



154th HERITAGE BANK TOOWOOMBA ROYAL SHOW REPORT 12th – 14th APRIL 2018

The production of the very best in the region had been the aim of agriculturalists and horticulturists on the Darling Downs since 1860 when the foundation bodies of the Darling Downs Agricultural Society and the Drayton and Toowoomba Agricultural and Horticultural Society were formed.

Established to promote the improvement of stock and to develop the pastoral, agricultural and horticultural resources of the colony of Queensland, the Royal Agricultural Society continues to not only uphold this vision of agricultural excellence but to take a more proactive role in the education of young people within our communities.

In excess of 12 000 entries were judged across 33 competition categories at this year's show. The Toowoomba Royal is now recognized as the largest horse show in Australia. Almost 4 000 entries were judged across 6 competition days. Just over 400 horses were stabled on average each night of the show.

After last year's torrential rain on Peoples Day and 4 out of the past 5 shows, being severely impacted by rain, we were all looking forward to fine weather and were not disappointed.

The Toowoomba community supported the show in droves with almost 20 000 people attending on Show Thursday and a total attendance of just under 40 000 for the three days.

The Official Opening was conducted by Dr John McVeigh, Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government.

Continuing our focus on food we were able to secure both Costa Georgiadis and Paul West to attend the show. Both were extremely popular drawing large crowds to their gardening and cooking demonstrations.

We also introduced the Agtastic Trail where show patrons could learn about different agricultural aspects and get their photo taken in one of our 6 picture boards.

As the show was held during the Commonwealth Games we developed a Comm Games Precinct and Food Truck Village. The area included a big screen, craft beer bar, additional seating, bean bags and nightly entertainment. Although the space looked fantastic, it was a bit hidden and didn't attract as many people as we had hoped. We will continue to develop and expand the area for next year with a focus on international cuisine, entertainment during the day and a more open and accessible layout.

We introduced a new offer in conjunction with the Showmens Guild where patrons could purchase 10 rides and entry to the show for \$50. This proved very popular and we sold out the day prior to the show commencing. In fact all our ride bundles were very popular with a 500% increase on last year's sales.

Our website was completed the week before the show and proved very popular. We also dedicated a lot more effort on our social media campaign for the first time with posts and photos being uploaded on a regular basis.

We also conducted an exit poll on show patrons for the first time in almost a decade which provided excellent feedback.



Some of the main issues included:

- Some of the infrastructure in particular the amenities are in urgent need of an upgrade. This will be something that will be addressed in our upcoming masterplan.
- The Fireworks must go off at the advertised time. This is not negotiable. Show patrons will put up with them being 10 minutes late but an hour late like they were on Thursday night is not acceptable. This will be addressed next year.
- Having a hard copy program of events available at the gate is a must. We only had a small number available this year and they were all gone within the first two hours. We also need to ensure that all advertised events are staged when they are supposed to.
- More seating and more shade.
- Plenty of free things to see and do (We had over 60 this year).
- More signage around the grounds directing patrons to events.

We were able to invite special needs students & their families from Clifford Park Special School to attend the show on Wednesday and give a pre show Animal Nursery experience. Thanks to our entertainers who gave up their day and various sponsors including Homestyle Bake and Orchy who provided lunch.

The Darling Downs Rural Ambassador and Showgirl were announced on the Saturday of Show. Sarah Wilson representing Warwick Show Society was named Miss Showgirl while Brooke Cuddihy representing Bell Show Society took out the Rural Ambassador Award. Both Sarah and Brooke will represent the Darling Downs at the state finals at the Ekka in August.



SHOW STATISTICS

- Total attendance 39 760
- 82% of patrons rated the show as good, very good or excellent.
- 72% of patrons would definitely recommend to a friend or family member to attend the show next year.
- On-line ticket sales accounted for 25% of all ticket sales.
- 99 Toowoomba Show-Showbags which included entry, rides, food and showbags were sold, more than triple what has been sold in the past.
- Ticket and ride bundle sales up 50% on last year.
- Total prepaid ride ticket sales almost \$40000. A 500% increase on 2017.
- 10 Rides for \$50 plus entry to the show sold out the day prior to the show commencing. (500 bundles)
- Bonus ride vouchers up 20% on 2017.

The Society provided local organisations and community groups in excess of \$20 000 worth of complimentary or discounted tickets. In addition the Society paid out more than \$25 000 to community groups for services provided during the show. We try and use local service providers where possible throughout the show and are indebted to these business who provide such excellent service in sometimes trying circumstances. From hire companies, to electrical, plumbing and public address systems we couldn't put on such a large event without their support.

Over 2 00 volunteers assisted during the show. Without their dedication and effort the show Could not function and I thank them for that. In addition, more the 300 sponsors contribute to what is our regions largest community event through donations of cash, product and prizes. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank all of our sponsors for the great contribution they make. So many special memories come from attending the show. Perhaps all our sponsors are more in the memory business than show business.

We look forward to your continued support of the 2019 Heritage Bank Toowoomba Royal Show which will be held from March 28th – 30th.