

# 2016 'High Tea' Fundraiser

Xavier Chayce, one of the lucky recipients of the iPads purchased from funds raised by 2015's Fundraiser



*Special report by* **Jane Thomas**

Last year the RNA undertook a fundraising project aimed at assisting families who are currently being affected by the drought. In line with the RNA's charter of helping and educating rural youth, the event raised money for the purchase of iPads for children whose families reside in drought affected regions.

The 2015 'Inaugural' event was a huge success!!!

Originally it was planned that the money raised would buy iPads for children being educated through the Longreach School of Distance Education. However, support for the project was so great that the offer was

able to be extended to also include children educated through the Charleville SDE.

Charleville Principal, Jenny Swadling, enjoyed catching up with many parents and friends at this year's event.

The iPads for Longreach and Charleville were purchased from local businesses and then distributed to the students. The RNA was delighted when it received wonderful feedback from some of the families involved. The message was clear!!! Being able to 'download' their requirements and then complete those studies, at a time convenient to their families, has been of great assistance during these trying times.

Jenny Swadling (centre) with Linda Hacker from 'Roselea', Muckadill and Narda Roberts from 'Victoria Downs', Morven



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A video was made of their heart-felt messages and I include the link here for you to [enjoy here](#)

We also received some insightful comments that were sent through from Rowena Arthur, Principal of the Longreach SDE. Rowena wrote:

*Earlier in the year we flew out three iPad experts to deliver two days of iPad training to our Home Tutors. During the Clusters over the last fortnight we did follow up sessions where Home Tutors shared how they now use the iPads for school. Many have told us that the iPads have made their lives so much easier and their children love using the iPad.*

A few examples:

- ♦ *students can complete work on the iPad and email it directly to their teacher (they no longer have to scan and save it first- this really saves time)*
- ♦ *students can make an iMovie and email it directly to their teacher or if it's too big to email copy it to a thumb drive and post it in*
- ♦ *one child joined an on-air lesson while waiting in the doctors surgery in Townsville others have joined lessons in a car while travelling*
- ♦ *some students have converted from computer to using the iPad for nearly everything in the school room- the iPad is so much more portable*

- ♦ *those with small internet plans can download apps while in town and have them to use at home for schoolwork*
- ♦ *parents have become more technology savvy – although they will say the kids still run rings around them!*
- ♦ *students can easily take photos of home life and school tasks and email them straight to their teachers.*

*We realise now we underestimated the positive impact of this project! The benefits are much broader than we ever anticipated.*

In response to such favourable feedback, it was decided to repeat the same theme again this year. The principals of the Mt Isa SDE and Charters Towers SDE were contacted and both agreed that iPads or tablets would also be of great benefit in the education of their outback families.

We were delighted that two lady representatives, from both centres, were able to attend our function.

The Fundraiser occurred on the Thursday before the Ekka gates officially opened. Once again the event was conducted in the main auditorium of the 'Royal International Convention Centre' which is situated at the heart of the showgrounds. The 1323 square metre room lends itself well to the host of activities scheduled throughout the afternoon's programme.

As a 'Ladies Only', 'High Tea' function – it is a rather unique affair. But then so much



*“As a Ladies Only, High Tea function it is a rather unique affair.”*



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associated with the EKKA is unique!!! Recognised as Qld's largest and most loved annual event, it is not surprising that this fundraiser, which precedes the 10 day show, again attracted 500 animated guests all enthusiastically expecting to once more partake in the entertainment and excitement associated with an 'Ekka Experience'.

The same organising committee members - comprising Mrs Margi Adnam, Mrs Gina Fairfax, Mrs Margot Warby and me (Jane Thomas), were joined by their team of Hostesses - with everyone submitting the names and email addresses of family and friends. Once again each guest was forwarded her own personal invitation, with every lady invited having a direct connection with (or love of) the RNA. We believe that this is a winning formula!!! A genuine feeling of good-will and camaraderie is one of the key trademarks of this 'City greets Country' event.

This year a 'Save the Date' reminder was sent out in early March, with the formal invitation going out at the end of May. Fortunately, the RNA's 'IT' team managed to overcome last year's email glitches and all correspondence seemed to reach its destination without too many problems. Tickets sold fast and many cash donations started filtering through. Again, the same lady as last year supported our event, by writing out a cheque for multiple iPads.

Her quiet generosity is so very much appreciated by us all!!!

Our event was also supported by both sides of politics. Deb Frecklington, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, attended again this year. As the State Member for Nanango, Deb lives in Kingaroy and is a familiar face and friend to many rural families. This year she was also joined by our Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk. Annastacia has a long history with the Ekka, with her father being Minister for Primary Industries (during show time, he used to move his office to the Ekka) while her mother has been in charge of the 'Quilts Section' for the last 15 years. The Premier presented us with a cheque for \$2000, from the people of Queensland.

At this stage I would also like to mention that we were both honoured and delighted to be joined on the day by the Governor's wife, Mrs Kaye de Jersey, Dame Quentin Bryce AD, CVO and our immediate past Governor, Ms Penny Wensley AC. Along with the Committee, these three ladies agreed to give an interview on 'Ekka TV'. To view please [click here](#)

Guests started arriving at 1.30pm and the room quickly began to buzz with activity. Undoubtedly one of the best aspects of this event is the ability for guests to move around and mingle. 'Meeting and Greeting', while helping to raise funds for our rural children, is what this event is



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*“Our event was supported by both sides of politics.”*



From left: Gina Fairfax, Former Governor of Queensland Penelope Wensley, Dame Quentin Bryce, Margie Adnam, Jane Thomas, Margot Warby, Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Annabelle Brayley, Mrs. Kaye de Jersey and Deputy Opposition Leader Deb Frecklington



Host Pip Courtney



Cellist Bella McDonald

all about. One ‘country’ guest was even heard saying that she and her four friends meet at the Fundraiser and then plan what they are going to do during the next 10 days of the show.

At 2.00pm everyone was asked to take a seat in front of the stage. This year the winner of the ‘Lucky Seat Number’ was quickly identified when the pre-decided seat was announced. This resulted in peals of laughter from the winner and her group of friends from Quilpie.

Everyone quickly settled down to enjoy the colour and styles of the Fashion Parade. This year marked the 25th year that the Ekka Fashion Parade has been directed by Lindsay Bennett. Consequently, it featured a special ‘retrospective’ segment. 12 of Brisbane’s top Fashion Houses each selected a favourite piece from the last 25 years for a rare ‘Runway Revival’ - along with a selection of their current designs.

It was lovely that Bronwyn and Marabeth Smith (from ‘Irma J Smith’) and Pia du Pradal could again attend our afternoon’s activities.

At the conclusion of the Fashion Parade, the serious business of WHY we had all gathered together was taken in hand by a person well-versed in life on the land.

Special Guest Master of Ceremonies, the

highly acclaimed ‘Landline’ ABC Television presenter Ms Pip Courtney, again presided over a varied programme.

Firstly, she introduced Isabella McDonald, a Year 11 Somerville House boarder, who was educated through the Mt Isa SDE. Unaccompanied, Bella performed two beautifully executed solo pieces on her cello. I was amazed to hear that initially Bella learnt to play her cello via Skype through school of the air. What an achievement!!! And how very accomplished she has become – recently winning the award for ‘Most Outstanding String Soloist’ at the Gold Coast Eisteddfod and then travelling with her mother to New Zealand for the Waikato International Cello Festival, where she performed over a period of nine days.

Pip then introduced our Guest Speaker, Mrs Annabelle Brayley. Annabelle, who describes herself as an “Outback Storyteller”, is also the author of several books – including “Bush Nurses”, “Outback Vets”, “Nurses of the Outback” and her most recently released publication: “Our Vietnam Nurses”. Her talents extend beyond putting ‘pen to paper’ as she effortlessly maintained everyone’s interest with tales about her involvement with the Charleville SDE. She also broached a more sensitive topic – the urgent need for increased and more reliable data access throughout our vast state.

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Once again 'Ekka TV' was there to capture the action live. To view Annabelle's speech please [click here](#)

At the conclusion of all official activities everyone happily resumed their 'meetings and greetings', while partaking in a traditional 'High Tea' of ribbon sandwiches, scones and profiteroles accompanied by champagne top-ups or cups of tea and coffee.

At this stage the Raffle Tickets started selling in earnest and those interested in the Silent Auction items kept a close eye on the progress of the 'bid sheets'. For two months leading up to this event several key ladies have worked very hard - gathering together many of the 16 Silent Auction items and 55 Raffle prizes. All vouchers and items were delivered to the site prior to the event and only available for purchase on the 'Big Day'.

This year, Raffle Tickets were sold by the Miss Showgirls, who worked in pairs and were easy to spot by eager purchasers. We are most grateful to this lovely team of girls (and their organisers) for finding the time to help us out during their busy show schedule. Pictured here are two of those enthusiastic volunteers.

The announcements of the Silent Auction winners and the drawing of the Raffle tickets were the final highlights of the afternoon programme. Winning ticket numbers were projected from huge overhead screens and lucky recipients came forward to collect their prizes.

As with all fundraising activities, the

*"Annabelle describes herself as an Outback Storyteller."*

Key speaker Annabelle Brayley

Bridget Delahunty (left) and Genevieve McDonald enjoying the High Tea

# RNA Fundraiser



Guests filing out bid sheets in the hope of winning a Silent Auction item



Miss Showgirls Shana Edwards (left) and Nikki Hoffman

*“We are most grateful to this lovely team of girls and their organisers.”*

event could not be a success without its sponsors. I wish to sincerely thank all those who provided Raffle and Silent Auction items. We hope this acknowledgement does not embarrass anyone of those who so willingly offered their support in this most important part of our fundraising activity:

- Adele Hughes – ‘Rangeland Quality Meats’
- Adorne Jewellery, West End
- Alice Finlay
- Alice Greenup (Author)
- Ann Garms – ‘The French Connection’
- Annabelle Brayley (Author)
- Belinda West
- Brigitte & Roly Hughes (Thargomindah)
- Brisbane Festival
- Chemist Warehouse (Redcliffe)
- Dean Rusling – ‘Chalkos Art Foundry’
- Debbie Noller
- Dymocks Book Store
- The Fairfax Family
- Georgia Macmillan Paints and Paper
- Gainsdale Group: Spicers Tamarind Retreat, Maleny
- Ivory Tavern, Tweed Heads
- Jan Kiesecker
- Jenny Old (Author)

- Joan Scott
- John Cox (Artist)
- Katrina Christ Photography
- Kylie & Brian Rutledge, Quilpie
- La Boite Theatre
- Lindsay Bennett Marketing
- Liz from Azzanzi Hair Salon (Dicky Beach, Caloundra)
- Margot McKinney Jewellery
- Merlo Coffee (Bowen Hills)
- Napoleon Perdis
- Heather Sartain – ‘One Wybelenna’
- PandaPearls, Nundah
- Penguin Books Australia
- Pia du Pradal, Fashion House
- Putia Pure Foods Kitchen, Banyo
- Qld Ballet
- RACQ
- RBSellers Outfitters
- Rod Bower – ‘Continental Biscuit Manufacturers’
- Rydges (Fortitude Valley)
- Sally Cottee
- Samantha Ogilvie Fashion Boutique
- Terry White Pharmacy (Fairfield Gardens)

- The Mason Baker Gourmet Jar-cakes
- Urbane Restaurant Group
- Village Roadshow Theme Parks

The generosity of the supporters listed above significantly contributed to us raising just over \$40,000. It is a wonderful outcome that will be very much appreciated by the children whose lives we touch.

As the function drew to a close, ladies departed singly and in groups while RNA staff started to prepare the room in readiness for the next day’s arrival of the Ekka crowds.

On behalf of the RNA, I wish to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the success of the RNA’s 2016 Fundraiser as well as all those volunteers who worked so hard during the show to ensure that the 10 days of Ekka were full of ‘Enjoyment, Excitement and Entertainment’.

The year ahead will be a busy time for the RNA as it prepares for its third Fundraiser and our 140th EKKA show!!!

In closing, I leave you with the thought provoking words of Francis of Assisi:

**“For it is in giving that we receive.”**

Until next year,

**Jane Thomas**

# Highlights of the 2016 Fundraiser Event

RNA Fundraiser



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BNA Fundraiser



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- 1. Emilie Ferguson from Toowoomba with Sarah and Harrison Hughes from Lake Nash Station NT.
- 2. Rebecca Mitchell from St Lucia and Louise Kelly from West End.
- 3. Cellist Bella McDonald.
- 4. Sue Wagner from Theodore, Lisa Hughes from Brooweena and Fiona Mars from Bauhinia.
- 5. Jane Nason from Hendra, Garth Reid from Petrie Terrace, Jane Thomas, Lou Shields from Greenslopes, Pia du Pradal from Brookfield and Janet Campbell from Cooroy.
- 6. Guests enjoy the fashion show.
- 7. Pip Courtney begins the fundraiser.
- 8. The treats of the High Tea.
- 9. Jan Moody from Hendra, Bev Biggs, Anne Muddleton from Taringa and Beverley Fox from Ascot.
- 10. Guests enjoy the fashion show.
- 11. CJ Rylance from Brookfield and Kate Warby from Samford.
- 12. Cathy Cameron from Brisbane and Mandy Mott from Toowoomba.
- 13. Allison Mobbs from Longreach QRRWV and Sarah Pearson from Blackhall LSOE.
- 14. Fashion models on parade.
- 15. Rhonda Bridle from Toowoomba, Tottie Weal from Brisbane, Jenny Action from Rockhampton and Alice Greenup, Kumbia.
- 16. Deb Newell from Brisbane, Jan Ncilwraith from Toowoomba and Margo Hayes from Laidley.
- 17. Bridget Delahunty from Brisbane and Genevieve McDonald from Cloncurry.
- 18. Noela O'Donnell from Brisbane, Annabelle Brayley from Morven and Kathy Cavanagh from Bribie Island.
- 19. Robyn Martin and Christine Ashton from Brisbane.
- 20. Diana Osbaldiston from Clayfield and Jan Jenyns from Norman Park.
- 21. Raeleen Wright from Mt Spencer, Nebo, Jidie Redcliffe from Wamuran, Sally McGilvray from Womblebank, Mitchell and Sarah White from Tulloona.
- 22. Guests enjoy the fashion show.
- 23. Anne Douglas from Toowoomba and Joan Scott from Roma.
- 24. Libby Hufton from Harden NSW, Regina Cotter from Brisbane and Edwina Edwards from Mt Pleasant.
- 25. Cellist Bella McDonald.
- 26. Linda Ryan and Janeen Fricke from Mt Isa, School of the Air.
- 27. Lou Wilson from Bardon, Annabelle Grieve from Millmeran, Alison Chandler from Brisbane and Sue Barrett from Brisbane.
- 28. Pamela White from Brisbane/Condamine, Lola Wilson from Perth and Nannette Frederick from Sydney.
- 29. Margie Adham, Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and Jane Thomas enjoy the show.
- 30. Camilla and Carla Roberts from Brisbane.
- 31. Fashion models on parade.
- 32. Janet Treloar, Robina Kelly and Sue Cameron all from Brisbane.