



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 May 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Townsville, Youth Crime**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.33 pm): I rise to inform the House about our ongoing efforts in Townsville to reduce youth crime related issues. I did a ride along on the half-baked RAP delivered by the LNP when it was in government. I lobbied and received 20 additional police officers to fully staff that patrol. There is more going on in Townsville.

As reported in the second tranche of the Youth Justice Strategy recently announced by Minister Farmer, the recent evaluation of the Townsville Community Youth Response showed decreasing reoffending rates. Are members on the other side listening? I will explain how. This is because of our investment in a suite of programs, including the Transition 2 Success program. Some 67 per cent of participants in that program did not reoffend within 12 months of completion. This is in complete contrast to the LNP's failed youth boot camps, which had recidivism rates of 70 per cent. Other programs include Project Booyah, Yinda cultural mentoring, Clontarf, Stars Foundation, Flexi School, Pathways College and other youth justice strategies. Youth restorative conferencing alone resulted in 77 per cent of participants not reoffending and 98 per cent of victims being satisfied with the outcome. In its time, the LNP cut that program.

All of the stakeholders in these programs are working with the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group, resulting in decreasing offending rates overall. This is positive news for Townsville. In fact, recent evaluation of the community youth response model in our city showed a 25 per cent decrease in rates of reoffending for high-risk young offenders, because they can access various intensive case management services. Since the community youth response started in February 2017, the overall number of youth offences for 10- to 16-year-olds in Townsville also reduced. Prior to this recent evaluation, the annual independent crime statistics showed a promising decrease in property offences and the number of stolen motor vehicles, both around the 18 per cent mark. I commend and congratulate both our police for their work and the local community.

As we keep saying to young people, if you break the law you will be held accountable. We strongly encourage parents of those youth to step up and take responsibility for their children but, when they get into strife, we will give them all the assistance we can by engaging them in these programs and breaking the cycle of crime. We know that this challenging issue has been around for years. The LNP completely failed to address the causes of crime. We are about tackling the causes of crime. I applaud the Palaszczuk government for addressing and tackling the causes upstream. That is in stark contrast to the efforts of LNP members who sacked child safety officers. They do not tackle the causes of crime. When we do, we stop people offending in the first place.

What about the LNP's false promise of a police helicopter in Townsville? After working on that platform for 15 years, I know that it does respond as a multitasking platform to QAS, Queensland Health, QFES and QPS requests for service. Guess how many times it called for police assistance in the last year? Of course, there is silence from the other side. It was 12 times. That equates to once a month. The bulk of those requests were for water police searches.

The member for Nanango says, 'We will deliver a police helicopter.' What for? It will go up in the air one or two times a year. Is the member serious? This is a thought bubble. The member is completely deluded. Polair might work in South-East Queensland, where there are three million people, but in Townsville I would rather see boots on the ground. That is why we are delivering police and why I am opening a new police facility in the Upper Ross. Reoffending rates are decreasing because of all of the programs. We have the extra police. We also have a commitment of 53 additional police and I know that, through the work of the police minister, we will deliver it. You have learned nothing. You do not tackle the causes of crime—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Through the chair.

**Mr HARPER:** Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am going off again. The members for Redlands and Gaven are coming up to look at the Stronger Communities Action Group as they are considering replicating that model in others areas of the state. I commend the work of the Stronger Communities Action Group.