



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 October 2019

## ADJOURNMENT

### Townsville, Community Safety

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (7.15 pm): I want to acknowledge the Scouts in the public gallery. I am a big supporter of Scouts in Thuringowa. Also, it would be completely remiss of me not to acknowledge my wife, Amanda, who is down from Townsville and in the public gallery today.

Speaking of Townsville, the good people of Townsville have endured terrible events over recent days regarding criminals involved in stolen cars and driving with no regard for the public, placing our community at risk of injury. Due to the requirement to use the Queensland Government Air helicopter in providing overhead assistance in tracking these disgraceful individuals, commercial aircraft were either delayed or diverted coming into our city. It brought a day of shame to our normally proud city that received national attention for all the wrong reasons.

Rightfully, the people of Townsville have called for this to stop and I echo their calls for immediate assistance to apprehend these offenders and place them before the courts, and we can only hope that they are sentenced appropriately. I agree with the Townsville public: they want sentences to meet community expectations. I thank both the Premier and the Minister for Police for meeting with me yesterday and for their swift response in today announcing a targeted police operation, Romeo Seville, in the Townsville community targeting in particular recidivist offenders. They have apprehended those offenders, and we thank the police for the work that they have done. Sadly, the ages of those offenders are 11, 12 and 13. It is disgraceful that their parents do not care. They have failed those children.

As the local member I will stand up and do everything in my power to help make our communities safer. We have already delivered over our election commitment of 53 additional police, taking the number to 103 since 2017; boosted the Thuringowa QPS RAP hub from 20 to 40 officers; and we are about to open the Upper Ross police facility, expanding it from two officers to 10. That is in stark contrast to the LNP, which had exactly zero police for Townsville in its 2017 election commitments, had plans to sell off the North Queensland police academy and sacked 300 police staff. It had failed boot camps with 70 per cent recidivism rates. Recently we passed the youth justice amendment bill, which is explicit in that clause 48 states that it will provide the courts and police more powers to keep youth offenders in custody should they pose a serious risk to the community or commit an offence.

It is interesting to note that the shadow minister for police and member for Toowoomba North has recently been quoted in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* saying that those opposite do not want people incarcerated. We do. We want to hold people to account and get these criminals off the streets. The member should hang his head in shame after his comments at a meeting in Townsville in response to the positive news of law and order, saying—

I don't want to hear that, that won't help the LNP.

After hearing that in the House this morning, all I can say is that nothing will help the LNP. It is completely hopeless.