The official magazine of the RNA

SHOWBIZ

SPRING 2026



SPECIAL UPDATE

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW RNA PRESIDENT

POWDERFINGER

TO ROCK THE SHOWGROUNDS

IN A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR OF LIVE MUSIC

RNA THE ROYAL NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND

BRISBANE SHOW GROUNDS

ROYAL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE BRISBANE AUSTRALIA

Ekka ROYAL QUEENSLAND SHOW

ROYAL QUEENSLAND AWARDS



LEGACY BUILD SECURES FUTURE

SPECIAL UPDATE
FROM NEW RNA PRESIDENT

Artist's impression of the upgraded Brisbane Showgrounds Main Arena featuring a new Machinery Hill grandstand.

As the newly elected President of the RNA, I would like to provide a special update to members on the $287.5 million Main Arena redevelopment as part of the Queensland Government's $3.5 billion investment in athlete villages for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Since September, visitors to the Showgrounds will have noticed significant activity underway in and around the Main Arena precinct by our project builders Hutchinsons.

Major demolition works are continuing across Machinery Hill, the former beef pavilion, Stockmen's Bar and the horse stalls along Brookes Street.

While construction zones and demolition works are a visible sign of change, they are also the first steps in one of the most important projects in our association's 150-year history.

The Main Arena redevelopment is a once-in-a-generation investment that will secure the future of the Ekka and the Brisbane Showgrounds for decades to come.

For generations, the Main Arena has been the heart of the Ekka.

It has welcomed champion livestock, hosted grand parades, entertained millions of visitors and created lifelong memories for Queensland families.

While these traditions remain as important as ever, the facilities supporting them must evolve to meet the needs of future generations.

Following the successful completion of the 150th Ekka, demolition and enabling works commenced in late August and have continued throughout September and October and into early November.

These works mark the beginning of a transformative redevelopment that will deliver a new Machinery Hill grandstand, a state-of-the-art Horse Pavilion, expanded green and event spaces, re-imagined Cattlemen's Bar and significantly improved accessibility across the precinct.

Construction will continue throughout 2027 and is planned to be finished in time for Ekka 2028.

Importantly, the Show continues throughout construction with the lower bowl of the new Machinery Hill grandstand expected to be in use for Ekka 2027 together with the newly refurbished Ernest Baynes and John MacDonald grandstands.

The new Horse Pavilion will provide modern facilities for our exhibitors and their horses, enhancing the experience for one of the Show's most important and enduring agricultural sectors.

At the same time, the additional open green spaces and flexible event areas will create a more welcoming and connected Showgrounds precinct that can be enjoyed year-round by visitors attending everything from the Ekka to concerts, festivals, sporting events and community gatherings.

A key focus of the redevelopment is accessibility.

The project will vastly improve access throughout the Main Arena, including specialised lift access to the historic John MacDonald Stand, improved pathways connecting key precinct areas, and a substantial increase in accessible seating.

These upgrades will create a more inclusive experience, ensuring more Queenslanders can enjoy all the excitement and atmosphere of the Ekka and other year-round events.

The redevelopment balances the restoration of our heritage-listed grandstands with contemporary infrastructure designed to serve future generations, ensuring the character and traditions that make the Ekka so special are retained while delivering facilities that meet modern expectations. Moreover, the Main Arena redevelopment provides the RNA with a wonderful opportunity to provide much needed upgrades to member facilities.

The project also forms part of an extraordinary legacy opportunity through Brisbane's 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Together with the Brisbane Athlete Village development, these investments will transform the Brisbane Showgrounds and secure its place at the heart of Queensland life well beyond 2032.They will strengthen our ability to host world-class events, support tourism and economic activity, and ensure the Showgrounds remain one of Australia's premier event destinations.

These projects provide certainty for the future of the Ekka and ensure that Queensland's most loved event can continue at its original birthplace for generations to come, connecting city and country just as it has done since 1876.

As construction progresses, I thank our members, exhibitors, patrons and partners for their continued support.

While there will be short-term disruption, the long-term benefits will be extraordinary.

Together, we are building a legacy that will honour our proud history while creating an even stronger future for the Ekka, the Brisbane Showgrounds and Queensland.

I look forward to providing regular updates to members on these game-changing legacy infrastructure upgrades to our Showgrounds' precinct.



Dan O'Connor
RNA PRESIDENT

Artist's impression of new green spaces

SPECIAL
FLY-THROUGH
CLICK TO WATCH



Artist impression of the upgraded Main Arena

Artist's impression of the new Horse Pavilion's mounting yard with direct access onto the upgraded Main Arena

Artist's impression of the new Horse Pavilion facilities

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Following Dan O'Connor's OAM election as RNA President in October, Don Chandler has been appointed Senior Vice-President of the RNA Council, with Gary Noller appointed Junior Vice-President.

Both have a long history with the RNA. Don has previously served as Junior Vice-President and held several committee leadership roles, including Chair of the RNA Foundation and Poultry Committee. Gary has served as an Executive Councillor and chaired several committees, including Beef, LAP, Joint Stock and Young Judges.

IAN FERGUSON RETIRES

Ian Ferguson has retired from Council after almost 20 years of service, following an even longer association with the RNA.

His involvement began through tent pegging before progressing to roles as a Steward, Honorary Council Steward and, in 2007, Councillor.



Ian has made a significant contribution to the Horse and Arena Committee, including serving as Chair and Ringmaster.

The RNA thanks Ian for his dedication and contribution to the organisation over many years.

NEW COUNCILLORS

The RNA has welcomed two new Councillors, Michael Lenihan and Brett Morris, following the retirements of David Thomas and Ian Ferguson.

Michael is a Life Member of the RNA and third-generation horse exhibitor with a lifelong connection to the Ekka and Queensland's agricultural show movement. He has been involved as a competitor, Ring Steward and judge, and has held governance roles with the Ipswich Show Society, including Treasurer. Professionally, Michael brings almost 20 years' experience across agribusiness and commercial banking and currently works as an Agribusiness Manager with National Australia Bank.

Brett also has a longstanding connection with the RNA's horse section. An equine veterinary surgeon with more than four decades' experience, he served as the official Horse Section Veterinarian at Ekka for approximately a decade and has been a Steward since the early 1980s and an Honorary Council Steward since the early 1990s. His extensive equine, horse health and biosecurity experience complements his deep practical knowledge of the Ekka and its horse section.

NEW FDC CHAIR

Shaun Sandilands has been elected chair of the RNA's Future Directions Committee (FDC) following the retirement of Jess Morel, with Aleacea Nixon taking on the role of Deputy Chair.

Shaun has been a Show competitor, an Ekka steward for the last 14 years and was elected to the FDC in 2016.

In 2017 he was appointed as Honorary Council Steward for the Ekka's Youth in Agriculture Competition and has been Deputy Co-Chair of the FDC for the past seven years.

He is also Vice Chair of Agricultural Shows Australia's Emerging Leaders Working Group.

Formed in 2001, the FDC's role is to provide a youthful perspective on the future of Ekka and to engage with young people both during and outside of show.

RNA FAREWELLS PRESIDENT DAVID THOMAS

AFTER 15 YEARS OF SERVICE



The RNA has farewelled President David Thomas, who retired in October after 15 years of dedicated service in the role.

Since becoming President in 2011, David helped guide the RNA through one of the most significant periods in its history.

His presidency began as the Brisbane Showgrounds redevelopment was in its early stages, with the RNA facing the challenge of securing the organisation's long-term future.

Over the past decade, the RNA has successfully transformed its business model, developed new event and revenue opportunities, strengthened its financial sustainability and secured the Ekka's future at its historic birthplace for generations to come.

During this time, the Brisbane Showgrounds evolved into one of Queensland's premier events precincts, hosting hundreds of events each year while the Ekka continued to grow and thrive.

The RNA is now well positioned for the future, with once-in-a-lifetime projects including the Main Arena redevelopment and Brisbane Athlete Village set to deliver lasting benefits for the organisation and wider community.

These initiatives will help secure the future of both the Showgrounds and the Ekka well beyond the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The RNA sincerely thanks David for his outstanding dedication, leadership and commitment over the past 15 years during such a remarkable, transformative and legacy setting era.

Ekka 150 YEARS in the MAKING 1876-2026

THANK YOU SPONSORS!

Together, we made this year's 150th Show unforgettable

PRESENTING PARTNER

BOQ

GRAND CHAMPION PARTNERS

Woolworths The fresh food people

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SUSHI HUB

TOY FARM

SUPPORTERS

Carnival Cruise Line

KILCOY Global Foods

Plush Puppy

RYDGES FORTITUDE VALLEY BRISBANE

horsey people

If you, or someone you know, would like to be involved as a sponsor for Ekka in 2027 please contact our team.

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BRISBANE SHOWGROUNDS SET FOR A

RECORD-BREAKING YEAR OF LIVE MUSIC

Photo by Jordan Munns

A blockbuster line-up of festivals and international and Australian acts is set to make 2027 the biggest year of live music in the history of the Brisbane Showgrounds.

One of the most anticipated events is Powderfinger's LIVE 2027 tour, with all six September performances at the Brisbane Showgrounds already sold out.

Next year will mark 17 years since Powderfinger last took to the stage, with the Brisbane Showgrounds to host the iconic Australian rock band's first live performances in almost two decades as they kick off their highly anticipated national tour in their hometown.

The band has also announced two additional hometown shows at the Brisbane Showgrounds for December, to bring their national tour to a close. More than 140,000 fans will see them live at the Showgrounds.

Powderfinger has a long-standing connection with the Showgrounds, having performed at the venue three times as part of Livid Festival in 1997, 1999, and 2002.

The excitement doesn't stop there, with international heavyweights also set to take to the stage in 2027. Popular Scottish DJ Calvin Harris will perform in February, with his show already sold out, followed by American rock band Kings of Leon in March.

Festival favourites will also feature on the 2027 calendar, with Laneway returning to the Showgrounds in February, following its event on the Gold Coast earlier this year.

Laneway has a long-standing association with the venue, which first hosted the Brisbane leg of the festival in 2009.

The 2027 event will mark Laneway Festival's 16th year at the Showgrounds, with Irish post-punk band Fontaines D.C. and three-time GRAMMY Award-winning artist Hayley Williams set to headline.

The live music calendar will kick off earlier this summer, with Good Things returning in early December 2026. The festival will deliver its signature mix of rock, punk and alternative music, headlined by American rock band Limp Bizkit.

Rounding out the year, Wildlands will take over on New Year's Eve, welcoming 2027 with a major celebration of electronic music and contemporary sounds. The lineup will be led by American DJ John Summit and British rapper Skepta.

From world-renowned DJs and chart-topping rock acts to much-loved Australian performers, the Brisbane Showgrounds' packed live music program is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of fans from across Queensland.

With several more music festivals still to be announced for 2027, the year is set to be the biggest in the Brisbane Showgrounds' history for live music, further cementing its reputation as one of Queensland's premier music event destinations.

LIVE MUSIC CALENDAR



GOOD THINGS FESTIVAL
SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER 2026



WILDLANDS
THURSDAY 31 DECEMBER 2026



LANEWAY
SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2027



CALVIN HARRIS
FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2027



KINGS OF LEON
WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2027



POWDERFINGER LIVE 2027
3, 4, 6, 8, 10 & 11 SEPTEMBER
10 & 11 DECEMBER



SHOWSTOPPING CROWDS FLOCK TO HISTORIC 150TH EKKA

More than 423,000 people passed through the gates of the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) presented by the Bank of Queensland (BOQ) from August 8-16, as the state's largest and most loved annual event celebrated its historic 150th anniversary.

For a century and a half, the Ekka has brought together the best of Queensland, from the country to the city, showcasing agriculture, local produce, innovation, livestock and entertainment while creating cherished memories for generations of families.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the success of this year's Show reflected the enduring appeal of a Queensland institution that had stood the test of time.

"Hundreds of thousands of people from rural towns and cities across Queensland and beyond flocked to this year's Ekka to celebrate its remarkable 150th milestone," he said.

"This year's special anniversary provided the RNA with the unique opportunity to thank Queenslanders and Australians for their extraordinary patronage and support over 150 years.

"We are very grateful to every Queenslander who came through the gates and made this the most memorable in the Show's history."

Visitors embraced the experiences that make the Ekka so special, from beloved competitions and animal displays to live entertainment, thrilling rides, showbags and the iconic strawberry sundaes.

In 2026, almost 23,000 entries were received across 59 competitions, backed by a $759,000 prize pool. More than 5,000 exhibitors took part, contributing to the strongest entry numbers in more than five years.

Driven by strong demand during the milestone year, many sections reached entry capacity, including Led Steer, which recorded a record number of cattle. Several Arts and Cookery sections also achieved their highest participation in a decade.

After 150 years, the attraction of Ekka remains clear – bringing Queenslanders together to celebrate agriculture and the best of the state, while creating new memories and continuing traditions for generations to come.

423,000
VISITORS



194,000
STRAWBERRY SUNDAES EATEN



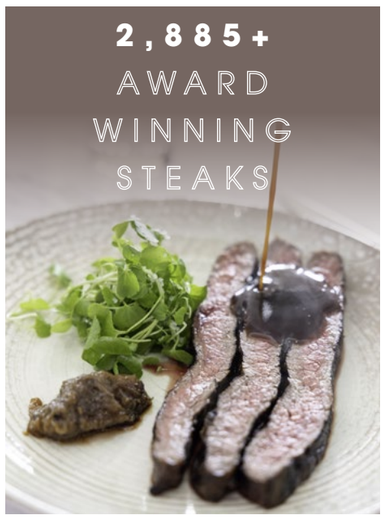
22,800+
COMPETITION ENTRIES



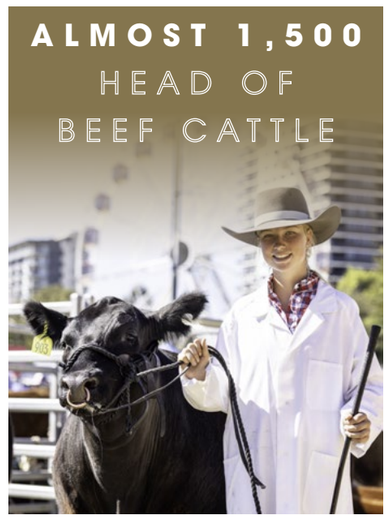
5,000+
COMPETITORS



2,885+
AWARD WINNING STEAKS



ALMOST 1,500
HEAD OF BEEF CATTLE



210+ HOURS
OF LIVE MUSIC



150 YEARS OF EKKA



20,000 EKKANITES
SPECTATORS EACH DAY

3.5 TONNES
OF FIREWORKS

44 FLAME
UNITS

80 FIRING
COMPUTERS

439 SHOWBAGS INCLUDING **93 NEW ONES**

BEST SELLING SHOWBAGS INCLUDE:

- BERTIE BEETLE BLUE
- SQUISHY THINGS
- FREDDO





TOP THREE RIDES

- CRAZY COASTER
- THE BEAST
- THE WARRIOR

Six Acres RESTAURANT
RYDGES FORTITUDE VALLEY BRISBANE
BAR gusto

CONNECT & CELEBRATE

HOSTING AN EVENT AT BRISBANE SHOWGROUNDS?

GATHER AT BAR GUSTO FOR PRE- OR POST-EVENT DINNER & DRINKS.

- 190-SEAT VENUE
- INDOOR DINING AREA
- OPEN-AIR DECK UNDER A HERITAGE FIG
- 40-SEAT PRIVATE DINING SPACE
- VERSATILE FOOD AND DRINKS PACKAGES

LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT VENUE TO HOST YOUR END-OF YEAR CELEBRATION?

CHOOSE FROM MULTIPLE VENUE SPACES ACROSS SIX ACRES RESTAURANT, BAR GUSTO AND RYDGES FORTITUDE VALLEY.

SCAN THE QR CODES BELOW TO VIEW MENUS & EVENT PACKAGES.

END-OF-YEAR EVENTS KIT

YEAR-ROUND EVENTS KIT


'THE LIBRARY'


BAR GUSTO DECK


BAR GUSTO


SIX ACRES RESTAURANT









RELAX AND INDULGE ON CHRISTMAS DAY!

JOIN US AT SIX ACRES RESTAURANT FOR A SEAFOOD LUNCH BUFFET

Friday 25 December | 12:30-3:30pm

ENJOY A GENEROUS BUFFET SERVING UP ALL THE CHRISTMAS FAVOURITES...
...from oysters, prawns, bugs, smoked salmon and baked fish, along with glazed ham and roast sirloin, served with delicious salads, sides and desserts.

Scan the QR code for details and to book your table.
*See booking page for T&Cs. Menu items and images are indicative only and may vary on the day.

601 Gregory Terrace, Bowen Hills QLD 4006
07 3188 3000 • reservations_rydgesfortitudevalley@evt.com • **rydgesfortitudevalley.com**



Terry Nolan and his wife Jan

TERRY NOLAN CROWNED EKKA LEGEND

A champion of Queensland's beef industry and a driving force behind the Ekka's prestigious Led Steer Competition, Terry Nolan has been recognised with the RNA's highest honour – the 2026 Ekka Legend Award.

For almost 50 years, Terry has played a vital role in the Ekka's beef cattle competitions, particularly Led Steer, where he was instrumental in helping establish the competition in 1979.

He went on to judge his first Show in 1989 and has judged many Ekka competitions over the years, including Led Steer, Carcasses, Junior Judges, Prime Cattle and various Stud Breeds.

Terry's contribution to the Led Steer Competition has extended well beyond financial support through Nolan Meat Company. He has played a key role in evolving and promoting the competition, helping transform it into a true showcase of cattle excellence and an important link between producers and the broader beef industry.

Drawing on his extensive industry expertise, Terry has strengthened the competition's commercial relevance by aligning the judging criteria with real-world market specifications and processor requirements, enhancing the competition's integrity, educational value and industry impact.

By connecting producers with processors and markets, Terry has further strengthened the competition's role as a true paddock-to-plate showcase, reinforcing the Ekka's relevance to the modern beef value chain.

A passionate advocate for the next generation of beef producers, Terry has also supported schools and young exhibitors, encouraging participation and helping foster a strong connection between young people and the beef industry.

Across changing market conditions and industry cycles, Terry has remained a consistent advocate for the Ekka and its agricultural competitions, promoting their importance to Queensland's rural sector.

The Ekka Legend Award recognises individuals who have made a remarkable contribution to the Show. It was introduced in 2004 and just 19 people have now been awarded the RNA's most prestigious honour.



GRAND CHAMPIONS

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND STUDENT FERMENTED BEVERAGES

CHAMPION FERMENTED BEVERAGE
St Aidan's Anglican Girl's School

APICULTURE

MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR
Arborwood Honey

YOUNG FARMER CHALLENGE

YOUNG FARMER CHALLENGE FINALIST
Fowl Play

BUSH POETRY

OVERALL CHAMPION
Justin Geange

CAKE DECORATING

GRAND CHAMPION
Pauline Herrmann

CATS

SUPREME ALL BREEDS CAT OF SHOW
Animal: Coolcoons Secret Business, (Maine Coone)
Exhibitor: Fiona Cooper

CREATIVE ART & CRAFT

GRAND CHAMPION EXHIBIT
Shona Lawrence

DAIRY CATTLE

SUPREME CHAMPION DAIRY COW
Animal: ARDYLBAR SOLOMON VICKI (Holstein)
Exhibitor: AD & SL Barron

DAIRY GOATS

MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR
Lesley & Tom McDowell

DOGS

BEST IN SHOW
Animal: CH. STARPACER DOUBLE O SEVEN (Old English Sheepdog) Owner: Miss L G Nash-Tapper
Exhibitor: Julie Jennings

EDUCATION ON SHOW

CHAMPION SCHOOL OF SHOW
Upper Brookfield State School

FARRIERS AND BLACKSMITHS

MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR (OPEN)
Robert Jukes
MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR (INTERMEDIATE)
Mitchell Willoughby Dwyer
MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR (SENIOR NOVICE)
Harrison Baxter
MOST SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITOR (JUNIOR NOVICE)
Charlie Mackenzie

FISH

GRAND CHAMPION EXHIBIT OF SHOW
Peter Ford

HORSE

CHAMPION GENTLEMAN RIDER
Jaspa Beattie – Araluen Motown
CHAMPION LADY RIDER
Maddison Ball - Givenchy

HORTICULTURAL DISPLAYS

MOST EFFECTIVE DISPLAY
Orchid Societies South East Queensland

LED STEER

GRAND CHAMPION LED STEER
Breed: Limousin, Exhibitor: A&S O'Dwyer
GRAND CHAMPION LED STEER CARCASS
Breed: Limousin, Exhibitor: A&S O'Dwyer

NATURAL FIBRES & WEARABLE ART

GRAND CHAMPION
Brooke Wills

FARRIERS AND BLACKSMITHS

CLASS 37 OVERALL WINNER
Exhibitor: Palgrove Charolais Pty Ltd, Breed: Charolais X
CLASS 38 OVERALL WINNER
Exhibitor: Aurelian Pastoral Co, Breed: Angus/Ultrablack
CLASS 39 OVERALL WINNER
Exhibitor: LA&DL HENSCHELL, Breed: WAGYU FULLBLOOD
CLASS 40 OVERALL WINNER
Exhibitor: Palgrove Charolais Pty Ltd, Breed: Charolais X
CLASS 41 OVERALL WINNER
Exhibitor: Werner Rural Investments, Breed: Wagyu



GRAND CHAMPIONS

PAINTING & DRAWING

GRAND CHAMPION EXHIBIT
Terry Hadnutt – Slim Dusty
GRAND CHAMPION PORTRAIT OF SHOW
Gavin Ireland - Watching

PHOTOGRAPHY

CHAMPION PRINT
Maree Rablin – Free Flight Grey Goshawk
CHAMPION DIGITAL IMAGE
Gerry Allen – Cathedrals of the Harvest

POULTRY

SUPREME GRAND CHAMPION
Hec and Dean McKenzie

PRIME LAMBS

OVERALL CHAMPION PEN OF THREE LAMBS
Warren & Wendy Schelbach
OVERALL PADDOCK TO PLATE CHAMPION
Bellevue Grazing Company Pty Ltd

QUILTS ACROSS QUEENSLAND

BEST QUILT OF SHOW
Genevieve Jackson – Spring is Here

RAISING HY-LINE HENS

OVERALL CHAMPION
Greenbank Hive

SHEEP

SUPREME CHAMPION BREEDS GROUP OF SHOW
Matthew Franklin

SCULPTURE

CHAMPION SCULPTURE
Donald Harvison - "Footloose" - Billy Brolga cuts loose to "The Claypan Boogie"

SHOWJUMPING

CHAMPION RIDER
Stuart Jenkins

STUD BEEF

CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS BULL
Exhibitor: Keddstock Pty Ltd, Breed: Charolais
CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS COW OR HEIFER
Exhibitor: 4 Ways Charolais, Breed: Charolais

STUDENT MADE CHEESE

CHAMPION CHEESE OF SHOW - WHITE MOULD
Exhibitor: Tullawong State High School, Exhibit: Grubby Tubby
CHAMPION CHEESE OF SHOW - BLUE MOULD
Exhibitor: Beenleigh State High School, Exhibit: Say Cheese!!!

THOROUGHBRED & STANDARDBRED

CHAMPION STANDARDBRED
Louise Cooper – Gregs Legacy
SUPREME CHAMPION THOROUGHBRED
LJ Sears & Michael Myers - Maserati Lady

WOODCHOP AND SAWING

CHAMPION AXEMAN OF SHOW
Brayden Meyer

WOOL

GRAND CHAMPION MERINO FLEECE OF SHOW
Roselea Merino Stud

YOUNG JUDGES

MOST SUCCESSFUL COMPETITOR
Elanna Travers

YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

OVERALL YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE -EFFECTIVE ARRANGEMENT
Girl Guides QLD
OVERALL YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE - BEST MOVEMENT AND/OR ANIMATION
Caboolture State High School

FLORISTRY

RICHARD & MEGAN CHRISTENSEN AWARD FOR FLORAL DESIGN
Redlands Floral Art Club

FASHIONS ON THE FIELD

GRAND CHAMPION
Sandy Holmes

150 YEARS OF EKKA

GRAND CHAMPIONS





AUSTRALIA'S ULTIMATE BEEF SUPPLY CHAIN COMPETITION MARKS 30-YEAR MILESTONE

Entries are now open for the 2027 RNA Paddock to Palate Competition presented by JBS Australia, as the prestigious competition celebrates its 30th anniversary.

Recognised as Australia's most commercial beef supply chain competition, Paddock to Palate offers more than $63,000 in prize money across five classes, providing producers with the opportunity to benchmark their cattle and showcase performance from paddock to plate.

First judged in 1998, the competition continues to go from strength to strength, attracting a record number of entries in 2026, with more than 1,300 head of cattle from across Queensland and New South Wales taking part.

RNA Beef Committee Chair Gary Noller said entries were assessed from paddock performance through to feedlot efficiency, carcase quality, and consumer taste testing.

"The competition allows exhibitors to gain access to objective performance data, enabling them to refine genetics, improve herd productivity, and validate breeding strategies," he said.

"It provides exhibitors with a unique platform to benchmark their cattle, elevate their brand, and gain exposure to processors, buyers, and consumers.

"Exhibitors receive detailed feedback that supports breeding, feeding, and marketing decisions."

The competition's first phase, best aggregate weight gain, is held at the JBS Beef City feedlot west of Toowoomba, followed by a carcase competition and an MSA eating quality competition.

Exhibitors achieving the highest combined scores across all three phases will take out top honours at the Paddock to Palate Awards and Beef Industry Dinner during the 2027 Ekka Beef Week.

The RNA's prestigious competition has also built a strong reputation among consumers. It's the only beef competition in Australia to produce a commercial brand - the JBS Royal 100 - which has become a sought-after release among restaurants and butchers each year.

ENTRIES FOR CLASSES 37, 38 AND 40 ARE OPEN AND CLOSE FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER 2026.

For more information and to enter please click here.

Entries for the 2028 Wagyu Challenge (classes 39 and 41) will open in January 2027.

A GIANT CHALLENGE AWAITS AS ENTRIES OPEN FOR EKKA'S ICONIC PUMPKIN COMPETITION

We might have recently celebrated Halloween, but the real monsters will soon be growing in Queensland paddocks, schools and backyards, with entries open for the Ekka's Giant Pumpkin Competition presented by Pillow Talk.

The competition offers more than $3,400 in prize money, with a bonus $1,000 up for grabs for any winning entry weighing more than 350kg. Featuring two classes - Open and Youth (for individuals or school groups aged 18 years and under) - the competition

Dating back to the first Ekka in 1876, the Giant Pumpkin Competition is one of the Show's most iconic and anticipated agricultural competitions, attracting a record number of entries last year.

For schools, the competition offers more than just prize money. It provides a hands-on learning experience across science, mathematics, sustainability and agriculture, with students exploring plant growth, measurement, data collection, environmental factors and problem-solving.

Queensland schools have already proven they can think big, with Toowoomba's Downlands College holding the competition record after growing a monster 368.5kg pumpkin in 2024, smashing the previous record of 261.5kg set in 2015.

After months of nurturing their giant gourds, competitors will bring their pumpkins to the Brisbane Showgrounds on Saturday 20 March 2027 for judging. Held outside the traditional August Ekka dates, the competition takes advantage of Queensland's optimal pumpkin-growing season.

Keen growers and schools can get started by requesting free giant Atlantic pumpkin seeds through the Ekka website.

ENTRIES CLOSE SATURDAY 13 MARCH 2027.

To enter or request free seeds, please click here.



High Tea Committee from left - Gina Fairfax AM, Jane Thomas, Sarah McCamley, The Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM Governor of Qld, Andrea Crothers, Alison Chandler and Margie Adnam

RNA 'HIGH TEA' FUNDRAISER

The RNA's 2026 'High Tea' Fundraiser was held on Friday 7th August (often referred to as Day Zero). This occasion marked the Fundraiser's 10th event in which funds have been allocated towards supporting children living in rural and remote outback Qld. Coincidently, this anniversary also fell in the same year as the Ekka's '150th Birthday Celebrations'. There was much to celebrate!!! Enthusiasm was particularly high and guest numbers were increased to 500 for this special occasion.

I include here an Ekka TV link which contains comments from ladies involved in this annual get-together:

CLICK HERE

"WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THIS YEAR'S EVENT RAISED $58,078 THROUGH A VARIETY OF SUPPORTIVE OPTIONS"

For those of you who are not aware of where the event's fundraising has been directed, here is the list of organisations/ charities which have benefited since Inauguration in 2015:

- **2015** Longreach & Charleville Schools of Distance Education
- **2016** Mt Isa & Charters Towers Schools of Distance Education
- **2017** 'Lady Cilento Children's Hospital School' now known as the 'Queensland Children's Hospital School'
- **2018** 'Western Alliance'
- **2019** 'BUSHkids'
- **2020/21** Cancelled due to Covid
- **2022** 'Outback Futures'
- **2023** 'BushED'
- **2024** 'Outback Futures' follow-up initiatives
- **2025** Longreach School of Distance Education (LSODE) – Music Department
- **2026** Two charities were selected this year – aimed at covering parts of Qld not previously visited. Firstly, the 'Isolated Children's Parents Association' (ICPA) with its school 'Sports Camps' programme; and 'Storyfest Southwest' an organisation which visits schools and helps promote the enjoyment of book reading.

The Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Doctor Jeanette Young AC PSM, who is Patron of the RNA, not only addressed the 'High Tea' gathering but (together with her husband, Professor Nimmo) officially opened the Ekka the following day. They also returned on Exhibition Wednesday to watch the 'Grand Parade' and visit the Cookery, Creative Arts and Crafts sections.



The Governor of QLD addressing the gathering

This year's live auction featured the following unique items that went under the hammer:

- **Morganite and diamond drop earrings**, donated by Patti Sedgwick owner of Sedgwick Antique and Estate Jewellery;
- **One week's accommodation in a 3-bedroom penthouse at 'Costa Nova'**. This Sunshine Beach venue features huge ocean, beach and coastline views and was donated by the Fairfax Family;
- **Painting titled 'Orchid Swamp'** by renowned artist Annabel Tully
- **Royal Qld Steakhouse experience** organised through the RNA;
- **Expert succession planning guidance** with Fran Becker, Senior Partner at 'Hamilton Locke';
- **Acrylic painting on canvas titled 'Summer Garden'**, donated by the artist, Marina Little.

This year the 'Live' Auction raised a never before achieved $22,718, while a record number of Raffle prizes were donated, which raised $13,492.

Raffle ticket sales were again a major contributing factor to the financial success of our event.

As with most fundraising activities, the event's success relies heavily upon the generosity of its supporters. I wish to sincerely thank all those who provided Raffle and Live Auction items.

The Hostesses, Committee and I wish to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the success of this event and we look forward to welcoming our family and fundraising friends (both new and old) to next year's 'Exciting, Enjoyable and Entertaining Ekka Event'.

2026 is my last year as Chair of this special event. I am delighted to announce that Alison Chandler, Committee member and wife of the RNA's Senior Vice-President, has agreed to become the new Chair.

As the Founder, I am so happy with this outcome and am looking forward to enjoying many years of continued success.

Best wishes,

Jane Thomas

Chair



A NEW YEAR OF COMPETITION IS BREWING FOR THE ROYAL QUEENSLAND AWARDS

Preparations are underway for the 2027 Royal Queensland Awards (RQA) supported by King Street, with competition entries set to open soon. The prestigious awards celebrate the best of Australia's food and beverage industry, giving producers a valuable opportunity to benchmark their products against some of the nation's finest. In 2026, more than 2,500 entries were judged across seven categories - Branded Beef, Branded Lamb, Cheese and Dairy, Ice Cream, Gelato and Sorbet, Wine, Beer, and Distilled Spirits.

SAVE THE DATE FOR GRAPE GRAZING BY NIGHT

Mark your calendars for Friday 9 July 2027, when Grape Grazing by Night returns to the Brisbane Showgrounds to celebrate the best of the Royal Queensland Awards.

The event pairs RQA award-winning wines with gourmet grazing stations featuring medal-winning beef, lamb and cheese, creating a premium food and wine experience.

KEY COMPETITION ENTRY DATES:



BEER

16 NOVEMBER 2026



DISTILLED SPIRITS

18 NOVEMBER 2026



ICE CREAM, GELATO, AND SORBET

27 JANUARY 2027



CHEESE & DAIRY

27 JANUARY 2027



BRANDED BEEF AND BRANDED LAMB

3 FEBRUARY 2027

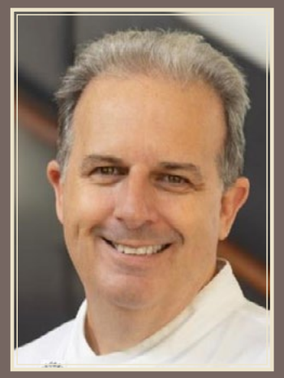


WINE

FEBRUARY 2027

Ekka
ROYAL QUEENSLAND SHOW
Presented By: BOQ

CHOCOLATE PUMPKIN PIE PASTRY



With entries opening for the Ekka's Giant Pumpkin Competition presented by Pillow Talk, our Brisbane Showgrounds Executive Sous Chef, Dean Brewer, has shared his irresistible Chocolate Pumpkin Pie recipe.

Combining the rich decadence of chocolate with the sweetness of pumpkin, this delicious pie is a must-try!

Whether served as the perfect dinner-party dessert or enjoyed with your afternoon coffee, every slice delivers a delightful balance of indulgence and seasonal flavour.

Base ingredients:

1.5 cups of plain flower
1/3 cup of icing sugar
1/4 cup of cocoa powder
125g of chopped butter
1 egg yolk
1/2 tbspn of chilled water
100gm of melted white chocolate

Filling ingredients:

300g of chopped roasted pumpkin
125g of spreadable cream cheese
2 lightly beaten eggs
1/2 cup of brown sugar
3/4 tspn of cinnamon
1/2 tspn of nutmeg
1/4 tspn of ground cloves



CHOCOLATE PUMPKIN PIE PASTRY

Base method:

1. Combine flour, icing sugar, cocoa powder and butter in a food processor until the mixture resembles wet breadcrumbs.
2. Add the egg yolks and water and pulse until combined.
3. Gently knead until smooth, then wrap in cling film and chill for 30 minutes.
4. Roll the pastry out between two sheets of baking paper to line a 23cm round fluted tart pan with a removable base.
5. Prick with a fork and chill for a further 30 minutes.
6. Bake in the oven at 180 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes.
7. Once the base comes out of the oven, brush it over with white chocolate, then allow it to cool completely.

Filling method:

1. Combine pumpkin, cream cheese, eggs, sugar, and spices in a food processor until smooth.
2. Pour into the prepared tart base, then bake in the oven at 180 degrees for 10 minutes before reducing the heat to 150 degrees and baking for a further 30 to 35 minutes until the mixture is set. Allow to cool, then enjoy!




GET A HEAD START
ON YOUR 2027
GET IN CONTACT WITH THE
VENUE SALES TEAM
ENQUIRIES AT SALES@ROYALICC.COM.AU
OR CALL 07 3253 3900