

Media Release



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Research reveals Queensland's unique love of Ekka

The 2010 Royal Queensland Show, fondly known as the Ekka will feature expanded animal attractions, a smorgasbord of improved culinary delights and unbeatable value packed entertainment, following the findings of special research commissioned by the RNA.

Speaking at the official launch of the 2010 Ekka this morning, RNA Chief Executive Jonathan Tunny said more than 3700 people took part in surveys and focus groups following last year's Ekka.

"The Ekka is the people's event, it belongs to them, it's woven into their history growing up so it was important to the RNA to find out what they thought about the Ekka, what the Ekka should be and what they wanted to see more of.

"It's critical the Ekka delivers what the people want most of and this research allows us to start the ball rolling with this year's show by maintaining and strengthening those areas which resonate the most and adding suggested improvements."

Mr Tunny said the research revealed Queenslanders have an overwhelming sense of pride and unique generational connection to the Ekka, and it was the event's rich traditions, warm community spirit and nostalgic memories which resonated the most.

"For 133 years, generations of families have come together for this unique once a year quintessential Queensland event which unites city and country to form a part of the state's heritage and culture," he said.

Glenn Hardy, partner of research company IER based in Melbourne and research author said rarely had he come across an event with such a strong connection with the community.

"All Queenslanders are touched by Ekka from an early age and it clearly travels with them through their lifetime," Mr Hardy said.

Mr Tunny said it was pleasing the research had importantly found that 75 per cent of those surveyed who attended last year's show believed the Ekka was delivering on their desired experience - through the entertainment, animals, fun day out for family and friends, bringing the country and outback to the city - and overall were satisfied.

"They've also told us they want better food options; and they want to know they're getting value for money when they come through the gate," he said.

Mr Tunny said the research found that in this stressful high tech 24/7 world we live, it was the traditional nature of Ekka people treasured the most - the animals, the ability to spend time with loved ones, the community spirit and genuine fun.

"The research also found that two of the biggest drawcards for people was the chance to see and interact with the animals up close and the exciting two hour night time main arena program," he said.

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The RNA has responded to the research by:

- Creating a new Animal Arena and Animal Walk to compliment the 10,000 animals who call Ekka home.
- Re-introducing the legendary 80s and 90s Cotton and Wool Fashion Parades;
- Creating shaded and fenced 'chill out zones' for parents with children and encouraging them to bring a packed lunch and picnic rug.
- Introducing a teaser program of night time ring entertainment during the day,
- Offering a bigger program of live music catering for all music tastes
- Introducing a brand new alfresco dining precinct offering top quality restaurant food at a fraction of the price.
- Offering more food options including a brand new seafood wine bar, roving fruit carts, good quality coffee, plus an improved range of dining options

"The famous Cotton and Wool parades represent a traditional favourite, so we've decided to re-launch them in 2010, with a contemporary twist of course," Mr Tunny said.

"10,000 animals call the inner-city of Brisbane home for a few weeks in August, they're at Ekka for a very prestigious competition of judging and they're also here to 'show off' for visitors.

Mr Tunny said it was important visitors knew the extent of the free activities available and the excellent value a trip to the Ekka offered.

"More than 70 per cent of the Ekka is dedicated to free activities, once you're through the gate there are hundreds of free activities to choose from," he said.

"These include fashion parades, amazing concerts, competitions, award winning food and wine sampling, free kids shows such as Shrek and New Macdonalds Farm and the show stopping two hour night-time entertainment program."

Mr Tunny said he hoped this year's program of entertainment, superb food and wine and award winning produce would help entice those who hadn't been in recent years.

"Names like Katie Noonan; the McClymont Sisters, Operator Please, The Grates, alongside Chefs Jason Pepler and Alastair McLeod, present a side of Ekka that people may not realise is here."

The 2010 Ekka was officially launched by Queensland icon and favourite son State of Origin captain Darren Lockyer and featured performances by singer Katie Noonan and entertainers the League of Sideshow Superstars.

A special preview of the Cotton and Wool parades plus cooking demonstrations by leading food identities Peter Howard, Alison Alexander and renown Brisbane chef Jason Pepler, formerly of Isis and now Confit, also featured at the launch. Ekka opens in just three weeks time from August 5 – 14.

For all the latest Ekka 2010 news go to the Ekka Media Centre at www.ekka.com.au/mediacentre
To arrange interviews contact Ekka Media Centre's Veronica Carew on 3253 3930 or 0408 323 631 or Andrea Sackson on 3253 3931 or 0414 672 318.

***Editors please note** - Research author Glenn Hardy is available for interview on 0410 655 390.

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