

1888

MAIN PAVILION DESTROYED

- Main Pavilion (corner of Bowen Bridge Road and Gregory Terrace) was destroyed by fire on June 13, 1888

1891

EXHIBITION BUILDING AND CONCERT HALL CONSTRUCTED

- The Exhibition and Concert Hall (now known as The Old Museum) was built on the corner of Bowen Bridge Road and Gregory Terrace. It was built to replace the RNA's first exhibition building (Main Pavilion) which was destroyed by fire three years earlier. It contains 1.3 million bricks and was completed in 23 weeks. 300 men were constantly at work during its construction. The building was equipped with a huge pipe organ by Wallis and Co of London
- The first district exhibits contest was held – nine regions competed for a prize pool of £175*

1894

FIRST FIREWORKS

- The first fireworks display occurred in the Main Arena, beginning another show tradition*

1906

JOHN MACDONALD STAND BUILT

1912

AMERICAN AVIATOR

- American aviator Arthur Burr Stone used the Main Arena to take off and land a Metz Bleriot Monoplane, for the first ever flight over Brisbane

1917

TOOWOOMBA'S AUSTRAL HALL

- Toowoomba's Austral Hall was bought for £1,500 and re-erected at the Showgrounds, making it the largest building of its type in the state

1919

EKKA CANCELLED DUE TO INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC

1920

EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES VISITS THE EKKA

1921

THE RNA

- The prefix 'Royal' was added to the association's name, after it was granted under warrant from His Majesty King George V

1923

ERNEST BAYNES STAND BUILT

1926

NATIONAL SPEEDWAY

- The National Speedway opened at the RNA Showgrounds
- The Queensland Country Women's Association made its first appearance at the Ekka
- The first night time ring program was held at Ekka, following the introduction of electric lighting*

1928

SIR DONALD BRADMAN TEST DEBUT

- The Main Arena played host to the test debut of the world's greatest batsman Sir Donald Bradman. Bradman was playing in the first Australia versus England International Test in Queensland and scored a total of 19 runs
- The first international rugby league game was held on the Main Arena

1930s

GREAT DEPRESSION

- New Ekka competitions provided fresh entertainment for visitors during the depths of the Great Depression, including goat races which attracted 100 competitors*

1937

INDUSTRIAL PAVILION OPENED

1942

WORLD WAR II

- The Ekka was cancelled, as the grounds were used as a staging depot during World War II

1950

EKKA FOOD TRADITIONS

- The now symbolic Ekka fairy floss, butter board sandwiches, Strawberry Sundaes and dagwood dogs were introduced*

1954

QUEEN ELIZABETH II AND PRINCE PHILLIP VISITED THE EKKA

1964

ANIMAL NURSERY AT THE EKKA INTRODUCED

1966

HUMAN CANNONBALL APPEARED AT THE EKKA FOR THE FIRST TIME*

1971

INTERNATIONAL SPRINGBOK TOUR

- The International Springbok Tour was held at the RNA Showgrounds, with a two metre chain wire fence erected to separate the players from the spectators

1989

LIVID MUSIC FESTIVAL

- The renowned Livid Music Festival was held at the RNA Showgrounds for the first time, which later featured performances by superstar group Oasis and Green Day in 2000 and British music icons The Cure in 2002

1996

COMMERCE AND EXHIBITION
BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED

2000

SIDESHOW ALLEY AND
WOODCHOP

- The Inner City Bypass was constructed, and Sideshow Alley and the woodchop arena were redeveloped

2003

REDEVELOPMENT VISION
BEGAN

- RNA Council embarked on its vision to keep the Ekka at the RNA Showgrounds and cement the long-term financial viability of the RNA, through redeveloping the Showgrounds and its facilities

2005

RNA SHOWGROUNDS
MASTER PLAN LAUNCHED

2009

REDEVELOPMENT PARTNER

- Lendlease was selected as the RNA's development partner for the \$2.9 billion RNA Showgrounds Regeneration Project

2010

MASTER PLAN APPROVAL

- The RNA Showgrounds Master Plan was approved by the Urban Land Development Authority, paving way for construction to start
- One million people attended events at the RNA Showgrounds in a calendar year

2011

CONSTRUCTION STARTED

- Construction commenced on the Industrial Pavilion, as part of the RNA Showgrounds Regeneration Project
- The first release of residential apartments at The Green went on sale and work began on the related infrastructure
- British heavy metal band Iron Maiden and world renowned guitarist Slash performed at Soundwave music festival, which attracted a crowd of 45,000
- Grammy Award-winners Wolfmother closed the Ekka's concert series in front of a capacity crowd

2012

ROYAL ICC'S FIRST VISITORS

- The ground floor of the brand new Royal International Convention Centre (Royal ICC) housed the Ekka's Canine Competition, Agricultural Hall and horticulture exhibits
- Construction began on the new 7,000m², \$7.7 million Plaza
- The RNA was inducted into the Queensland Business Leaders Hall of Fame for its contribution to the state's economic and social history
- In an Australian first, Ekka fans were able to customise their own fireworks on the show's free interactive fireworks iPhone app
- New Ekka ticket bundles were introduced and resulted in a 400 per cent increase in pre-sales
- 2012 Australian of the Year and Academy Award-winning actor and producer Geoffrey Rush attended the opening day of the Ekka
- In true Queensland style, a cricket match involving cricketers greats Adam Gilchrist, Glenn McGrath, Ian Healy, Andy Bichel and Jimmy Maher took place on the Main Arena on the final day of the Ekka
- 45,000 revellers made their way to Soundwave to enjoy performances by System of a Down, Marilyn Manson, Slipknot and Limp Bizkit

2013

BRISBANE SHOWGROUNDS LAUNCHED

- The Royal ICC was fully completed and held its first events in March 2013
- Completion of the Plaza and Porte-Cochere
- Construction began on K1, the first of the commercial towers at Kingsgate commercial precinct, and on The Green residential apartments
- More than 400,000 guests attended the Ekka
- The Royal Queensland Show took home the prestigious Best in Show title, along with 13 other awards, at the 2013 International Association of Fairs and Expositions Awards (IAFE Awards)
- More than 54,521 Ekka Facebook friends – a growth of 75 per cent on 2012
- The Caravan and Camping Show attracted 71,500 people to the Brisbane Showgrounds
- 50,000 music lovers descended on the Brisbane Showgrounds for Soundwave

2014

BRISBANE SHOWGROUNDS REGENERATION PROJECT STAGE TWO UNDERWAY

- Stage two of the Brisbane Showgrounds Regeneration Project launched in September, including the announcement of the four and a half star Rydges Hotel and construction commencing on King Street
- The Royal ICC hosted Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal (Princess Anne) and 250 delegates at the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth (RASC) conference in October
- Grammy Award-winner Lorde performed at Laneway festival to a record crowd

2015

HOTEL CONSTRUCTION

- Work started on the 208 room, four and a half star Rydges Hotel on the corner of Gregory Terrace and King Street, with construction completed in December
- In June, Kingsgate commercial sector opened for business on the corner of King Street and St Pauls Terrace, becoming the Queensland head office for Lendlease
- In September, the RNA welcomed the very first residents to the Brisbane Showgrounds in The Green apartments

2016

KING STREET COMES TO LIFE

- The 208 room, four and a half star Rydges Hotel, along with the Paddock Bar and Six Acres restaurant, opened on King Street in February. The street, which connects St Pauls Terrace and Gregory Terrace, also opened to traffic the same month.
- From August to November, King Street welcomed restaurants The George Bar and Bistro, Fat Dumpling, Sushi & Nori, Hello Chicken and Il Verde
- After 119 years, The Old Museum came home to Ekka, forming a brand new precinct home to the Flower and Garden Exhibition and Quilts Across Queensland

2017

CELEBRATING EKKA'S 140TH

- The Ekka celebrated a remarkable milestone - its 140th anniversary - with the RNA marking the special occasion by introducing a new half price ticket for entry from 6pm and not one, but two fireworks displays
- King Street cemented its reputation as a foodie hot spot, with eight new retailers (five of those restaurants) opening their doors, including two-hat French restaurant Montrachet
- Construction commenced on 25 King, the world's largest engineered timber office building, in June
- Construction commenced on The Pavilion in August. Once complete in late October 2018, it'll house more than 1,600 large animals during Ekka and be used as a 650 bay car park and event space outside of show

* Historical information and statistics sourced from 'Showtime - A History of the Brisbane Exhibition' by Joanne Scott and Ross Laurie, 2008; and RNA Archives.

2018

INVESTING IN AGRICULTURE

- The RNA invested in its charter of championing and celebrating agriculture, building two new event facilities - The Pavilion and Marquee 2 - which were both used at the Ekka for the very first time. The Pavilion, completed in October, was partially used at the show to house beef and dairy cattle, dairy goats and poultry. Meanwhile Marquee 2 was completed in February and became the new Woodchop Arena, expanding the competition area by 50 per cent
- King Street emerged as one of Brisbane's most popular dining and retail precincts, with 12 new retailers opening throughout the year including Australia's newest luxury food shopping concept Mercado
- Construction commenced on Alexandria Park in August. Once complete in mid-2019, it'll offer more than two acres of additional green space for the public to enjoy all year round and during Ekka

2021

EKKA CANCELLED FOR ONLY THE FOURTH TIME IN HISTORY DUE TO GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC

2022

EKKA RETURNS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWO YEARS

2019

NEW PARK FOR POOCHES AND THE PUBLIC

- Alexandria Park was completed in April, offering two acres of additional green and event space, along with a refurbished heritage-listed undercover events pavilion known as Building 8. The park became the new home of the Ekka's Canine Competition presented by Black Hawk in August. Outside of the show, the park is used as an events space and can be enjoyed by the public
- Nine major music festivals which attracted 150,000 people were staged at the Brisbane Showgrounds including Listen Out and RNB Fridays Live
- The RQFWS held its Beer Awards for the first time in five years, with the RNA revitalising the competition to once again showcase Australia's best brewers and their products. It also forms part of the RNA's commitment to reward and recognise the nation's best of the best

2020

EKKA CANCELLED FOR ONLY THE THIRD TIME IN HISTORY DUE TO GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC