



# GAA

Gemmological Association of Australia

New South Wales Division

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting Gemmological Association Australia (NSW Division) – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### Curator of Specimens Report

Work on organising the collection into teaching trays and back-up stock is progressing well. These teaching trays will contain a carefully chosen range of specimens representing each gemstone, including rough, crystals, synthetics and imitants. These trays then can be used by teachers for lectures and lab classes.

This work revealed items of which GAA had little or no specimens, or only small and/or poor quality specimens. Since I was going to the annual Gemstone Mineral and Fossil showcase in Tucson, Arizona, in February, GAA provided some funding to purchase some of these items. GAA NSW made a cash advance of \$AU 1500, which yielded \$US 946.50.

In addition, just before leaving, I discussed with Deborah Hudson her upcoming ornamentals new short course and we agreed that she needed larger, more market-typical specimens for this, rather than those we have, which are limited by storage in small round gem boxes. Also, apart from a few items sent from Federal, the ornamentals in the collection were rather out of date – there are stones seen readily at Sydney shows which we had none of. So purchases of ornamentals were numerous, but I saw hundreds more I had never seen or heard of, plus turquoise and variscite from many different USA mines.

As we develop new short courses, it is desirable to construct permanent sets for these, so they can just be brought out each time without having to rummage for stones. Hence I tended to buy 2 or 3 specimens, where the price allowed, so that we could use them for one or two permanent sets and still have a stone or two in back-up stock. I chose thinner cabs when buying by weight, to reduce costs a bit.

Of the 43 Tucson shows, 8 were not open to the public/wholesale only, 8 had finished before I arrived (of which 3 were bead shows), 2 I was not interested in (African Art Village and American Indian Art & Collectables) and 4 I did not get to – very upmarket fine mineral galleries in Granada Ave. So went to 19, which covered just about all of the public shows where gemstones and minerals could be found. This was over 8 days, including the end of the whole show, since bargains appear in the last days.





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Overall, not a lot of bargains were to be found, except some good discounts on smaller stones near the end. Stones which were really expensive: all sapphires, spessartine, diaspore, Morganite, watermelon tourmaline slices, faceted Moldavite.

Ruby in Zoisite has become scarce, someone said, also Merelani mint garnet. I saw large and beautiful stones at \$US 1400/ct, up from \$800 the previous year, the seller said. But found paler, smaller stones at another seller for only(!) 250/ct. A string of mint garnet beads was \$US 500. A student had recently lost our Gem 2 fluorescing light green grossular, and we had just one to replace it, so I was looking for some – failed to find any other than these super-expensive ones.

My best finds were at shows which had a lot of carvings or large tables of cabs, then some seller had a small case of faceted stones tucked in a corner – this was where I got cheap Morganite and diaspore.

So I was able to find most of the shopping list of items needed, plus update the ornamentals.

When the current reorganisation of specimens is completed, a list of teaching trays will be made available to teachers. The back-up stock is stored alphabetically, and thus will be easy to locate.

Other work will involve display of minerals currently still in storage since the relocation.

Cheryl Murdoch  
Curator of Specimens

