



OFFICIAL
PUBLICATION OF
THE ROYAL
AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY OF
TASMANIA

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **END OF YEAR REPORT FROM THE CEO**
- **ROYAL HOBART SHOW 2023**
- **RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE SHOWGROUND**
- **SNAP PRINTING ROYAL HOBART WINE SHOW**
- **ROYAL TASMANIAN FINE FOOD AWARDS**
- **VOLUNTEERS THANKYOU**
- **MOTORHOME PARK**
- **FINE WINE AND DINE**
- **SUNDAY MARKET**
- **WELL DONE GLENORCHY POLICE**
- **SOCIETY'S FINANCIAL HEALTH**
- **RAST AT THE ADELAIDE SHOW**
- **RAST SUPPORT FOR THE 2023 REGATTA**

Bush Telegraph

ISSUE 19

DECEMBER 2023

Overcoming challenges in 2023

Running a multi-faceted organisation such as the RAST always brings its challenges, and not least in 2023.

But as we approach Christmas, the Society can look back on a period of solid achievement.

For the second year in a row, the RAST successfully delivered a diversified Royal Hobart Show over multiple venues from Campbell Town to Hobart's Eastern Shore. All these venues worked well, and the feedback received from the 2023 Show, indicates only a few minor issues need to be addressed ahead of the October 2024 Show.

On the redevelopment front, the demolition of structures on the Showground at Glenorchy proceeded smoothly during the year. The administration building was one of the structures to be demolished, and RAST Administration transitioned to portable office accommodation near the Howard Road gates. In itself, this was a complex logistical undertaking, involving everything from collecting and safe keeping archives to IT issues involved in moving offices.

Working with Government and the GCC on some aspects of the redevelopment remains challenging, something any developer would understand, but gently and incrementally, the Society is making progress with these bodies.

The temporary Motorhome Park is now located behind Bunnings and by December 22 it will have 85 caravan and motorhome sites, almost all with facilities and all fully booked. In fact, the Motorhome Park promises to be a very busy tourism hub in Hobart right through until next Easter.

It was another busy year for events such as the Royal Tasmanian Fine Food Awards and the Royal Hobart Wine Show, and before they get underway for a new year in 2024, RAST will be reviewing their operations to ensure they are at peak, optimal performance.

End of Year Report from the CEO

Showground Redevelopment

After a good start to the Showground redevelopment earlier this year, progress has been slowed in recent months due to a combination of issues. After much negotiation with our consultants and Glenorchy Planning Authority members we have now determined that the best path forward is to lodge a completely new Development Application (DA) rather than try to amend the previously approved DA.

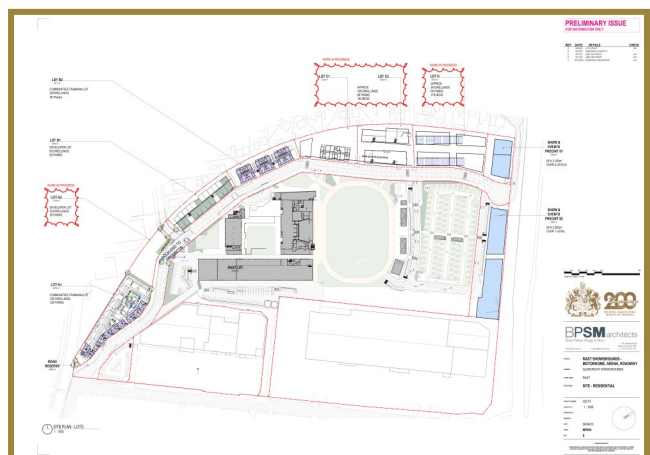
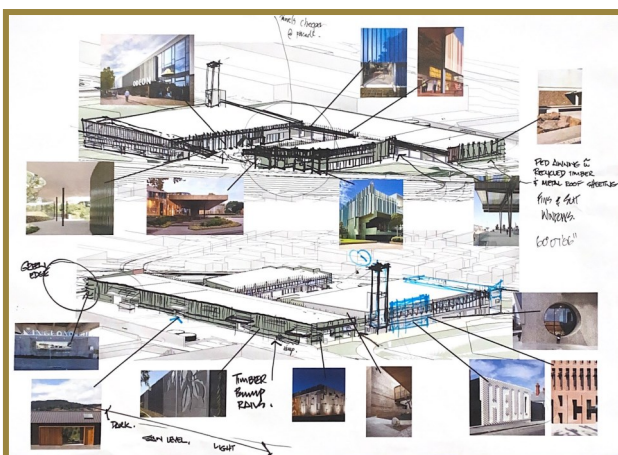
The final design of several components has changed to achieve a better cost outcome, to better facilitate the housing development (i.e.: a public road instead of a private road), to accommodate future tenants, to address planning issues, and to adhere to a government request.

We anticipate lodging the new DA very shortly and that will be closely followed by the Special Area Plan (SAP) amendment to allow for housing. We are just waiting on approval from Homes Tas and the owners of Bunnings to enable us to lodge the SAP amendment.

The above delays should result in a completion date around April 2025 for the new buildings. However, various fit out components may be delayed until after the October 2025 Show. Overall, our costs are still running at approximately 30% higher than original estimates. Most major developments this year have been hit by inflationary pressures, and the Tasmanian Government has been unable to provide further financial assistance to date. So we are pursuing a number of other strategies to support the vision that led to the redevelopment.

We are receiving significant developer interest in the housing component, and we are working closely with several players to achieve the best possible results for both RAST and the future owner / occupiers of those apartments.

The temporary Motorhome Park is close to completion with an expected opening within days. This will add another 42 fully serviced sites to the temporary park and will assist in addressing the significant demand we are experiencing for motorhome accommodation throughout the summer period.



Draft concept images of the redevelopment

Membership changes

Early in 2023 the RAST Board endorsed a few changes to our membership structure by introducing the concept of restricted and non-restricted members. This enables us to provide a hierarchy of membership: those members who actively volunteer to assist the Society, and those whose support is limited to membership, who wish to take advantage of member benefits, but are unable to provide the pro-active element of volunteering. It allows us to better reward our volunteers and, hopefully, attract more of them. The immediate result has been several members putting their hands up to assist with our various events and competitions which has been very pleasing to see.

Performance of major events

The 2023 PETstock Royal Hobart Show continued to build on the success of 2022 and apply the learnings from the 2022 Show to improve the overall offering, layout and management of the 2023 Show. We witnessed a slight improvement in gate takings, a notably more diverse demographic, increased competition numbers in several sections and sold-out trade space. I expect the overall financial result to be on par with our budgeted expectations. Creative Crafts, in particular, has made a stunning resurgence with a 55% increase in entries taking us to over 550 across that section. This is a superb effort by the committee and RAST's McKinley Garwood after battling for many years to turn around a steady decline in entries.

The food and wine competitions both benefited from a strategic review this year with wine performing slightly better as a result. There is still more work to do with food though as we haven't yet achieved what we hoped for with the new strategic plan and both plans will be reviewed along with the existing strategies over the next month or so.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff, volunteers, Board and Show Council for their support and efforts throughout the year. We remain focused on delivering the new facilities and using them to reinvent the entire operation delivering a more sustainable business model for the RAST for the next 200 years. Merry Christmas to all, please stay safe and be kind to each other.



Stewards, staff and volunteers during the 2023 Petstock Royal Hobart Show

PETstock Royal Hobart Show 2023

Detailed reviews are held each year after the Royal Hobart Show. Separate reviews are held by the Show Council and RAST staff in the weeks following each show.

After the 2022 Show, the first to be held at the Hobart Regatta Grounds, the reviews were good, but noted some teething issues at the new location.

The two 2023 reviews, following the second Regatta Grounds Show, suggested the 2023 Show proceeded very smoothly. Crowd numbers were a little over last year's 40,000 mark and continued a trend towards a more diverse audience, bringing in more showgoers from nearby city suburbs, the southern suburbs, and the Eastern Shore.

Since the latest Show in October the two reviews found improvements in the 2023 Show which built upon the lessons learnt during the first Show at the Regatta Grounds in 2022.

The new, enlarged parking arrangements proved a great benefit for the Show, and the Goods Shed worked well as a venue for cattle judging and the judging of cats. It is hoped that the Regatta Grounds will be available for the 2024 Show, but the Society remains in close contact with the Macquarie Point Development Corporation as the state government attempts to proceed with its plan to build a football stadium on the site.



Pre-Show Weather Challenges

The weather during most of the Show was perfect. But that wasn't the case in the days just before the Show. Picture a group of hardy staff holding down a marquee that was threatening to blow away at 2.00am a couple of days before the Show.

Storm conditions brought winds howling over the Domain and down onto the Regatta Grounds. One of two RAST marquees held strong, but the other, to house the Kennel competition, was in a more exposed position. As the winds blew, the marquee broke out of a bracket fastening it to the ground, and staff had to be called in to secure the big tent. Valuable items were removed from the marquee as a precaution, but the structure held, and the drama passed.

On the same night, Hobart City Hall suffered a roof leak, resulting in some minor water damage for the Youth Art area.

What the RAST reviews found

- One sign of a good upcoming Show is commercial space rental. This year, it was sold out by August.
- The entertainment brought from interstate and across Tasmania for the Show was well received by the public.
- Creative Crafts enjoyed a 55% increase in entries. City Hall again proved a popular venue.
- The Cats' competition proved a great success.
- Life on the Farm, including the return of a shearer this year, "worked really well";
- It was a strong Show for the fleece competition;
- The woodchop venue and competition were very good;
- The Goats and Stud Sheep judging on at Campbell Town Showground attracted significantly increased visitor numbers
- The Equestrian venue at Lauderdale proved to be ideal for the event.

The issues noted by the two reviews requiring action for 2024 were mostly of a minor nature, such as:

- Life on the Farm required more seating so that crowds could better enjoy the shearing and reptile demonstrations at work.
- Consider the pros and cons of moving cats from Saturday to Thursday when the Show generally enjoys its largest crowd.
- The Campbell Town event may require an additional food van to cater for growing crowd numbers.

PETstock Pet Parade.

The PETstock Pet Parade on Show Saturday was very well attended. Showgoers were invited to bring their pets along for the parade. And they did.

The marquee used for the parade was full, and the parade included pet sheep, chickens, mini goats and dogs.

The parade was a great initiative by RAST staff and has been a popular addition to the Royal Hobart Show. The parade has been sponsored by Petstock since its first year in 2022.



Living Legend of the Show

A tradition of the Royal Hobart Show is the annual award of Living Legend of the Show. It is announced during the Vice Regal luncheon at the Show.

This is the greatest honour the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania can bestow on a living individual who has contributed to the success of the Society and the Royal Hobart Show. This year's recipient was Ian Scott who has been involved with Woodchopping at the Show since 1964.

Ian was born in the Huon Valley and lived at Geeveston until recently moving to Sandy Bay. He has been hooked on Woodchopping and sawing since locals involved in the timber industry asked if he would like to have a go at the sport.

Six years after joining the sport, Ian won his first World Single Handed Sawing Championship at Ulverstone (the log size was 18 inches, now 450mm) and he defeated Mervyn Lenz from the US. Following this win in 1970 Ian defended the title in 1974 and defeated Ron Hartell from Canada.

With the introduction of metric measurements, Ian still holds the record imperial measurement to this day. He has had many Double Handed Sawing partners throughout his career. He has won two World Single Handed Sawing Championships and records show that he has won approximately 70 state titles in Single and Double Handed Sawing, and two Australian Single Championships.

Ian has been a representative in Australian, Tasmanian and Veterans Teams, competing against the USA and NZ. He's a great ambassador for the sport and has been President of the Southern Tasmanian Axemen's Association and now currently the Patron, and is also still on the Woodchopping Committee of the RAST. He is a Life Member of STAA and also the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania.

Over the years Ian has stored logs and made machinery available at no cost for numerous carnivals and working bees and has been helping organise the woodchopping carnival at Geeveston for over 45 years.



Over the course of this year's Show recognition awards have also gone to:

Elwin Rumley, who receives only the Society's second 70 year Service Award for his services to Woodchopping.



Debbie Emmerton, an officer of the Society who receives a 40 year Service Award



And 2 Life Memberships for their exceptional services to the Show:

Russell Cripps (Director, Councillor and Equestrian Ring Announcer)

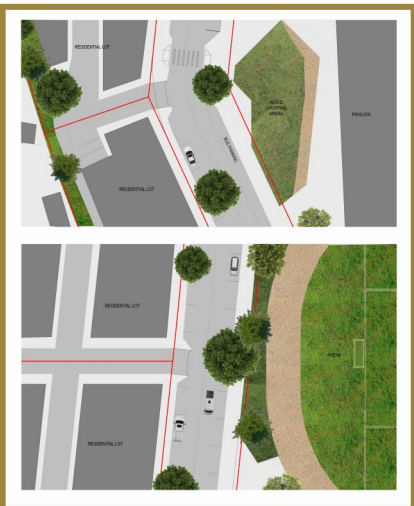
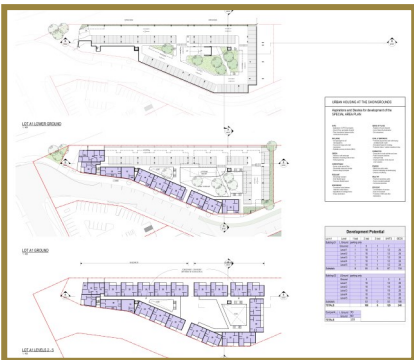
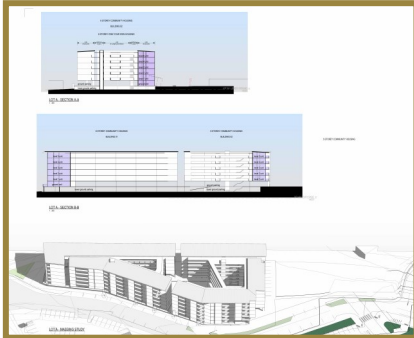
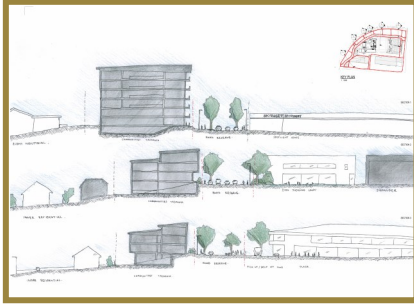


Neville Fenton (Beef Cattle)









Draft concept images of the new housing

Renewable energy for the Showground

During the year the RAST worked closely with its consultants on energy options for the redeveloped Showground.

This is a dynamic field given the transition Australia is currently undertaking from fossil fuels to renewables. Renewable batteries, waste to energy systems, and solar systems are all under close scrutiny together with the sophisticated energy market that has emerged in Australia in recent years.

The Society intends that whatever system is finally decided upon, it will make a statement about the environmental credentials of the Society and at the same time produce enough electricity to power the entire Showground with enough left over to sell into the power grid. This will establish a new revenue stream for the Society.



Electricity Grant

A year ago, RAST publicly aired what it called “astronomical” power price rises confronting it, as its old power contract ended. The Society was hit with a 105% price increase for a new 12-month contract.

Many other businesses followed the Society into the media to relate their own power price woes. So we were pleased when the Society received a \$20,000 grant as part of the state government’s energy bill relief program being offered in conjunction with the federal government.

It was this price increase shock that confirmed to the Society the need to become energy independent, and led to the current investigations into renewable energy options that would make the Showground a producer of its own power.

Snap Printing Royal Hobart Wine Show

The Snap Printing Royal Hobart Wine Show reached a milestone this year, celebrating its 50th anniversary.

The Show included the return of the Richard Langdon Trophy for Vineyard of the Year. The trophy is awarded to the single vineyard that shows a high level of innovative and sustainable viticultural management practices leading to the production of quality fruit. The winner this year was Longview Vineyard.

The event was the last for Committee chair Greg Melick, and Chair of Judges, Jeremy Dineen. Taking over the roles are Jeremy Dineen moving to the role of Committee Chair and Mark O’Callaghan as Chair of Judges.

Four days of judging in September included input from a top Canadian judge, Treve Ring, who is an international wine writer and editor, judge and speaker on wine topics.

Evolving to meet changing consumer trends, this year the Wine Show added dedicated classes for Fiano and Grenache, and increased its focus on low and no-alcohol beverages with two additional classes to better represent this category.

A total of 46 classes of wine were judged, ranging from vintage dry whites and vintage dry reds, to fortified wines, sparkling wines, no-to-low alcohol grape beverages, and brandy.

It has been a challenging year across all of Australia’s Capital City Wine Shows, for reasons largely emanating from pressures on the wine industry itself. A review early in the new year will map out plans to better position our Wine Show, and allow us to continue to attract new exhibitors while providing an attractive value for money proposition for new and current exhibitors.



Royal Tasmanian Fine Food Awards

After two years of a new strategy for presenting the Royal Tasmanian Fine Food Awards, the Society will be holding a review to ensure the event's performance is meeting the strategy targets.

In years gone by the Food Show was one big event, but now it has been sectioned into several events running over several months, with seasonal attributes of foods a major benefit of the new strategy.

The Royal Tasmanian Fine Food Awards recognises the finest Australian food producers across 21 categories, including baked products, beverages, bread, chocolate, coffee, cheese, dairy products, delicatessen, smallgoods, herbs and spices, honey, ice-cream, olive products, preserves, seafood and plant-based products

It is the oldest and most respected Fine Food Awards in Australia.

This year's Awards drew more than 20 major sponsors and many more minor sponsors, reflecting the importance of the program within the Australian food industry. The review to be undertaken in the new year will aim to ensure the program remains at the cutting edge of food making industry in Australia, forever evolving and forever relevant to food makers and consumers alike.



A combination of photos from the 2023 Royal Tasmanian Fine Food Awards

Volunteers Thankyou

It's always the last event of the Society's year, the annual thankyou BBQ for all the hard work of our volunteers.

As a community organisation, the RAST depends on its army of volunteers to assist in the planning and running of our many events, from Royal Hobart Show activities to the food and wine shows.

This December's BBQ was well attended and many tales and reminiscences were exchanged over beer and wine. The Society's thanks to you all.



Motorhome Park

A temporary Motorhome Park has been established at the Showground, providing a much needed tourism asset to Hobart,

It has been partly operational for several months, but will be fully operational days before Christmas, providing 85 caravan and motorhome sites, almost all with facilities. Following the demolition of old structures, the now rocky ungrassed ground has been covered by synthetic turf.

Bookings are very strong, and look like remaining so until at least Easter.

Earlier in the year RAST wrestled with concepts to provide a temporary motorhome park on what is essentially a building site, and is already receiving comments from patrons supportive of its new facilities and location just behind Bunnings and away from demolition and construction work, while remaining convenient for travel into Hobart CBD and around southern Tasmania.

Architectural plans were drawn up this year for a new and permanent, state-of-the-art motorhome park at the Showground as part of the redeveloped precinct.



Fine Wine and Dine

This year's Royal Tasmanian Fine Food Awards and the Royal Hobart Wine Show culminated in November with the annual Fine Wine and Dine dinner at the Hobart Grand Chancellor Hotel.

About 200 people attended an event whose menu showcased fine food winning entrants and trophy wines. The evening also included the annual announcement of the Tasmania Award for an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to the Tasmanian wine industry.

This year the Tasmania Award was awarded to Phil Laing. Up until his passing in January 2023, Phil was a passionate advocate for the Tasmanian wine industry and was involved in a variety of different wine events and was influential in introducing several people now involved in the Tasmanian industry, and particularly wine events, to the industry and his legacy will live on for decades to come.



Sunday Market

The Showground Sunday Market operated satisfactorily in the early part of this year, but sadly had to close after Easter due to the redevelopment program for the Showground.

A review found it impossible to relocate the Market safely within the Showground with redevelopment of the Showground pending. So the reluctant decision was made to suspend it from Easter 2023.

Plans for a modern new market are contained within the redevelopment plans, and it is expected the weekly event will recommence in late 2025 so long as the construction calendar remains on schedule.

Well Done Glenorchy Police

RAST enjoyed a highly co-operative year this year with our local Glenorchy Police.

In years gone by there was some frustration at the lack of progress in dealing with routine incidences of theft, vandalism, petty crime and graffiti. It is a problem experienced by most businesses, but this year there seems to have been a spike in offences.

But the response of Glenorchy Police has been most re-assuring. They have responded promptly to calls for assistance, they've followed through with enquiries, and made arrests. At the same time the RAST has invested in more security at the Showground.

"Our message to Glenorchy Police is well done, and thanks for your supportive role in keeping crime levels in check this year," said Scott Gadd, CEO of the RAST. "The Society thanks you for your hard work and wishes our local Police a very Merry Christmas."



Right: Tasmanian Police visiting the 2023 PETstock Royal Hobart Show

Society's Financial Health

The Society held its Annual General Meeting mid year for the 2022-2023 financial year. Members heard that the Society finished the year with a surplus of just over \$645,000. CEO Scott Gadd said that the RAST was performing to financial expectations.

Paul Geard Remembered

A former president of the Society and a well known figure in the agricultural sector, Paul Geard, sadly died this year.

Paul began showing at the Royal Hobart Show with his parents in 1954 and was closely associated with our Society for the remainder of his life. His son, Ben, continues the service today as a Director of the RAST.

Paul first exhibited Holstein Friesian cattle in 1956 and won Champion Dairy Cow in this, his first year. Later he became Chair of the Dairy Cattle Committee.

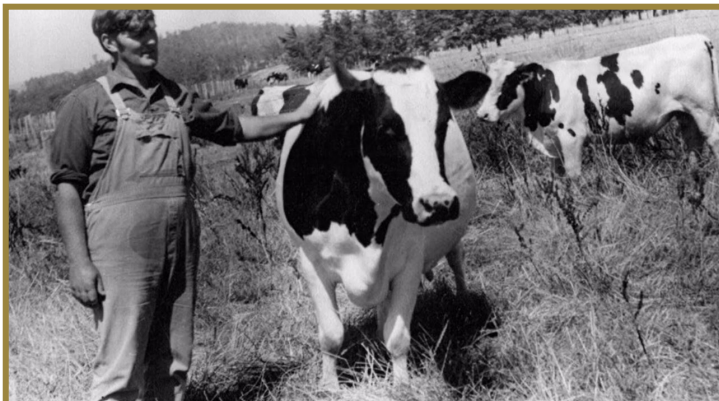
He joined the Show Council in the 1980's and was elected President of the Society in 2005, a position he held for six years. He joined the RAST Board on its inception in 2010. Paul was an Honorary Life Member and Honorary Life Councillor.

His commitment to the Show saw Paul, together with his wife Elizabeth, receive the Society's ultimate accolade, the Living Legend of the Show, in 2019.

Paul supported the RAST in many other ways including through direct sponsorship, providing man power and machinery, supplying hay, undertaking voluntary work on the arena and donating a tractor to the Woodchopping section each year.

Most weekends would find Paul at the Showground, volunteering his time to develop and improve the ground, building judging rings, redeveloping the central arena, and general ground maintenance.

His passing represents the end of an era, and RAST is a better Society for his presence among us over many decades.



Bill Geeves Remembered

The Society lost a great champion this year with the death of Royal Hobart Wine Show legend Bill Geeves.

For 50 years, Bill helped to mould and build the wine show. He was a larger than life character who mentored countless new stewards and officials of the wine show.

As a young employee of Cascade Brewery in the early 1970's, Bill was asked by the brewery if he would like to join a committee being set up to consider conducting a wine show. It was the start of a 50 year association for Bill.

RAST CEO Scott Gadd remembers Bill as a passionate moving force behind the wine show. "Bill would often appear unannounced in my office, sometimes as a messenger, sometimes to kick around ideas and strategy but always to stir me up a little and make me think in different ways. He was highly respected and well liked by everyone at RAST, especially those involved in the Royal Hobart Wine Show, past and present."

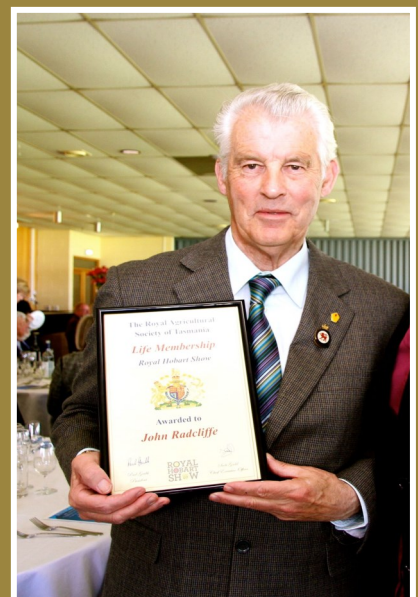
In 2016 Bill was presented with the Society's Tasmanian Award in gratitude for his commitment to the wine show. This is the highest honour RAST can bestow at the annual wine awards. Earlier, in 2013, Bill was presented with an Honorary Life Membership at Government House by His Excellency, the late Peter Underwood AC.



Above: Scott Gadd and Bill Geeves

Right: John Radcliffe

The Society also lost another great stalwart this year with the death of John Radcliffe OAM. John was a long time sponsor of the Show's Woodchopping section and a friend and supporter of the RAST.



RAST at the Royal Adelaide Show

A RAST delegation attended a major conference hosted by Agricultural Shows Australia and the SA Next Generation group in Adelaide this year. It was also a chance to visit the Royal Adelaide Show.

Attending the conference were RAST Councillor Matilda Scott from Cleveland, McKinley Garwood, Operations Coordinator at the RAST, from New Norfolk, Mitchell Spong, RAST Operations Manager (Mornington), Zak Douglas, RAST General Manager Business Development (Howrah), Mark Robinson, RAST Poultry Committee member (Dulcote) and Andrew Kline, RAST Sheep Committee (from Kempton)

They were joined by Peter Spotswood, RAST President, Helen Geard, RAST Vice President, Tim Munro RAST Director and Councillor, and Scott Gadd, CEO of the RAST.

Showing into the Future was the theme of the three day conference. "Agricultural shows are a bedrock of the Australian way of life," says Scott Gadd. "But this status can't be taken for granted, and it is essential that our movement remains relevant to our communities.

"So it is important that we nurture the next generation of show managers and it was a pleasure to be able to take to Adelaide some very committed young Tasmanians who are emerging as the next generation of Show organisers."

The conference heard from a futurist, Paul Higgins, the CEO of the International Association of Fairs and Expositions, based in the US, and speakers on issues such as Environmental, Social and Governance matters, biosecurity and public health at shows, and insurance issues.



RAST support for 2023 Royal Hobart Regatta

The RAST is working co-operatively again in 2024 to support the Royal Hobart Regatta.

Earlier this year, we returned the favour at the 2023 Regatta after the Royal Hobart Regatta Association assisted the Society to settle in at its temporary Regatta Grounds location in preparation for the 2022 PETstock Royal Hobart Show.

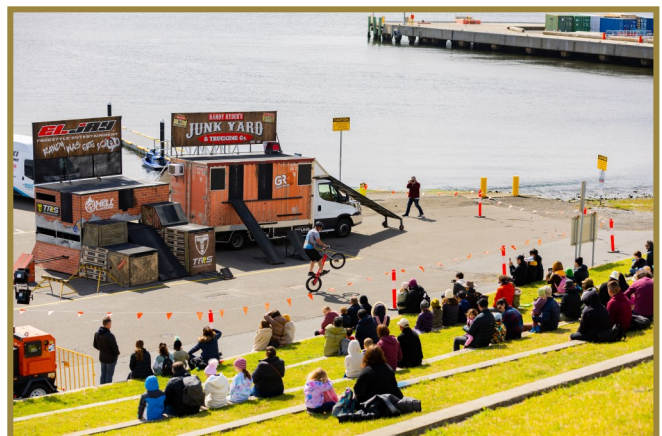
The Society provided technical advice at the 2023 Royal Hobart Regatta on a range of issues including infrastructure needs and provision of alcohol on site; supplied labour, two groundsmen to assist with set-up and running of the event, and a cleaning crew.

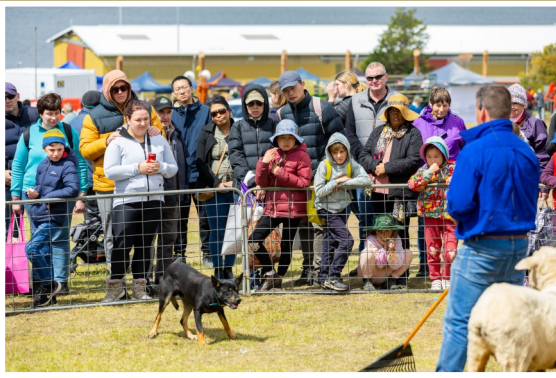
The Regatta Association again extended its support to the running of the 2023 Royal Hobart Show and we'll be providing our support to the Regatta in 2024.

There are many areas where our interests coincide, and we share our views regularly, based upon experience gained over our long and proud histories as event organisers.



Below: Photos from the 2023 Petstock Royal Hobart Show





Photos taken from various RAST events throughout 2023



On behalf of the RAST staff, we wish you all a lovely Christmas and New Year!