




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 30 April 2024

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Community Safety

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.50 pm): It is a well-known fact that an invertebrate like a cockroach does not have a backbone. It is a real shame the Leader of the Opposition scuttled out of here because I want to clear up some facts around when he said that we do not back police and have reduced—

Mr HEAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I understand the member was referring to the presence or absence of members in the chamber. I bring that to your attention as you were not listening.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I was conferring with the clerks at the table at the time. Member for Thuringowa, there is a convention that we do not refer to the absence of a member. If you did do that, I ask you to withdraw.

Mr HARPER: I withdraw. A number of LNP speakers referred to the number of police having dropped under Labor. That is incredibly wrong. Following on from the member for Mundingburra's contribution, I point out that we have 771 police in Townsville—thank you police minister—65 of whom I have been able to secure in Thuringowa since 2015. That included a doubling of the Rapid Action and Patrols hub which the LNP left with 20 officers. It now has 40 officers. I then built an Upper Ross police facility with 10 staff. Kirwan Police Station has gone from 54 to 96 police, which is incredible. We have significantly increased police numbers up there and we back our police. We do not sack police and we do not try to sell the academy either. I am happy that the Premier visited last week because we announced a further \$100 million for the Kirwan police precinct. That is on top of the replacement of the Kirwan Police Station. That is a total investment of \$145 million. That is backing our police.

What did the LNP candidate for Thuringowa want to do with that site—she is on the record about this? I table this document.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 12 September 2020, titled 'Political support secured for true test of trots in Townsville' [708](#).

In 2020 the LNP Thuringowa hopeful announced that the Liberal National Party would support turning that site back into a paceway. I am not going backwards in time; I am going forward. We will deliver a brand new police facility. I ask the LNP candidate for Thuringowa: does that mean if the LNP gets in that they will not be backing the police?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. I ask that the member be brought back to the victims.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. We are not on that bill.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: We are not on the victims' bill? That is a fair call.

Mr HARPER: It is great that the member for Nanango is paying attention in the House. In 2015, we heard those opposite talk about some watering down of the law and that crime is out of control. I table this document from 22 February 2013, which states—

Out-of-control kids terrorising Townsville residents.

Roaming gangs of teens ... as young as 12 have turned a regional city into a war zone ... authorities say ... they are powerless to deal with the problem.

Townsville residents say they are living in terror ...

Tabled paper: Article from the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 22 February 2013, titled 'Out-of-control kids terrorising Townsville residents' [709](#)

I say to those opposite: do not come in here and pretend there is some linear time in the past when laws were watered down. In fact, that was when it was out of control. This article talks about a 16-year-old and a 14-year-old who stole a car and rammed it up against a tree. I went to that job in 2014. Someone nearly lost their life. It was in Albert Street right near the office of the former member for Mundingburra, the now Leader of the Opposition. That was a terrible accident involving a stolen car. I say to members opposite: don't come in here and pretend that it started in 2015 when it was well and truly out of control, as the media reported, in 2012, 2013 and 2014 under the LNP's watch.

We will continue to back police in Thuringowa. I am very proud of that commitment. I thank the police minister for visiting with the Premier and announcing that additional \$100 million. That is unmatched by the LNP or the LNP candidate. In 2020 I was able to secure funding for a brand new Kirwan Police Station. That was unmatched by the LNP. We are constantly backing police in our city. I am happy with the Premier's announcement this morning regarding Queensland's Community Safety Plan which will look after our community by doing everything within it. There are more police. The police helicopter is doing a fantastic job. Assistant Commissioner Massingham was in Townsville. Unbelievably, there has been a nine per cent drop in crime over the past nine months. In the first quarter of this year, there was a 33 per cent reduction in crime largely due to the use of the helicopter in our city. This side of the House backs our police; that side of the House sacks police.