




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

World Mental Health Day; Townsville, World Record

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.10 pm): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Mudgeeraba with positive commentary. Thursday, 10 October was World Mental Health Day. A special event was held in our home city of Townsville, Mr Deputy Speaker. In fact, on that day Townsville created a new world record for the most people to ever gather in one place in high-vis vests. Why would we do that, some may ask? It was to bring people together some eight months after the monsoonal flooding event. We gathered in one of the worst hit areas, the Fairfield shopping precinct, which only eight months ago had over a metre of water go through it, devastating businesses.

On World Mental Health Day some 2,499 people stood together in the Bunnings Fairfield car park to do more than break a world record, which was previously held by a province in Japan. Our Townsville region has certainly seen its share of challenges in terms of dealing with mental health and wellbeing. We have endured high suicide rates and been through some very challenging times.

The community came together to help break the stigma often associated with depression, anxiety and other mental health issues. In our proud garrison city, 2,499 people literally stood side by side. We were joined by a representative from the Guinness World Records for our attempt. I, along with others, like Mayor Jenny Hill, John Asiata from the North Queensland Cowboys, Joe Williams and Johnny Ruffo, spoke at the event. I said that it was more than attempting to break a world record; this gathering of people from across our community was symbolic of who we are.

We come together in times of need to help a mate, neighbour or friend when the chips are down. There was plenty of that demonstrated earlier this year. This event was about raising awareness about mental health. At the event I spoke with members of the Defence Force from 3RAR and 27 Squadron RAAF base personnel, young people, veterans and some people with a disability. It was great to see you there, Mr Deputy Speaker, and Minister O'Rourke. I also acknowledge my entire family who came along as well.

I would like to thank Mental Health Australia and Patricia Schluter from the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health for helping to put this event together. We are a resilient and strong community. I want to thank all those who came along and all those who helped organise the event like Michelle Bond, Mark Lassig and the team from Bunnings Fairfield—they deserve to be commended—the Kirwan Scouts, Townsville SES volunteers, Minty, Pricey and Chooky from Triple M who emceed and all the supporting community groups that put on the sausage sizzles and informed people of services when they need help. We broke a world record that day and it is a day that we should all be very proud of.