

WELL folks, it looks like that special time of year has rolled around once again. As hundreds of volunteers and organisers put the finishing touches on a top-class event, the RNA Showgrounds trembles with anticipation as thousands of city and country folk prepare to converge on the inner-city location for the 2011 Royal Queensland Show.

That's right, the state's largest and most loved event, the Ekka, is back bigger and better for its 134th year.

And Queenslanders are being encouraged to come together at this year's show to enjoy a 10-day showcase of what makes this state great.

RNA chief executive Jonathan Tunny said the state had endured much hardship since the beginning of the year, and now it was time to celebrate all things Queensland.

"It's been a tough year for many communities across the state, from the city to the bush," he said.

"The impact of the January floods caused much heartache and devastation, but also stirred communities to rally behind one another in a wonderful outpouring

EKKA MAGIC

of civic pride and true mateship." Mr Tunny said the Ekka was the state's oldest, proudest and most loved community event, and this year more than ever, the show was truly about bringing city and country together.

"The great community spirit and the traditions that personify the Ekka are at the heart of the show," he said.

"The Ekka is the people's event – a celebration of the best of the best, and a chance to come together with family and friends to enjoy an event unlike any other."

Mr Tunny said about 400,000 visitors are expected to attend Queensland's biggest event, which

offers families unbeatable value, with more than 70 percent of the RNA Showgrounds dedicated to free activities.

"Combined with hundreds of free activities to choose from each day including fashion parades, concerts, competitions, food and wine sampling, free kids shows, plus the two-hour night time entertainment program, it's hard to find better value," he said.

Now in its 134th year, the 2011 Ekka features an amazing line-up of show-stopping entertainment including performances by Grammy and ARIA award winners, a culinary heaven including some of the nation's finest food and wine, Australian-first technology, about 23,000 competition entries, plus 10,000 animals both cute and cuddly, and some of the state's finest being exhibited.

For all the latest information about the upcoming Ekka, tickets and exhibiting, head to the official event website at www.ekka.com.au or phone (07) 3552 1831.

Royal Queensland Show: the history

- Started in 1876, the Ekka has attracted generations of families for over 133 years.
- Visitors to the first Ekka were treated to more than 1000 exhibits.
- The Ekka has helped introduce the newest technologies to Queensland including microphones, telephones and electric lights.
- In 1882, the first railway station opened at the RNA Showgrounds.
- The Ekka has only ever been cancelled twice – in 1919 during the height of the influenza epidemic, and 1942 during the dark days of WWII.
- In 1920, Edward, Prince of Wales, visited the Ekka, and Oval 2 was built.
- In 1954, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visited the Ekka.
- In 1964, the now infamous animal nursery was introduced.
- Bowen Park was chosen as the site of the very first show in



Students of Murphys Creek State School were invited to the Ekka media launch to officially open the 2011 Royal Queensland Show. Pictured from left are RNA president Allan Wairdy, OAM and RNA chief executive Jonathan Tunny (back) with school captain Josh Rogioni and student Zac Keogh, Year 2, principal Jo Sinclair, Jones, Jessie Sheehan, Prep, and Ava Sinclair, Year 5.

1876, and consisted of 6.8 hectares bordered by Bowen Bridge Road and a creek which ran through the centre of the present main arena.

- Today, the RNA grounds cover 22 hectares.
- Over 400,000 visitors are expected to come through the

gates during the 10-day show in 2011.

- In April, construction on the first stage of the \$2.9 billion RNA Showgrounds Regeneration Project began, with work starting on transforming the Industrial Pavilion into a world-class exhibition centre.



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