

Show Camp Story of the Day

More
Ekka
than ever.

FRIDAY
AUGUST 9
2013

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- * All Day: Beef cattle judging in the main arena.
- * 6:00pm: Night program - Ekka IgNites - includes the Official Opening by the Governor of Australia
- * All Day: Woolworths Fresh Food Showcase Sampling - Woolworths Pavilion

The Brisbane Show Camp is a joint program of Education Queensland and the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of



'NEW EKKA' REVEALED

By Emily Suffolk, Abby McDonald and Tyler MacDonald.



The newly redeveloped Royal International Convention Centre has impressed both visitors and exhibitors alike. Its beauty and practicality is a sure sign for the continuation of the Royal National Association (RNA) and its Regeneration Project.

The \$65 million redevelopment of the Industrial Pavilion is the first stage of the RNA's

\$2.9 billion, 15 year Regeneration Project. The first stage included the removal of seven buildings and the creation of 7000m² of extra space in the plaza. Construction on the Regeneration Project began after last year's Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) and the new Convention Centre was completed just prior to this Ekka.

RNA President David Thomas stated "The RNA designed the Plaza to incorporate the rich history of the Showgrounds and the Ekka, by linking the heritage elements in a flexible space which flowed to the Convention Centre."

Steve Grimes, Project Manager for the redevelopment, explained why the upgrade was needed: "Fundamentally, it's to make sure that the RNA will be here for another 130 years and can continue to hold the Ekka." He explained that the RNA has relied on the Ekka to generate most of its revenue (approximately 80% annually) in the past. Consequently, if people decided not to come, because of weather or sickness, the revenue for the year would be dramatically reduced, making it hard for the RNA



RNA | THE ROYAL NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND





to continue its work. Steve outlined the RNA's plan to increase revenue: "What we've decided to do is sell off a small portion of our site, and the money we get from selling the land will be put back into new businesses for the RNA, which means that we can do other things and not be so reliant on the Ekka".

The original façade of the of the Industrial Pavilion on the Convention Centre is just one example of the RNA's commitment to maintain as many of the Showground's main historical buildings and features as possible. This ensures that the heritage and the community feelings of the Ekka will not be lost in the redevelopment. Mr Grimes told of the challenges this commitment presented. "Probably the biggest challenge was finding things we didn't know were in the ground," he

said. "When we go to develop something, we start digging up the ground, and even though we've done all the surveys, we're still finding those things as we dig up the ground. Typically, you have to stop, work out how you can relocate that service, and move on, so that's probably been the biggest challenge." Consequently, the RNA has spent a lot of time and money on keeping the heritage elements of the Showgrounds.

Another aim of the Regeneration Project is that each building will have multiple uses. The Convention Centre, for example, can be used all year round for conventions, functions and exhibitions, as well as its primary function as a display building during the Ekka. The cattle stalls will be a car park for most of the year, with attachable temporary buildings

for animal owners during the Ekka, which could be used for school groups throughout the year.

The volunteers and stallholders who regularly use the Centre are also reaping the benefits of the redevelopment. Christina, of World Famous Funnel Cakes, Sophie at Mayfield Chocolates and Michael, a volunteer for the Greyhound Adoption Program, all agree that business has boomed since they moved into the Centre. Michael commented, "Before, we were in a little corner. We are very happy now with the new area we have been allocated, because it's quite large and we are in a good spot." Sophie added, "It has promoted our business and it is also getting our name out there."

It certainly seems that the public are enjoying the "New Ekka", including friends and longtime Ekka visitors Sandra and Donna, who said, "It's very nice and modern, its new and different." Wendy, Tony and their daughter Leia also commented on the redevelopment, "It is lovely and clean, with some nice, shady umbrellas to sit under while enjoying strawberry sundaes".

The new Royal International Convention Centre's wow factor is certainly impressing the public and is a positive sign for the continuation of the RNA's Regeneration Project.

Ekka 8th to 17th August, 2013