




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Townsville City Council, Election

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (6.27 pm): I want to finish this week on a brighter note given Pink is in Townsville and it is my wife's birthday in a couple of days. However, I have to deal with the fallout from the election of the local government and mayor, particularly regarding Troy Thompson. Although he has not yet been declared mayor, he was formerly the One Nation candidate in Thuringowa in 2020 who was disendorsed. He was found to be in contempt for his disgraceful behaviour against me—the harassing, the intimidation and the horrible election campaign. I have gone through three elections but nothing quite like this.

There is an unwritten rule in this place that you do not bring family into it. People can disagree with my party and my politics, but do not bring family into it. Still to this day, my wife is affected by the 2020 election. She feels physically ill being around Mr Thompson. At least the member for Mirani had the decency to personally apologise to me. Mr Thompson never has. I do not know how we are going to have a working relationship. I do get on with other councillors but, my goodness me, leave family out of it. We have been through hell.

I have received direct threats of bashings to my family. My wife and I have had to do extreme things to our house. It has had an effect on my wife's and my anxiety. It is just wrong, and my kids have now been dragged into it. This is the impact individuals have. Leave it at the door. Leave your politics at the door. Our families are the people who support us in this House. He has now accused me that I am the reason he is banned from this place. I have here the Ethics Committee report, which I table.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 206, 57th Parliament—Matter of privilege referred by the Speaker on 13 August 2020 relating to the alleged behaviour of a visitor signed into the parliamentary precinct by a member, and the failure of the member to adequately supervise that visitor [438](#).

It was the Speaker who made that ruling and this man needs to come clean on that. He needs to come clean on his disendorsement. I have an actual letter. He said that he was not disendorsed. Here is a letter from Neil Symes, a state executive member. This letter goes into the detail and states—

... your candidacy for Pauline Hanson's One Nation and the seat of Thuringowa has been revoked, effective immediately.

This happened because of a failure to disclose a number of things, and I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 21 September 2020, from Queensland State Executive Member and Candidate Co-Ordinator, Pauline Hanson's One Nation, Mr Neil Symes, to Mr Troy Thompson, regarding Mr Thompson's candidacy for Pauline Hanson's One Nation and the seat of Thuringowa [439](#).

Come clean. If you are going to run for a seat, you need to be honest with people. If you are going to run for mayor, be honest with people and up-front, but leave family out of it. If you do not like me, that is fine. If you do not like my politics or the way I fight for things in Thuringowa, fine. I will fight every day for the people in my electorate, but I love my family and I will protect them fiercely. I will resolve every day to make sure that they are protected from individuals and their displayed behaviour.