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## Ekka a drawcard for Asian visitors

Almost 6,500 people from Greater China visited the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) this year to see giant pumpkins, prized cattle and champion woodchoppers, thanks to an international marketing campaign driven by Ekka's Strategic Tourism Partner, Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ).

The visitors from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong made the trip to Queensland last month for the state's largest and most loved annual event, representing an increase of almost 20 per cent on the previous year.

The organisation behind the Ekka - the RNA - began its push for Asian visitors and tour groups to the show three years ago and this year partnered with TEQ on a fresh marketing strategy, with China now Queensland's fastest growing tourism market.

Queensland Minister for Tourism and Major Events Kate Jones said the increased number of visitors from Greater China was as a direct result of the campaign TEQ undertook in those markets.

"It is great to see more international visitors, particularly those from the eastern markets, travelling to the state to experience this truly iconic Queensland event," Minister Jones said.

"This is the first of a three-year marketing strategy to encourage Greater Chinese visitors to come to Brisbane, experience Ekka and get an unforgettable taste of Queensland.

"We know they will share stories of their trip with friends and families, inspiring travellers to come to Queensland, while many will return to experience all that our state has to offer.

"We are very pleased by the results the campaign has delivered in its first year and I'm excited by the potential it has for the tourism industry."

The campaign focused on marketing activities in Greater China cities offering flights to Brisbane, including Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Guangdong.

The Ekka was also included in tour packages with promotion focusing on Ekka's traditional and unique competitions including beef cattle, woodchop and giant vegetables.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the successful campaign not only resulted in an increase in visitors from Greater China but also contributed to Queensland's tourism sector and the economy.

"We bring the country to the city for a 10 day celebration of Queensland agriculture for all to enjoy and it's wonderful to see an increase in Asian visitors experiencing this unique event," Mr Christou said.

"The show welcomes 21,000 competition entries, 10,000 animals, a smorgasbord of award-winning food and wine and a spectacular night program, so there's plenty to do and see – it's definitely worth travelling for.

“We even had Taiwan’s most popular travel television program, iWalker, film at Ekka this year, so those who didn’t make the trip will still get a chance to see some Ekka sights.

“We see huge potential to increase our visitor numbers from Greater China and will continue focusing on this region when rolling out international marketing campaigns in the coming years.”

It’s hoped there’ll be an increase in overseas visitors next year, when the Ekka celebrates its 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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For more information please contact the Ekka Media Unit:  
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 3931/ 0417 451 775  
Email: [nclifton@rna.org.au](mailto:nclifton@rna.org.au)