

# Ekka

ROYAL QUEENSLAND SHOW

Presented By:



# BRISBANE SHOW CAMP



# The Ekka Courier

The newspaper of the Brisbane Show Camp



The Brisbane Show Camp is a joint program of The Department of Education Queensland and the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland. The camp is conducted by the Brisbane Urban Environmental Education Centre.

# 2025

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# Beef Week Feature 2025

## RARE BREEDS AT EKKA 25

*Many livestock and poultry breeds in Australia have unique characteristics that are important in meeting the challenges of the future. However, both pure breed livestock and poultry in Australia are under continuing economic and environmental threats. These breeds also form part of our heritage and need to be preserved for future generations.*

Rare Breeds Trust of Australia

### Rare cattle breeds are being exhibited at the Ekka this year.

The breeds of cattle exhibited that are listed by the Rare Breeds Trust of Australia, and an explanation of their status is shown in the following table.

#### Rare Breeds being exhibited at the Ekka this year.

Darren Riley from Yelir Devon Stud in Headington Hill, approximately 50km south of Toowoomba, runs mainly Pure Bred Devons and a few Devon Shorthorn Cross. He believes the future of the breed will see pure bred as well as cross bred animals because the meat quality is just as good as other breeds.

“We have 26 females and quite a few are registered,” Darren said.

Highlands are also classified with Devons as ‘watch’.

Watch	At Risk	Vulnerable	Endangered
Conservation action required to ensure that female numbers do not fall below 750	Less than 750 breeding females Less than 127 annual registrations	Less than 450 breeding females Less than 76 annual registrations	Less than 250 breeding females Less than 42 annual registrations
Braford	Australian Lowline	Dexter	Blonde d'Aquitaine
Charbray	South Devon	Red Poll	Senepol
Devon	Square Meaters		
Fleckvieh			
Highland			

This table has been compiled from information from the Rare Breeds of Australia website.  
 The Rare Breeds Trust of Australia is a not for profit organisation established to maintain diversity in our domestic livestock breeds.  
<https://rarebreedstrust.com.au/public/pages/cattle>



Hugh Higden from Koolah Creek Highlands in Langley Vale in NSW has a herd of 45 animals consisting of mostly Highlands and Angus Jersey.

He sees a future where his stud stock will get recognised worldwide and there will be quite a strong push to reintroduce Highland cattle back into the commercial space and beef market. Hugh also said cross breeds will be the way forward in the future.

Kath McUtchen from Jambili Stud in Jandowae runs South Devons and Belgian Blue mixed breeds. She has 120 cattle and 30 registered stud cattle and hopes for a strong future with more customers. South Devon are classified as 'at risk'.

Ellen Moffat from Kilaya Square Meaters in Esperance, Western Australia, has 16 cows, seven heifers and three bulls. She considers that the breed has lost popularity due to it being less affordable and less valuable than more common breeds.

"They have an excellent temperament," she said.



Lowline: Cann Valley Super Moon Interbreed Supreme Champion Female.  
Photo courtesy Queensland Country Life, photographer Shan Goodwin.

Australian Lowline breeder, Martin Page, has a 50 acre property in Tallegalla with 25 stud cattle. He believes that there is a strong future ahead.

Amber McLucas has 45 Angus, Lowlines, and Dexter stud cattle. She believes that Dexters have lost popularity because most people don't know that the Dexters can do both meat and dairy. They think it's either one or the other and they are not interested.



Square Meaters

Blonde d'Aquitaine is classified as endangered. Kyle Mellars, the owner of Melander Blondes in Chinchilla, Queensland, has 50 breeders on his property. He says they are not well known enough yet and this is why they are a rare breed.

"This is our first year bringing cattle down here to the Ekka. It is the 50th anniversary for Blonde d'Aquitaines in Australia so we thought we'd better come and do all of the big shows this year and show everyone that Blonde d'Aquitaines are out there," he said.



Blonde d'Aquitaine

## Exhibitor Profiles:



**Huntington** Stud is exhibiting three Charbray bulls at the Ekka this year. Cassidy Watson from Huntington says they run 2000 head of cattle on their 17,000 acre property in Taroom, Queensland.

She likes Charbrays because they are resistant to ticks and can survive the cold.

They have been exhibiting at the Ekka for four years, and believe that it is important because it allows other breeders to see the quality of their animals.





Darren Riley runs the 141 acre **Yelir Devons** stud located in Headington Hill, south of Toowoomba. He runs 26 females, mainly pure bred Devons and some Devon Shorthorn cross.

This year is Darren's third year at the Ekka, where he will be exhibiting eight cattle.

It's important for him to be exhibiting because he wants to keep Devon cattle visible to the public.

Darren breeds Devons because they have been in his family for a long time and they have a great ability to do well in different situations.



Fleckvieh breeder, Trevor Andersen, has been showing his cattle at the Ekka since 2007. This year he is exhibiting six cattle.

He owns the **Trinity Vale** Stud located near Kingaroy in Queensland.

On his 92 acre property he runs up to 20 stud cattle at any one time.

Trevor says he exhibits at the Ekka mostly for the promotion for the stud and for the breed.

Exhibiting has introduced some new people to the breed and has created profits by selling bulls.



Chris Braithwaite is the proud owner of **Midas Gelbvieh** Stud located in Murgon, Queensland.

He has 170 Gelbvieh cattle on his 600 acre property.

The breed first came to Australia in 1989 and he first saw them at the Ekka in 1990 and was very impressed by them.

He did some research into how well the Gelbvieh performed in American conditions. When he found out that they came first or second in many characteristics, he decided to purchase some.

Chris has been showing Gelbvieh cattle at the Ekka since 2006. He is exhibiting eight animals this year and thinks it is important to introduce the breed to other breeders and to the public.

He said that it would also be an honour to win a ribbon.

Trevor discovered the Fleckvieh cattle after he stumbled across them when they bought a leasing property many years ago. The more he looked into the breed, the more he liked them.

He also likes these cattle because they are very quiet.



Fleckvieh

# LIMOUSIN

Carcase, Yield, Efficiency.

**Gold Crest Limousins** is a 200 acre property with 160 head of cattle outside Crows Nest on the Darling Downs.

The Stud is operated by Darren and Shelly Hartwig. They selected Limousins because they are a carcass breed which produce a lot of meat.



Gold Crest Next Level: Bull 12mths and under 18 mths.

They have been showing at the Ekka for over 30 years and this year the Hartwigs have six head of cattle at the show.

They exhibit to show their genetics, and market the stud and their animals to other breeders.



Veronica O'Shea breeds Murray Greys on her ten acre property, **Red Gum**, in Coominya, Queensland.

She has been bringing Murray Greys to the Ekka for 30 years and this year she is showing a cow which has a calf.



Red Gum Mollie and calf.

The Ekka gives her the opportunity to display and promote the breed, and support the beef industry.

# Shorthorn Beef

Neil Hellyar breeds Shorthorn cattle at **Maddison Park** Stud near Lismore, New South Wales, where he has 38 cattle on his 128 acre property.

This is his second time exhibiting at the Ekka where he is showing a Junior Heifer and a Junior Bull.

Exhibiting during Beef Week is important as it makes his name more widely known with buyers of the breed. He enjoys breeding Shorthorns as the reddish white colour is beautiful and they have wonderful attributes.



Maddison Park Van-Damme and Maddison Park Andrea

### Top 12 Breed Entries 2025

Speckle Park (Feature Show)	191
Santa Gertrudis	105
Charolais	81
Limousin	65
Brahman	63
Angus	60
Droughtmaster	55
Hereford	52
Brangus	48
Simmental	46
Red Angus	28
Murray Grey	25

## Judging Beef Cattle – Talking to Anthony Ball

*Anthony was the overjudge for the RNA Stud Beef Young Judges Competition and the Queensland Ag Shows Stud Beef Young Judges Competition at the Ekka 2025.*

Q: What is your background with cattle?

*My cattle background, I grew up on a dairy farm on the Atherton Tablelands in Far North Queensland. That's where I spent a lot of my time as a boy. I now currently work for Elders Studstock Queensland and the Northern Territory, specialising in all manner of studstock from beef cattle to dairy cattle to horses and sheep as well. I'm employed as a stud stock auctioneer as well.*



**Anthony Ball.**  
Photo: Elders

Q: Have you always been around beef cattle?

*I've had a mixture of backgrounds but predominantly dairy cattle and beef cattle.*

Q: Do you operate a beef cattle property?

*My wife and I run a small operation. We run a small breeder fattening operation on the Atherton Tablelands in a place called Malanda, about 70 minutes west of Cairns.*

Q: What stud cattle do you breed?

*We breed some Santa Gertrudis cattle for ourselves and our children, and we also have a Brangus component to our commercial operation. They're both tropical breeds, they're both Bos Indicus breeds, and I feel for us being in tropical climates they're adapted and well suited to the area that we've got there and I think they're two breeds that we can hit a lot of market specs on and for us on a pasture-based operation. They're the breeds that I think do well for us.*

*And with the Santa Gertrudis side of things, when I was a little boy coming to the Exhibition, I was always fascinated by the big dark red cattle. And that's basically another reason I chose Santa Gertrudis, just because I've always liked them.*

Q: Do you only judge that breed, or do you judge other breeds?

*No, I judge multiple breeds and I've been fortunate enough to judge across a few different states within Australia. I've been fortunate enough to judge dairy cattle and beef cattle and we certainly do have a huge array of beef cattle in Australia and I've been fortunate enough to sort of work with about 40 different breeds of cattle which has been nice.*

Q: How long have you been judging stud beef? What got you into judging?

*It was just a natural progression. I grew up on the land. I had a love for cattle. My first love was showing cattle and obviously to pick the right cattle to show you needed to learn the terminology and what to look for. And so I started doing a few schools and was asked to do a bit of judging and we've gone from there.*

Q: What do you consider as the most important aspects when you are judging?

*I think every judge has their own differences and every judge will have their little one percenters on why they put an animal up or down. But for me, structural correctness. They've got to be functional and they've got to be able to handle the harsh Australian environment, in particular the Queensland environment. So structural correctness is a big one for me.*

Q: How do you approach a judging task? What are you looking for?

*A judge will walk around the ring because obviously there'll be multiple cattle in the ring a lot of times, and we're looking for structural correctness. We're looking for breed type and confirmation and again every judge is different so they'll all have their little one per cent of what they may be looking for.*

*Walking around allows us to look at an animal from a 360 degree angle. It allows us to look at an animal across the ring and we can make comparisons with our eyesight and then we can choose those animals to come into a placing.*

Q: How important are the breed standards of excellence when you are judging cattle?

*I think they are 100% important. Every breed, whether it's a tropical breed, a European breed or a British breed, they will have their standards or their classification systems or markings or certain aspects that are specific for that breed. And I think it's very important when you move from breed to breed or show to show that you uphold the values that the breed societies put in place for their members and the cattle that are registered.*



Queensland Agricultural Shows State Final Champion, Beau Magann, and Reserve Champion, Annaka Hanson, with Judge **Anthony Ball**. Photo courtesy Queensland Country Life, photographer Zac Braxton-Smith.

Q: Does personal preference come into your decisions?

*Again, every judge is different.*

*My personal belief is very important because I'm looking for an animal that I feel is suited not just say, to southern Queensland, but an animal that could fit a vast many people or areas of the state. May not be the same as what another judge is looking for but for what I want it's very important and it's important that I stay consistent and back those ideals.*

Thank you very much Anthony, we really appreciate your giving us your time.

*No, thank you very much. I hope you enjoy the Brisbane Show and sit down and enjoy the cattle. I'm always happy to help, but thank you very much, guys.*

## A NEW STATION FOR THE EKKA



The Exhibition Railway Station has reopened this year after being closed for three years for redevelopment.

“This is great news for everyone who loves the Show and it’s just fantastic that people can arrive and depart from inside the Ekka for the first time since 2022,” Brendan Christou, RNA Chief Executive, said.

The station has step-free access from the platform creating an accessible and user friendly way to travel to the Ekka. There is a new entry plaza, pedestrian access to Bowen Bridge Road for use when the Ekka is not on, way-finding signage and a hearing loop.

Trains services are only 15 minutes apart, so visitors will not have long to wait.

“We’re all about helping people get where they need to go,” Kat Stapleton, Queensland Rail CEO, said.

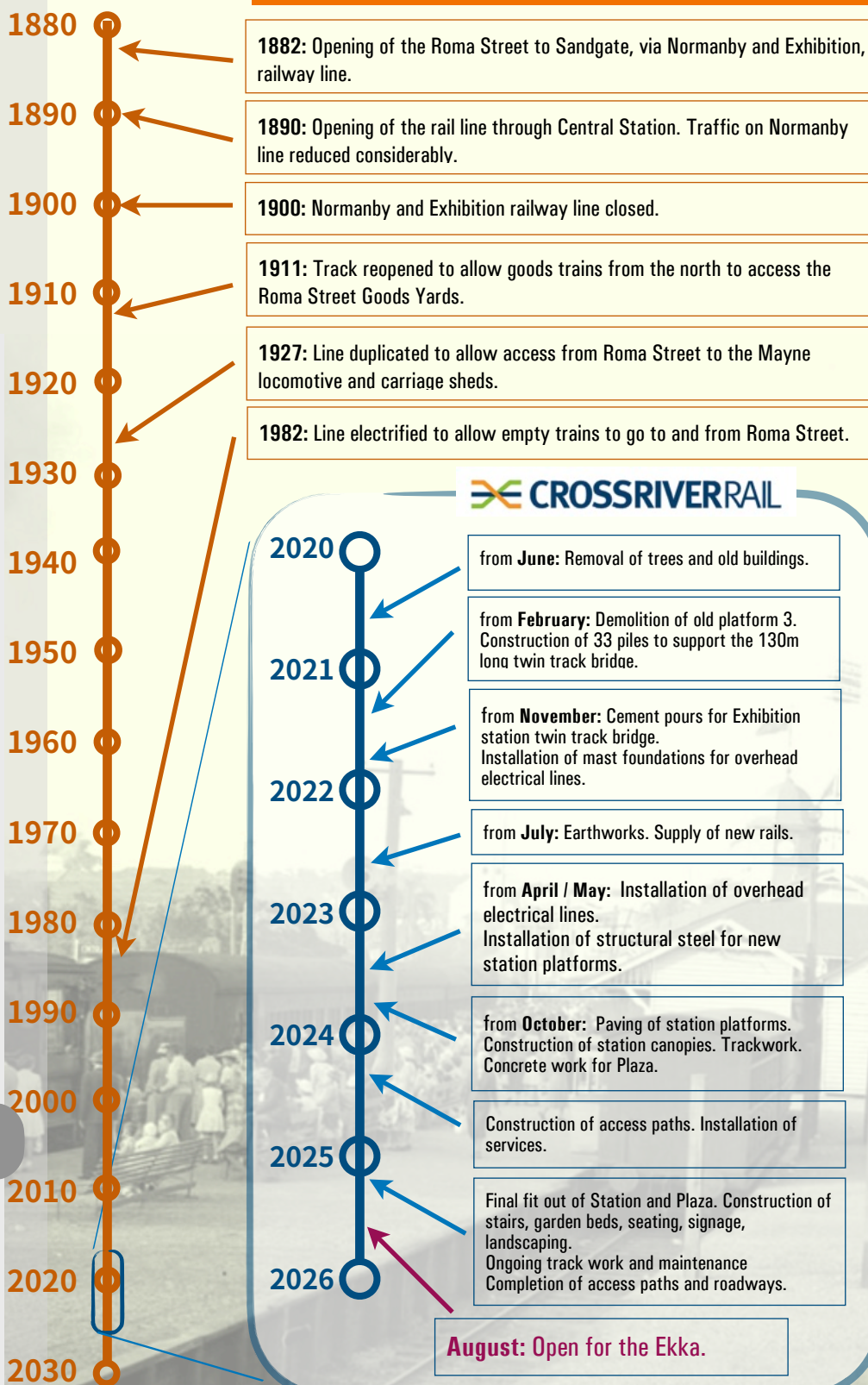
The price of the train ride to the show is just 50c each way.



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# HISTORY OF THE EXHIBITION RAIL LINE AND STATION



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## WOODCHOPPING OFF TO A SAW-SOME START

The Ekka is hosting eight national woodchopping and sawing titles this year as part of the program in the Ekka Woodchop Arena.

More than 1600 entries from competitors of all ages and from right across Australia are hoping to win part of a prize pool of over \$140 000.

Underhand, Standing Block, Tree Felling, Sawing, Team Relay, and combination events will be held.

In Underhand events, the competitors stand on top of the log and use a downward motion to chop through, from both sides, a log lying horizontally.

Standing Block, as the name suggests, has a block mounted vertically on a stand. The woodchopper cuts half way through the log from one side (a scarf), and then moves to the other side of the block and cuts one on the opposite side, slightly higher than the first.



Underhand



Standing Block

In Tree Felling, the axemen work their way up a pole by cutting small pockets and inserting a wooden board with a metal shoe on the end, (springboards) climbing onto it, and repeating as they make their way to to approximately three meters using three springboards. From the top board they cut the block which is approximately four and a half metres from the ground. They cut the block on top of the pole half way through then descend and repeat the procedure on the other side of the 'tree'.



Competitors set up their block, mark lines on their log where they are going to chop, and choose an axe.

“Having a good, strong core and strong arms and legs doesn’t hurt, but if you don’t know how to do it technically, it makes it a really long time,” woodchopping competitor Madeleine Edwards said.

Handicap events are also held, where competitors start at different times, depending on how many events they’ve won. The winner is always the person who finishes first.

Normally there are eight competitors, which are sometimes called ‘dummies’, in each race.

This year the Ekka will conduct the National Titles in the 325mm Standing Block, 350mm Underhand, 325mm Tree Felling, 300mm Standing Block Hard-Hitting, Women’s 275mm Underhand, Women’s 325 Single Handed Sawing, Open 450mm Double Handed Sawing, and the Jack and Jill 375mm Double Handed Sawing.

“We’re very much friends, but we are very competitive,” woodchopping Judge, Wayne Graham, said.



The origin of the sport is uncertain. Some say it was in 1870 in Ulverstone, Tasmania, when two axemen made a \$50 bet as to who could fell a tree first. Others believe it started in the 16th century Basque Country, when a man chopped ten logs and ran a marathon to be allowed to propose to his future wife.

The first ever woodchopping championship was held in 1891, at Bell’s Parade, Latrobe, Tasmania. The site was selected to be the home of the Australian Axemen’s Hall of Fame and Timberworks.

Tree Felling in the old Wood Chop arena at the Ekka.  
 (Photo: Queensland State Archives)

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## STRAWBERRY SUNDAE LANE

Strawberry Sundae Lane is a new addition to the AG Education Hall this year.



It uses interactive displays to inform visitors about the Ekka's famous Strawberry Sundae.

Diagrams and information about the ingredients, their source and processing are displayed. There are also lots of hands on activities for younger visitors.

The main ingredients of the Strawberry Sundae are dairy, wheat, sugar and, of course, strawberries. All of these are produced in Queensland,

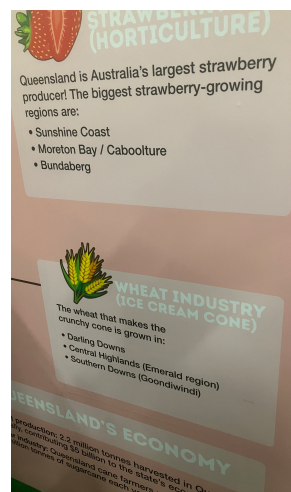
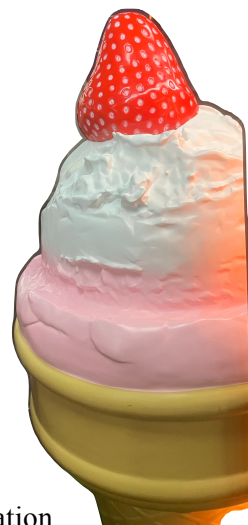
from the Gold Coast Hinterland, the Darling Downs, The Central Highlands and coastal areas up to North Queensland.

The display also shows the processes, some of which take weeks or months, that each ingredient goes through before being combined at the Ekka.

Strawberry Sundae Lane may reveal a lot about the dessert, but the actual ice-cream recipe is still kept secret. This means that the public won't be able to replicate the popular sundae.

"I think there's many reasons [why Strawberry Sundaes are so popular]. I think history, they've always been popular at the Ekka, and I think it is because they raise money for charity with the Prince Charles Hospital Foundation," a visitor to the show said.

Strawberry Sundae Lane is an engaging way for consumers to understand the work that goes into their sundae, while also offering an entertaining experience.



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## TERRIFIC TINY TANKS



The winning tank by Shae Wardle

The Nano Tank competition, held in the AG Education Hall Fish Display area, has been won by 19-year-old Shae Wardle.

The tank created by Shae was chosen for her attention to detail, texture and her placing of the wood so it looked like roots growing on the rocks.

“I’ve always been into fish, but I didn’t have a lot of space for it so I got into doing smaller tanks over bigger tanks,” Shae said.

“I get inspired by seeing the work that

other people do, and wanting to copy it,” she added.

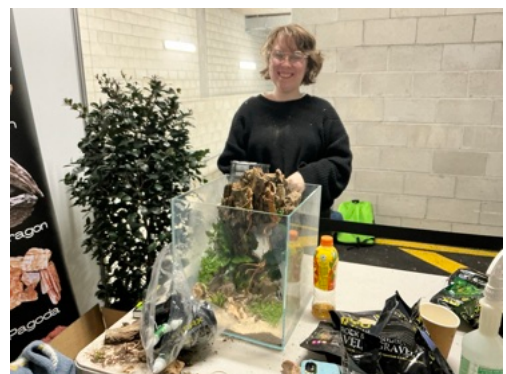
There were four competitors this year. The most experienced were Greg Ure and Peter Ford, who both have four years experience competing with nano tanks. Shae has had just two years experience, and Gavin Ireland is a first year competitor.

Nano Tanking is the art of decorating small fish tanks with only the materials provided.

With a time limit of four hours, competitors must finish the tank, add plants and fill with water, ready for the fish.

This is a delicate art, in which every detail counts and tweezers are needed. It is very challenging, even for the experts.

“Its difficult trying to visualise what it’s going to look like with the materials that you have,” Peter Ford said.



Shae working on her tank

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## ART WORK GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT



Three Community groups have each created displays made entirely out of fruit and vegetables, and their hard work is on display at the AG Education Hall. The groups are Scouts Queensland, Girl Guides Queensland, and Caboolture State High School.

The displays, which each took around a week to construct, include around 20 to 30 types of produce.

This year's theme was "Australia".

Before the construction can begin, the design needs to be created and the background painted. An image of the design is usually projected onto the onto a white background and traced over.

There are some strict guidelines that the exhibitors must follow.

“They’ve got to make sure the fruit and vegetables are a similar size, none have any rotten bits, and they have to be in good condition. They have to have their stickers facing up,” Belinda Anderson, an officer from Scouts, said.

**Note:**

Displays are judged, in two different classes, on Effective Arrangement (and Product Quality), Best Movement and/or Animation, and Best Background.

Caboolture State high School received two first and one second place.

Girl Guides QLD received one first place.

Scouts Queensland received one third place.

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## WOOLLY TOY FARM WORKSHOP



A new addition to the Agriculture Education Hall is the Toy Farm Wool Workshop where 50 children in each workshop will follow the story of wool from fleece to yarn.

The workshop has three stations.

The first is sorting and cleaning where participants removed the burrs, dirt and prickles from the fleece.

This is followed by the carding and teasing where the wool is combed to make it ready for spinning.

The final step is spinning the wool into yarn, followed by the basics of weaving on a hand loom.

After each workshop, the attendees can take home a colourful bracelet that they made during the class and a free charm that was given to them at the Toy Farm stand.

In a commercial operation, the fleece from a sheep must first go through a scouring process which removes unwanted materials and grease from the fibres. It is then spun into yarn and woven into fabric before being made into clothes.

Mr Rod Siller, supervisor of the workshop, said, “It’s fun because I’m putting something back into the community and giving the kids enjoyment and pleasure, and teaching them something about farming”.

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## FABULOUS FLORISTRY



Ruby Rienks and Jack Pietersen with their winning entry

This year an introductory floristry arranging competition was held in the Flower and Garden Precinct.

Competitors had 30 minutes to arrange flowers they selected from the ones provided. The arrangements were judged and the winner announced.

The winning arrangement, Sideshow Symphony, put together by Ruby Rienks and Jack Pietersen, was inspired by the rides at the Ekka, especially the B105 Sideshow Alley and The Warrior.

“We both enjoy flowers and gardening, so we thought it would be a bit of fun,” Ruby and Jack said.

Jessica Morel, chair of the RNA Future Directions Committee hopes that the competition will be back next year.

The introductory floristry competition is for pairs of competitors where one must be under the age of 35.

Entry details can be found by following the Ekka or the RNA Future Direction Committee on Instagram or Facebook, or in the floristry schedule on the Ekka website.



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## AUSSIE FMX FREESTYLE FIRESTORM



The Aussie FMX Freestyle Firestorm team perform every evening as part of the EkkaNITES program.

The riders soar an incredible 23 metres into the air, flipping, twisting, doing heel-clickers, seat grabs, back-flips, and much more that is sure to give the crowd a rush of adrenaline.

One moment the talented daredevil riders are just silhouettes in the beautiful Brisbane night sky, the next they're flying past you in a blur of neon, before launching into aerial mayhem that will leave you wide-eyed and gasping for breath.

"I think it's the closest feeling you ever get to flying, you really do feel like you're just up there you've got all the time in the world and it's amazing to look around and take it all in," Aussie FMX freestyler Brodie Carmichael said.

"I think its 90 per cent mental, so having a lot of confidence in yourself, and then I think learning how to practice is a big part of it too. So watching people, studying it [the trick] and breaking down certain tricks into small parts is a big part of it, definitely."

Hold on tight – Aussie FMX is certain to leave you pinned to the edge of your seat and begging for one more jaw-dropping jump.



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## DAVE MANCHON - THE BRISBANE BOY



Dave Manchon and Rooftop Rocy

Dave Manchon, a Brisbane raised horse rider and trainer, has brought his show, *A Brumby's Run – Wild Horses in Full Flight* to the Main Arena each night.

The show is inspired by Banjo Paterson's poem, *A Brumby's Run*, and includes 55 horses, miniature ponies and a young cowgirl wearing angel wings.

Dave grew up in Brisbane, in the city, and didn't have much access to horses but has always loved them. Buying a horse was too expensive for his family so to pursue his passion, he had to work in the country for free to learn from horse riders and trainers-

Fourty-one-year-old Dave has spent most of his life learning about horse riding and has been riding professionally for 20 years.

"In horses, it's generally a lifelong career path. [It] takes a long time to learn and train these animals, so we're always learning and I'm grateful to be where I'm at," he said.

"I love horse riding because it's fast and slow at the same time or it can be both things. It can be exhilarating and then at the same time the slower moments with horses can be inspiring."

Dave trains his horses by gaining trust during everyday practices. He then starts to introduce skills and tricks.

Before a show he takes care of the essentials for horses and makes sure they're happy. Comfort is the most important thing to Dave when it comes to preparation.

His favourite horse, Rocy, has been with him for 18 years. Dave loves Rocy's beautiful mind and sweet nature.

Dave has previously been at the Ekka with his *Rooftop Express Show* and *The Bison Stampede – Battle in the Saddle*.

He takes shows like *A Brumby's Run* all around Australia. He was at the Sydney Royal Easter Show and at the end of September he is travelling to Melbourne with *The Night of the Horse Show*.

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## RAAF FLY-OVER



The Royal Australian Air Force Roulettes flew five Pilatus PC-21 jets over the Main Arena at the Ekka to mark People's Day.

The PC-21 is a trainer jet capable of a cruising speed of 620km/h and has a maximum speed of 685km/h.

The leader of the flyover was Squadron Leader Lachie Hazeldine who has been with the RAAF since 2001 after completing a degree at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

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## COMICAL CIRCUS FIREMEN



The Circus Firemen juggling high up on ladders.

Two circus performers dressed as firemen are performing daily on the main stage of the Channel 7 Pavilion.

The Circus Firemen are brothers Angus and Matilda. They have been performing together for over 20 years, seventeen of which has been as The Circus Firemen.

They grew up in the town of Goulburn in New South Wales where their love for performing began. They joined a youth theatre as an afterschool activity and then went on to join the Pants Down Circus, before starting The Circus Firemen.

Their tricks include chainsaw juggling and front flips from wobbly ladders.

“Big happy crowds ... just make it feel so easy,” Angus said.

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## FANTASTIC FOOD



Delicious authentic West African street food.

There are new and affordable eats at this year's Ekka with over 110 food vendors selling everything from tacos, burgers and lobster rolls to the famous Dagwood Dogs.

International cuisine, including Thai, Indian, Vietnamese and Japanese, is also available.

"We wanted to try something different," a visitor to the lobster roll stall said.

A customer at the Royal Queensland Tastes, located in the plaza, said, "The smell was fantastic and I like barbecue".

The Ekka has some budget friendly options for families. Cheese toasties are available in the Woolworths Fresh Food Pavilion for just \$3.50, with family bundles for \$12. If you'd like something cold and sweet, then don't forget the iconic Ekka Strawberry Sundae, which is priced at \$6.80. Visitors can buy four sundaes in a bundle for only \$25, saving \$2.20.

The Ekka Tuckshop sells dim sims for \$2 and potato scallops for \$3.

Not only is there a variety of cheap food, there are fine dining options available too. The Royal Queensland Steakhouse serves award winning meats, locally sourced fresh produce and seafood of the highest quality.

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## DAIRY GOATS



Anglo Nubian Dairy Goat at the 2025 Ekka

Five named breeds and an "Other Breed" section are on display in the Dairy Goat competition this year.

The breeds are Anglo Nubian, British Alpine, Saanen, Toggenburg and Nigerian Dwarf. Each of these breeds will be judged in their own class, but all have similar standards.

The ideal appearance of a goat is a fine head, supple skin, a well-fleshed body and an in-balance walk.

Dairy Goat farmer, Leo Thompson from Datadoo Anglo Nubians, has a property near Rockhampton where he and his wife Kylie produce boutique goat milk products.

He says that it is important for the Dairy Goats to come to the Ekka and to other community events so that the owner or the producer can inform the public of the process that their milk products go through before going to the store.

“(We) try and close the gap between the producer and the consumer,” he said.

Mr Thompson has to start preparing his goats in February as the process takes him seven months. There is a five month gestation period and then another eight weeks until they are ready for competition.

He likes the Anglo Nubians because they have distinct features of big, floppy ears and a big, Roman nose.

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## BUSTER THE CHAMPION BULL



Buster weighs in at 1,356kg at Ekka. (Photo: Ekka)

A 34 month old bull named Buster has weighed in at whopping 1356kgs (1.3 tonnes) at Beef Week this year.

Buster, or The Station King T106, was exhibited by AJ and M Scrivener of The Station Angus, Yarrowitch, NSW, and is one of the biggest bulls in Ekka history.

Emily Scrivener said her family have had an Angus stud for quite a few years and for the last three, Emily, her dad and her brothers have run the stud.

Emily said that Buster was a big calf from day one and believes his size has a lot to do with genetics, as his mum was a very big cow and weighed 920kg. His father is not as big as Buster.

“He gets spoiled with food. He eats dry grass (and) oats as well as a supplement called Grow and Show. He eats a bit of grain before breakfast and after dinner. And he gets fed a little bit of grain before his shows,” Emily said.

Buster was awarded the Grand Champion Angus Bull at the Ekka and was the Reserve Champion Senior Angus Bull at this year’s Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Buster is the heaviest bull entered at the Ekka this year and Emily thinks he’s one of the top 5 or 6 bulls that have ever been to the show.

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#### Heaviest Bulls at the Ekka

1. 2011: Pine Creek Angus (NSW) exhibited a 1.5 tonne (possibly 1535kg – 1555kg) Angus bull named Monk.
2. 1992: Charolais Bull, Gunnadoo Just Right – 1360–1370 kg.
3. 2025: Buster – 1356kg.
4. 2017: Devon bull from Coonabarabran named Krypton – 1334kg..



## LETS GET QUACKING



Ruth Melville holding an Indian Runner duck

Melville's Duck Racing is staging duck races daily in a race course beside the Large Animal Pavilion.

They race tall and slender Indian Runner Ducks.

The breed originated from India but can be found in most parts of Asia.

Five times a day, eight ducks compete in three races.

The ducks begin in a starting pen while Craig Melville does a countdown with the crowd. When he opens the gate the ducks start running through an obstacle course before finishing and receiving a reward of bird seed.

"It's completely different from anything else and the other animal races," Mr Melville said.

"Indian Runner ducks have cognitive abilities and are very clever."

"You can give them a task and they'll solve it."

"They can remember up to six people and work really well with them all the time," he said.

Mr Melville has spent 30 years around ducks. On his farm he uses them to train his working dogs.

"The ducks are always giving the dogs a challenge."

"It's like playing chess – they always try to outsmart the dogs and the dogs will always have to think," he said.

For the Melvilles, duck racing is all about good free family entertainment.

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## PRECISION REPTILES ON SHOW



Mr Duffey with a Collett's Snake.

Broden Duffey, from Precision Reptiles, presents a Venomous Reptiles show daily to show people that reptiles aren't monsters and they are not as scary as many people assume.

There is a common belief that a good snake is a dead snake, but snakes are really helpful and play a crucial role in protecting Australia's biodiversity.

"I've always been fascinated by reptiles," Mr Duffey said.

"I used to re-home greyhounds, and one of them was bitten by a snake. The snake catcher was hours away because we were out in the middle of nowhere," he said.

This led him to do his venomous snake handling course.

Mr Duffey's experience with snakes has been both good and bad. He has been bitten 15-20 times by a python but surprisingly he still loves snakes and his job.

The Ekka show includes a Monitor Lizard, a Red-bellied Black Snake, an Eastern Brown Snake, a Collett's Snake, a Death Adder, a King Brown Snake and a Black Headed Python.

His favourite snake is the King Cobra even though they are not Australian.

His favourite Australian snake is the Black Headed Python.

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## COBIA COOKING DEMONSTRATION

Visitors to the Woolworths Fresh Food Pavilion got an opportunity to see Chef Tracey cook Cobias (or Black Kingfish) in her demonstration at the Royal Queensland Cooking Stage.



(Left to Right): Chef Tracey, Donna (the host of the show) and Serena from Rocky Point Aquaculture

Chef Tracey, from the Women's Recreational Fishing Network, talked about aquaculture and fishery and gave the audience some tips of the trade while cooking the fish.

The fish being showcased as the key ingredient was the cobia – a versatile type of fish, suitable for all cooks.

“Cobia is the one fish that's impossible to destroy. You shouldn't worry about wasting money, buying expensive

fish and then not being able to cook it right,” she said.

She said that in regard to the flesh, it's not like Swordfish or Tuna, which are both really meaty, but Cobia is more like a Barramundi.

In her cooking demonstration, she prepared a salad using iceberg lettuce, onions and strawberries with a strawberry dressing. The fish was covered with breadcrumbs and macadamias on one side only because when she tried this recipe for the first time, she tried to do both sides, but when she flipped it, the crust came off. All the ingredients were then put together onto one plate, and the dish was ready to serve.

The demonstration wasn't just about the cooking. She also featured the starring fish itself. Serena from Rocky Point Aquaculture, presented a large Cobia for everyone to see.

“This is a seasonal fish and the season finished quite a bit ago, but they've been living in their own palace with about about 3,000 of their other mates, being really nicely fed and being kept specially for us,” Serena said.

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## PURR-FECTLY PURR-ETY CATS



A British Shorthair cat, Tatty.

Twenty-four cat breeds are being judged at the Sushi Hub Cat Precinct this year.

Each cat breed is judged in its own class.

The judges use breed standards and look at the shape of the chin, muzzle, ears and how they are set. They also look for the shape and set of eyes, and the coat characteristics.

The most prestigious awards are the Kitten Show Award and the Supreme All Breeds Award which is presented to the best cat of the Show.

Ekka competitor, Rodney McGregor, has 25 cats and has entered two of them this year. His Sphynx cat placed fifth and his Devon Rex cat placed fourth in their respective classes.

Rodney is a qualified judge but has not yet judged at the Ekka. He hopes to one day because he has always enjoyed judging cats.

“It’s fun, it’s just fun. You get to play with other people’s cats and hand them back. There’s some pretty nice cats out there,” he said.

“It [the cat show] gives people a chance to actually see the different breeds,” Rodney said.

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## PAWS-ITIVELY PAWSOME DOGS



Heidi Mackay with her Red Kelpie, Spud.

Heidi Mackay's amazing dogs are demonstrating their skills twice daily in the Main Show Ring in their first year at the Ekka.

Heidi has three Red Kelpies – Spud, Red and Oi – and a pure bred German Shepherd, Rip. Together they make an amazing crew. They perform various tricks such as marking a spot and running over to touch a button with their nose, then returning to Heidi.

"I'm like a stage mum when it comes to my dogs, I get proud of them every day," she said.

Heidi has been training dogs professionally for 31 years and has produced some of the best animal actors in the world. Her first movie, 'In Pursuit of Honor', had about 300 horses. This is the largest number of horses used in a movie produced in Australia.

Her dogs recently featured in the film 'Eden', which starred Sydney Sweeney.

Heidi and her dogs are also involved in the Australian Outback Spectacular, which she absolutely loves.

She adores her dogs and uses every failure during training as an opportunity to learn.

"You have to fail to succeed," Heidi said.

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## LIFE SAVING BANDS



The Police Marquee at the entrance to the Gourmet Plaza on Gregory Terrace.

Senior Constable Georgia Wheatley and her team are giving safety wrist bands to children, so, if they become lost at the Ekka, they can be quickly reunited with their parents.

She enjoys the job because she can meet people while helping to keep kids safe.

Officer Wheatley said, "We pop the parents' name and their phone number on the inside of the band. If we locate a lost child or one separated from their parents, we can cut off the wristband and call the parents' number and reunite the child with their parent."

"This is much more efficient than asking a troubled child for information," she said.

If a child without a safety band is lost, the parents should contact the police as soon as possible so they can distribute the child's details and organise a search party.

There are also general duty police officers at the Ekka making sure there are no offences or assaults.

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