




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Riverway Drive

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.51 pm): It gives me great pleasure to stand and update the House on one of my favourite projects in Thuringowa. The Upper Ross is one of the biggest growth areas in the electorate of Thuringowa.

Government members interjected.

Mr HARPER: Yes, I can hear whispers of 'Riverway Drive'. Everyone will know that I fought hard when I was first elected. No LNP candidate, past, current or future, can ever deliver what I have already delivered in terms of the stage 1 duplication of Riverway Drive. That has been an enabler for around \$50 million worth of private investment in new shopping centres and things we have never had before, providing young people with jobs in my electorate, either at the new shopping centre or at any of the adjacent stores. It was a pleasure to cut the ribbon on that and get the commitment in 2020 for stage 2.

I am happy to provide an update to the House that stage 2 has gone to tender. I am aware that four major companies have put in bids for that tender and I am looking forward to the outcome, of seeing who gets it and that they do a cracking job. I doorknocked the entire Upper Ross area in the lead-up to getting the \$95 million commitment for the Labor government to deliver stage 2. Currently, stage 1 finishes at Allambie Lane and 25,000 cars are still using the single lane after that all the way up to Dunlop Street in Kelso, where I live. I proudly travel that road every single day.

I know that making safer roads and busting congestion are all important. I cannot wait for the hundreds of jobs that will be created with stage 2. We have had challenges along the way because it was delayed. A legacy of the former Thuringowa city council was the placement of the main water pipeline under Riverway Drive. We all remember that in 2020 a section of that pipeline broke and the people of Townsville could not use washing machines and they were restricted in toilet flushing and all kinds of things.

Seventy-five per cent of Townsville's water travels nine kilometres from the Ross River Dam through that pipeline under Riverway Drive to the Douglas Water Treatment Plant. We had to put in additional money along with the former city council—and I want to acknowledge former mayor Jenny Hill. The state government went halves with the former mayor; we put in \$33 million to deliver that new pipeline on the other side of the Ross River, away from urban encroachment so we will never again have issues with that pipeline. Nine kilometres of that pipeline have been laid. They just have to do the tie-ins to the end between the Ross River Dam and the Douglas Water Treatment Plant and we can finally get on with construction of stage 2. I know a lot of people who live in the area are keen to see it. It will be another job-generating infrastructure project; it will be another part of our Big Build.

If we use the recent completion of the ring-road as an example—stage 5 of the Townsville ring-road goes through Thuringowa—additional ramps have been added to it and that has enabled two major developments with nearly 2,000 homes to be built, and we need more homes. We have

CopperString, we have Lansdown, we are going to be manufacturing batteries and all kinds of things with the critical minerals that will open up in the north-west. We have the largest defence space in the nation taking on another section from Darwin coming down, so we need more houses. As I drive home along Riverway Drive I can see those developments taking place right now.

In contrast, the former member for Thuringowa, Sam Cox, at the time I was first elected promised to deliver stage 1—and I do not know how because it was half the cost of what was eventually needed to deal with this pipeline—only if we sold the Townsville port and the north-west rail line all the way out to Mount Isa. The people of Thuringowa saw through that and kicked him out. They said, ‘No, that’s not going to happen.’ We wanted to keep our assets in public hands and we did. Our port is expanding as we speak. There is more investment into the area. We know those critical minerals of the North West Minerals Province will help as will the Lansdown production and manufacturing of a number of products that we will export to the world.

It is our Labor government that is investing in major infrastructure, in trunk infrastructure. I cannot wait to get the minister, the Premier and everyone else up there to cut the ribbon on Riverway Drive stage 2 when we finally open it.