




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.12 pm): I rise to support the appropriation bills. It is timely to mention that I used to sit behind Duncan. He loved giving his speech on the budget. He would always insert a bit of humour. Peggy, we miss you, mate. This one is for you.

From the start I thank the Treasurer for the great, big budget for regional Queensland, the city of Townsville and my electorate of Thuringowa! What can I say? It is a good budget and I am proud to share it with the people of Thuringowa. If the result had gone to the LNP—God help us—Thuringowa would have missed out on \$100 million in infrastructure that will support local jobs.

First, I want to address the Leader of the Opposition, who gave his budget reply speech today—yes, the member for Broadwater, David ‘Fusilli’ Crisafulli. For anyone with a knowledge of pasta, fusilli is a thin, weak, tightly spun pasta that does not hold much flavour. That is what the leader—

Mr Madden interjected.

Mr HARPER: This is what happens. He amounts to nothing. He has nothing. He is a running a show about nothing over there. What a joke—attacking our record on health, housing and crime and attacking infrastructure that is creating jobs! We are going to belt that budget right out the back row! There was no mention of the 5.4 per cent unemployment rate announced today or the 33,000 jobs created last month—nothing. He has nothing! There was no mention of the 900 surgeries cut under Scott Morrison and the attack on Medicare and our health system that will leave people waiting for their orthopaedic or heart surgeries—nothing. He talked about nothing!

He talked about our ageing population. He should know that the federal government is responsible for aged care. There was not one word about the 100,000 people on the waitlist who, as we heard, are dying waiting for their home care packages—nothing. There was not one word about the fact that we do not have a GP in Townsville who bulk-bills in the residential aged-care facilities, so residents require an ambulance, putting more pressure on our public health system. It is all about Medicare. There was not one word to address that.

Then he went on about housing. There was not one word about the federal LNP who absolved themselves and walked away from social housing and rural and remote Indigenous housing—nothing. Under Labor, we have record funding for housing—\$2.9 billion for housing. We will continue to support those people.

There was this continued rubbish about breach of bail. He knows breach of bail failed—90 per cent reoffended. Leave it alone. It failed. Move on!

He then went on to talk about our \$30 million funding commitment, which I know will be delivered in full, to build a new police station at Kirwan. Yet his own charge—the LNP candidate in Thuringowa in 2020—did not even have a commitment to rebuild or replace the Kirwan Police Station—nothing.

Mr Smith: No commitment.

Mr HARPER: No commitment—nothing! There was nothing for the police station. There was nothing for Riverway Drive. There was nothing like the \$1 million that I got in this budget for the Weir school. Sorry, member for Pine Rivers. She is going. I am starting to yell—nothing, nothing! There was nothing like the \$1 million for the new catering hall at Heatley or the \$2.4 million for Kirwan school upgrades or the \$350,000 for Kelso primary—nothing. I have a theory: he is Newman. Under all of that, it is Newman. He is back! He is Newman mark 2.

Seriously, \$913 million in infrastructure for Townsville signals that we have not been forgotten in the regions. We have already spent over \$1 billion in infrastructure such as the Haughton pipeline stage 1. On the front page of the budget paper there is \$195 million for stage 2. We know that the LNP member for Herbert—the member for Townsville knows this well—completely failed the people of North Queensland after promising to fully fund stage 2 if he got elected. He pulled the wool over the eyes of the people of Townsville. I hope they repay him in spades by not forgetting that fact when it comes to the federal election.

I say to the member for Herbert—I hope he is listening, which I doubt, because he certainly has not been listening to the people of Townsville: please change your logo to ‘not fighting for Townsville’, because in the federal election there was not one infrastructure project announced. There was nothing. Nothing was announced. The \$195 million that the federal member promised and never delivered has suddenly disappeared. He never had it. In stark contrast, our budget delivers in spades for the people of Thuringowa.

Following our excellent health response, we again back our health team in North Queensland by funding \$1.1 billion for our hospital and health service. I love our doctors and nurses. We have 182 more doctors, 249 more nurses and, for my friends in the Ambulance Service—and for the smart remark the member for Moggill made—46 more ambulance officers and a new ambulance station. We back our health service, while those on the other side sack health workers.

I thank the health minister for allocating planning funds for the Kirwan Health Campus expansion. This is a total commitment of \$40 million, which I know we will deliver over this term of government. I am very proud of our Townsville University Hospital, but I want to shine a light on the Kirwan Health Campus and why it is so important to support and modernise this 37-year-old campus. They have four community health facilities. They have the Parklands aged-care facility, the Townsville Community Care and Acquired Brain Injury Unit and the Josephine Sailor Adolescent Inpatient Unit. They deserve this funding. This again signals that local jobs will be created when we move to build the new Kirwan Health Campus.

Let me move to schools. Out of the \$37 million for schools in Townsville, we have \$12 million for schools in Thuringowa. I am rapt. Thank you very much.

When it comes to road projects—members think I am going to talk about Riverway Drive, not yet! There is \$65 million for the Townsville Ring Road stage 5, supporting 400 jobs. We are doing it. We are getting on with it. Then, of course, there is Riverway Drive stage 2. What can I say? Next year they start digging. There is \$2 million allocated for that.

We have a Treasurer who is backing the people of Townsville with a great Labor budget. Thank you very much, Treasurer. Thank you, Premier. I am done!