




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2020

MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.31 pm): I always like to contribute in the 'scream'. They cannot be taking their motion too seriously. It is the member for Everton's motion, yet he could not even speak for five minutes on it. I rise to speak against the motion moved by the LNP and their ship of fools who have a legacy of failure in the youth crime space. They hid their crime statistics; we report them. This is the same mob who have a shameful history of never actually doing anything of substance in their time under Campbell Newman.

Let us start with the boot camps—\$16 million of taxpayers' money wasted, resulting in 70 per cent recidivism. The member for Clayfield wants to talk about helicopters. We have two of them! We can talk about a certain helicopter ride by 'Lord Farquaad', the ever smiling member for Kawana, who should hang his head in shame, flying to the boot camp in that helicopter—'hello Bronwyn Bishop!'—at taxpayers' expense. Perhaps he needed the chopper to bring back the thousands of dollars donated by the very people who ran Lincoln Springs—shame, shame, shame!

Just weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition was in Townsville to offer up their new plans, with a rebadged boot camp. Yes, they dusted off the Campbell Newman boot camp plans with a—wait for it, members—'farm stay'. They cannot be serious. This is not being tough on crime. Sending them off to a 'farm stay'. Did you see the interview? What a train wreck. The LNP candidate for Mundingburra—and there are some questions to be asked there—is the same bloke who ran TSCAG. I am sure the member for Mundingburra has some questions about perhaps being led up the garden path. He was responsible for reducing crime in Townsville. He did not know where to look. He stood behind the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr HARPER: He looked down and then he looked to the side.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Thuringowa, resume your seat. Member for Ninderry, you are warned under the standing orders. You are interjecting. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Ninderry withdrew from the chamber at 5.34 pm.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I have made myself clear. When warnings are issued, there are to be no interjections from those members.

Mr HARPER: The LNP candidate did not know where to look because the leader was asked who will run the farm stay. 'Well,' she said, 'um, um—people. People will run it.' When asked what these young people could do, she offered up, 'Um, um—fencing. They could learn fencing.' For goodness sake, the LNP do not have a plan. This is a thought bubble written on the back of a coaster.

Our government knows that locals should have a say in how we respond to youth crime and we have listened. Locals wanted and petitioned for on-country programs in Townsville, and that is exactly what we have delivered. Young people have been referred already.

Community safety comes first in Townsville and young people must be held accountable. We have implemented tough new bail laws to ensure that if young people are an unacceptable risk to the community they must be refused bail. I ask the LNP: do they support community safety? Do they?

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr HARPER: You do? Good.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Coomera will cease his interjections.

Mr HARPER: I will take the interjection. Why do they oppose strengthening of the bail laws? If a young person continues to reoffend, they will be held accountable.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Clayfield will cease his interjections.

Mr HARPER: The Newman government introduced an offence of finding of guilt for another offence while on bail, and the court ruled that it did not work. Results are clear: 90 per cent of those offenders reoffended within 12 months—another fail under the LNP. Our strong bail laws nullify the LNP's breach of bail because those serious offenders—the hard nuts who we are going after—will not get bail. Making breach of bail an offence is a waste of the court's time. Further offences committed on bail are considered seriously and dealt with by the courts and penalties applied.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mr HARPER: Our five-point plan to crack down on youth crime was announced in March: offenders posing a risk to the community must not get bail; a police blitz on bail and appealing court decisions—a 100 per cent success rate I hear, Minister. Our 24/7 co-responder model is already happening. In Townsville last week that co-responder team attended 40 jobs, conducted 32 street checks, completed 17 address checks—this is 24 hours a day. This is what we are doing under our government. We are empowering local communities in the war on crime with \$2 million for local crime action committees in 10 places, a further \$200,000 on top of substantial investment in the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group.

That is the government investment and our reforms are working. What we are left with is a hard core group of offenders. We are going after them. We will go to Townsville and do something about it. The LNP have a legacy of failure. They never, ever achieved anything in their time in government.