



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 October 2019

**MOTION**

**Queensland Health**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.35 pm): I rise to oppose the motion moved by the member for Mudgeeraba. The hypocrisy! How dare the LNP members sack all of those staff and not care about health workers in this state. I know that the health minister cares and I know that the Labor government cares. I often remind the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services of my former role as a critical CareFlight paramedic in Townsville. I served in that role for many years. The minister does not forget that and he does not forget about our hardworking frontline paramedics who are out there saving lives.

Between 2012 and 2014, in my former role as the acting officer in charge of Townsville, nearly every day I was deployed because of the ramping under the LNP. There were daily trips to the hospital. Under the LNP, every day ambulances were ramped. The member for Mudgeeraba did not mention Townsville. We know why. Now, when I speak to paramedics and the health staff in Townsville, they tell me that the situation has completely turned around. Why? Because the Palaszczuk Labor government is investing in frontline health staff. Since 2015, the Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered 511 paramedics and has budgeted for a further 200. That is 711 paramedics for this state.

The LNP has a litany of failures. Under the LNP, ramping occurred throughout the state because it did not invest in frontline staff. It did not care about frontline staff. It sacked nurses.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered more paramedics, delivered more ambulances and delivered more beds for our hospitals. When it comes to delivering emergency medical services for Queenslanders, the Palaszczuk government has a very proud record. From the Torres Strait to the Gold Coast, this government has backed our paramedics as they do one of the state's hardest jobs. Since 2015, we have hired 511 paramedics and an additional 200 were planned for in the recent budget. In Townsville, we are receiving nine more paramedics. I can remember when I was in that role we received nothing under the LNP. We have delivered one of the best pay rises—

**Mr Hunt** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I take that interjection from the member. One of the worst things that I can recall that occurred under the LNP was that it tried to strip away entitlements, such as meal allowances. The former LNP government did not care about paramedics. It accused paramedics of fraud for claiming a meal entitlement. It was just awful, horrible stuff. Whenever an LNP member came to visit Townsville, the staff hated it. They did not want to be at the station. At that time, they were mainly ramped at the hospital anyway. They could not stand the sight of the LNP members because of the way they treated the ambulance officers.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I lost my entire front office. The LNP government sacked our community first aid people and baby capsule fitters. It did not care. It sacked the lot.

Those opposite did not invest in the Ambulance Service. Under this Labor government we have seen one of the best investments in the Ambulance Service of this state. I am proud to have served with the Queensland Ambulance Service for 28 years. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame. They contributed nothing in their time in government. We have turned it around. We now have 711 paramedics. We do not get ramping in Townsville anymore because we have invested and we have invested well.

I am very pleased to see we have invested \$5 million for a new station in my electorate of Thuringowa. We are purchasing more cars. That means more crews are out there responding for calls for service. That is happening not only in Townsville but right across the state. Those opposite should get a mirror and have a good hard look in it. They should hang their heads in shame for the way they treated the ambos in the time that they had in government from 2012 to 2014. That was the very reason I stuck my hand up and said, 'No, they cannot treat our ambos like this. I will run.' I am proud to be the member for Thuringowa standing up for our paramedics and nurses and making sure that we get the best healthcare system in the state.