




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Thuringowa Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.54 pm): You would have to have been living under a rock if you do not know what has been happening in Townsville in the last week. There have been some very important announcements, but I will start my contribution by saying bye-bye to the Broncos, the Dolphins are done, the Titans are tired but the North Queensland Cowboys will be playing the Knights. I hope they knock them over and get the job done at the Queensland Country Bank Stadium on Saturday night. That is a stadium that was proudly built by this Labor government.

Speaking of getting the job done, the job was done last Friday when we did the sod turn on—wait for it—Riverway Drive stage 2. What a journey it has been. First I had to doorknock most of the Upper Ross back in 2014 to get the \$45 million funding secured for stage 1, which duplicated between Gollogly and Allambie Lane. There are 25,000 road users a day on this 10-kilometre road. It is a very busy roadway. We got that job done and we cut that ribbon in 2018.

The rest of the Upper Ross then said that we had to go all the way up towards the dam for stage 2, so I doorknocked thousands of residents on the river side. In 2020 we secured the \$95 million funding required to do stage 2. It is completely different to stage 1. Stage 1 brought around \$50 million worth of private investment with the new Riverway Plaza, which means jobs for locals, and stage 2 will do the same. The Upper Ross consists of Condon, Rasmussen and Kelso. They are very busy and growing suburbs that make up half of my electorate.

People are pretty excited to see that stage 2 has begun, but it did not come easy. The main pipeline under Thuringowa Drive from the Ross River Dam to the Douglas treatment plant broke in 2020, so this government assisted the then Townsville City Council with a further \$33 million to build a brand new pipeline providing water security for our city, from the Ross Dam nine kilometres down. There are some members in this place who helped get that funding and I am forever grateful.

That particular road is now underway. The construction has begun. Over 140 jobs will be created on that. That is what our proud Labor government does. It is job-generating, major road infrastructure that is unmatched by the LNP. There was not one commitment from the LNP in 2020 to do Riverway Drive stage 2. It took a Labor member. I worked hard in that electorate to make sure the thousands of people I spoke to are getting the infrastructure they deserve in the Upper Ross. I cannot wait to invite some members to come up and do the whole drive on Riverway Drive when it is completed all the way to the dam.

Speaking of the dam, I am working with the Townsville Barramundi Restocking Group. They are after \$5 million. There are 74,000 registered boat owners in North Queensland and we want to get them fishing on the dam. There are 120,000 barramundi sitting in that dam just waiting to be caught. I am looking forward to having some people visit my electorate soon. I have an MP petition out there right now to get as much support as I can to get some funding on that project.

If I add it all up, there is \$45 million for stage 1, \$95 million for stage 2 and \$33 million for the pipeline. There is an additional \$8 million that we gave the current Townsville City Council to open up the Beck Drive extension but they have rejected that money. That is \$181 million that I have secured to get into the Upper Ross and deliver that road infrastructure. I urge the Townsville City Council to rethink that and actually open up that back road. We cannot rely on one way in and one way out, despite the duplication. They need to get on with the job and use that money because people want it. They say it is common sense. We have seen thousands of people come into the area on the back of the Townsville Ring Road opening with stage 5. There are two huge land developments right now creating more housing for our area and I am right behind that. They attribute that to the new ring-road.

Just in Thuringowa on roads alone, around \$620 million has been delivered on the ring-road, Riverway Drive and Hervey Range. Only a Labor member will do that. It is completely unmatched by any LNP candidate or any other candidate. None of them are backing the Upper Ross like I am. I will continue to fight and deliver for the best electorate in Queensland—that is, Thuringowa.