



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Toowoomba Royal Show

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (2.17 pm): The Toowoomba Royal Show begins next Friday. Aside from the Ekka, it is Queensland's only other royal show. It is the flagship event for our region, bringing together the very best of the Darling Downs and beyond. It is also a special time where friends get together—more important than ever before given the times in which we live. However, there is a serious issue facing the show that requires the government's urgent attention.

As has been repeatedly argued by Trevor Beckingham, General Manager of the Queensland Chamber of Agricultural Societies, there are serious inconsistencies in the application of COVID related restrictions that are impacting the holding of shows in the months ahead. It is inconsistent that the Queensland Health directive places entrance restrictions on Toowoomba's three-day show that do not apply for the same site for the remaining 362 days of the year.

Currently, the Toowoomba Showgrounds has 1,000 caravans on site. Equestrian events have occurred on the main arena. The pavilion can be filled with exhibitors for a market. We now face a situation where volunteers and volunteer groups like the Girl Guides will be unable to stand on the gate without the society engaging security, with security costs that will reach tens of thousands of dollars.

The Chief Health Officer has spoken publicly about the intention to pull back these restrictions, most recently at the Western Queensland Alliance of Councils Assembly in Charleville. Just yesterday Queensland Health advised that amendments to the directive are being prepared, but cannot say if they will be changed in time for next week. Time is running out for these amendments to be finalised. CEO Damon is today one week away from welcoming the first exhibitors. Every day that passes is costing thousands in lost revenue and an increasing level of frustration generally aimed in the direction of staff and volunteers.

Already the show I grew up around, the Oakey Show, has been cancelled. Gympie has been postponed and many others too. The Oakey Show Management Committee made the very difficult decision primarily on the basis of inconsistent restriction application. It would have been their 114th show and leaves a gaping hole in their community that is impossible to fill. I will quote their president, Judy, who said that 'the future of local rural shows is at risk not only for the individual show committees but their own local communities who all benefit from their own local show'. Queensland shows contribute over \$140 million in direct economic activity to regional communities and attract 15,000 statewide volunteers.

I urge the health minister and Queensland Health to do everything necessary to complete their review of the directive and finalise the amendments immediately so that the beating heart of so many rural and regional communities goes on.

