

Thursday 21 July, 2005

Ten days of non-stop fun at 'Ekka 2005'

Is it your very first Strawberry Sundae of the day, the smell of hay in the horse stables, the colour and movement of Sideshow Alley, growing anticipation as you watch entrants compete for Champion of Show, or the frenetic pace of the woodchop that you love most about the Ekka?

Shortly you can experience and enjoy it all, when the Royal Queensland Show or 'Ekka', Queensland's biggest and best-loved event, kicks off on Thursday 11 August, running to Saturday 20 August at the RNA Showgrounds in Brisbane.

The Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland (RNA) President Dr Vivian Edwards OAM said the people of Queensland would have plenty to smile about at this year's Show.

"The Ekka is about bringing Queenslanders from the country to the city together to enjoy each others company and have a great deal of fun. For 10 days the RNA Showgrounds becomes a city within a city. There is so much activity and the atmosphere is electric," he said.

"One of my biggest joys each year is seeing the delight on people's faces, particularly children, when they discover something for the very first time.

"This year there is a spectacular mix of events and entertainment from some of Australia's best bands to the Holden Stormriders and the Human Cannonball in the Main Arena; visually stunning daytime and evening street parades; the Circus Big Top and Circus School for the young at heart; thrilling new rides such as Energy Storm in Sideshow Alley; and long-time favourites like the Dairy Farmers Fireworks, RACQ Insurance Farmyard Friends, and The Coffee Club Parades," said Dr Edwards.

More than 600,000 people are expected to visit the Ekka in 2005, contributing more than \$170 million to Queensland's economy. This year's highlights include:

- **Events and Entertainment**

It's Showtime, so get ready for the extraordinary range of events and entertainment on offer. The RNA Showgrounds are set to echo with the sounds of Australia's best bands as live music returns in 2005. Featuring national favourites **Grinspoon** on Friday 12 August, **Motorace** on Saturday 13 August, and **Spiderbait** on Saturday 20 August. For Sideshow Alley daredevils there 113 rides valued at more than \$60 million. Roll up, roll up to the Ekka's very own BIG TOP for a fun-filled show. Children will love the opportunity to clown around at the Flipside Circus School and will be delighted by the Nestle Peters *Just Magic* Forest's new attractions including animals and friends from Australia Zoo, live Bilbies and the opportunity to dig for Fossils. Watch the newest extreme sport to hit the country, Whip Boxing. Enjoy performances from Australia's funkiest dance group, Raw Metal each day in

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the Wool Pavilion. The Gooney Girls, Brisbane's finest female comedy duo, will present a cooking show with a difference at the Tastes of Queensland Stage.

- **Competitions**

The RNA has received a record number of entries in 2005 with almost 30,000 entries in 25 competitions showcasing Queensland and Australia's best. Competition will be fierce amongst the beef cattle, goats, dogs, fine art, woodchopping, quilts, photography, sculptures, fruit wine, scones and fruit cakes. Entrants range in age from 3 years to 80+, some are entering for the first time and others have been competing for 50+ years.

- **Showcasing Queensland's Resources**

Learn more about and enjoy the very best that Queensland has to offer – the best meats, fibres, grains, wines, fruits and vegetables. Tempt your tastebuds at the Woolworths Fresh Food Pavilion, Brisbane Markets Agricultural Hall, Agforce 'Meating' Centre and the International Village. Update your wardrobe following one of Ekka's four fashion parades showcasing wool, leather, cotton and Summer 05 designer fashion. Be delighted by the diverse range of animals on show from alpacas, to camels, beef cattle, pigs, fish and horses.

- **Partnerships and People**

It's the people and partners that make Ekka such a magnificent event, from our sponsors to our aligned charities, volunteers, schools and organisations that work together to make the Ekka truly unique. In 2005, Brisbane's sister city in China, Shenzhen, will host an international trade exhibition featuring retail sales, business development opportunities and cultural entertainment and fashion. The RNA will again award the "RNA Show Legend Award" to someone who has left an indelible print on the history of the RNA and Ekka. Ekka 2005 Grand Champion sponsors include: The Coffee Club, Masterfoods Australia New Zealand Petcare, Coca Cola, Dairy Farmers, Woolworths and Carlton & United Beverages.

Ekka Essentials

- Admission prices are \$20 for adults, \$10 for children (5 to 14 years), children under 5 are free, and \$14 for adult concession.
- The Ekka opens daily at 9am.
- Saturday 20 August is Seniors' Day at the Ekka, with an admission price of \$10.
- There are two family passes – family ticket 'A' for two adults and two children which costs \$45 (a saving of \$15); and family ticket 'B' for one adult and one child for \$25 (a saving of \$5).
- For more information about the Ekka and to plan your day, visit www.ekka.com.au.
- Translink will be providing regular train and bus services to and from the Ekka. For further information visit www.translink.com.au.

Some things you may not know about the Ekka

- The very first Royal Queensland Show was held on 22 August 1876.
- Approximately the entire Moreton Bay settlement attended the first Show.
- The very first Showbag was a bag of coal and it was free to all visitors.
- The women wore their finest garments and the men, black and grey suit coats.

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