



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Hansard 7 December 1999

CAIRNS MINERALS AND LAPIDARY CLUB

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (12.40 a.m.): Last Saturday, I was invited to officially open the renovated and refurbished premises of the Cairns Minerals and Lapidary Club. I was expecting a pleasant afternoon. I was only the newly elected member for Cairns when I first met the newly elected President of the Cairns Minerals and Lapidary Club, Mr Bill Reece. He is a retired gentleman who is prepared to offer his time and considerable efforts to promote the Cairns Mineral and Lapidary Club.

As it turned out, this was more than just a pleasant occasion; it was a special occasion. Through the efforts of Mr Reece and the executive of the club, funds were made available through the Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund, the Reef Casino Benefit Fund and the Cairns City Council. I am pleased to say that I too have added my support to the upgrading of those premises. They have been refurbished to allow for the different work areas that are required. The machinery that is available to students and recreational participants in the club has also been upgraded. A large display area caught the eyes of many people who attended the open day. A modest shop sells mementos for those of us who have a particular interest in gemstones and who take pleasure in jewellery. Even more importantly, those interested in arts and crafts related to minerals, such as sculpting, carving and silversmithing, were catered for. The jewellery and, indeed, the skills of the artists that were on display were well beyond what one would have expected from a recreational environment.

A great number of people from around Cairns attended the club's open day to see what was going on. It was especially pleasing to note that they were people of all age groups. Certainly, senior citizens and other retired people who clearly have taken a long interest in the minerals of far-north Queensland attended. However, it was also clear that younger people and their children were fascinated by the amazing rock formations, the patterns and the diversity of the minerals of far-north Queensland.

A couple of serious issues were spoken about on Saturday, not least of which is accessibility for recreational groups such as the Cairns Mineral and Lapidary Club to areas now under native title. While those groups have previously enjoyed easy access, they are concerned about how they will obtain access to certain areas of interest under the new rules. This is an issue for far-north Queensland in particular, because many of our interstate visitors want to enjoy the occasional day or two fossicking. Of course, those people do not have the time or the resources to go through extended or complicated procedures in order to be permitted access to suitable areas to do that. I am hopeful that in the near future the Government will resolve this minor although important problem for members of clubs such as the Minerals and Lapidary Club.

It was also apparent that the upgrade of the club's premises is not an end in itself. It has opened the door to the expansion of the club's services in all kinds of ways. For example, it has allowed the club to offer tuition services to younger members of the community and newer members of the club who are interested in mineral exploration and usage.

I congratulate Bill Reece and others like him who give of their time, their effort and their money. I also congratulate the club's executive and all its members who have had the faith and the commitment to continue with the project to refurbish the club's premises. They are now seeing the fruits of their labours. Those people bring great benefits Cairns, not only directly through their activities as a mineral and lapidary club but also through the preservation and valuing of our history. The club provides a very safe, important and enjoyable activity for members of the community. May we all wish them well in their future endeavours.