

April 29, 2023

## Historic win! Pump-Kings pipped by pupils

Students from Downlands College in Toowoomba have become the new kings and queens of the veggie patch, with their 202kg pumpkin winning the Royal Queensland Show's (Ekka) iconic Giant Pumpkin Competition supported by Pillow Talk by six kilograms at the Brisbane Showgrounds today.

The school beat three veteran growers to take home \$1,450 in prize money and claim the sought-after Pillow Talk Champion Heaviest Pumpkin of Show title, along with first place in the Youth Class.

It's the very first time in the competition's history a school has taken top honours over an Open Class competitor.

Student Patrick Edwards said their secret was a bit of love and care for the pumpkin.

"We watered it and put fertiliser near its roots, but I honestly didn't think it would be above 175kg," he said.

Downlands College agricultural teacher Dr Jeff Buchanan said there was also some science involved from their plant science studies.

"We use technology to measure ground water levels, so we had sensors under our pumpkins to try to optimise the ground water levels to get the maximum growth out of them," he said.

"This is the third time we've been involved in the competition and we've had a few wins in the Youth Class before, but we've never grown anything close to this.

"We actually thought we were on track for a record earlier in the year as we had a 212kg pumpkin, but it rotted."

It was a close competition this year, with Geoff Frohloff, who holds the Ekka record of 261.5kg, taking out first place in the Open Class with a 196kg pumpkin.

The Frohloff family had three generations competing, with Geoff's son Tony winning second place with a 132kg gourd and grandson's Riley and Dylan also getting their green thumbs on and submitting entries in the Youth Class.

Some of the giant pumpkins will roll back into the Brisbane Showgrounds in August, to be displayed in the Agricultural Hall during Ekka.

Those who want to enter next year, can sign up for their free Atlantic Giant pumpkin seeds at the Show.

The crowning of the Ekka's first Grand Champion for 2023 signals the official countdown to Queensland's largest and most loved annual event, which is now just 105 days away.

## 2023 GIANT PUMPKIN COMPETITION RESULTS:

**Pillow Talk Champion Heaviest Pumpkin of Show – Downlands College – 202kg**

### **Pillow Talk Heaviest Pumpkin – Open Class:**

1st Geoff Frohloff – 196kg

2nd Tony Frohloff – 132kg

3rd Jim Baxter 129.5kg

### **Pillow Talk Heaviest Pumpkin – Youth Class:**

1st Downlands College – 202kg

2nd Downlands College – 51kg

3rd Wilsonton Agricultural Field Centre – 42.5kg

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### MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Veronica Carew  
General Manager Communications  
Ph: 07 3253 3930/ 0408 323 631  
Email: [vcarew@rna.org.au](mailto:vcarew@rna.org.au)

Nicole Clifton  
Media and Communications Officer  
Ph: 07 3253 3932/ 0417 451 775  
Email: [nclifton@rna.org.au](mailto:nclifton@rna.org.au)