

10 August 2017

Perfect forecast to celebrate 140th Ekka

The gates to Queensland's largest and most loved annual event, the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka), will open tomorrow morning in Brisbane with a perfect forecast predicted for the 10 days of show.

This year the Ekka is celebrating a remarkable milestone – its 140th anniversary – and is set to attract 400,000 people to the event that Queenslanders have voted their most iconic.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said it was hoped the above average weather forecast attracts bumper crowds.

“The weather forecast is just stunning, up to 10 degrees above the August forecast, and we hope everyone comes to the show and takes advantage of these perfect conditions.”

Mr Christou said to celebrate the show's 140th birthday the Ekka was giving back to the community with special half price entry from 6pm with the \$16 twilight ticket plus not one but two fireworks displays each evening.

“The Early Children's fireworks at 6pm will make sure everyone gets a chance to see some fireworks after a big day out at show,” he said.

“Particularly the little ones who are often asleep before our major fireworks finale which ends the night show at 8pm each evening.

“We hope the early fireworks create new memories for the next generation who we hope will become lifelong supporters of the show.”

NEW TO THIS YEAR'S EKKA

Some of this year's highlights include:

NOT ONE BUT TWO FIREWORKS SHOWS

For the first time ever the Ekka will boast two evening fireworks shows in the Main Arena each night. The Ekka is introducing a special early Children's Fireworks 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 ends the night show each evening. The 7.40pm fireworks show will once again be a spectacular display featuring world first human stilt performers shooting pyrotechnics.

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 the early Children's Fireworks presented by MG Motor at 6pm; a brand new fireworks finale spectacular featuring world first human stilt performers shooting pyrotechnics off their backs at 7.40pm; 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.

THE BEAST – IT’S A MONSTER OF A RIDE

True to its name, The Beast is the largest travelling ride in the Southern Hemisphere – it’s 25 metres tall with a swing of 45 metres high and weighs a whopping 86 tonnes. With the force of a fighter plane it swings back and forth like a pendulum, reaching speeds of 120km an hour.

STAR OF THE SHOW

Australia’s first rotating gondola Ferris Wheel stands more than 32 metres high and riders will enjoy 360 degree views of Sideshow Alley.

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. 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.

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. With 10,000 performances across 24 countries and 14 Guinness World Records under their belts, don’t miss the Xpogo Stunt Team.

Day 1: Friday 11 August – HIGHLIGHTS

MEDIA DOORSTOP: 11.30am with RNA President David Thomas or Chief Executive Brendan Christou on Heritage Hill overlooking the Main Arena.

JUDGING HIGHLIGHTS:

- From 9am – Stud Beef Cattle judging, Main Arena (map reference L-6)
- Champion of Champions judging 3.30pm – 4.30pm (map reference L-6)
- From 9am – Canine judging, Dog Pavilion (map reference P-11)
- From 9am – Prime Beef Auction, Expo Place (map reference P-9)
- From 9am- Woodchop and Sawing, Woodchop Arena (G-3)
- From 10am – Betta Splendens Fighting Fish Competition Lower Royal ICC (ref 1-12)

THE BIG BOYS ARE ON THE MOOVE! – Record beef entries (map reference L-6)

In a true display of bringing the country to the city, more than 1,750 head of beef cattle will descend on the Ekka to be paraded, judged and displayed. Australia's largest annual cattle competition has attracted a record 2,889 entries this year and it includes 421 classes in the prestigious Stud Beef Competition, 27 in the Led Steer and 14 in the Prime Beef Competition. The Stud Beef Competition is the largest showing of stud beef in the southern hemisphere and judging continues tomorrow in the Main Arena. **WHEN: From 9am – MAIN ARENA**

THEM'S FIGHTING WORDS! – Australis biggest fighting fish comp!

'Anyfin' is possible in the Pisciculture Competition this year, with 34 new fighting fish (betta splendens) classes. With fighting fish increasing in popularity, we've also flown in one international judges from Thailand (where fighting fish originated from) for judging tomorrow. The competitive fish are marked on five qualities, including aggression – it's sure to be interesting as they go head to head through their glass tanks. Some of the competitors have even flown their prized fighting fish over from Thailand, while others have imported them from overseas. Common goldfish, exotic tropical and freshwater fish as well as crustaceans, amphibians and even aquatic plants will be judged prior to the show (9 August) and will be on display in the Royal ICC throughout Ekka. Drop by and see all the vibrant colours, the range of sizes and especially the more unique breeds. **WHEN: From 10am – 5pm – Lower Royal ICC.**

WHAT A CRACKER! (map reference G-4)

With their cracking routines, the best and youngest whip crackers in the region will show off their skills in the Australian Stockwhip Challenge presented by Packer Leather. For the fourth year at Ekka, competitors including from St John's Lutheran Primary School, St Mary's Catholic College and community group South Burnett Crackers will be given a fair crack of the whip as they compete across four categories:

- Pee-Wee (8yrs & under)
- Juvenile (12yrs & under)
- Junior (16yrs & under)
- Packer Leather Open Division (all ages)

As it's Packer Leather's 125th anniversary this year, the pool of prize money in the open division has been increased to \$1,250 (1st \$700, 2nd \$350, 3rd \$200). These talented whip crackers are sure to impress while having a cracking good time! **WHEN: 9.30am – 2.30pm – OVAL 2**

MEET THE WOOFERS!

The Canine Competition is one of Ekka's largest and most popular competitions and attracts an average of 2,400 entries. From Border Collies and Chow Chows to French Bulldogs and Poodles, up to 217 different breeds will be on show for Ekka guests to marvel at. The stakes are high with judges flying in from Slovenia, Japan, Ireland and Serbia to put our canine competitors to the test. Don't miss the brand new Feature Working Dogs Show (August 18), Dances with Dogs (August 20) and the ever-popular Best Puppy In Group (August 19). Tails will also be wagging when the Champion of Show is crowned on August 19, with last year's winner a Poodle. Tomorrow judging kicks off with the Gun Dog category. **WHEN: From 9am – Dog Pavilion (P-11)**

Ekka Essentials:

- Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) August 11 – 20, 2017
- Brisbane Showgrounds, 600 Gregory Terrace, Bowen Hills, Queensland
- Gates open at 9am
- Tickets are available online at www.ekka.com.au

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/media-kit

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



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