



Speech by

Mr M. HORAN

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TOOWOOMBA CARNIVAL OF FLOWERS

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (11 p.m.): Tonight I want to tell the Parliament about one of the greatest festivals in Australia—the longest continuously running festival, namely, Toowoomba's Carnival of Flowers, which will be held for the 50th time in September this year. It is a marvellous, homegrown event, which commenced in Toowoomba in October 1950. The carnival has run continuously since that time with the assistance of volunteers.

It is great to think that one of Queensland's cities can run such an event for a period of 50 years. The carnival developed out of the Australia Day festival which used to be held at the beginning of the year in Toowoomba. In 1949, a number of meetings were held under the auspices of the chamber of commerce. A subsequent public meeting led to the election of a committee which was led by Alderman Ted Gold. That committee staged the first carnival in October 1950.

Mr Ken Brown, who was involved in the Australia Day event and the Carnival of Flowers that year, was one of the driving forces behind the festival. I remember Ken for his involvement in the floral section of the Toowoomba Show when I used to run the Toowoomba Showgrounds.

The Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers is a very special event. The highlight of the festival is the carnival parade on the Saturday which attracts something of the order of up to 100,000 people. People come to the carnival in buses from all over Queensland. It is a very traditional event. Many people take part in the parade via the floats and bands. The theme of the parade is the beautiful flowers in Toowoomba—our garden city.

The carnival queen quest is one of the strongest features of the festival. The quest raises a considerable amount of funding each year. Last year the entrants raised just over \$30,000. The quest consists of seven sections. Apart from the carnival queen quest, we have sections for younger people and more mature age people. The quest brings together a lot of families. We are all in awe of the way families support the carnival year after year. Companies and businesses in Toowoomba are involved in fundraising and support the girls in the quest. The crowning of the carnival queen will take place on 10 September at a gala ball.

The highlight of the carnival, of course, is the gardens themselves. There are some 26 sections of the garden competition. Throughout the weeks surrounding the carnival we see literally hundreds of busloads of people coming to the city to look at the beauty of the gardens. People notice the way that the gardens blend in with the city.

Throughout the week we have various floral shows in the halls and churches of the city. We have carnivals and sideshows. Shop windows are decorated. We have a number of other cultural events, including fashion parades, sporting events and a speedway. These things make the carnival just that much more special.

This event is run with local help, local sponsorship and local honorary assistance. If ever an event merited financial support from the Government, it is the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers, because it has a track record. It has been running for 50 years and it is successful, it is happy, it is enjoyable, and it is based upon the natural ingredients of Toowoomba and the people of Toowoomba. It has proved to be a wonderful tourist attraction. It is an event in which people can take part.

Being the 50th year of the carnival, this year's festival will have some special events. There will be a special display of memorabilia. There will be the Ergon International Flower Show. Some 200 volunteers will assist in running the flower show. No doubt we will also see one of the best parades ever.

I would like to congratulate the president, Neale Stewart, the vice-president, Robert Campbell, and the carnival board. I particularly congratulate Joan Falvey, who has been helping for many years, and Graham Rayner, who has been the chief parade marshal for many years. I make special mention of Bob Carroll, the chief executive officer, and the carnival's office staff. I also wish to mention the carnival's sponsors, namely, the Heritage Building Society, which is the main sponsor, Big Fresh, Ergon Energy, Grand Central and the Toowoomba Chronicle. We must not forget the small sponsors and the individuals who put their hands in their pockets and make the carnival such a success.

Throughout the 50 years the home garden contest has been sponsored by the Toowoomba Chronicle. I have no doubt that the 50th carnival will be the biggest and best ever. I invite all members of this House and everyone in the south-east corner of Queensland to come to Toowoomba and attend the greatest Carnival of Flowers ever. It is Australia's most successful and longest running carnival.

Time expired.
