

July 14, 2015

Ekka urges Queenslanders to back the bush

With the worst drought in history crippling the bush, Queenslanders are being urged to come together and recognise and champion the essential role farmers play in their everyday lives, as the countdown to the iconic Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) began in Brisbane this morning.

Speaking at the Ekka's official launch this morning, RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the Ekka was committed to supporting our farmers and showcasing their hard work, while providing a world-class event for Queenslanders to enjoy.

"For 138 years the Ekka has been bringing the country and city together to showcase agriculture, and despite the tremendous hardships they are facing, our farmers are continuing to make their way to show," he said.

"With more than 80 per cent of Queensland now drought declared we all need to rally behind our farmers and recognise that everything starts with agriculture - from the clothes you wear to the food you eat.

"With food security issues impacting on nations around the world, we need to champion the fact that in our backyard, our farmers are producing the world's best, year in year out - we need to become proud advocates of this."

Mr Christou said this year more than 400,000 people were expected through the gates for the 138th Ekka – which was just 24 days away.

"In 1876, 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," he said.

This year's show will feature 10,000 animals, 21,000 competition entries, world-class entertainment and award winning food and wine – dedicated to showcasing the best of the best.

Mr Christou also unveiled the headline acts at this year's Ekka which include pop superstar Samantha Jade, R & B sensation Stan Walker and the brand new EkkaNITES night program – the only show of its kind in Australia which will feature a series of world firsts.

"We are thrilled to have superstars Samantha Jade and Stan Walker performing at this year's show and Ekka guests will even get the chance to meet them," he said.

"Another stand-out attraction will be the XTREME Action – Featuring the Transformers at EkkaNITES, this is a one off performance created uniquely for the Ekka.

"Ekka guests will be in awe of the spectacular new fireworks finale, which features a new Bellagio effect where fireworks not only shoot skywards but sideways and inwards."

The night program won't stray from its country roots with the traditional elements like the woodchop and sheepdogs, as well as country music legend James Blundell, playing starring roles.

Mr Christou said with more than 70 per cent of the grounds dedicated to free attractions and activities, Ekka guests will have no shortage of entertainment to choose from.



Ekka
Royal Queensland Show

Media Release

“The show will also feature the Heritage Bank Racing Pigs that need to be seen to be believed, the new Dinosaur Adventures display which will captivate both young and old, kids favourite Hoot and Hootabelle and the new circus inspired Natural Fibres Fashion Parades, presented by Cotton Australia, are not to be missed.”

This year the show will once again run over two full weekends from 7-16 August, giving visitors more opportunity than ever before to experience the show. Mr Christou said families could save 30 per cent on ticket bundles available exclusively online at www.ekka.com.au until midnight Ekka eve (August 6).

NEW TO THIS YEAR'S EKKA

MUSIC STARS

This year the hottest Sony pop acts from across the country will perform on the Ekka's Entertainment and Fashion Stage. For the first time, Australian pop superstar Samantha Jade, who has had international fame, will bring a piece of stardom to the Ekka as she performs her catchy pop hits. Australian Idol winner Stan Walker will perform his soulful melodies while pop star Bonnie Anderson, who rose to fame in 2007 on Australia's Got Talent, will captivate audiences with her hit single Blackout. It's back to back talent as Sydney pop-rock outfit Little Sea rock the stage with their popular tunes and Reigan Derry, fresh from her X Factor success, will sing her heart out as she wows the Ekka audience. Fans will have the chance to meet these Aussie superstars after their performances and even get an autograph and photo.

EkkaNITES

This year's brand new night show, EkkaNITES, is the only show of its kind in Australia. The nightly show will include the traditional elements like the woodchop and sheepdogs as well as a series of world firsts including the 'XTREME Action – Featuring the Transformers' - a one off show created uniquely for the Ekka, plus four giant mobile laser spheres with performers inside. FMX riders will fly through the air and country music legend James Blundell will rock the crowd before the show finishes with a bang when the **brand new fireworks finale** lights up the Brisbane sky. EkkaNITES will offer more excitement, more extreme and more action – a true 360 degree arena experience. It will once again be produced by Jack Ellison who has worked on blockbuster movies James Bond (Quantum of Solace) and Mission Impossible 2.

FIREWORKS FINALE - During EkkaNITES

The fireworks finale is an Australian first show created just for the Ekka audience. For the first time the fireworks have been designed in a Bellagio effect – they will not only shoot skywards but sideways and inwards. There will be 18 separate firing points designed to ensure a 360 arena experience. The spectacular fireworks finale will also feature the breathtaking LED horses.

NEW LOOK FASHION PARADES

The Ekka's most glamorous event has undertaken a major transformation. The iconic Natural Fibres Fashion Parades, presented by Cotton Australia, will be taken to dazzling new heights this year. For the first time the parades will incorporate the glitz, awe and glamour of the circus – its fashion under the big top! The parades will incorporate aerial artists and performers, plus the best new season fashion from some of Australia's top designers including Easton Pearson and Gail Sorronda. The popular parades have been going since 1980 and have once again been created by renowned Australian Fashion Event Director Lindsay Bennett.

HERITAGE BANK RACING PIGS

Pigs really will fly at this year's Ekka. It's a sight to see when these talented pigs race each other around a track and also jump into a pool of water. It's great family fun and something people of all ages will love.

SOUL MYSTIQUE PRESENTS MAGIC MAMBO

New to the Ekka this year is the dazzling art of quick change. The art of quick change costume transformation is a specialised branch of magic that dates back to the 15th century. Soul Mystique incorporates Latin and ballroom dancing with their magical quick change routine. Be prepared to be dazzled by their charmed dance moves and sparkling costumes.

WHIP CRACKER NATHAN GRIGGS

This is whip cracking with a difference. Nathan Griggs, who holds the world record for the most whip cracks in one minute – 530, will amaze the audience as he sets his whips alight whilst performing during EkkaNITES. He will also perform his cracking show each day of Ekka.

DINOSAUR ADVENTURES

Did you hear a roar? 'Jurassic World' fever will hit Ekka when Dinosaur Adventures stomp their mark on the show. For the first time the Ekka will host Dinosaur Adventures which will amaze both young and old. The John Reid Pavilion will play home to a prehistoric world where families can see moving dinosaurs come alive before their eyes. Guests can even try their hand at being a palaeontologist and participate in a fossil dig... Just beware of T Rex.

HOOT AND HOOTABELLE

Kids favourite Hoot and Hootabelle will have the whole audience bopping at their Ekka show. The best friend owl-pal's, who love playing and singing together, invite the boys and girls to join in on the awesome fun! With lots of singing and dancing to some of their famous tunes, this show will charm its audience. Hoot's best friend Jimmy Giggle will also make a special appearance, visiting Ekka for the first time.

CHRISTOF!! THE CLOWN

We're thrilled to welcome international family favourite Christof!! The Clown. He has performed across the globe and will now clown around at this year's show. It's his first time to Ekka, but some Queenslanders may remember him from Expo 88.

PAT-A-PIG

A cute new addition to the RACQ Animal Nursery will be the pat-a-pig display. Ekka guests can meet and greet little piglets.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

The 2015 Ekka Media Kit is now available to download, it is the most comprehensive information guide to show, to download please visit [www. http://www.ekka.com.au/media-centre/media-kit/](http://www.ekka.com.au/media-centre/media-kit/)

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



For more information please contact the Ekka Media Unit:

Veronica Carew
General Manager Communications
Ph: 07 3253 3930/ 0408 323 631
Email: vcarew@rna.org.au

Kelly Hawke
RNA Media and Communications Officer
Ph: 07 3253 3931/ 0438 340 989
Email: khawke@rna.org.au