



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

---

Record of Proceedings, 13 August 2020

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Thuringowa Electorate**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.28 pm): I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government, which has prioritised the health, safety and welfare of people in Queensland with regard to keeping them safe from the global pandemic COVID-19. This has allowed us to get on with our economic response and deliver for the people of North Queensland, including my electorate of Thuringowa. It is about supporting people to get a job—whether that is through our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, Back to Work Youth Boost, Works for Queensland fund, or perhaps by supporting tradies by increasing the First Home Buyers' Grant or an additional \$5,000 per regional applicant, taking state and federal grants to \$45,000.

I had a great conversation with a taxidriver on the way to the Townsville Airport recently. He said that he and his family were so excited to be building their first home by accessing that grant and supporting local jobs. As we have seen in our delivery of job-generating infrastructure like Riverway Drive stage 1, it attracts more private industry—it becomes a catalyst, and they are investing in our local community—such as the \$30 million Riverway Plaza development, which is creating over 300 jobs over the life of its project. It is led by local company Phoenix Constructions.

**Ms Farmer:** Where is it?

**Mr HARPER:** It is on Riverway Drive. Soon tenders will be announced to build the \$250 million Townsville Ring Road duplication stage 5 that runs through the very heart of Thuringowa—and is connected to Riverway Drive. It will be creating more jobs.

We have invested millions in opening up the North West Minerals Province. There is a further \$16 million in CopperString 2.0 which will attract more investment in the resource sector. We are committed to raising the Burdekin Dam wall and we are investing in the Kidston pumped hydro project where we committed over \$130 million to build the high-voltage line required for transmission of that pumped hydro power—supporting over 500 jobs. It is all about creating local jobs.

However, recently, as you know, Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, we had to go it alone. We had to go it alone on stage 2 of the Haughton water pipeline after the federal member for Herbert, Phillip Thompson, promised the people of Townsville in the lead-up to the last federal election that they would fund and deliver it, with no strings attached; however, a year later, they had not lifted a finger. It was all a ruse. They would give \$195 million in one hand and take \$156 million away with the other through enforcing that our state government does not receive its full GST allocation. The member for Herbert let down the people of Townsville. He broke his promise. It came, as we found, with strings attached and we should never forget that. In North Queensland, your word is your bond. You cannot promise us something in North Queensland and not deliver.

I want to acknowledge and commend the Water for Townsville Action Group and their 12,000 members for their advocacy for water security. They have worked hard with us for so long. I want to thank the Premier and Treasurer for backing North Queensland by fully funding stage 2 of the water pipeline and creating a further 1,000 jobs.