

In 2026, EkkaNITES proudly celebrates 150 years of the Royal Queensland Show with a spectacular tribute to the people, traditions, and pioneering spirit that have shaped Queensland and Australia.

This milestone celebration brings past, present and future together, helping create powerful multigenerational memories that honour our heritage while inspiring our future.

Each night, the Main Arena will come alive through storytelling, music, and unforgettable performances that capture the beauty, resilience and spirit of the outback.

From the roar of engines to the beating of hooves, EkkaNITES 2026 is a bold, immersive spectacle worthy of 150 years.

EkkaNITES Program 6pm – 8pm

- **Woodchop: Qld vs NSW - Host the 'Voice of the Outback' Neale Stuart**
- **Mechatronic Robotic Sheep Dogs - Presented by University of the Sunshine Coast**
- **Cowboy Karaoke with Ekka's Farmyard Friends**
- **EkkaNITES Welcome with Hosts Laurel Edwards and Ian Skippen**
- **Heart of the Land '150 Years of Queensland Farming Spirit'- Dave Manchon & Friends**
Voices of Chris Cobb and Felicity Kircher
- **Line-Dance Cam- Presented by Coke a Cola**
- **Ladder Bikes Flair Stunt Riders - 'Daredevils of the Past'**
- **V8 Utes -Trackskill's Tribute to Precision Driving Team**
- **Hot Wheels Heroes - Matt & Madz Mingay**
- **Freestyle MotorX - 'Riders of the Night' - Aussie FMX**
- **Fireworks Spectacular - 'Celebrate 150'**
- **Meet the Stars - Under the Stars - Meet the Cast from EkkaNITES**

EkkaNITES

CELEBRATE 150

1876 - 2026

Fireworks Spectacular - Celebrate 150

Celebrating the Ekka's 150th anniversary, the all-new EkkaNITES Fireworks Spectacular will deliver one of the most ambitious and technically advanced pyrotechnic displays ever staged at the Brisbane Showgrounds, transforming the Main Arena into a fully immersive, 360-degree multi-dimensional experience.

At the heart of the spectacle is a reimagined arena layout, featuring dual runway firing lines extending across the arena; a towering Scissor Lift Pyro Tower delivering elevated aerial effects; and mobile firing platforms integrated into live arena action.

The show will also see the return of spectacular pyro kites, not seen at the Ekka since 2017, creating a dramatic visual effect as illuminated kites trail sparks across the night sky. Quad bikes, vintage-style bikes and sidecars will also be incorporated into the show, carrying pyrotechnic effects through the arena and adding speed, movement and danger to the performance.

The entire display is synchronised to a diverse soundtrack, celebrating Queensland and Australian music icons in a high-energy, contemporary production designed to engage all generations.

Returning to deliver the 2026 spectacular is Queensland-based pyrotechnics company Skylighter Fireworks, renowned for their large-scale event expertise and innovative design. Their approach blends cutting-edge firing technology with creative storytelling, ensuring a seamless integration between fireworks, music and live performance.

Further elevating the experience is the support of Queensland-based lighting specialists High Impact Lighting (Ash Neuendorf), whose dynamic lighting design will amplify every moment of the show. Through powerful beam work, colour washes, movement and precision timing, lighting will extend the fireworks beyond the sky, bringing depth, energy and atmosphere across the entire arena. The combined effect will create a fully immersive environment where fire, light, music and motion work together as one, delivering a truly spectacular, all-senses experience for audiences.

NEW! Woodchop: Queensland vs New South Wales

A cornerstone of the Ekka for generations, woodchop represents the strength, precision and resilience of Queensland's regional communities, and in 2026 it will be showcased under the lights blending elite competition with modern production.

Queensland and New South Wales go head-to-head in a thrilling interstate woodchop competition. Hosted by respected regional radio personality Neale Stuart, this opening act not only delivers a high-energy competition but also reconnects audiences with the grit and determination of rural communities.

UniSC Mechatronic Robotic Sheep Dogs

Showcasing the future of agriculture, the University of the Sunshine Coast's robotic dogs bring cutting-edge agri-tech innovation to the Main Arena in a dynamic and visually engaging demonstration.

These AI-powered machines represent the next generation of livestock management and precision farming, capable of assisting producers in monitoring, mustering and analysing conditions across vast properties. Their inclusion in EkkaNITES reflects the evolution of Queensland's agricultural industries – from manual labour to highly advanced technology, reinforcing the event's 150-year narrative of continual progress and innovation.



Cowboy Karaoke with Ekka's Farmyard Friends

Featuring Ekka's much-loved Farmyard Friends, Cowboy Karaoke invites audiences to let loose, sing along and connect with the fun of the show.

The act reflects the lighter side of country culture while reinforcing the Ekka's identity as a welcoming, multi-generational event. Set against the broader storytelling of the night, Cowboy Karaoke offers a moment of joy and spontaneity, ensuring the experience remains accessible, engaging and entertaining for the entire audience.

Line-Dance Cam Presented by Coca-Cola

Line-Dance Cam Presented by Coca-Cola will transform the arena into a celebration of movement, music and shared experience.

Hosted by Laurel Edwards and Ian Skippen, the segment invites audience members to join in a fun, line-dancing moment broadcast across the big screens. Complete with giveaways, this special event will capture the vibrant spirit of community that has defined the show for 150 years.

Australian National Anthem featuring Chris Cobb and Felicity Kircher

Experience a stirring rendition of the Australian National Anthem and other iconic songs, brought to life by outstanding country music artists Chris Cobb and Felicity Kircher.

Originally from Papua New Guinea, Chris has a voice and tone that blends heartfelt storytelling with a modern country sound. Drawing inspiration from everyday life and family, his music connects deeply with audiences.

Now living on the Sunshine Coast and proudly calling Australia home, Chris continues to share his authentic, relatable sound with growing audiences. Powerful on stage and grounded in his roots, Chris Cobb brings country music to life with every performance.

Felicity is a powerhouse of Australian country music and a proud Tamworth Toyota Star Maker winner. Known for her commanding vocals, heartfelt songwriting, and electric live performances, she blends contemporary country energy with authentic storytelling.

With a growing national profile and a reputation as one of Australia's most exciting country talents, Felicity delivers passion, presence, and pure country spirit every time she takes the stage.

Chris and Felicity are our also lead singers in the Heart of the Land Show singing songs such as 'My Island Home' and 'We Are Australian'.



Heart of the Land – Celebrating 150 years of Queensland Farming Spirit featuring Dave Manchon and Friends

This year's night show will take audiences on a nostalgic journey through time, paying tribute to the generations of Queenslanders who built the state from its farming roots and the early days of cotton and sheep to the thriving beef industry that earned Queensland its proud title as 'The Beef Capital' of the nation.

Through stirring narration, a sweeping musical score, and breathtaking performances, Heart of the Land will honour the evolution of rural life and innovation that has driven the growth of Queensland's agricultural industries.

The epic production will feature the following captivating elements:

NEW! The Pioneers' Camels

For the first time in Ekka history, camels will appear in the main arena.

NEW! Queensland's Goat Rush Mountain

Goats have played a remarkable role in Australia's history, arriving with early settlers and quickly proving indispensable to survival in harsh and unfamiliar landscapes.

Golden Fleece

Sheep played a foundational role in opening and economically stabilising early Queensland.

Stockmen and Women

In a stirring tribute to Queensland's rural heritage, stockmen and women will honour the grit, skill and resilience of those who built the land from horseback.

NEW! Horsepower

This powerful segment pays tribute to the pioneers who transported supplies, livestock and families across vast distances, forging communities in the bush.

Stockmen to Soldiers - The Australian Light Horse Legacy

When war reached distant shores, Queensland's stockmen answered the call, becoming members of the legendary Australian Light Horse Brigade.

Queensland Colonial Association

A dynamic cast of period-dressed performers will help bring Heart of the Land to life.

Queensland Penny Farthing Association

Adding movement and colour, the "Pedal Power" display from the Qld Penny Farthing Association will glide across the arena.

Farming Today

After journeying through Queensland's pioneering past, the production will shift focus to celebrate the innovative practices and technology driving farming today.



EkkaNITES X-TREME

Get ready for high-energy performances and heart-stopping stunts, as X-Treme entertainment hits the main arena as part of EkkaNITES.

Ladder Bike Flair Stunt Riders – A Tribute to Daredevils of the Past

Jack Field and Billy Gough from Flair Riders / Flair Action Sports will bring a nostalgic motorbike stunt sequence inspired by the fearless arena riders of yesteryear.

The spectacular Ladder Bike Stunt pays tribute to the golden era of arena daredevils, including legendary Queensland motorcycle stuntman Johnny “Wonder” Fogwell, whose high-risk showground performances helped define the thrill of Ekka entertainment through the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

With riders climbing elevated ladders mounted to moving vintage-style motorbikes, the performance blends nostalgia, danger, precision and theatrical showmanship before leading the crowd into the thunder of the V8 Precision Driving Utes.

The result is a modern salute to the stuntmen who made Brisbane audiences hold their breath, reimagined by two highly skilled motorcycle experts for a new generation of Ekka fans.

V8 Utes: Tribute to Precision Driving Team presented by Trackskill

Buckle-up for a thrilling tribute to the iconic Precision Driving Team – a legendary act born at the Ekka in 1965 and embedded in Queensland show history.

For decades, the roar of engines and razor-sharp choreography of fearless drivers thrilled arena crowds and characterised Ekka entertainment. In celebrating 150 years of the Ekka, we proudly bring that spirit back to centre stage. Presented by Gary Baxter of Trackskill, this reimagined tribute will honour the pioneers of precision driving – the V8 Utes – capturing the skill, timing, and adrenaline that made the original act unforgettable.

Gary Baxter

Gary is one of Australia’s leading drivers and has been competing in various competitions for more than 20 years. He’s a two-time Australian ROH Wheels Commodore Cup Champion, having taken out the series in both 1995 and 1996 and regularly stunt drives in movies and television commercials.

Tim Ramages

Tim is a professional performance driver and trainer who has worked on movies including Mortal Kombat. He started his

career in Gravel Rally (Australian Rally Championship) at a state and national level in the early 1990s, moving onto drifting and competing in the Tarmac Rally.

Graham Edwards

Graham brings experience in the V8 Brute Ute series and Trackskill V8 Utes. Having cut his teeth in go karting, with multiple titles from Queensland and across Australia, he now focuses on his role as Lead Instructor for Drift School Australia and instructor for Race X.

Michael Baxter

Fresh from performing at the Darwin Show, Michael will perform for the first time at the Ekka. He has been performing with the Trackskill team since 2021 and is keen to take over the reins from his father, Gary one day. Michael is a star in a go kart but loves the big V8 power.

Hot Wheels Heroes featuring Matt & Madz Mingay

Get ready for BIG air and BIG excitement as legendary stuntman Matt Mingay and his son Madzy bring the iconic toy brand to life in a high-octane Main Arena performance.

Known for their fearless performances and crowd-favourite stunts, the Mingays will push the limits with gravity-defying jumps, high-speed action and precision driving that captivates audiences young and old.

This thrilling segment blends nostalgia with cutting-edge live entertainment, tapping into the imagination and energy that have made Hot Wheels a global phenomenon.

Matt Mingay

Matt is a world-renowned professional stunt rider and action sports athlete who’s been thrilling crowds since turning pro in 1997. A multiple-time Australian Stunt Riding Champion, Matt is known for pushing the limits with jaw-dropping stunts, fearless precision, and an infectious passion for motorsport.

Madzy Mingay

Following in his father’s tyre tracks, Madzy, who is just 19 years old, is already showing incredible skill, wowing crowds with his fearless attitude and natural talent. A rising star of the stunt and motorsports world, Madzy is one to watch as he continues to rev up the next generation of thrill seekers.



*Ekka*NITES X-TREME

Freestyle Motor X: Riders of the Night by Aussie FMX

Strap-in, hold tight and don't blink...Aussie FMX's Riders of the Night action-packed show will roar into the Main Arena bigger, louder and wilder than ever.

Aussie FMX will deliver an electrifying performance with Riders of the Night – a high-impact freestyle motocross spectacular combining extreme sport with cutting-edge LED technology.

Riders Tom Robinson, Tyler Wakeford and Brodie Carmichael will send their bikes more than 20 metres into the air, launching gravity-defying backflips and synchronised aerial formations, that keep the crowd on the edge of their seats. This year, the team will take things up a level providing the only full LED custom FMX show in the world. Combined with the night-time setting, the lights make every jump stand out, creating a visually powerful and adrenaline-charged experience for audiences of all ages.

Brodie Carmichael

Brodie is Aussie FMX Team Manager a role that follows his achievements of 5th place at the 2017 Nitro World Championships and three-time world record holder. Brodie will be bringing his signature move the Switch Blade Indy to the Main Arena.

Tyler Wakeford

Renowned for having one of the biggest 'whips' in the Freestyle Motocross scene, this Allora local has increased his repertoire of stunts including back flip combos sure to wow audiences.

Tom Robinson

Tom is renowned for inventing the world's first body aerial "twist top" stunt while competing at X Fighters Madrid in 2016. He continued to make a name for himself on the international circuit, taking first place in Japan's Mosh on Dirt competition in 2018, as well as second and third placings for the Pilots Tour Mexico.

Brodee Rowan

Brodee is one of the next generation riders of Aussie FMX. Known for his determination and commitment to the sport, Brodee continues to develop his freestyle motocross skills and has achieved one of FMX's biggest milestones by landing a backflip.

Amber Carmichael

Amber is Australia's leading female FMX emcee, known for her electrifying energy and crowd-commanding presence. With freestyle motocross in her blood, Amber started riding at just 13 years old and has since become the powerhouse voice behind some of the country's biggest action sports shows.



NEW! Human Cannonball ***Dave “The Bullet” Smith***

Prepare for a jaw-dropping, world-class spectacle as human cannonball legend Dave “The Bullet” Smith blasts into Brisbane from the USA.

Continuing a legendary family tradition of daredevil aerial performance, Dave “The Bullet” Smith holds multiple Guinness World Records for distance and height in human cannonballing.

At EkkaNITES, audiences will witness a heart-stopping performance as Smith is launched from a custom-built cannon, soaring high above the arena before landing with pinpoint accuracy.

Each launch delivers an explosive moment of suspense, speed and raw human courage, making it one of the most anticipated highlights of the night program.

Bold, daring and unforgettable, Dave “The Bullet” Smith’s Human Cannonball performance will be a standout international feature of EkkaNITES 2026.



Meet the Stars Under the Stars

When the fireworks fade and the engines cool, the night is far from over at EkkaNITES.

Step up to the edge of the Main Arena and experience a magical Ekka moment as your favourite night show performers make their way back to greet fans.

Snap a selfie with a fire-spinning artist, grab an autograph from a V8 driver or high-five a freestyle motocross daredevil.

Meet the EkkaNITES hosts

Laurel Edwards

The queen of Brisbane breakfast radio, Laurel Edwards is a true-blue Queenslander and Ekka tragic. “Brisbane is where my heart beats, and the Ekka is where the community connects,” she explains. Known for her vibrant personality and natural ability to relate to audiences, Laurel’s love of Queensland, warmth and humour, guarantees she will bring heartfelt energy and flair to EkkaNITES.

Ian Skippen

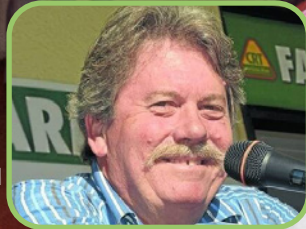
With a career spanning print, radio, TV and online, Ian is a respected media icon driven by a genuine love of people and their stories. Known for his professionalism, energy and quick wit, Ian will bring experience and connection to every moment of EkkaNITES, keeping audiences on the edge of their seats from the first introduction to the final applause.

Rhianna Buchanan

EkkaNITES X-Treme host Rhianna Buchanan has spent over a decade at the heart of Australia’s live entertainment and motorsport scenes. Blending her deep motorsport credentials with show-stopping stagecraft, Rhianna brings both energy and experience to EkkaNITES, and will help keep the crowd on the edge of their seats as Master of Ceremonies for the Flair Stunt Riders, V8 Precision driving team, Hot Wheels Heroes, and the incredible Human Cannonball.

Neale Stuart

Woodchop arena announcer, Neale Stuart, will host the Queensland vs New South Wales woodchop competition. Affectionately known as “The voice of rural Australia”, Neale has spent more than 35 years behind the microphone, becoming a familiar voice at agricultural field days, country shows, festivals and major rural events across Australia.



Behind the scenes of EkkaNITES

Jack Ellison – Producer

Jack Ellison returns for an astonishing 12th consecutive year as Producer of EkkaNITES. A former professional athlete and world-record-holding freestyle jumper, Jack has channelled his adrenaline-fueled roots into H2O Events, Australia’s leading special events production company. With more than 30 years of experience, he has served as marine coordinator on blockbusters such as James Bond: Quantum of Solace and Mission Impossible 2.

Tony Laffan – Head of Ekka Entertainment & EkkaNITES Creative Producer

For 14 years, Tony Laffan has been the creative visionary and artistic producer behind EkkaNITES. A true showman with a rich background as an international illusionist, magician, and hypnotist, Tony’s work fuses the spectacular with the meaningful, crafting shows that are deeply rooted in Queensland spirit. Whether he’s scripting performances, curating talent, or working magic behind the scenes, Tony continues to set the gold standard in arena entertainment.

Nick Mitri - Skylighter Fireworks

With more than three decades of experience in the pyrotechnics and entertainment industry, Nick Mitri leads one of Australia’s premier fireworks display companies. Throughout his career, Nick has designed and delivered thousands of fireworks displays across Australia and internationally, ranging from major sporting events and public celebrations to large-scale festivals and international fireworks competitions.

Nick Kozij - Skylighter Fireworks

With extensive experience in large-scale event operations, pyrotechnics and technical production, Nick Kozij is recognised as a leading figure in Australia’s fireworks and live events industry. As Senior Manager at Skylighter Fireworks, he oversees the planning and delivery of major productions across Australia, creating memorable experiences for millions each year.

Harrison Smith - Skylighter Fireworks

Harrison is an award-winning fireworks designer whose creativity, precision and artistic vision have earned recognition across the pyrotechnics industry. Renowned for crafting displays that seamlessly blend colour, timing, scale and emotion, Harrison has designed productions for major public events, sporting spectacles and international competitions.

Ash Neuendorf - High Impact Lighting

Ash Neuendorf is the Founder and Director of High Impact Lighting and has spent more than a decade helping transform the live entertainment landscape through bold, high-impact lighting design, technical production and show technology. Known for pushing creative and technical boundaries, Ash brings a strong passion for innovation, combining lighting, special effects and pyrotechnic-style show moments to create powerful live experiences.

Ray Moss –NW Group

As General Manager (Qld) of NW Group, Ray Moss helps bring together sound, lighting, vision, communications and technical coordination across a complex environment, supporting the Main Arena, broadcast requirements and live entertainment delivery across the Brisbane Showgrounds. His personal connection with the Ekka stretches back to the late 1980s or early 1990s, when he was a member of the audio crew for the nightly fireworks.

ONE NIGHT ONLY AT XXXX STOCKMEN'S BAR & GRILL

Sunday FUNday – Denim and Dance (18+)

WHEN: 8.30pm, Sunday 9 August

Pull on your favourite denim and kick off the week Ekkastyle with a high energy night of live music, bootscooting line dancing with Cowgirls Australia and big country vibes. Whether you're a seasoned dancer or just in it for the fun, Sunday FUNday is all about cutting loose, hitting the dancefloor and celebrating with mates.

Expect feelgood tunes, crowd pleasing dance moments and a buzzing crowd ready to keep the party rolling late into the night. It's relaxed, it's fun, and it's the perfect way to turn Sunday into your new favourite night out.

Single Mingle Monday (18+)

WHEN: 8.30pm, Monday 10 August

Step into a world where comedy meets Cupid at Singles Mingle Monday, hosted by the Sit Down Comedy Club.

Quickwitted comedian and crowdfavourite host Kat Davidson will ensure this is anything but a typical night out. It's part standup show, part dating spectacle – where brave singles are plucked from the crowd for onstage blind dates, complete with cheeky questions, hilarious twists and an arena full of cheerleaders.

Whether you're on the dancefloor, in the dating hot seat or soaking up the chaos from the sidelines, Singles Mingle Monday is a bold, feelgood celebration of connection. It's unpredictable, it's unforgettable – and who knows? Your next big laugh could lead to your next big love.



SINGLES MINGLE *monday*

Drag Queen Bingo (18+)

WHEN: 8:30pm to 11pm, Thursday 13 August

Are you ready for sequins, sparkle, and serious bingo business?

One of Ekka's most dazzling nights, Drag Queen Bingo will roll into the Ekka with a fabulously fierce Priscilla Queen of the Desert takeover in 2026!

Led by one of Brisbane's favourite queens, Vollie LaVont, this high-energy spectacle channels the spirit of the classic Aussie film, combined with show-stopping lip-syncs, disco anthems, and bold, over-the-top costumes dripping in feathers and excess... and of course bingo!

Just like Priscilla Queen of the Desert, this unforgettable night blends humour, heart, and high glamour in one wildly entertaining experience.

