




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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ADJOURNMENT

Eromanga Natural History Museum

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.06 pm): I have had the great pleasure of meeting Cooper, Sid, Zac, George and Monty out at Eromanga. Eromanga is the furthest gazetted town from the sea, and it claims a world-class museum in the far south-west of my electorate of Warrego. Cooper is Australia's largest dinosaur and is housed at Eromanga Natural History Museum. Cooper is 90 million to 95 million years old, nine metres high to the top of the backbone and 30 metres long. To put Cooper into perspective, this dinosaur is longer than this parliamentary chamber and he towers above the chamber's chandeliers.

Mr Janetzki: A big dinosaur!

Ms LEAHY: He is a big dinosaur. He would probably eat those chandeliers for breakfast. When Cooper was alive some 90 million years ago, he would have eaten one tonne of vegetable matter every day. Cooper was South-West Queensland's first dinosaur. He was found in 2004 when a 14-year-old, Sandy Mackenzie, spotted an unusual rock while mustering on the family property west of Eromanga. Cooper, Sid, Zac, George and Monty and many others are housed at the museum along with collections from the upper Murray-Darling and the Lake Eyre-Cooper basins, which are all part of the overlying Eromanga Basin.

The fossil collection continues to grow exponentially each year, with Australian dinosaur, megafauna, microfauna and plants of a quality and quantity that are rarely seen in a single collection. Over 70 palaeontology sites are registered to be worked on in the South-West Queensland region. The museum is unique. It is not only a place where you can see dinosaur bones; you can go there and be trained to assist with the preservation of the bones and fossils on site. If you prefer to be in the outdoors you can join the annual fossil digs for dinosaurs or megafauna. There is four-star accommodation available on site at the history museum to relax in after a hard day of preservation or digging fossils.

The museum, unfortunately, is running out of room to house all of these fossils and is in need of expansion. Who would have thought we would have so many fossils that we could not house them all? I encourage state and federal governments to look favourably on any applications for funding, as this museum is truly world class. I remember well the difficulties the Quilpie Shire Council encountered when it went to source the initial funding for the museum. It was a long, dusty road. What has been achieved is a credit to the Quilpie shire; its councillors, particularly Mayor Stuart Mackenzie and his wife, Robyn; and the museum team of Jo, Corey, Shauni and Chloe.

The Eromanga Natural History Museum is truly world class, and I encourage every member of parliament to take the time to visit Eromanga as well as this natural history museum, because they will not see anything else like this in the world.