




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 11 March 2021

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Kirwan Ambulance Station

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.33 pm): On 22 December 2020 I was very proud to officially open the brand new \$3.2 million Kirwan Ambulance Station. I thank the Minister for Health for allowing me to do that. As she said this morning, the minister visited the station a few weeks ago. We were joined by retired senior staff, current staff, our local ambulance committee members, the members for Mundingburra and Townsville, Deputy Commissioner Dee Taylor-Dutton and my wife, Amanda Harper, in her capacity as then acting assistant commissioner. It was a really special day a few days before Christmas. I would have put a bow on it!

I know that the staff are very excited by the new station. The original station was built in 1979 as a substation, with an OIC residence at the rear of the station. It was staffed with just two officers and had one ambulance. Fast-forward 40 years and in its place stands a modern, state-of-the-art station. I was very proud to work at the station in my years on the road and in my capacity as Acting OIC in 2014, prior to being elected. Mind you, I spent a bit of time there in 1990 when I first joined the service, because if you ever upset the superintendent in Townsville station you were shipped over to the substation. I did a fair bit of time at Kirwan!

As the local member, I have a really good working relationship with my OICs, be they fire, police or ambulance. In 2014 I went to the then member for Thuringowa as I had some serious issues with the station. The modern ambulances could not fit under the roof. Only four cars could fit in and new students would be hitting the roof—literally. The then member had no solution. Clearly, it took a Labor member to deliver what was needed. I was pretty disappointed. I walked out. Prior to the election I thought, 'That is pretty disappointing.' I thought he was about as handy as a hip pocket in a singlet. No wonder he was a 'oncer' in this place. He was deposed in 2015 only to jump to One Nation and then the Katter party before he lost again—absolutely hopeless.

The new station reached practical completion on 21 October 2020 and commenced operations on 12 November 2020. It now houses 10 ambulance response vehicles, 56 staff and one honorary ambulance officer—me. I am very proud to continue service and to have a connection with QAS in that capacity. It is a special asset. I thank the community for getting behind the original petition many years ago. They know how important it is to have a new station in Kirwan. I am very proud to have delivered it in my time.