




Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2022

**POLICE LEGISLATION (EFFICIENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS) AMENDMENT  
BILL 2021**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.42 pm): I intend to make a positive contribution to the debate of the Police Legislation (Efficiencies and Effectiveness) Amendment Bill 2021. From the start, I thank and acknowledge the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for the work it did on this bill and the work it does in this area. I managed to meet with committee members in Townsville during public hearings, and they do some sterling work. I also thank very much the Minister for Police, Mark Ryan, who is in the House today, for his vision to build and strengthen our Queensland Police Service with a commitment of over 2,000 more police in this state, the single largest investment in 30 years. I know how important that is to all of our communities. I know that it is also supported very much by the Queensland Police Union.

The Queensland Police Service is world class. It has done a remarkable job in keeping Queenslanders safe during the COVID pandemic. Police have done much during the pandemic and it is important that, with all the challenges they are expected to address, we give them the best, most efficient operating environment. If we can streamline processes relating to certain documents and get police back on the front line faster, we should do so. This is one measure this bill proposes in relation to witnessing certain documents. It is anticipated—we have heard it from other speakers—that 22,000 hours of police time will be returned to the front line annually. If we can ensure the right frameworks exist to disrupt crimes perpetrated using mobile phones and other electronic devices, we should do so. This bill does that and, in doing so, builds on the laws passed in 2019 in relation to non-consensual sharing of images—crimes that we know have a lasting impact on victims.

I have seen the difference a well-supported Police Service makes to my community in Thuringowa. Thanks to the Palaszczuk government's historic investment, Queensland will benefit from those thousands of additional police personnel. At least 150 extra police officers will be deployed to each of the state's policing regions including the northern police region, which takes in our city of Townsville. This means that this financial year alone the northern police region will get an extra 50 police officers. That is in addition to the almost 130 extra officers already delivered to the northern police region under the Palaszczuk government. Even more are on the way. I thank the minister. There are more than 900 police officers permanently based in the northern police region, and it will not be long before it is over 1,000. I have formed relationships with police in my current role, but I have known police for many years on a personal level in my former career as a paramedic with the Ambulance Service. I know that always draws—

**A government member:** Really?

**Mr HARPER:** Yes, I was. From conversations I have with police I can say that they are extremely impressed with what the Labor government is doing to build infrastructure and deliver more police in our regions and communities.

**Ms Pease** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I take that interjection from the member for Lytton. For the first time ever, a deputy police commissioner is now permanently based in North Queensland. I give a shout-out to Deputy Commissioner Paul Taylor, Assistant Commissioner Mark Wheeler and District Superintendent Craig Hanlon. Each one of them—and the men and women who each day put on the police uniform—helps keep our community safe in sometimes really challenging conditions. I thank each of those fine senior officers who keep me regularly updated on police operations as they continue to tackle head-on crime in our community. I have every confidence in our police in Townsville that they do indeed apprehend offenders and hold offenders to account. They also go above and beyond, particularly in times of disaster. We saw it in the 2019 Townsville and North Queensland floods and we have seen it again recently with the South-East Queensland and Brisbane flood disasters. I am incredibly proud of their commitment to our community and of what they do across the state.

Our increased police presence in the region is further bolstered by our police having the right resources. As opposed to the LNP, which told police to tighten their belts and pay for their own body-worn video cameras, in Townsville we have delivered close to 5,000 QLiTE devices to frontline police, close to 600 body-worn video cameras, 335 tasers, 130 police vehicles and six vessels. I again thank the minister for making Townsville a priority.

When we talk about police efficiencies, I must remind members of the announcement earlier this year when the Premier and the minister visited Thuringowa to announce our government's commitment to build a brand new, \$30 million Kirwan police precinct at the site of the 1300SMILES Stadium. This will be fantastic for our city. That is just stage 1. There is more to come. I will have more to say on that as it progresses. This is a government that puts community safety as an absolute priority. We are supporting more police and new facilities to accommodate them.

Some years ago I lobbied hard with the minister for the two police beats in the Upper Ross—they had single officers and could only work day shifts—to be amalgamated and to deliver a brand new station in Rasmussen which now has 10 officers and serves that community beautifully. Hats off to each one of those officers for the work they do.

The Palaszczuk government's significant investment means that police have the support and resources they need to do their jobs. Members of the LNP love to talk tough when it comes to policing and crime but, really, they have no idea. I am not blaming them—they had a crack—but they failed. Fewer police, less resourcing, privatisation and failed boot camps with high reoffending rates are not the ingredients for a safer community. Like I said, I am not blaming the LNP. Granted, they tried, but their efforts failed. Failed breach of bail laws saw 90 per cent of offenders charged and reoffending. Our government has the balance right. Those opposite like to talk integrity, like they did in the House this morning. The well and truly documented Lincoln Springs failed boot camp provided a \$5,500 donation to the LNP just days before the announcement. If those opposite want to talk integrity, they should have a look in their own backyards.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** You weren't even around.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Order! Member for Buderim!

**Mr HARPER:** The member for Buderim was not even around. He has no idea of the secrecy, the lies and the mistruths of the LNP in getting donations to deliver failed boot camps. They should hang their heads in shame.

**Mr WATTS:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has used an unparliamentary term.

**Mr HARPER:** If I have, I apologise.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member.

**Mr HARPER:** In Townsville we have strengthened our Police Service. Additional police have been deployed right across this great state. We give the police the resources they need to keep our community safe and, as this bill demonstrates, we put the right frameworks in place to support the police to do what they do best—that is, being on the front line, engaging with the community, disrupting crime and, above all, keeping Queenslanders safe. I am very proud of the deliveries that we have been able to advocate for. My friends in Far North Queensland and Mackay all work together to get more police in our communities to tackle those issues. We do it with the support of the police minister. We do it with the support of the Premier. This is what Labor governments do.

This is in stark contrast to what we saw under the LNP Newman-Crisafulli-Bleijie government. They took helicopter trips. You thought Julie Bishop was bad! It was the brand new then attorney-general—

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I take your interjection. The brand new then attorney-general got a helicopter to fly him up to Lincoln Springs—he charged taxpayers \$15,000 for that. That is an absolute disgrace. Those opposite have made him Deputy Leader of the Opposition. There are integrity issues all around him. The man hired a helicopter to transport his shiny backside up to Lincoln Springs—look at me, look at me—and it failed. The people involved reoffended. He spent \$15,000 of taxpayers' money. How has that man been promoted within their party? How did he do the numbers? Did anyone in the LNP look at that?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member, I will ask you to come back to the bill.

**Mr McCallum** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I take the interjection from the member for Bundamba. I was asked on radio in 2014-15, 'Have you ever been in a helicopter?' I said, 'Yes, for thousands of hours in a rescue helicopter looking after people.' I was not wasting taxpayers' money.

**Mr WATTS:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Anything relevant to the bill would be useful from the member.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am listening very closely.

**Mr HARPER:** We back our police; we do not sack our police. We will keep doing it every day. That is in stark contrast to the dismissal failures of the LNP when they were in government. You got it wrong—admit it. We are doing a better job. We are delivering more police. I am proud of the Labor government. It is about time they started working with the government to do more.

**Mr McCallum** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** There are three new police helicopters—how good is that. There are more drones. There are a lot of drones on that side of the House! They are dragging the chain like an anchor—the anvil of disappointment.

*(Time expired)*