



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2023

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Ambulance Service**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.58 pm): On Monday I nearly choked on my cornflakes when I was reading the *Courier-Mail* article in which the LNP and the Leader of the Opposition were carrying on about meal overtime for paramedics. I thought I would share with the House my experience as a negotiator on an enterprise bargaining team with my union, whom I have been proudly associated with for 33 years, then United Voice, now the United Workers Union.

During those negotiations—which were deplorable, by the way—we would fly down from regional Queensland to represent our members and the negotiating team from the government would not even turn up. They were trying to break the back of the union. What they tried to remove with their offer—and their offer was deplorable—was meal overtime. Paramedics in this state deserve meal overtime. On many occasions in my 30-year career, when I had just purchased a meal—it might be from Subway or somewhere else—I was asked to go to a code 1 emergency case. As all paramedics in this state do, I always put the patient first.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** That is typical of the LNP. I hear the whingeing and whining from the other side. They also tried to take away afternoon and night penalties as well as weekend penalties. That was utterly rejected by our members from across Queensland to the point where we joined with the firies from the United Firefighters Union to stand in front of this place. We rallied in our thousands. Not one LNP member—and plenty of them sat around the cabinet table, member for wherever you are but not for long—had the intestinal fortitude to come down and face angry ambos and firies who were being stripped of their entitlements by the LNP. I can tell the House that they will do it again. It is in their DNA. The LNP only know how to sack, cut and sell. What they did to our emergency services was terrible.

Given that it is the last sitting day and nearly Christmas, I want to send a message to our hardworking emergency services personnel, ambos, police, rural firies, SES volunteers, nurses and all of those who will be working over Christmas. They absolutely deserve their penalties and they absolutely deserve our thanks for looking after Queenslanders. Summer is coming and we do not know what is ahead of us, but we thank them in advance from the bottom of our hearts. With the indulgence of the House, I wish everyone a merry Christmas. I am looking forward to seeing everyone back here in 2024.