. We are getting on with the job of putting more funding into our emergency departments. We are getting on with the job of funding our hospitals. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that she should pick up the phone and get the federal Morrison government to pay back the \$300 million owed to Queensland Health.