

18 August 2005

Smiles all round at the 2005 Royal Queensland Show.

Queensland, Australia's 'Sunshine State', lived up to its name during the 2005 Royal Queensland Show, affectionately known as the Ekka, as the sun shone bright and warm for the majority of the show.

August in Queensland usually brings with it cold days punctuated by chilly westerly winds, but this year, more than 600,000 Ekka visitors enjoyed clear, sunny days, and mild nights.

RNA President Dr Vivian Edwards OAM said the Ekka was about bringing Queenslanders from the country to the city together to enjoy each others company and have a great deal of fun.

"Whether you're five years of age, 95, or somewhere in between, there is something to delight, amaze and entertain everyone at the Ekka," he said.

"One of the main draw cards was Lady Cannonball Stephanie Smith from the USA. This was Stephanie's first appearance in Australia and everybody was thrilled to see her being shot from her cannon and fly through the air during our main-arena night program."

Other Ekka attractions included top Australian rock bands Grinspoon, Spiderbait and Motorace, country music superstar Tania Kernaghan, the Holden Stormriders Precision Driving Team and the Yamaha Freestyle Motorcross Stunt Show.

Burton's Family Circus was a popular attraction, and its two lion cubs, Kovu and Kiara, delighted circus visitors with their antics. Another family favourite was Hypnotist Shane St James, who left some 500 people spell-bound in 20 hysterical stage shows.

Fashion is always high on the agenda at the Ekka, and this year was no exception with over 10 fashion parades every day. Showcasing leading Australian designers like Paul Hunt, Daniel Lightfoot, Winnie, Gin Kim, Bora Hwa Sook Lee and Brothers Neilson, the parades were an eclectic mix of high-class elegance, and contemporary cool.

Sideshow Alley was awash with colour and excitement. From stomach-churning rides such as The Twin Flip, Hard Rock and Energy Storm, to the traditional Big Wheel and the Chair Lift, Sideshow Alley was the most thrilling place to be at this year's Show.

Every year at the Ekka, farmers and animal breeders come together to compete for the title of 'Best in Show'. This year the RNA received record competition entries, with 4,000 horses, 3,500 cattle, 3,500 dogs, 3,000 poultry, 3,000 wines and more than 7,000 arts and crafts on show.

There were plenty of Ekka food favourites on offer, with more than 350,000 dagwood dogs (a hot dog, in batter on a stick), 400,000 buckets of hot-chips and 9,000 litres of tomato sauce being consumed over the 10 days. But it wasn't just fast food – Ekka visitors could experience the finest cuisine from across the globe at the International Food Village, could sit down to a thick, juicy steak at one of the Show's

renowned restaurants, or tuck into a tasty, fresh ham and cheese sandwich at one of the many cafes.

One of the most memorable experiences of the Ekka for any child is the Showbag Pavilion and at this year's Ekka almost 500,000 bags rushed out on the arms of many happy visitors.

Admission prices were \$20 for adults, \$14 for concession and \$10 for children.

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