

6 July 2017

Ekka gives back in 140th year

The only major Queensland event of its kind to lay claim to 140 years of operation, the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka), is celebrating this milestone with its first ever half price ticket and not one, but two fireworks shows each evening.

To thank Queensland for supporting the Ekka for the past 140 years, the RNA is introducing the half price adult ticket, the \$16 Twilight Ticket, plus a special early children's fireworks show at 6pm in addition to the night show finale spectacular at 7.40pm.

Queensland's largest and most loved annual event has a remarkable history, being staged every year except for just two – in 1919 due to the Spanish Flu epidemic and in 1942 when the grounds were used as a World War II staging depot.

As the countdown to the Ekka began at the show's official launch in Brisbane this morning, RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the 140th anniversary was an opportunity to look back on the event's rich history but most importantly, acknowledge the support Queenslanders have given the show.

"The Ekka is the people's show and this year we are celebrating its 140th anniversary by giving back to the people who have made the show what it is today," said Mr Christou.

"Two of the most popular Ekka attractions are the Night Show and our great food options and the new Twilight Ticket means people can come to Ekka from 6pm till late and enjoy the show for half price.

"Foodies can come straight from work, enjoy an award-winning meal and quality live entertainment in our food pavilions. Families can come after school for dinner, watch the night show and enjoy a few more hours of fun at sideshow and showbags.

"The Twilight Ticket in addition to the return of the historic discounts introduced last year – the two day pass and the hugely popular two-for-one Super Ride Tuesday and Super Food Sunday – will deliver the most discounts ever offered at Ekka.

"These discounts will ensure the Ekka remains the best value family day out. A family of four will pay just over \$18 per person for 12 hours of free entertainment. That's under \$2 per hour.

"Not only is the Ekka affordable for all, it is the only event in Queensland that offers a legacy of country tradition alongside the new," he said.

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 over the past 140 years more than 30 million people have attended the show, making family traditions and childhood memories to pass down through generations.

“An exciting new event at Ekka this year sure to create new traditions and memories will be the first ever early children’s fireworks show in the Main Arena at 6pm.

“The introduction of the Children’s Fireworks presented by MG Motor means that kids won’t have to wait up past their bedtime to see spectacular fireworks light up the Ekka sky,” he said.

Mr Christou said this year more than 400,000 people were expected through the gates for the 140th Ekka – which was just 36 days away.

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

“This year’s Ekka is all about paying tribute to what has come before and celebrating what’s new,” said Mr Christou.

NEW TO THIS YEAR’S EKKA

NOT ONE BUT TWO FIREWORKS SHOWS

For the first time ever the Ekka will boast two evening fireworks shows in the Main Arena each evening. The Ekka is introducing a special Early Children’s Fireworks show presented by MG Motor at 6pm. The early fireworks show inspired by the Colours of the Great Barrier Reef will make sure everyone gets a chance to see some fireworks after a big day out at show, particularly the little ones who are often asleep before the Ekka’s major fireworks finale which ends the night show at 8pm each evening. The 7.40pm fireworks show will once again be a spectacular display featuring world first human stilt performers shooting pyrotechnics off their backs.

TWILIGHT TICKET

For the very first time, a Twilight Ticket is on offer for this year’s show, meaning people can enjoy Ekka for half the price of an adult ticket from 6pm until late as they watch the sun go down. For just \$16 a ticket, anyone over the age of four (those under four get in free) can enter the show from 6pm - and they’re guaranteed to find plenty to do and see after dark, including:

- Being wowed by the action-packed night show EkkaNITES
- Bringing the kids to see the new and colourful children’s fireworks
- Indulging in a fabulous dinner in the Ekka’s premier food precincts, Woolworths Fresh Food Pavilion, Gourmet Plaza and the Royal Queensland Steakhouse, which for the first time will open later until 9pm.
- Going on a foodie adventure and enjoying a few drinks in Woolworths Fresh Food Pavilion, including the new craft beer alley.
- Tasting food from around the globe at Gourmet Plaza, while listening and dancing to the bands on stage
- Enjoying Australia’s best steak, lamb, wines and cheeses at Ekka’s famous Royal Queensland Steakhouse presented by JBS Australia in its new high profile location at the top of the stairs in the Royal International Convention Centre.
- Braving the big rides in Sideshow Alley, including the brand new Beast which has a swing of 45 metres high and the force of a fighter plane

The Twilight Ticket is perfect for an after-work or after-school Ekka trip and is expected to be a hit.

CHILDREN'S FIREWORKS PRESENTED BY MG MOTOR: 'COLOURS OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF'

Kids won't have to wait up past their bedtime to see spectacular fireworks light up the Ekka sky, with a new children's fireworks show in the Main Arena at 6pm. Inspired by the colours of the stunning Queensland Great Barrier Reef - one of the seven wonders of the natural world - bright coloured pyrotechnics designed especially for the show will fire high into the sky to replicate the beautiful corals. Giant kites featuring fish, dolphins, whales and an octopus will swim and sway effortlessly through the sky, while stilt walkers will be beautifully themed in flowing ocean costumes. The fireworks display will be enhanced by soundtracks from Finding Nemo, Little Mermaid and the Wiggles, through to the bubble-gum pop Top 40 Hits of Taylor Swift, Bruno Mars and Katy Perry. Each night a lucky child will win the chance to push the special fireworks plunger, getting the stunning display off to a firing start!

EkkaNITES

The Main Arena will come alive each night of show with the spectacular never before seen night show EkkaNITES, featuring world firsts and great family entertainment. The world-class show will feature a jam-packed program of fun, family performances; the special early children's fireworks show at 6pm; a brand new fireworks display featuring world first human stilt performers shooting pyrotechnics off their backs; the never before seen Rooftop Express Brumby Muster featuring 30 horses and a talented kid from the bush; a death-defying world first Jaws of Death Aerial Straight Jacket Escape by renowned escape artist Sam Powers; fearless FMX riders and airborne Monster Trucks. Sit back and prepare to be wowed!

HERITAGE BANK WESTERN HIGH DIVE SHOW

Taking extreme diving to wild new heights, the Heritage Bank Western High Dive Show will see international and national professional divers make a splash from 25 metres in the air - and one will even be on fire, literally! The theatrical storyline will see four divers take giant leaps from three, 10, 15 and even 25 metre high diving boards, as they perform spectacular sky-high stunts, twisting, turning and tumbling through the air. As the show heats up and the rival families battle it out, one of the wild west divers is set on fire, plummeting 10 metres into the water below in a spectacular flame dive. There's certainly no room for error, with the divers landing in a tiny tank of water just eight metres wide and 2.8 metres deep - half the size of a professional diving pool. These professional high divers will thrill with their incredible stunts, as they take the plunge three times a day at Ekka.

XPOGO STUNT TEAM

The world's best extreme pogo demo crew are bouncing over from the USA and will reach new heights as they fly through the air and even jump a vehicle. For the first time at Ekka, the Xpogo Stunt Team featuring championship pro athletes Michael Mena, Anthony Staubs and Nicholas McClintock, will throw

down flips and incredible tricks - all on extreme pogo sticks. The crowd will watch on in anticipation as the team bounce more than 10 feet in the air, performing backflips, synchronised pogo, athlete battles and more. In a heart stopping move, high-flyer Michael will get some serious air as he jumps the full length of a vehicle – is he hopping mad?! With 10,000 performances across 24 countries and 14 Guinness World Records under their belts, the Xpogo Stunt Team is sure to be a highlight.

FEATHERED FRIENDS BIRD FLIGHT SHOW

For the very first time at Ekka, six of Australia's most beautiful bird species will take flight as they soar across the audience and show off their unique personalities. The crowd will watch on in awe as these stunning birds, including the endangered Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, free-fly right above their heads to take centre stage. The audience will have fun getting to know them - the most intelligent bird in the team, the cheeky Sulphur Crested Cockatoo, will even demonstrate how he picks fruit from trees and even picks money from wallets! From the colourful Eclectus Parrot and Blue and Gold Macaw to the wise old Barn Owl, the crowd will love getting to know their new feathered friends.

BANANAS IN PYJAMAS LIVE SHOW PRESENTED BY AUSTRALIAN BANANAS

Australia's favourite mischievous twins, B1 and B2, will be coming down the stairs and onto the stage at Ekka for the very first time. The coolest bananas in town will have a birthday party to organise for their teddy bear friend Lulu - but will they manage to get everything done, or will they run out of time having too much fun along the way? The show will feature songs from their iconic Australian TV series and some fun dance routines which the kids can follow along with. Since hitting Australian TV screens 25 years ago, Bananas in Pyjamas has been a phenomenal success and is now loved by children in more than 135 countries. Australian Banana Growers will give each kid a healthy banana to eat - it's nature's energy snack and will help get the children through the rest of their action-packed show day.

NATURAL FIBRES FASHION PARADES – 'BACK TO NATURE'

From the farm to an Ekka first dual runway, this iconic fashion event will celebrate all things natural this year with a 'Back to Nature' theme, while introducing a new Speaker Series and Natural Fibres Market. From Queensland-grown wool and cotton to fashion favourites leather, bamboo and silk, the parades directed by Laura Churchill feature 27 established, emerging and regional designers for one fabulous display of style. Designers will showcase garments across categories including daywear, racing/occasion, regional designers and the popular formal/bridal segment – all on an Ekka first dual runway, offering more opportunity for those coveted front row seats. There will also be a dedicated student design segment featuring the work of students from Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Billy Blue, Australian Institute of Creative Design (AICD) and TAFE Queensland. With an emphasis on education, a new speaker series has been introduced this year offering Ekka guests a snapshot of four key aspects of the natural fibre fashion industry from Queensland wool to sustainability.

COMMUNITY STAGE PRESENTED BY COLORBOND STEEL

The revived Community Stage is returning to Ekka after a two year hiatus and it will take up residence in the growing precinct at The Old Museum. Themed 'Dancing in the Garden,' the stage will give dance

schools and community groups the chance to showcase their talents in front of an audience, while providing a platform for plenty of interesting gardening demonstrations and talks.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION HALL

The newly named Agricultural Education Hall features more educational activities for children than ever before, including the new Field to Fork interactive rural journey where kids will discover how their food gets from the field to their fork. In order of the agricultural cycle - composting, soil analysis, growing and planting, harvesting and processing - they'll take part in activities such as grinding grains into flour and then using the flour to bake healthy muffins. The number of educational activities in the Ag Education Hall has almost doubled - last year's interactive journey featured six activities, this year there will be 11.

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

The 2017 Ekka Media Kit is now available to download. It is the most comprehensive information guide to the show - to download please visit www.ekka.com.au/media-centre

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