

DECEMBER 11, 2020

Comeback Ekka set to open on a weekend

The 2021 Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) presented by RACQ will open on a weekend next year as planning for a fantastic comeback show hits full steam.

Like all major event operators, the RNA is looking forward to recovery and is planning for the gates to open in August 2021.

RNA President David Thomas said after such a challenging year, the RNA is delighted to be working hard to bring the country to the city once again to celebrate the 143rd staging of the Ekka next year.

“In April this year, we made the decision to cancel the Ekka for only the third time in our history due to the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19,” Justice Thomas said.

“To keep the spirit of the show alive we launched Ekka 2020 Online in August – a digital version of some of our traditions while also operating pop up strawberry sundae outlets.

“The response and support from the public was overwhelming and we can’t wait to stage a fantastic comeback Ekka in eight months’ time.”

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said as a not for profit, and like many businesses whose revenues have been impacted by COVID-19, the RNA is prudently planning to stage a wonderful show while delivering better efficiencies to fixed costs across grounds.

“All the unique Ekka traditions the public know and love such as our much-loved competitions, animals, food, sideshow alley, kids’ carnival, showbags and entertainment will be back while ensuring a cost-effective approach in our comeback year,” Mr Christou said.

“To that end, the show will open on Saturday (August 7) and close on the following Sunday (August 15) running for nine days instead of 10. It would maintain two full weekends and the Ekka public holiday and will save the RNA significant operational costs.”

Mr Christou said the Brisbane Showgrounds regeneration project had changed the footprint of the Ekka grounds for the better and was able to handle the expected crowds of 400,000 over nine days.

“It will also reduce time spent on site for our competition exhibitors many of whom take either annual or unpaid leave to attend the show,” he said.

“Some of our major competitions will also be featured in new locations, as we look to maintain and expand the growth and reach of our traditions, particularly in the digital age.

“The Old Museum will be rested in 2021 with our Flower and Garden precinct relocated to the Agricultural Hall, while our Quilts competition will become part of the new Fine Arts precinct located upstairs in the Royal ICC for the first time.”

RNA President David Thomas said the RNA was committed to delivering those traditional and unique Ekka experiences that the public and competition exhibitors come back for year after year.

“We will continue to work closely with Queensland Health on staging next year’s show in line with their recommendations,” Justice Thomas said.

“Our wonderful agricultural traditions will once again be at the forefront of the Ekka paying tribute to our hard-working farming families and bush communities.

“After a very challenging 2020, we look forward to the people of Queensland coming back together again to celebrate our great state.”

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