



Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MOTION

Liberal National Party, Health

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.01 pm): This proud Palaszczuk Labor government backs our health staff. We do not sack our health staff. I say to the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow health minister and member for Mudgeeraba: you need to own your mistakes of the past. I remind people in my electorate, in our hometown of Townsville, every single day that 400 of the 4,400 health staff who were sacked in this state were part of the Townsville health network. I knew some of them personally. You need to own your mistakes. Those opposite have never apologised for sacking those staff. The Labor government has replaced them. In Townsville we have replaced 337 nurses, 208 doctors, 110 health professionals and 65 more paramedics. That is 700 health staff we put back in after the damage of the LNP. I speak with health staff in our city all the time. I have dear friends who work at the Townsville University Hospital. They remember the days of—and they never want to go back those days—‘you have nothing to fear’.

We all remember the days when you could go to an ambulance station and there would be a forward-facing contact where you could go and do your first aid training. In 2014 I was the officer in charge of the Hugh Street Ambulance Station. All of our first aid trainers were sacked. Our baby capsule fitter, Dennis, had been with us for 20 years. He was sacked. He was a broken man. He came into my office and he was crying. If you have ever been to a job where a baby survived an accident because of the capsules we hired out but a parent or grandparent succumbed to injuries, you know the value of those capsules. You could not put a price on them.

People often ask me, ‘Why are you here, Aaron? Why did you go into parliament?’ Johnathan Thurston came in to get his baby capsules fitted. He did that with all of his kids. He said, ‘Aaron, this is wrong. Dennis can’t lose his job. He’s part of the community.’ So a petition was started, and within 24 hours 700 mums had signed it. I signed it. My assistant commissioner of the day, Rodney Walz, the former assistant commissioner up there, received a phone call from the Leader of the Opposition. The now member for Broadwater was then the member for Mundingburra. Rodney Walz came down to see me and he said, ‘The member wants your head on a platter.’

‘Nothing to fear’; do members remember that? He threatened to sack me for speaking out against the Newman government, which sacked people in our state. I will remind people every single day that that is why I am in this House—because I was an angry ambo—and I will stand up for health workers in our city every single day. The LNP need to apologise for what they did but they never will. It is in their DNA.

(Time expired)