



Speech By **Aaron Harper**

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2023

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Childhood Brain Cancer, The Cure Starts Now

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.00 pm): Someone has to do it and every now and then, in parliament, I do not mind bravely wearing a bright colourful suit for a very good cause. This year, my 'dare to wear' challenge is the precursor to The Cure Starts Now truck convoy that is happening on Sunday in Townsville. This is a call to all in this House to help raise money to fund research for children's brain cancer. I give a shout-out to Triple M's Steve 'Pricey' Price. My pink floral outfit is being repaired and Pricey said, 'I'll give you \$1,000 if you wear this suit into the parliament.' There is our first \$1,000. This disease affects children in all of our electorates so I ask all members to, please, think about making a donation to The Cure Starts Now.

The Cure Starts Now Foundation was formed by Townsville dad Ren Pedersen after losing his seven-year-old daughter, Amy, in 2009. The Cure Starts Now Foundation is nationally known for providing direct financial support for research into this cancer, which is called DIPG, Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma. It is a cancer that is rare and fast growing. It is a tumour that forms in the cells of the brain stem and it is incredibly hard to treat. It has a terrible prognosis. The cancer occurs in children and it is terminal.

Ren reached out to a local in my community, Todd Martin, through his connection to Camp Quality when Amy was diagnosed. When Camp Quality closed its Townsville office, Ren asked Todd to help in restarting the annual truck convey, which is now in its seventh year. The convoy is well supported by the Townsville community. People come out in their thousands to support the event.

A government member: And a good local member.

Mr HARPER: Thank you, mate. I will be putting the Harper truck in the convoy. I thank Todd whose work is to be commended. Outside of his working career, Todd provides all aspects of the event including administration, sponsorship, governance, media, logistics and operations.

Over 140 trucks and bikes, including my Harper community truck, will partake in Sunday's convoy, which travels 20 kilometres through Townsville streets and up Riverway Drive, concluding at the dam where we will announce the amounts raised. In 2017, the first amount raised was \$24,000; last year, our Townsville community raised \$138,000. We have already raised up to \$30,000 and by the end of this speech—thank you, Premier—we will have another \$2,500. Before acknowledging all of the participating members—and I will have to take a breath before I do that—I give a shout-out to the Queensland police and staff from Transport and Main Roads who will manage the road corridor during the convoy.

On top of the \$1,000 from Pricey, the Premier's generous donation and that of community members, branch members and my staff, I acknowledge the contributions of the members for Miller, Waterford, Redlands, Mackay, Caloundra, Morayfield, Maryborough, Toohey, Pine Rivers, Bundaberg, Bundamba, Rockhampton, Bulimba, Macalister, Bancroft, Mansfield, Cook, Stafford, Pumicestone, Mount Ommaney, Ipswich West, Townsville—which was a very generous donation—Capalaba, Algester, Springwood, Gaven, Keppel and yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker and member for Stretton. This is a great cause and I thank you all. We have just hit \$5,000 and the cure starts now.