




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 3 September 2019

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Townsville, Community Safety

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.40 pm): I am proud to talk about our achievements in Townsville. I apologise to the people of Townsville that we have had to drag some members of the opposition here. Previously in the parliament I have discussed all efforts taken by our government to reduce the incidence of youth crime in our great city of Townsville. I will provide an update. The youth crime issue does not just affect our city but cities and towns across the nation. It is a real problem and one that we are certainly not afraid to tackle. We have driven down reoffending rates and we will continue to do that. Yesterday we had the great announcement of the remaining 53 police our government committed to being delivered 18 months early. I sincerely thank the minister and Commissioner Katarina Carroll for hearing the concerns of local MPs. To the people of Townsville, we have your backs on this. There will be 28 additional police officers delivered by June 2020, with the remaining 25 to be delivered by December 2020. Townsville, that means since 2015 we will have delivered 103 police officers to our city by 2020 and we will continue to make our streets safer.

Let me put it in contrast. The LNP abolished 330 police positions. It is in their DNA to cut, sack and sell. That is all they know. Those opposite wanted to sell the Townsville Police Academy. All they had was a failed boot camp and high recidivism rates of up to 70 per cent. The youth justice bill was passed last week. Those opposite need to learn to read the legislation. Those people who pose a serious risk to themselves or the community will not be released on bail. The bill actually strengthens legislation. Some members of the opposition made remarks that the streets will be filled with criminals released on bail. It is a beat up and nothing more than cheap political attempts to try to scare people. We will continue to hold people to account, support victims of crime and help break the cycle of crime by supporting those at risk of entering the youth justice system via Project Booyah and reinstating lost funding under the federal LNP. Did we hear anything from those sitting opposite about losing funding under the LNP? Nothing! Cue the crickets!

Those opposite come to this city and try to tell people they have solutions but they do not. Our government has strengthened the capacity and capability of our police by 103, including 20 more to our police RAP hub that they left half unstaffed. We have built another police station in the Upper Ross. Labor will continue to back the people of Townsville. Yesterday's announcement goes further on delivering our commitment to supporting the people of Townsville.

The LNP set up failed boot camps where offenders broke out and broke into neighbouring properties. It was a \$16 million waste of money which resulted in 70 per cent recidivism. Hang your heads in shame! Labor's Transition 2 Success program has a 70 per cent non-reoffending rate within 12 months of completing the course. That is positive news for Townsville.

I table the major general's plan and 23 recommendations, with six delivered so far.

Tabled paper: Report, dated 5 December 2018, by Major General (Retd) Stuart Smith AO, DSC, Townsville Community Champion to the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, Premier and Minister for Trade, titled 'Townsville's voice: local solutions to address youth crime—An independent report on the Townsville community's view on youth crime, including an assessment of the effectiveness of current prevention strategies and recommendations for improvements' [1416](#).

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Townsville's Voice brief summary of recommendations implemented and those pending stand up in 2019' [1417](#).

Those opposite do not have a plan. You come into this place and—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Put your comments through the chair.

Mr HARPER: The members of the opposition come into this place and promise a police helicopter. \$3 million a year would not buy the boom of a helicopter. If members go out to the Townsville base and look at the two AW139s they will see that they are fitted with a FLIR. Members, they are \$1 million each so \$3 million would not get you maintenance, a hangar, a crew 24 hours—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HARPER: Mate, it would not get you anything. You are kidding yourself and you are kidding the people of Townsville.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has deliberately disregarded your previous ruling about commenting through the chair and not directing personal comment to the members of the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will direct their comments through the chair.

Mr HARPER: I apologise. The opposition come to Townsville and promise things they cannot deliver. They allocated zero police in 2017. Zero police was the opposition's promise for Townsville. They promised 20 for Cairns. The opposition has promised a helicopter that will not even get up in the air. The opposition should put their FLIR on a bunch of balloons or a kite because you will not get an hour and a half a week with the funding they have promised. We have \$46 million for two aircraft.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you will have to put your comments through the chair. This is the last time I will say it otherwise I will warn you formally.

Mr HARPER: Labor has a real plan; the LNP has false promises and false hope. Those opposite have nothing.