

July 12, 2016

Back to the future as Ekka supercharges into history

The Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) has gone back to the future in a celebration of heritage and innovation, welcoming The Old Museum back to the show for the first time in 119 years, while introducing historic discounts to make this year's Ekka the best value ever.

For the first time since 1897, The Old Museum will return to its original home for the 10 days of show, transformed for Ekka into the new Flower and Garden Exhibition presented by Envy Lawn "Grown for Life" and the Quilts Across Queensland precinct, with a special Ekka rose being cultivated to mark the occasion.

As the countdown to the iconic Ekka began at the show's official launch in Brisbane this morning, RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the inclusion of The Old Museum was a significant historical event because it was originally constructed for the RNA in 1891 as Brisbane's first Exhibition Building.

"From 1891 to 1897 the Museum was part of Ekka grounds, but following a major economic depression the Queensland Government took over control of the building," he said.

"It then became the Queensland Museum in 1899, so we're going back to the future in a sense.

"While Ekka 2016 will offer plenty of action-packed entertainment and improved amenities as part of our \$2.9 billion Brisbane Showgrounds redevelopment, it will also celebrate what's come before, which is a big part of Ekka's cross generational appeal.

"You can't put a price on the memories, stories and experiences of Ekka's past," he said.

Mr Christou said in 1875 the forefathers of the RNA embarked on a legacy which today has touched the lives of almost 30 million people who have come to the show.

"Ekka remains the best value family day out, because it is the only event in Queensland that offers a legacy of country tradition alongside the new," he said.

For the first time in history, the Ekka has introduced a Two Day Pass, Super Ride Tuesday and Super Food Sunday ticket options to supercharge your Ekka value this year.

Tickets are 15 per cent off online up until Ekka eve and remain the same price as last year for the 10 days of show if you buy online.

Mr Christou said this year more than 400,000 people were expected through the gates for the 139th Ekka – which was just 24 days away.

This year's show will feature brand new world class entertainment including a spectacular new night show and never before seen fireworks display, plus 10,000 animals, 21,000 competition entries, and award winning food and wine.

Mr Christou said one of the headline acts of this year's Show was the 25th anniversary celebration of another Ekka institution, the Fashion Parades.

To mark 25 years of Ekka fashion there will be the parade's most captivating spectacle yet, a special retrospective segment to open each show as we go back to the future of fashion.

NEW TO THIS YEAR'S EKKA

THE OLD MUSEUM

For the first time in 119 years, The Old Museum is coming home to form a brand new precinct for the 10 days of show. It'll be home to Ekka's Flower and Garden Exhibition presented by Envy Lawn "Grown for Life" and Quilts Across Queensland. The precinct will be buzzing with a hive of activity ranging from student garden installations and community and garden society displays to outdoor dining, stunning quilts and a jam packed speaker schedule on the Flower and Garden Platform Stage. Built for the RNA in 1891, The Old Museum was originally called the Exhibition Building and Concert Hall. The Queensland Government took control of the building and grounds in 1897, following a major economic depression. It then became home of the Queensland Museum in 1899. Bringing the Ekka and The Old Museum back together again symbolises the importance of heritage and legacy to the RNA. The Old Museum Precinct will house:

- The School Garden Competition, which has moved from The Plaza
- The Bush Poetry Competition, which has moved from the Education Stage at the Royal ICC
- Quilts Across Queensland, which has moved from the Upper Royal ICC
- Horticulture, now renamed The Flower and Garden Exhibition presented by Envy Lawn "Grown for Life", which has moved from the Lower Royal ICC
- A 'Chill Out Green'
- Plenty for the kids to do and see, including Meet the Bales, the Triceratops Tiara Tea Party, Secret Fairy Garden and activities with Hortiman.
- The Flower and Garden Platform Stage

EkkaNITES

The Main Arena will come alive each night with the spectacular never before seen night show, EkkaNITES – featuring world firsts and showcasing incredible female talent. The night show is made up of four main parts – tradition, the Hot Wheels High Octane Show, live music and of course the breathtaking fireworks finale. The world-class show will feature a brand new design, more extreme sports, a tribute to Aussie music and pyrotechnics never before seen in Australia. The audience will be amazed by the Hot Wheels High Octane Show, featuring the world first Sphere of Death, a jet engine propelled mini car, Hot Wheels branded V8 drift cars and the most number of FMX bikes ever seen at Ekka jumping a helicopter with rotating blades. Sit back and prepare to be wowed!

FIREWORKS FINALE - Featuring world firsts

The breathtaking EkkaNITES fireworks finale will feature a Pyrotechnic Tower never before seen in Australia. Fireworks will be fired from 49 positions on the 25 metre high tower creating a Bellagio fountain effect – shooting sideways, inwards and skywards - engulfing the entire arena in explosive light and colour. Quad motorcycles will tow 20 kites with silver fountain fireworks, while six illuminated horses will gallop around the arena changing colours before the crowd's eyes. The audience won't miss a second of the action, with the 360 degree show design allowing them to have an equal experience from any spot. Topping off the spectacle will be the fireworks soundtrack – a custom made mash up of jukebox classic hits mixed in the Main Arena by hot Brisbane DJ Yakedo.

25 YEARS FASHION RETROSPECTIVE

This iconic fashion event is an Ekka favourite and this year it's celebrating a special milestone with a show you won't forget! This year marks the 25th year of the parades being directed by Lindsay Bennett and will see the most captivating spectacle yet, with a special retrospective segment to open each show. Twelve of Queensland's most sought-after and long-established designers have selected a favourite piece from the last 25 years for a rare runway revival – so audiences are in for a stylish treat! It's sure to be an incredible show, with collections featuring fine-quality cotton, wool and other natural materials, in tribute to the high-quality products of the Sunshine State's agriculture industry. Natural fibres remain the most versatile and enduring, and audiences will see them in their most gorgeous form, spun into couture and ready-to-wear fashion by Queensland's top designers and talented fashion students. Designers include: White Label Noba, Hunt + Kelly, Irma J Smith House of Fashion, Maiocchi, Tengdahl, Pia du Pradal, Darb Couture, George Wu, Paul Hunt, Sacha Drake and Louenhide; as well as students from TAFE Queensland Brisbane and QUT Fashion School. Hair will be styled by CorCorz with makeup by Napoleon Perdis. Head to the fashion precinct and enjoy a fabulous display of style.

HERITAGE BANK LUMBERJACK SHOW

Cheer on your favourite lumberjack team as the Red River Saw Mill and the Blue Mountain Logging Camp compete to find out just who is the best in the bush. There's only one way to truly settle their dispute and that's with an old time lumberjack competition. From the roar of chainsaws racing, to climbing new heights by the high riggers, racing up and down a 50 foot pole, and from watching the log drivers tussle their nemesis off a log and into the drink, there will be no time to turn away. Outside of the constant action, the antics of the lumberjacks, determined to offset the other's ability and reputation as top lumberjack, will leave the crowd in stitches. Cheeky Hobson narrates the show and does everything in her power to keep the motley lads in line. With her work cut out she'll engage the crowd in every moment, making them part of the act. This international act from Canada - full of pranks, gags and surprises - is sure to keep the audience on their toes and entertained.

ZIMBOYZ

ZimboyZ will have the crowd on the edge of their seats in this thrilling and daring acrobatic show. Vusa, Abiy and Hassan will take the crowd on a journey to a world of impossible acts like human pyramids, chair balancing and Chinese pole – and that's just the warm up! The trio will soon have the audience speechless with a gravity defying exhibition of flexibility, imagination and pure muscle strength. Just when the crowd think their nerves can't take anymore, they'll be laughing at the ZimboyZ side splitting antics and cheeky personalities. ZimboyZ are undoubtedly one of the best acrobatic troupes to come out of Africa and have been showing the world what they're made of for more than a decade. These amazing acrobats have toured in Europe, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and New Zealand and are now calling Australia home – how lucky are we!

THE CIRCUS FIREMEN

Angus and Matilda are The Circus Firemen! They'll turn up the heat with high-energy acrobatics, red hot juggling and searing Australian comedy. In their death-defying finale, they'll attempt to balance precariously on two ladders while juggling fire! Sure to impress and entertain, it's firemen themed circus at its very best. The Circus Firemen have toured the globe many times, performing on the streets of Europe, North America and Australia, as well as festivals in Asia, Canada, the UK and New Zealand. The two brothers, who have been performing together for more than 10 years, are new to Ekka and are guaranteed to have the audience in stitches with their comedy and circus acrobatics.

PAW PATROL SHOW

It'll be all paws on deck when Nick Jr.'s PAW Patrol takes over the stage at Ekka for the very first time. Heroic puppies Chase and Marshall, led by a tech-savvy 10-year-old boy named Ryder, will use their unique blend of problem-solving skills and cool vehicles to work together on high-stakes rescue missions. Marshall the fire dog and Chase the police pup will keep the kids entertained with their unique personalities and skills. They both have special Pup Packs on their backs to help them handle any situation – no job is too big, no pup is too small! This is one show the kids are guaranteed to love – PAW Patrol was named Toy of the Year in 2015.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

The 2016 Ekka Media Kit is now available to download, it is the most comprehensive information guide to show, to download please visit www.ekka.com.au/media-centre

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