




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2024

MOTION

Miles Labor Government, Travel Expenses

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise to speak to the amended motion. I have been looking forward to it. I think I am going to enjoy it. When it comes to listening and delivering for Townsville, we blow those opposite out of the water. The Premier has been to Townsville so often that I tell him that he should leave a swag at the airport. Every time he comes to Townsville, he delivers for our city. In four short weeks, he delivered a police helicopter. We all know about helicopters—don't we, member for Kawana? We remember his trip up to Lincoln Springs with the same mob that made donations to the LNP. He had to take security with him—\$5,000 an hour. He could not even drive a couple of hundred kilometres. The member for Kawana is nice and quiet on that one. He does not like hearing about that.

When it comes to delivering, we are delivering more police. As I said yesterday, 122 more police are hitting the Townsville streets thanks to the Miles government. The Premier was up there just last week to announce \$100 million for the brand new Kirwan police academy, which we will build under a Labor government. The LNP was going to sell our academy. In Townsville, we back our police; we do not sack our police. We are providing them with the infrastructure and everything else that they need.

Labor are also delivering for our region. I can tell the member for Nanango that Townsville is part of regional Queensland. We are delivering CopperString, which will deliver good, stable jobs and secure our renewable energy future. CopperString is the project that the Leader of the Opposition is absolutely quiet on. Will he back it? Probably not. We are delivering an expansion to the Townsville hospital, which will provide an extra 143 beds.

Mr Walker: Hear, hear!

Mr HARPER: Thank you, member for Mundingburra. That project will support more than 1,000 good construction jobs. It allows our city to have confidence.

Mrs Frecklington: Get back to your amended motion. Even your amended motion isn't touching on this.

Mr HARPER: I take the member for Nanango's interjection and she will love this bit. The LNP do not care about Townsville. Even the Leader of the Opposition did not want to stick around after he lost his seat in 2015. He cut and ran—and, boy, did he cut. On his watch, the LNP cut to the bone and we will not forget: 390 health workers sacked; 197 TAFE workers sacked; 37 police personnel sacked, some of whom I know. They told me what they thought of the Leader of the Opposition. The LNP tried to sell the Port of Townsville. They cut more than \$20 million in road funding. Does the member for Nanango know what the worst thing is? They will do it all again. They do not support our royalty measures. They do not support people in Townsville. I have seen the Premier deliver a lot in Townsville in five short months and we are very thankful for everything he has done. When he comes, he listens, he acts and he delivers. When the Leader of the Opposition comes to Townsville, he gathers his candidates for the standard 20-minute photo shoot on a street or at the C Bar.

I have to tell this story. Back in 2020, the Leader of the Opposition was at the polling booth during the election. He spent the rudimentary 15 minutes doing the handing out with the same candidate that he has endorsed to run against me in this 2024 election. He came over to me on his way out and said, 'You've got this, mate. See you back in parliament.' My goodness me. If you cannot back your own candidate, why would you re-endorse—

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The comment is completely and utterly untrue and I ask the member to withdraw.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! I will hear the point of order in silence.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I take personal offence and ask the comment to be withdrawn.

Mr HARPER: I withdraw.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Broadwater, that language was unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I withdraw.

Mr HARPER: The people in Townsville, the people in Thuringowa, know my record of delivering, champion. I might have hit a nerve, hey. No ticker there, Leader of the Opposition.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Buderim, I was attempting to get your attention but you were yelling so much you did not hear me, even though I was raising my voice. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr HARPER: I will enjoy this last minute because the people of Thuringowa know that I deliver unmatched by the LNP. Your candidate, your charge, did not commit \$30 million to the Kirwan police station and has not committed \$100 million to the academy. You are all gob now. Up in Townsville, when I am out doorknocking in Kirwan, I can tell you what they think of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are warned.

Mr HARPER: I know what the people in Thuringowa think of the Leader of the Opposition. They have described him as slick and slimy and they do not like him in Thuringowa.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will have silence while I take some advice from the Clerk. Member for Thuringowa, you have used unparliamentary language. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr HARPER: I withdraw. The people of Thuringowa know that I will continue to back them and back our local police. We do not sack our police. We will deliver for our city. It is clear by the rejection of the LNP that they do not care about regional Queensland and they do not care about community safety.