

THE RASTUS

JANUARY 2019

THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA UPDATE SERVICE



Leading Stories

- Land sale transforms Society's finances
- Showground Developments
- Hobart Show Planning

Land sale transforms Society's finances

It's a very busy year coming up for the RAST in 2019 following the \$14 million sale of a parcel of our land last month. And no. The sale doesn't mean the end of the line for the Royal Hobart Show. In fact, we're now able to re-invest more strongly into it.

The 17-ha showground was purchased by the Society way back in 1905. It has always been bigger than needed for staging the Show each October and until now has been a largely underutilised asset. But that's all changing.

The 4ha parcel of land sold at auction last month realised \$5 million more than the Society had expected. It places the organisation in a position to invest more confidently in a sustainable future, including a more assured future for the Royal Hobart Show.

The Society is a not-for-profit organisation and the Board has determined that the proceeds from the sale will be carefully and strategically invested into the future of the Society and its activities.

Since the land sale the Board of the RAST has established a working group to advise on an investment strategy, plan for a new pavilion, and a new staffing structure for the RAST moving forwards.





More on the planned new Showground pavilion

The Planning Commission has now approved the Master Plan for a new retail development on Showground land adjacent to the Bunnings Warehouse, facing Howard Rd. A Development Application has been lodged by retailer Spotlight.

When this development occurs, it will trigger funding for a new Showground pavilion which the Society will build facing the Brooker Highway. The Tasmanian Government has already contributed \$1.5 million towards this new pavilion.

We expect it to be another three to six months before building can start on the new retail site, which covers 1.5ha of land. In the meantime, our new pavilion is under intensive design consideration.

It will be a multipurpose two-story facility on landscaped lawns facing the Brooker Highway and will be suitable for a wide range of activities, including conferences and exhibitions. We're also designing it so it can act as an emergency center in the event of a disaster such as the Dunally bushfires six years ago. The Showground performed an important role during that bushfire emergency when it was used as a reception and distribution center for goods donated to affected rural areas, and a refuge for farm and domestic animals.

The new pavilion could incorporate commercial kitchens, bathrooms, and dormitory rooms.

Site works

Once the final go ahead is received for the Spotlight retail development on Howard Rd the Society will be demolishing the old stables and kennels that have occupied the site for decades.

We'll be seeking tenders from anyone interested in removing and re-using material from these old buildings. If you're interested, please let us know.



Hobart Show planning

Planning for this year's Royal Hobart Show has already commenced with a decision to revert to a four day Show this year. To see what the cost savings might be, we piloted a three day Show last year, but at the end of the day, the savings weren't all that significant.

The other lesson from last year is that a four-day Show allows some room for recovery if poor weather occurs. Last year's three-day Show saw very good crowd levels on the first two days, but the final day was marred because of a forecast for bad weather which actually failed to eventuate.

So, this year it's back to a four-day Show, although one innovation from last year will be retained. That's the Community day at the Show – this year on Show Wednesday - when we invite special needs and other groups, such as aged care homes and disability groups, to attend the Show at discounted rates.

Showground upgrade

Various works are either underway or about to commence around the Showground as we get into the new year. These include an upgrade to the power boards at the Hobart Showground Motorhome Park; an upgrade to the waste water system at the butchery; and new windows in the main administration building to complement the building's new roof.