

**August 20, 2023**

## **Ekka attracts bumper crowds of 400,000**

About 400,000 people have enjoyed Ekka's most successful show in years, with stunning weather, beautiful animals, first class entertainment, a popular daily ride special plus a Hollywood superstar.

The 144<sup>th</sup> Royal Queensland Show presented by RACQ was the most attended since 2019, before the covid-19 pandemic.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said this year's Show was a true celebration of the country coming to the city and had attracted people from all over Australia, plus movie star Matt Damon and his family.

The Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese even popped into Ekka for a strawberry sundae.

"This year's attendance figures have surpassed last year's comeback Ekka of 345,000 and are back to pre-pandemic crowds," Mr Christou said.

"Our goal was to welcome 400,000 in total by the end of show and we are on track to achieve that by night's end.

"This is a terrific result, and we thank the people of Queensland for their amazing support.

"We enjoyed strong pre-sales, which showed the public appreciated the great value on offer in the lead up to Ekka."

Mr Christou said the discounted ticket deals on the four Super Saver Days – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday proved popular – resulting in one of the biggest Mondays in recent history.

"Plus, our first ever daily two for one ride special was a huge hit with families taking advantage of it every morning of Show," he said.

"We wanted to ensure there were value savings to be had at the Show this year, so it was great to see Queenslanders take up these discounts and deals.

Mr Christou said visitors enjoyed all the traditional show favourites such as the animals, championship competitions, live entertainment, heart-stopping rides and fun showbags.

"Competition entries this year were back at pre-pandemic levels – 21,000 across 46 sections," he said,

"It was wonderful to see that competitive spirit alive and well as they aspired for a coveted blue ribbon.

"From champion woodchoppers to pint sized horse competitors and elderly bakers, the Ekka has a competition for everyone, and it was heart-warming to see the public continue to cherish this beloved tradition.

“The public also delighted in the 10,000 animals on display at the Show, and in turn learned about agriculture and Queensland’s farming communities.”

People’s Day was hugely successful with more than 67,000 people attending the Show, Ekka Monday a huge 48,000 plus attending, while yesterday more than 50,000 came through the gates, a monster crowd for the last Saturday of Show.

The Bertie Beetle showbag, which celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday this year was a clear show favourite again with the Bertie Beetle Retro the most popular.

Other best-sellers included the Matildas and Fantales showbags which sold out within three days; Barbie Dreamtopia which sold out before the final weekend; and Bluey, Pokemon, Pusheen, Darrell Lea Licorice and Pig Out, Mega Builder and Mega Princess were all hugely popular.

### **Ekka 2023 – By the numbers (approximate):**

- 208,000+ Dagwood Dogs eaten
- 150,000+ Strawberry Sundaes eaten
- 1,500+ volunteers help stage the Show
- \$220 million + amount Ekka generates for the Brisbane economy
- 3,500 + jobs created
- 550+ exhibitor stands
- 37,000+ cheese toasties (two tonne of butter and four tonne of cheese)
- 210,000+ schooners of beer
- 40,000+ cans of rum
- 5,800+ award-winning steaks
- 3 tonnes + of fireworks used each night
- 37,000 + glasses of wine
- 7,000 + tasting plates of award-winning steak and lamb
- 4,100m<sup>3</sup> + of sawdust and sand used as animal bedding
- 3,000 + corsages made

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