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Plans for rejuvenated RNA Showgrounds unveiled

The Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland (RNA) has today unveiled plans to redevelop the RNA Showgrounds into a 365-day-a year lifestyle and cultural hub.

Presenting the RNA Development Scheme Strategy, RNA President Dr Vivian Edwards said the new retail, commercial and mixed use facilities would be integrated into the 132-year-old site, with the EkkA a permanent cornerstone of the precinct.

“The RNA Showgrounds and the EkkA are steeped in Queensland history. Today is all about framing a vision for the future,” Dr Edwards said.

“This has been a long time coming and marks a significant change for us. It is an exciting proposal that will see the RNA Showgrounds become the centre piece of a new mixed-use precinct in Brisbane and will help rejuvenate the EkkA.

“The RNA has been working on a Masterplan for the past four years to ensure the RNA Showgrounds remain an integral part of Queensland’s social fabric and I’m pleased to say we’re now ready to bring this vision to life.”

Under plans outlined in the RNA Development Scheme Strategy, Water Street will become a retail precinct with 5,000 – 10,000m² of land north of St Paul’s Terrace surrounded by up to 160,000m² of commercial buildings made up of 15-25 level towers.

Other plans include the restoration and renovation of many of the RNA Showground buildings with the Industrial Pavilion, home to the EkkA’s showbags, earmarked for significant redevelopment.

“The RNA has a responsibility as custodians of the RNA Showgrounds on behalf of the Queensland community. We are working closely with the Queensland Heritage Council to ensure the character and heritage of certain buildings and spaces are protected,” Dr Edwards said.

Construction is due to start after the 2009 EkkA when the Industrial Pavilion will be refurbished to include an underground car park, a flat floor exhibition level, new administration and meeting facilities and provisions for a future hotel.

“As Queensland’s population grows so too does the opportunity to host world-class events and exhibitions. In order to do that, we need world-class facilities,” Dr Edwards said.

“We are keen to breathe new life into the site while retaining the character of the EkkA and RNA Showgrounds. What we will have is an innovative and unique venue with parks, walkways and bicycle paths that Queenslanders can access all year round.

“The EkkA will continue regardless of construction. From this year, we will be rejuvenating the show to maintain its position as Queensland’s biggest annual show.”

Dr Edwards invited the community to participate in shaping the final vision. The RNA will be conducting a series of public consultations and are inviting the public to leave feedback on the website www.rnashowgrounds.com.au, through email rnashowgrounds@rowland.com.au or via a free hotline 1800 066 053.

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For further media information please contact:
Jonathan Tunny
RNA Chief Executive
07 3253 3901