



Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**


**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### DownsSteam

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.57 am): I recently had the pleasure of visiting DownsSteam, which is a tourist railway and rail museum located at Drayton within the electorate of Condamine. My tour guide, Robert Ketton, was ably assisted by fellow rail enthusiasts Peter Eldridge and former Toowoomba Regional councillor and current chairperson of DownsSteam Ros Scotney.

DownsSteam was founded 11 years ago and is a community based volunteer organisation dedicated to the establishment of a tourist railway for the Darling Downs region. It currently has over 150 members, with 40 of these actively involved in all aspects of the day-to-day running of DownsSteam including the maintenance and refurbishment of engines, coaches and carriages, painting and sign-writing, tending gardens and maintaining the beautiful surrounds, conducting tours and catering for guests and visitors. DownsSteam enjoys the strong support of the local community and businesses in Toowoomba and the greater Darling Downs region.

The members of DownsSteam come from a variety of different backgrounds and vocations—from engineers to university lecturers to boilermakers to retailers and caterers. They do, however, all have one thing in common: a great passion for our railway history and the preservation of that history, something very close to my heart. The development of the railway opened up Queensland to the rest of Australia and provided long-needed transportation for produce and people.

In March 1864 the building of the railway line from Helidon up the range to Toowoomba commenced and was completed on 31 July 1866, only taking a bit over two years—an amazing feat without the technology and machinery we have available to us today. This significant infrastructure was a very ambitious project at the time and enabled freight, livestock and grain to be transported down the range to the eastern part of the state.

Without organisations such as DownsSteam and the volunteers who support them, the history of our railways would be lost forever. Currently, many projects are being undertaken by the members of DownsSteam, some larger and more involved than others. However, every project will add value to a visit to DownsSteam. I would encourage anyone travelling to Toowoomba to stop by and take the time to look at what DownsSteam has to offer. It was a truly enjoyable day spent with dedicated people who are very enthusiastic about the conservation of our railway history.

I acknowledge former councillor Ros Scotney, who stood down at the last council election. She was a councillor in the Pittsworth shire and a former mayor, and she spent four years as a councillor on the Toowoomba Regional Council. I thank Ros for her dedication to the local community.