




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2022

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Federal Election, Funding Commitments

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.32 pm): I am combative by nature and I will not shy away from a fight or from fighting for the people of Thuringowa on tackling the hardest issues, like crime and community safety. We are delivering 150 more police, more police stations and more resources. We have changed laws in this place with bipartisan support—serious offenders must not get bail, presumption against bail. We have delivered programs and funding, with millions of dollars for Project Booyah, Transition 2 Success, Clontarf, STARS, the pathways college, flexi school, the Lighthouse, and Murri Court, and I am working hard to deliver a specialist youth Murri Court in Townsville. In my community of Thuringowa, I have got Community Gro which are delivering a diversionary program. They get recurrent funding of \$500,000 to look after young people after hours—from when school finishes until about 11 o'clock at night. They do a great job looking after 65 kids a quarter.

We are delivering—versus the LNP, which consistently blame the state government on this issue. They tried boot camps but failed. They tried serious reoffending. They tried breach of bail. They failed. That is a 10-year-old policy. We had the Leader of the Opposition in Townsville trying to say that it is the best thing since sliced bread. It failed, with 90 per cent of people reoffending.

They continue to blame the state government, when the Prime Minister himself said in Darwin that it is not up to one level of government alone to solve the issue of crime. He then went on to commit \$14 million to the Northern Territory to combat crime. I wrote to the member for Herbert, Phil Thompson, because he stood beside the Prime Minister at that time. He has done nothing but blame the state government and buck pass on this issue, but he has gone missing in action. I wrote to him—and if the printers worked today I would table the letter—and asked where our \$14 million in Townsville is. The Northern Territory population is the same as Townsville and the surrounding district. They got \$14 million. He misled the people in the Upper Ross Community Centre the other night when he said that it was to deliver more police for the Northern Territory. No, it was not. I will tell you what it did.

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr HARPER: Come in spinner. I will tell you exactly what it did, and it sounds very familiar. It was, as the Prime Minister said—

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr HARPER: I will take your interjection because you have got nothing, mate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Your comments will come through the chair.

Mr HARPER: The member has got nothing. He said that it was to deliver a community-led response, with \$1.2 million for a Safety at Home project, \$1.3 million for youth camps, \$1.5 million for youth training and early intervention services, \$600,000 for CCTV, \$2 million for safe and secure places and \$3.4 million for a mental health service. That is what they are delivering in the Northern Territory,

but what do we get in Townsville? Nothing from Thompson. What he did today was stand up in Townsville—and they are in caretaker mode—and say, ‘If I get elected, I’ll give you \$500,000 for security cameras.’ Are you joking? Where were you three years ago when we needed to tackle it? When the Prime Minister says that all levels of government need—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We have clearly all missed each other over the Easter break. Let us see if we can get through the rest of the afternoon with some order in the House.

Mr HARPER: I say to Phil Thompson, ‘You failed.’ He has gone missing in action. That money should have been delivered in Townsville and he knows it. He has done nothing but blame and buck pass when we need all levels of government working together to address the issue. If they can deliver \$14 million to community safety in the Northern Territory—

Mr Purdie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Ninderry, you are on a warning.

Mr HARPER: I say to the federal member, ‘Stump up.’ Maybe it is out of his reach. Maybe it is above him to deliver for Townsville because he has done nothing but play politics with this. His own Prime Minister said that all levels of government need to work together. He needs to stop with the buck passing, the blaming and the dusting off of the 10-year-old policies that failed. We need to be working together to tackle this. I will not shy away from the toughest issues. I ask the federal member if he gets re-elected to work with us. Help us tackle the issue by working together. That is all we ask.