

July 4, 2019

Ekka backs the bush with a Show of support

Queenslanders are being urged to show their support for farming families battling drought and the devastation of the February floods as the countdown to the 142nd Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) presented by RACQ officially kicked off in Brisbane this morning.

With just 36 days until the gates open to the state's largest annual event, the RNA has frozen ticket prices for the first time in 11 years to encourage people to attend the Ekka and show their support for farmers.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said since 1876, the Ekka had brought the country to the city to celebrate and showcase agriculture and its importance to the community.

"Queensland is now in its seventh year of drought with 65.2 per cent of the state drought declared in May, while the February floods in North Queensland resulted in catastrophic losses for many primary producers," he said.

"Our farmers are the backbone of our nation and we want to draw attention to the many challenges they are facing, as well as provide opportunities for them to engage with others in the broader Queensland community and enjoy some much needed respite.

"The Ekka showcases the extraordinary resilience of our farmers and rural communities, and also recognises and rewards our exhibitors, who year in year out, produce the best of the best despite the crippling impacts of drought and flood," said Mr Christou.

More than 400,000 people are expected to flock to this year's Ekka which will showcase about 21,000 competition entries and 10,000 animals.

It will also offer big savings for families, a new home for the popular RACQ Animal Nursery and a brand new park and home for the Canine Competition presented by Black Hawk, plus an amazing line up of free entertainment and some of the nation's finest food and wine.

"The Ekka is the people's show, and this year's Ekka offers unbeatable value with ticket prices frozen for the first time in 11 years, discounted family passes for \$80, Super Saver passes for seniors and many more discounted ride and food offers," said Mr Christou.

"This year's Ekka is also brimming with more than 300 free activities to choose from each day including fashion parades, concerts, competitions, food and wine sampling, free kids shows plus the EkkaNITES supported by RACQ LifeFlight Rescue entertainment program featuring two fireworks extravaganzas."

Following significant investment in RNA traditions and facilities as part of the Brisbane Showgrounds Regeneration Project, Ekka patrons will this year enjoy visiting Alexandria Park the new home for the popular canine competition. Located on the corner of Gregory Terrace and

Alexandria Lane, the park offers Ekka guests and the public an extra two acres of green and events space all year round.

The Arrow Energy Pavilion (large animal pavilion), which debuted at last year's show, will feature animals on all four levels including beef and dairy cattle, poultry, dairy goats, sheep, angoras and alpacas.

The Ekka's most popular daytime attraction, the RACQ Animal Nursery, will be bigger and better than ever with a brand new home next door to the popular Kids Carnival area, adjacent to Alexandria Park.

"As a not for profit, the RNA invests heavily in our charter of championing and supporting agriculture and this year we are calling on the public to show their support for the bush by coming to Ekka and supporting the wellbeing and resilience of our rural communities," said Mr Christou.

NEW TO THIS YEAR'S EKKA

The 142nd Ekka is jam packed with more than 300 free things to do and see each day of show. Below is a snapshot of some of the most exciting new elements of the Ekka to enjoy this year:

TICKETS

- For the first time in 11 years, the RNA has frozen the price of every ticket. The prices of all seven paid passes have not increased and remain at 2018 prices - (the Little Ekka Pass is free for children aged 4 years and under)
- There's a new Super Seniors Day on Thursday 15 August. Seniors will get a minimum 15 per cent discount on their \$25 pass at the gate and a further 10 per cent off online, plus there is increased seniors entertainment including performances by famous singers Normie Rowe and Jackie Love
- For the first time on Super Ride Tuesday, families will get extra bang for their buck with increased children's entertainment including a Dora the Explorer live stage show plus 10 per cent off tickets online

NEW HOMES / FACILITIES

- Alexandria Park is part of the RNA's \$2.9 billion Brisbane Showgrounds redevelopment and features two additional acres of green and events space for the public to enjoy. At this year's Ekka, Alexandria Park will be the new home of the Ekka's Canine Competition presented by Black Hawk. The park features an existing undercover events pavilion known as Building 8 which has undergone extensive refurbishment works to enhance its heritage elements
- RACQ Animal Nursery, home to Ekka's cutest and cuddliest animals, will be housed in a brand new home next door to our popular Kids Carnival area – adjacent to Alexandria Park
- Arrow Energy Pavilion – LAP – this year features four floors of animals. It is the only building of its kind in the world, specially designed to house animals during Ekka and act as an events

space and car park facility outside of show – with all revenue invested back into Ekka. The animals new to the pavilion this year are sheep, angoras and alpacas. Beef and dairy cattle and poultry will return again.

EXPANDED KIDS CARNIVAL PRECINCT

Families will enjoy a bigger and better Kids Carnival Precinct which has increased by more than 15 per cent with an extra 750 square metres of rides and games to enjoy. The precinct is conveniently located at the end of Alexandria Parade and is home to great family attractions – RACQ Animal Nursery, and the Black Hawk Canine Pavilion

COMPETITIONS – What's new in comps / classes and locations:

Ekka's many competitions will delight and amaze:

- Dairy Cattle - new Dairy Youth Achievement Award
- Education on Show - new 'Nature in Bloom' theme
- Fine Arts: new cookery classes, including live judging, new Millinery classes, and new drone and commercial photography classes
- Horses: new classes in the Horse Competition for riders with a disability
- Pisciculture: new flowerhorn fish class
- Poultry, Pigeons, Birds and Eggs presented by Australian Eggs: Pigeons - returning for the first time in two years
- Poultry, Pigeons, Birds and Eggs presented by Australian Eggs: Birds - new canary classes for new mutations and new Muscovy duck Waterfowl Feature class
- Woodchop and Sawing - new Australian titles

DAYTIME ENTERTAINMENT – WHAT'S NEW

- An Ekka Pinball Arcade where two of the largest pinball and arcade competitions in the southern hemisphere (the Brisbane Pinball Masters and the Australian Kong Off 3) will be held
- Increased entertainment on Thursday 15 August for the new Super Seniors Day, with famous singers Normie Rowe and Jackie Love taking to the stage for the first time at Ekka
- Dora the Explorer and Jimmy Giggie live stage shows, as part of the increased children's entertainment on Super Ride Tuesday

- Luke's Reptile Kingdom - Venomous Snake Show, where Ekka goers can get wrapped up with friendly pythons and admire the incredible Australian wildlife
- PJ Masks Live Stage Show, where children will learn what it takes to be a superhero
- A citizenship ceremony, where 40 people will make their pledge to Australia
- New concept Tri-State Shearing and Wool Handling Championships, which will see Australia's best sheep shearers and wool handlers from Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania go head to head

EkkaNITES supported by RACQ LifeFlight Rescue – WHAT'S NEW (Main Arena – 5.30pm-8pm each evening):

Featuring world-firsts and Ekka firsts, the never before seen night show includes:

- Equestrian riders wearing world-first custom built backpacks shooting pyro as they gallop around the arena, in the Fireworks Spectacular - A Celebration of the Human Spirit
- The new and thrilling Aussie FMX bikes performing an Ekka first front flip
- New high-octane monster trucks, custom built to look like a cat and dog
- The Laughing Loggers who will speed climb a 50 foot pole for the first time in the night show
- The brand new Movie Stunt Drivers Show featuring spectacular precision driving by world-class stunt drivers
- Everyone's favourite horseman Dave Manchon performing his new show 'A Drovers Tale' featuring 58 horses

EDUCATION – WHAT'S NEW

More than 30,000 children will be inspired, educated and entertained at Queensland's largest classroom

- Seqwater will create an exciting and inspiring space for kids to understand, appreciate and connect with water and offer an array of new interactive and educational fun activities
- Seqwater's stand will feature the 'Sippidy doo Bar' where Ekka goers will be able to quench their thirst with drinks made from desalinated water such as 'Iced Teasal' and 'Saltless Sparking Seawater'

- Their popular giant augmented reality sandpit will return this year, educating kids with a simulation of what a drought would look like across south east Queensland

FASHION (Entertainment and Fashion Stage, Upper Level Royal ICC / 11.30am, 12.30pm, 1.30pm, 2.30pm daily) – WHAT'S NEW

- The Nature in Bloom Natural Fibres Fashion Parades presented by Channel Seven will celebrate agriculture and the colours and climate of spring in Queensland
- Directed by Laura Churchill for the third year, the parades champion Queensland fashion and feature 16 women's and menswear designers - seven of which are new to Ekka
- Showcasing natural materials of cotton, wool, silk and leather
- Daily 'Meet a Model' sessions after each parade where fashion lovers can be photographed with a featured model and designer outfit

Don't forget to follow us on social media #ekka



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