




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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ADJOURNMENT

Ambulance Stations

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (6.58 pm): What a great segue into my contribution because I am going to talk about ambulance. Here is to the Kirwan Local Ambulance Committee and the work they do. I worked with many LACs in my former career and that is what I want to talk about tonight.

Mrs McMahon: Were you a paramedic?

Mr HARPER: Yes, I was a paramedic for 30 years, but no-one knows some of the roles I did there. To put this in context, it was not just about treating people. Over my career, I was the acting officer in charge of stations such as Maggie Island, Hughenden, Giru, Ayr, Charters Towers, Townsville, Ingham and Northern Beaches. The very last one was at Kirwan station, which was an old station which could only fit four of the old cars in it. We knew that we needed to deliver a new station there. Working with the community and working with the LAC, we delivered and opened a brand new station in 2018 with capacity for 10 vehicles. It is not just about the vehicles; we got additional staffing as well to respond to the community.

When doing that role, you get to understand demand profiles and response times to make sure you have staff able to respond to an aging and increasing population. That is what we have seen in Townsville. We are weeks away from opening the Burdell ambulance station, just down the road from Northern Beaches where I worked some years ago. That was mapped out some time ago. In my role in Kirwan I knew that the Upper Ross area, where I live in Kelso, was growing. Condon, Rasmussen, Kelso and Gumlow have an area with around 25,000 people living there, with 10 kilometres of Riverway Drive. All I hear from people who live on it is ambulances going up and down, up and down.

I recently had a meeting with the assistant commissioner of the northern region for the Queensland Ambulance Service to ask about response times to the Upper Ross. It has been raised many times with the Upper Ross community group about whether the ambulance would expand into that area. I said that I would be fighting—and I have well and truly started that fight—for a new ambulance station to be delivered in the Upper Ross suburbs. That will get ambulances to people quicker—whether it is a baby having a febrile convulsion or your aging parent having a cardiac event or a respiratory issue like asthma. We want to make sure we can meet demands for a growing area.

I have started an MP petition. I want to thank the hundreds of people who have already signed that. It is online. I will be out doorknocking a lot more. I know that people get right behind our emergency services. I have delivered a new police station and a new rural fire station in the Upper Ross. This commitment for that area is visionary to make sure we have demand for service well into the future.