



Speech By
Aaron Harper


MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.02 pm): Obviously the member for Mermaid Beach is losing the plot. We will check on his health in a minute. I think he is the new self-elected president of the whinge, moan and bemoan club that has started because the consistently poor contributions from the opposition clearly show that the LNP is planning more cuts. We know this because they have not said one word to support the revenue measures in this budget. That means that they do not support making coal companies pay their fair share. If they do not support the coal royalty change, they would cut \$1.2 billion from the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan. They do not support the mental health levy so they would cut \$400 million a year out of the health budget, which would equate to cutting the Townsville University Hospital's 143 beds. I bet the member for Mundingburra would not want to see that under an LNP government. We do not want to see cuts to health. They need to come clean and tell us where the cuts would be under the LNP. It probably means that they would sack more nurses, just like they did last time.

I rise to support the appropriation bills. From the onset I say that this is an historic budget in terms of the funding that the Treasurer has allocated to health, in particular, right across the state. I am the chair of the Health and Environment Committee and recently we identified the causes of the pressures placed on our health system from an ageing and growing population, a population that has difficulties accessing primary and allied health care and that finds it difficult to access a bulk-billing GP, and a large portion of a population that cannot afford the ever increasing cost of private health cover.

It is clear that our Labor government's plan is to increase the capacity in our health system by funding over 2,500 beds across the state. The Townsville University Hospital, the largest retrieval hospital in northern Australia, will be boosted by over \$500 million—half a billion dollars—that will deliver an additional 143 beds. Those beds will be welcomed by our hardworking health staff and also by our Townsville community. Our emergency department sees 250 people a day and sometimes more, with a large percentage walking in to seek care because of the issues I have just raised. To increase bed capacity is a very important measure to tackle the impacts of the pressures on our emergency departments. We will see more nurses, more doctors and more paramedics employed. The QAS's budget will be increased by 11 per cent to meet the increasing demands for its services.

In my electorate of Thuringowa, one particular project that I have long advocated for is the Kirwan health precinct, which delivers community care, aged care, adolescent care, dental care and rehabilitation services, just to name a few. That ageing facility started as the Kirwan women's hospital, where thousands of babies were born and cared for over many years, and included our original neonatal unit. Those services were absorbed into the new Townsville University Hospital at Douglas, which is

perfectly situated beside the James Cook University. However, the Kirwan health precinct continues to deliver vital and important health services to the good people of Thuringowa and we have a plan to deliver a state-of-the-art facility to replace that ageing facility.

We need to provide modern health facilities to ensure that all of those services can continue to be delivered by our dedicated and professional health staff at Kirwan. In 2020 I made a commitment to the people of Thuringowa that we would deliver a \$40 million Kirwan health precinct site and redevelop it completely. In the last budget we received some planning money. That planning is underway and this year I am very pleased to see \$5.4 million allocated to the redevelopment of the Kirwan health precinct.

I have a lot more to contribute on what the budget delivers for my electorate in terms of our schools, the Kirwan police facility, the Townsville Ring Road and, of course, my very favourite topic—wait for it; and I am so pleased that the best minister for transport that this government has ever seen is in the House because he knows how hard I have lobbied for this—Riverway Drive stage 2. We allocated \$20 million to that project and this budget allocates more money to it. I cannot wait to see it start. We know that we need to work with the council to progress the new water pipeline, which has stalled the project a little. In their recent budget council allocated \$34 million to that, so we can get on with the job. This project will reduce congestion and make our roads safer because we have a state Labor government that delivers road funding.

I have heard all the moaning and whingeing from the other side. I say to members opposite: come to North Queensland and we will show you what new road projects are like. The Townsville Ring Road stage 5 at \$230 million and the Haughton connecting road and new bridge at \$500 million are being delivered under a Labor government. That is what we do in North Queensland. We are proud to continue to deliver and work with the minister.

Mr Mander: It's time to incorporate.

Mr HARPER: I will. It is too much for the member for Everton. He does not want to hear the good news. I could go on, but I know that everyone else wants a turn. Members can read all about the projects in my incorporated speech. I have sought leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech and I have the Deputy Speaker's approval. I thank the Treasurer for an outstanding budget that puts people first.

The speech read as follows—

Speaker, this budget delivers for my local schools, and I have long advocated for improving our aging school buildings in Kelso, Rasmussen, Kirwan, Thuringowa and Heatley.

I am pleased to see my local Kelso State School receive \$810,000 to refurbish Blocks 1 and 2 and repaint identified buildings.

Just down the road is Rasmussen State School receive \$440,000 to refurbish 4 learning spaces in Block E.

And Kirwan State School receives \$1.4M for a new administration building and hall renewal.

Up the road Kirwan State High School, and I recently met with new executive Principal Heather Murray, where we have already delivered a state-of-the-art hall, (that is air-conditioned and has a commercial kitchen) delivered by our Labor government to the tune of \$10M for its 2000 students. They will this year receive \$500,000 to refurbish the science learning space and upgrade amenities centre.

One of my election commitments in 2020 was to deliver a new hall for Thuringowa State High School, and I am very pleased to see \$3M out of almost \$6M we committed to build and deliver this new hall for Thuringowa and I want to give them a quick shout-out as recently both I and my wife, Amanda, enjoyed the annual Theatre restaurant to watch the show "SNAP", it was a delightful evening watching these hard working students perform this in an aging and tiny space, and I know the new hall will deliver a far larger space to continue this proud tradition at Thuringowa State High School.

My former school, Heatley Secondary College of which I have already delivered \$12M for school upgrades in the previous term of government and I made an election commitment to deliver a catering Hall with a commercial kitchen, and I am very pleased to see over \$660,000 delivered for that project at Heatley.

Another of my 2020 election commitments was to build a new Kirwan Police facility. I thank the Premier and Police Minister who came to Thuringowa recently to announce the \$30M for the new facility would be located at the former 1300 Smiles Stadium site, the original home of the mighty North Queensland Cowboys.

I am very pleased to see \$14.3M allocated to the demolition of the project site to make way for the new for the new facility, of which \$1M has been allocated. Our hard-working police deserve the very best facilities, I have seen some initial concept pictures of the new facility and was very impressed, as they pay a nod to the history of this site, I am looking forward to being involved in this project, and to ensure that link of the Cowboys is recognized in the new buildings, which I believe should be named in some of the former players who have contributed so much to our community.

In my time in previous terms of government I have proudly already delivered another police facility in the Upper Ross, and a new Ambulance station in Kirwan, so I am proud to deliver this state-of-the-art facility for the hardworking staff of the Queensland Police Service at the Willows site.

Speaker, I wish to update my electorate on roads infrastructure. This budget will deliver safety upgrades to Thuringowa Drive (Tavern St) roundabout and Charles Street improvements to the tune of.

Currently the Townsville Ring Road Stage 5 which runs through the very heart of Thuringowa is underway. This budget allocated \$83.5M towards this co-funded highway upgrade. It has and is delivering over 400 direct jobs and I was recently provided a tour of the work site and commend the professionalism of project manager in delivering this major works, both on time and on budget.

One of my favourite road projects is Riverway Drive Stage 2. After delivering Stage 1 to the cost of \$43M, we have seen over \$40M in private investment in the Upper Ross area.

I lobbied the Main Roads Minister and gave another election commitment in the lead up to the 2020 to deliver Stage 2 of the duplication of Riverway Drive.

By working with the federal government, we have secured a total of \$95M to duplicate Riverway Drive Stage 2.

Our State contribution is \$20M, and I am pleased to see \$5M go towards this project, which we hopefully see start construction soon, however this important project cannot begin until the Townsville City Council completes the duplication of the water main which is situated under Riverway Drive.

One of the biggest job-generating projects in Townsville in the Landsdown Industrial precinct, which will deliver thousands of jobs in battery manufacturing. This budget will deliver \$26M to construct a 13Klm raw water pipeline and pumping station connecting the Lansdown industrial precinct to the Haughton pipeline, which is another proudly delivered Labor project.

We know how important energy production and transmission is in north Queensland, we have seen millions invested in renewable energy and we need to make sure we have the infrastructure in place and upgraded to continue to deliver power to North Queenslanders.

In Thuringowa, we have the mighty Ross Sub Station, located near the Upper Ross Solar Farm. This substation is undergoing a \$28M upgrade and I am proud to see almost \$5M allocated in this budget to ensure we continue to deliver reliable power to the people of Thuringowa.

Speaker, this is another good job generating Labor government budget that focuses on delivering for all Queenslanders and one we should all be proud of for our constituents in our own electorates.

As the State member for Thuringowa, I am pleased to see over \$185M allocated to the people of Thuringowa in this state budget for roads, health, police, schools and so much more, all delivered for the people of Thuringowa.

I commend the Bill to the House.