

The official magazine of the RNA

SHOW BIZ

SUMMER 2024

NEW WINE JUDGE



RNA WINS BIG

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W E L C O M E

FROM RNA PRESIDENT DAVID THOMAS



As the year draws to a close, the RNA is looking forward to not just 2025, but the exciting next decade.

2024 was not without its challenges and as we celebrate the end of the year, I would like to reflect on our achievements at the RNA.

The Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) attracted more than 345,000 people over nine days in August.

Despite not reaching our target of 400,000, this was an impressive result given there were three days of very wet weather.

The rain caused the postponement of the iconic Grand Parade for the first time in more than four decades and impacted our horse competition schedule on the Main Arena.

To our Ekka staff, judges and stewards, thank you for your efforts in navigating the challenges we faced with the wet weather.

We did however see growth in our Ekka competitions, with more than 21,000 entries received across 60 sections.

Entry numbers were up by 20 to 40 per cent in several of the competitions, including cookery, horse and sculpture.

By the end of December, our events venue business will have hosted almost 200 events, including Queensland's largest event, Ekka, and nine large-scale music festivals.

This figure includes many events that were new to the Brisbane Showgrounds, which is a testament to our hard-working staff and their exceptional customer service.

Our chefs have also done a remarkable job, serving more than 130,000 plates of food, with 90,000 of those featuring medal-

winning produce from the Royal Queensland Awards (RQA).

2024 was a big year for the RQA, as we welcomed two new competitions - Aquaculture and Distilled Spirits.

There are now eight competition sections in the RQA, as we continue to expand our celebration of the nation's finest produce and its producers.

Entries for 2025 have already started opening, with Beer the first competition to be judged next year in February.

As the year draws to a close, the RNA is looking forward to not just 2025, but the exciting next decade.

In 2026, the Ekka will mark its milestone 150th anniversary and we also look forward to being part of the 2032 Olympics as the nominated venue for equestrian.

On behalf of the RNA, I would like to thank our members, sponsors, Ekka patrons, competitors, judges and stewards for their support this year.

I would also like to thank my fellow RNA Councillors and RNA staff for their hard work and dedication.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

David Thomas
RNA PRESIDENT

A SUCCESSFUL YEAR OF EVENTS AT THE BRISBANE SHOWGROUNDS



TOP 3 MOST POPULAR VENUE SPACES

1. ROYAL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE
2. JOHN REID PAVILION
3. EXHIBITION BUILDING

BY THE NUMBERS

186
EVENTS 68
NEW EVENTS

130,000+
PLATES OF
FOOD SERVED

90,000+
RQA AWARD-
WINNING
PRODUCTS SOLD

Photo credit: Bianca Holderness

The Brisbane Showgrounds' event venue business had a bumper 2024.

By the end of December, almost 200 events are set to have been held at the venue including conferences, banquets, exhibitions, warehouse sales and music festivals.

Among the events that took place in 2024 were dozens of new events including the Queensland Golf and Travel Expo, Queensland Reptile Exhibition and Performance Pulse Expo.

More than one million people attended events held at the Brisbane Showgrounds, including 345,000 alone for the iconic Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) in August.

Our chefs were kept busy throughout the year, with more than

130,000 plates of food served, with most of those dished up in the Royal International Convention Centre.

Around 90,000 plates featured medal-winning produce from the Royal Queensland Awards, with the most popular dish this year the bronze medal-winning Kilcoy Ebony Black Angus brisket served with scorched sweet corn salsa, soft polenta and chipotle scented gravy.

The Brisbane Showgrounds will see out the year with the Wildlands music festival on New Years Eve, with more than 30,000 people expected to attend.

2025 is also shaping up to be a successful year for the events venue, with many forward bookings already in place.

AWARDS AROUND THE GROUNDS



RNA STACKS UP ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

The RNA has received international recognition, winning 10 Awards of Excellence at the 2024 International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) in the United States in early December.

More than 2,000 entries were received across five awards categories including communications, competitive exhibits, agriculture, sponsorship and non-fair facility usage, with the RNA taking home five gold, two silver and three bronze medals.

The annual awards recognise and reward excellence achieved by agricultural shows worldwide.

Most of the medals won by the RNA were for the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka), including for a new Harvest to Home hands-on learning activation, new GOAT competition teaching students about food and fibre production, new strategy educating Ekka attendees on how

competitions are judged and the Show's ongoing partnership with Norco.

The RNA was also recognised for its Rural Discovery Day program for primary school students which takes place in May each year, and the new Brisbane Showgrounds website.

Awards

- Program designed to educate on the story of food – Gold medal
HARVEST TO HOME
- Strategy / tactic to engage exhibitors – Gold medal
HOW TO JUDGE
- Sponsor continuity – Gold medal
NORCO PARTNERSHIP
- Website (Facility Specific) – Gold medal
BRISBANE SHOWGROUNDS WEBSITE

- Photo: equine – Gold medal
HORSE COMPETITION
- Any Other Competitive Exhibits – Silver medal
G.O.A.T COMPETITION
- Photo: horticulture – Silver medal
NORTHERN DISTRICTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY DISPLAY
- Event occurring during the year – Bronze medal
RURAL DISCOVERY DAY
- Any other program or exhibit – Bronze medal
COBB & CO 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
- Creative display (single photo or photo series) – Bronze medal
HARVEST TO HOME

SCHOOL HOLIDAY BOREDOM BUSTER



Archie Brothers on King Street is an entertainment hub families will want to know about during school holidays.

With arcade games, bowling, mini golf, laser tag and more, there is plenty to keep the kids entertained.

There is even a cocktail bar for the adults, plus plenty of food for the family including burgers and pizzas.

For activity prices and bundles, please click here.



LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS GIFTS SORTED

Keep this one in mind if you're looking for last minute Christmas gift ideas.

Artisan on King Street, which is usually closed on a Monday and Tuesday, will open on December 23 and 24 from 10am to 5pm to give shoppers a final chance to grab their Christmas gifts.

The store offers unique handmade ceramics, jewellery, timber work, art, fashion and more.

For more information on Artisan, please click here.



SMOKING HOT NEW EATERY

A new restaurant recently opened on King Street in November, with a focus on charcoal cooking.

Yum Char, from the owners of Xin Chao and Super Combo, is serving up delicious charcoal banh mis with flavours including beef brisket, BBQ pork patty and lemongrass chicken, along with sides such as chargrilled wagyu beef skewers, corn ribs, fries and more.

Check out the full menu by clicking here.



Ekka

ROYAL QUEENSLAND SHOW



12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!





EXCITING AG-VENTURES IN THE CLASSROOM

The 2025 Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) education competitions have recently opened for entry.

The education section is now made up of 15 competitions, with the addition of a new Zebra Finches Project.

The competition allows students to gain insight into the cycle of life by raising and breeding their own Zebra Finches, caring for them over a 26 week period.

Other competitions in education include gardening, cheese making, photography and video production, giving students the opportunity to have a fun, hands-on experience in the classroom while learning how agriculture plays an essential role in their everyday lives.

The 2025 education competitions focus on

the global theme of 'Feeding the Future' which explores food production, technology, innovation and environmental agricultural practices as the world builds a sustainable future.

All education competitions are aligned with both Version 8.4 and 9 of the Australian Curriculum to provide teachers with ease of application in the classroom.

To explore the competitions further please click here.

Our education competitions at a glance

- Agricultural Sciences and Student Fermented Beverages
- Awesome Showbag Competition
- Education on Show – two new Minecraft Education classes
- Ekka Creative Clips
- G.O.A.T – Greatest Of All Time Competition
- Giant Pumpkin
- Greenhouse Innovator
- Little Sprouts
- Raising Hy-line Hens
- Student Bush Poetry
- School Garden
- Student Made Cheese
- Student Photography
- School Scarecrow – new theme celebrating the rich sporting history of the Brisbane Showgrounds
- Zebra Finch Project – new competition in 2025



BENCHMARKING AT ITS BEST

IN THE PADDOCK TO PALATE COMPETITION

Australian beef producers have the chance to gain valuable insight into their cattle genetics in the Royal Queensland Show's (Ekka) 2025 Paddock to Palate Competition presented by JBS Australia.

Entries opened in mid-December, with the competition offering almost \$45,000 in prize money across three classes – 100 day export, 70 day trade and 100 day Hormone Growth Promotant (HGP) free export.

Now in its 28th year, Paddock to Palate is one of the world's more commercially relevant competitions, with cutting edge data collection technology giving producers the chance to benchmark their cattle.

RNA Beef Committee Chair Gary Noller said the competition was greatly revered in the industry for its commercial reality.

"The phases of the competition, from weight gain to carcass, all deeply reflect the commercial industry," he said.

"We've seen the seedstock producers who enter the competition excel in their bull sales.

"Producers are not only benchmarking against their peers, but we now have studs and commercial producers putting their cattle into pens of seven under the one sire, so they're actually sire proving their genetics against their own genetics."

Australia produces some of the finest beef in the world, which has been reflected in the Paddock to Palate competition.

"The quality that comes out of the competition once a year is exceptional and the product goes off the shelf very quickly, which is a testament to the quality of the cattle and the genetics that are involved," Mr Noller said.

Entries in the Paddock to Palate competition, including the wagyu classes, increased by five per cent this year and are expected to increase again in 2025.

"The rise in the cattle market has buoyed confidence in the bush, so I would expect to see another increase in entries," Mr Noller said.

The competition features three phases which are best aggregate weight gain held at JBS Beef City feedlot west of Toowoomba, a carcass competition and an MSA eating quality competition.

The exhibitor who polls the highest aggregate score across all three phases will be awarded the overall prize at the Paddock to Palate Awards and Beef Industry Dinner during Ekka Beef Week in 2025.

Entries close Monday 27 January 2025. To enter please click [here](#).

Entries for the Paddock to Paddock Wagyu Challenge will open in mid-January 2025.

Proud sponsors of the Paddock to Palate Competition include JBS Australia, 3D Genetics, Australian Wagyu Association, Coopers Animal Health, Elanco Animal Health, Thompson Longhorn, Queensland Country Life, Zoetis, Datamars Livestock, Complete Women's Healthcare, Black Box Co and Thynne + Macartney



MEET THE ROYAL
QUEENSLAND
WINE SHOW'S
NEW CHIEF JUDGE

One of Australia's most talented winemakers will take over the helm of the Royal Queensland Wine Awards (RQWA) in 2025.

Julian Langworthy will fill the role of Chief Judge from 2025 to 2027, with Tom Carson coming to the end of his three-year term.

Mr Langworthy has more than 25 years' experience in the industry spanning vintages in France, Canada and Australia, with 14 of those based in Western Australia's Margaret River.

He was the first Margaret River winemaker to be crowned the prestigious James Halliday's Winemaker of the Year in 2019 and more recently won the WA Good Food Guide's 2024 Winemaker in November.

With a Chief Winemaker role at Deep Woods Estate and successful label of his own in Nocturne, his wines have been awarded more than 60 trophies and 200 gold-medals in wine shows across Australia and overseas.

Mr Langworthy said he hoped to give some value back to the wine industry as part of

his new role with the RQWA, having been a Panel Chair at the show for three years.

"As a strong advocate for the Australian wine show system it's a great thrill and honour to be at the helm of the Royal Queensland Wine Awards for the next three years," he said.

"Wine shows have been hugely important in developing and shaping the Australian wine industry.

"I would like to continue the great work of the outgoing Chair Tom Carson in recognising some of the best Australian wines and delivering feedback to producers, while also assisting in developing some of the great judging talent we have.

"In 2025 we will be looking for a broad base of judges from all walks of our amazing industry from right across the country, to allow some great insight to differing styles and emerging varieties that are on offer today."

Chair of the Royal Queensland Wine Show and RNA Councillor Ari McCamley said he was delighted Julian had accepted their

invitation to be Chief Judge for the next three years.

"Julian has established his credentials as a master craftsman of wines, particularly from his beloved Margaret River region, and demonstrated exceptional leadership as a Panel Chair at the RQWA in 2021, 2023 and 2024," he said.

"Notably, when judging was abruptly curtailed by a pandemic lockdown in 2021, Julian was quick to offer to help salvage the show.

"Our strict policy on the rotation of judges means we are excited for Julian's era as Chief, in which we expect he will continue to inspire and develop the next generation of judges.

"Julian is currently assembling his judging team to offer exhibitors at the 2025 Awards objective assessment of their wines and meaningful feedback."

Entries for the 2025 Royal Queensland Wine Awards will open on Monday 3 February 2025.

NEW AWARD

SPICES UP BEER COMPETITION



One of Queensland's most iconic drinks will be recognised at the 2025 Royal Queensland Beer Awards (RQBA).

The competition opened for entries in November and has this year introduced a new champion trophy for the best ginger beer.

The Ginger Beer supported by Buderim Ginger class recognises the rising popularity of craft ginger beer, showcasing the brewer's bold and refreshing interpretation of the classic Queensland beverage.

RQA Judges and Advisory Committee Chairperson and Judge Steve Henderson said it was right to recognise the unique Queensland ingredient at the Royal Queensland Beer Awards.

"The style guidelines for the brewed ginger beer class have been written especially for this competition and as long as it's a brewed product and is alcoholic it will be eligible to enter," Mr Henderson said.

"We're expecting quite a few Queensland-based entries, however the class is open to breweries right across Australia so we're hoping to see ginger beers from many different locations entered."

Those brewing non-alcoholic beverages can also enter the competition, with a new dedicated Non-Alcoholic Malt Beverage class introduced for 2025.

Entries in the RQBA have increased year on year since the competition was revitalised in 2019 and Mr Henderson said he

expected next year to be no different.

"We're the first Australian beer competition of the calendar year and I think a lot of breweries will want to see how their products compare by having them evaluated by our talented judges, so I do expect the number of entries to increase again," he said.

The winner of the Grand Champion Beer of Show will take home a \$5,000 Lion Bursary, aimed at furthering the brewer's own knowledge and advancing the Australian beer industry.

*Entries close Friday 31 January 2025.
Brewers can enter by clicking here.*



TRAWLING THE NATION TO FIND OUR BEST SEAFOOD

Australian tiger prawn and barramundi producers will be hoping to score the ultimate catch of a champion trophy at the 2025 Royal Queensland Aquaculture Awards (RQAA).

Entries opened in early December, with the competition featuring three classes - farmed small and large barramundi and cooked tiger prawns.

Producers can win the prestigious titles of Champion Barramundi of Show and Champion Tiger Prawn of Show.

Entries will be judged in March, with the judging panel featuring a diverse range of industry experts including fisheries managers, farmers, wholesalers, retailers, chefs

and food scientists.

International seafood expert and Chief Judge John Susman said 2024 was the first year of the RQAA and he was looking forward to once again judging the best of Australia's seafood.

"The inaugural awards were a resounding success, showcasing exceptional entries that highlighted the innovation and quality within the industry," he said.

"Australian-grown seafood stands out for its pristine provenance, sustainable farming practices, and unparalleled culinary quality, reflecting the nation's commitment to world-class aquaculture standards."

The awards give producers a platform to benchmark themselves against their industry peers and promote their top quality products.

"Winning a Royal Queensland Aquaculture Award offers farmers unparalleled recognition, bolsters their reputation for excellence, and provides a powerful marketing edge to elevate their business," Mr Susman said.

Entries close Monday 17 February 2025. Aquaculture producers can enter now by [clicking here](#).

DAIRY COMPETITIONS AIM TO LEAD THE WHEY



Australian dairy producers can scoop up valuable feedback, with entries opening in mid-December for the Royal Queensland Cheese and Dairy Awards and Royal Queensland Ice Cream, Gelato and Sorbet Awards.

Renowned international dairy judge and cheesemaker Russell Smith will lead a 13 strong panel of Australia's top food industry professionals in the hunt for Australia's best cheese and ice cream.

Mr Smith said the standards of judging are among the best in Australia and comparison reports are provided for each dairy product entered.

"We will have some of the best judges

in the nation in 2025 and there is a lot of support from the RNA to make sure these dairy competitions are the best in the country," he said.

"For entrants, having their product peer reviewed to see where they stand alongside their competitors in the industry is just as important as winning a gold medal."

The awards are built on long-standing traditions celebrating excellence in Australian dairy produce and are also reflective of current industry trends and changing consumer interest and demand.

"With so many changes in the manufacturing side of the dairy industry over the last few years, it's more important than ever

for competitions like these to keep up to date with the changing landscape of dairy manufacturing," Mr Smith said.

The judges will oversee 59 classes in the cheese and dairy competition including cheese, desserts, yoghurt, butter, milk and cream, as well as 14 classes in Ice Cream, Gelato and Sorbet including flavours vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, fruit and nut.

All Gold-medal winners are eligible to enter the Australian Grand Dairy Awards, which are held annually.

Entries close Friday 14 March 2025. Dairy producers can enter now by clicking here.



TRUFFLE & FOIE GRAS BUTTER BASTED TURKEY

Feeling a little fancy this Christmas? Take your traditional roast turkey to the next level with the addition of truffle and foie gras – it's guaranteed to be the talk of the Christmas table! Thank you to our Executive Sous Chef Dean Brewer who has shared this rich and decadent turkey recipe with us.

INGREDIENTS

250grms unsalted butter – we recommend using RQA gold-medal winning Pure Valley Unsalted Butter

15mls truffle infused olive oil

Cracked white pepper

100grms Foie gras (goose or duck liver)

25grms black truffle paste

Sea salt flakes

Whole turkey

Thyme

METHOD

1. Allow the butter to soften to room temperature and also slightly soften the foie gras.
2. Cut the butter into 2/3cm pieces and place into an electric mixing bowl.
3. Attach the paddle attachment and

soften the butter on a low speed until incorporated. Blend until the butter is light in colour.

4. Add the diced foie gras and truffle paste and infused oil.
5. Continue to blend until well incorporated and then season with cracked white pepper and sea salt.
6. Place the butter into a plastic container or roll in cling film and place in the fridge to firm up – approx. 3 hrs.
7. Once the butter is firm, remove from the fridge and container and cut into 1/2cm slices approximately 5cm in diameter.
8. Remove turkey from the packaging and pat dry with paper towel.
9. From the top of the turkey buffet gently run your fingers under the skin in between the breast meat to form a cavity.
10. Gently slide the sliced butter under the skin and ensure it is placed evenly across the breast meat.
11. Place the skin back into its original position and season with additional salt and pepper. Fill the turkey cavity

with fresh thyme and season with salt and pepper.

12. Place the turkey on a roasting tray and roast in the oven at 200 degrees for 20 minutes and then reduce the heat to 160 degrees and cook (40minutes per KG or until the thickest part of the breast reaches 65/70 degrees core temperature).
13. Remove turkey from the oven and rest for 45 minutes brushing the skin with excess melted butter from the roasting tray.

CHEF'S TIPS

The purpose of the butter is to keep the turkey meat moist so adding the extra flavour will enhance the flavour profile of the meat. You may also use other flavored butters – herb, citrus or your preferred Christmas liquor.

Keep the juices from the roasting tray and add to your gravy for additional flavour.

ROASTING HACK

Place onion halves and crushed garlic / fresh thyme or sage under the turkey while roasting to protect the bottom of the turkey from catching on the roasting tray.

YEAR IN REVIEW



For the second year running and the third time in four years, Sunshine Coast husband and wife brewers Shaz and Matt Wilson from Moffat Beach Brewing Co produced the beer judged Australia's finest at the Royal Queensland Beer Awards. Their Moff's Summer Ale first won the prestigious crown in 2020 and again in 2023, and in 2024 their Trilogy Best Coast IPA was crowned the best.



Toowoomba's Downlands College smashed the long-standing Ekka record by over 100 kilograms in the Giant Pumpkin Competition supported by Pillow Talk, with a ginormous 368.5kg entry. The previous record for the heaviest pumpkin was 261.5kg set in 2015.

Australia's best beef, lamb, cheese, ice cream, barramundi and prawns were crowned from a total of 465 entries, in the prestigious Royal Queensland Awards supported by King Street.



Victoria's Yarra Yering scooped the pool at the Royal Queensland Wine Awards, winning four major trophies plus the Grand Champion title for Australia's best wine. The 2022 Yarra Yering Underhill Red Table Wine beat almost 1,400 wines from 198 Australian wineries to be named the winner of the Angelo Puglisi Grand Champion Wine of Show Trophy.



The Brisbane Showgrounds' summer music festival season kicked off, with Listen Out attracting more than 24,500 people.

YEAR IN REVIEW



Queensland beef producers proved their cattle genetics are some of the best in Australia, scooping the pool in the weight gain phase of the RNA's prestigious Paddock to Palate Competition and Wagyu Challenge presented by JBS Australia, Russell Pastoral Operations which produce cattle on Champion Station in Blackall and Gyrranda Pastoral Company from Central Queensland were the standouts.



Queensland's largest event, the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka), attracted more than 345,000 people over nine days, despite three days of very wet weather.



The RNA entered the 2024 International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) Awards, winning 10 Awards of Excellence. Most of the medals were for the Ekka, including for a new Harvest to Home hands-on learning activation.



From everyone at the RNA, have a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.