




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Toowoomba Gemfest

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.36 pm): I wish to speak today about a great event that was held in the electorate of Toowoomba South. I was fortunate enough to be able to open the 33rd Gemfest last weekend in Toowoomba, which was part of our Family Week celebrations in Toowoomba—a great place to bring up a family. I would like to thank and acknowledge the Toowoomba Lapidary Club for their outstanding organisational skills in bringing this event to fruition for 33 years. I would also like to thank them for asking me to be their patron.

I would like to commend the efforts of the following club executive and members for their outstanding efforts throughout this great event which saw some 250 people arrive in the first hour: club president, David Radke; chairperson, Neville Kleidon; and the committee, Rod Brightman, Darryl Flanagan and Stan McKenzie. I would like to make a special mention of Beverley Radke, who put in a mighty effort ensuring the success of the event and also spent a great deal of time showing me around.

It was a great event. I had the opportunity to have a look at some fossilised mammoth tusks and some fossils from in and around the region of the Darling Downs. I also got to look at some semiprecious stones and gemstones from all around the world. It was a truly great event. There were two young members who were part of the junior Lapidary club in town whom I would like to mention: Brendan Taylor and Wyatt Fisk-Walsh. These two young people spent their weekend setting up tables and selling raffle tickets. They were proudly marching around and making sure that everything was operating properly as well as setting up and dismantling all of the signs that let the community know exactly where this event was taking place.

As I said, Toowoomba Gemfest is part of the fossickers' trail of different festivals that are held around this state. There was a great deal of interest from people who had travelled a long way to come and set up. They call themselves car boot sellers, but in actual fact they had reasonable sized marques erected outside. Business owners from as far away as Western Australia had also come to show their wares. It is a great event and there was a great number of interesting items for people to look at.

The lapidary club in Toowoomba funds its activities from this particular event. It has 70 members. They are looking for a bit of access to some of the Western Queensland coalmining sites where they believe there will be some good petrified wood specimens. It is a really interesting club for people interested in the ancient art of cutting gemstones as well as preparing semiprecious stones, fossils and other things, and I congratulate them on the event.

(Time expired)