

# RAS TIMES

NOVEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 20-3

## AND THAT WAS 2022

Looking back on a  
remarkable year

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### TREE CHANGE TRIALS

The culture shift from city  
to country

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### HEARING VOICES

Learn about the RAS' 140 oral  
history interviews

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### GET OUT AMONGST IT

Regional agricultural shows  
make a come-back

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“Australia takes her pen in hand  
To write a line to you,  
To let you fellows understand  
How proud we are of you.”

ANDREW BARTON (BANJO) PATERSON (1864 - 1941)



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# Contents

NOVEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 20-3

26



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## Features

- 22 **And that was 2022**  
Looking back on a remarkable year
- 26 **Tree change trials**  
The culture shift from city to country
- 32 **Hearing Voices**  
Learn about the RAS' 140 oral history interviews
- 36 **Get out amongst it**  
Regional agricultural shows make a come-back



## Regulars

- 6 **President's letter**
- 7 **The vine**
- 12 **Chief Executive's column**



products over the past four months - with gold, silver, bronze and champion medals awarded to outstanding products.

In September, we took this one step further by connecting award-winning products with industry buyers, chefs and restaurateurs as we welcomed back our Taste of Excellence event for the first time since 2019. Designed to showcase the variety of Sydney Royal medal-winning products, the event offers smaller or regionally located producers a chance to come face-to-face with key hospitality professionals. The event



### AN RASF GIFT THIS CHRISTMAS

The RAS Foundation is excited to join forces with Good360 to provide much-needed goods to showgrounds and community halls across flood-affected areas on the mid-north and north coast of New South Wales.

Just in time for Christmas, twenty-three pallets filled with a variety of goods, including Lego, children's toys, cleaning products and kitchen goods, were transported to Taree and Kyogle Showgrounds to be collected by surrounding show societies. Products and gifts will be shared with the local community by each show society, with many planning to run small Christmas gatherings or distribute packages to help alleviate pressures during the Christmas period.

Aiming to bridge the gap between organisations with excess products and those in need, the RASF first partnered with Good360 in 2018 to ensure communities in regional and rural areas could benefit from the program. Since connecting, the RASF has delivered over \$1.8 million worth of goods to regional communities in New South Wales.



was the perfect way to wrap up the Sydney Royal Year by celebrating the determination and commitment of our 2022 Sydney Royal Fine Food champions and helping gain exposure for excellent businesses that continue to deliver the highest standard.

From fine food to agricultural education, the RAS Foundation and a full calendar for Sydney Showground, it has been a tremendous year for the RAS and I have no doubt this success will continue in 2023 with so much more to come.

As the end of the year quickly approaches, I wish you all a healthy and happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. And on behalf of the RAS, our RAS council, and staff, I thank you for your continued support - your commitment to the RAS' vision ensures its great future.

Michael Millner, President  
Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

**T**wo hundred, it's a number that has been focused on all year as we celebrate the Bicentenary of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. So as the year draws to a close, I can't help but marvel at its significance. In a time of great adversity, the RAS has once again stood strong, and with the ongoing support of our RAS members, council, exhibitors, and staff, we have managed to protect the RAS' iconic legacy and build a strong foundation for its continued growth.

In 2022, we once again demonstrated the importance of bringing the community together to celebrate the best display of agriculture in the country, with the Sydney Royal Easter Show proving to be a great success. It also proved to be the perfect opportunity to celebrate our Bicentenary; we shared our story through books, medallions, tea towels, a fantastic Bicentenary function and even a Royal visit, reflecting on the role we have played throughout history and highlighting our mission to continue as guardians of Australian agriculture for decades to come.

Starting with the continued promotion of Australian produce, the RAS' Sydney Royal Wine, Dairy and Fine Food shows have judged some of the country's finest wines, beers, ciders, fine food and dairy

# The vine

NEWS | UPDATES | EVENTS



## Here for the competitions

THE 2023 SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW WILL RUN FROM 6-17 APRIL

Not only a showcase for the talents, energy and passions of rural New South Wales, Sydney Royal competitions are also an education for Sydney Royal Easter Show visitors. The competitions provide an incredible opportunity for city-dwellers to see everything from alpacas to woodchop, with cattle, goats, poultry and sheep, plus horses, domestic pets, goats, horticulture, arts and crafts all in one precinct across twelve days of the Show.

For our dedicated competitors and exhibitors, the competitions not only recognise and reward hard work and dedication, but they can enhance reputations and advance business opportunities.



Schedules will be launching shortly for the Sydney Royal competitions held during the 2023 Sydney Royal Easter Show - please keep an eye on our website for all details including schedules and key dates.

[www.rasnsw.com.au/sydney-royal-competitions](http://www.rasnsw.com.au/sydney-royal-competitions) ■





# Sydney Showground's sustainable future

When the RAS drafted its vision for a community that understands and values sustainable Australian agriculture it did not envision the events arm of the business would be leading the way. With a firm focus on net zero carbon emissions by 2030, the team at Sydney Showground, led by General Manager Darryl Jeffrey, is actively working to minimise impact on the environment and to help all clients do the same.

Taking on environmentally sustainable practices in conjunction with Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA), Sydney Showground is connected to the Sydney Olympic Park Water Reclamation and Management Scheme (WRAMS). This scheme recycles water from stormwater and sewage and is then supplied at a lower cost by Sydney Water and saves more than 850 million litres of potable water (drinking water) annually. Sydney Showground uses this water, which would potentially be discharged to ocean

outfalls if left untreated, to irrigate its grounds as well as for the flushing of toilets.

Tackling the problem of food and packaging, Sydney Showground has converted all food trays to cardboard or sugarcane alternatives. The use of crushed sugarcane stalks for disposable and even microwave-friendly food containers not only provides a greener alternative but also improves the scope for the sugar industry – an agricultural sector often under fire from health and consumer groups.

**“We collaborate with all clients, providing guidance and tools to make their events more socially and environmentally responsible.”**

*Darryl Jeffrey*

Single-use plastic cup usage has been reduced and will be eradicated eventually, by the move from draught or ‘on tap’ beverages to packaged, can and bottled products at Sydney Showground events. Working with Quayclean to implement a recycling program, aluminium cans and glass bottles are sorted on site and sent away for processing, in line with the government’s Container Deposit Scheme. The result is a cleaner precinct and a reduction in recyclable materials sent to landfill.

Energy and water are not only a huge cost to a business but also have an

enormous impact on the environment, but Sydney Showground has made prudent investments to reduce both aspects. Water savers on taps within GIANTS Stadium have provided a 3% saving on water consumption, 60% of water on site is recycled, all streetlights and high-bay house lights across Sydney Showground were upgraded to LED – with an estimated 50% reduction in power consumption, and upgrades to air conditioning chillers in the Dome and Halls 2-6 have reduced power consumption by 30%.

In conjunction with the Exhibition & Event Association of Australasia, Sydney Showground has also committed to the 2030 Sustainable Events Pledge - a collective vision to realising the future of the events sector.

“As a long-standing tenant, and one of the largest in the precinct, we are

actively supporting the 6 Star Green Communities rating awarded to Sydney Olympic Park. SOPA’s recognition as a global leader in sustainability drives us to explore more innovative approaches and to enhance our reputation as a clean and green business,” says Darryl Jeffrey

“We collaborate with all clients, providing guidance and tools to make their events more socially and environmentally responsible.”

**Sydney Showground’s sustainability document can be found on the website [sydneyshowground.com.au](http://sydneyshowground.com.au) ■**





# RAS AB Paterson Bush Poetry Award

On 5 July 2022, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW marked its bicentenary, celebrating 200 years since the first members came together and decided to help each other and look after the agricultural side of things in the new colony of Australia. Forty-two years after the RAS was established Australia's most recognised bush poet was born – Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson. His focus was on rural and outback life, celebrating the men and women of the land in much the same way the RAS always has.

Honouring the bicentennial year, and celebrating the legacy of Banjo Paterson, this year the RAS launched the RAS AB Paterson Bush Poetry Award for primary and secondary

school students in Australia. All school-aged students in Australia were invited to explore the beauty, mystique, enchantment and characteristics of the Australian bush in a new work of 50 lines or less.

Capturing the essence of the Australian bush in a poem did not prove to be a challenge for the inaugural winners – Julia Han (year 5, Excelsior Public School, Castle Hill) and Alice Surace (year 7, St Luke's Grammar School, Dee Why). Teachers were encouraged to use the competition as a whole class teaching activity and to refer to the NSW English syllabus when framing lessons around the competition, the result being two incredible winning poems which both beautifully

express the awe in which budding poets hold Australia's natural beauty.

Julia and Alice received the book *Complete Poems of Banjo Paterson* along with a copyrighted copy of *Waltzing Matilda* – presented by Alastair Campbell and his son Tom – direct living relatives of Banjo Paterson.

**The 2023 RAS AB Paterson Bush Poetry Award will be open for entries in term 1, 2023. For more information, visit [rasnsw.com.au/education/ras-ab-paterson-bush-poetry-award/](https://rasnsw.com.au/education/ras-ab-paterson-bush-poetry-award/) ■**



## BEAUTY

By Julia Han

I touch the eucalyptus trees  
 Leaves crunch under my feet.  
 Pieces of bark drop free  
 The forest floor complete.  
 I see butterflies fluttering in the wind  
 Sunlight grazing their wings.  
 Undefined and unconfined  
 Looking for what life can bring.  
 I hear the song of kookaburras  
 A melancholy mixture of melody.  
 An orchestra of highest class  
 The beautiful Australian familiarities.  
 I smell the scent of the billabong  
 Hidden behind the bushes.  
 Sand and stones pushed along  
 In the trickle of the fresh water pushes.  
 I taste cool drops of mist on the tips of my tongue  
 Fresh beads of dew that fall from the treetops  
 Lush and detoxing and beautifully young  
 Mint-raw but delicate in a way that never stops.  
 I touch  
 And see  
 And hear  
 And smell  
 And I taste  
 Yet my heart still wonders  
 About the things I may not know  
 My mind left to ponder  
 About the things that do not show.  
 But now the sun is high in the sky  
 And my thoughts are held to a rest  
 Questions flowing in full supply  
 For next time when I am once again a forest guest.  
 I guess now it is  
 Time to go back home.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Alastair Campbell, Tom Campbell, Julia Han, Lyndsey Douglas and Duncan Kendall



**A**s this year comes to a close, I am an incredibly proud and humbled Chief Executive. Proud of the teams at the RAS and Sydney Showground for their hard work and dedication and ability to tackle every challenge with a determination to succeed. I am humbled by the talent we have across all staff, and their commitment to surpassing expectations.

We began the year coming out of yet another heightened covid period and many staff were in isolation and working from home, but we knew this had to be our biggest and best year yet – it was our bicentenary year and we had high expectations for the Sydney Royal Easter Show marking the occasion. It is a marvellous thing when it all comes together, as it did for us. From historic themed competitions to milestones and memorabilia around the grounds, we made sure every visitor to the Show knew a little more about our history and knew we were marking our bicentenary.

Every media story mentioned our two-hundred-year history, every ribbon we awarded carried our bicentenary logo, and every special guest – from Princess Anne, the Princess Royal to the Prime Minister congratulated us on our longevity.

**Brock Gilmour, Chief Executive,  
Royal Agricultural Society of NSW**

The success of the Show was only exceeded by our Bicentenary Cocktail Function, the first real opportunity for the staff to relax and enjoy the festivities. It was a gala that will not be matched in our lifetime and in true Sydney Royal style has set a very high benchmark for the sescentennial celebrations in fifty years' time.

Whilst the bicentenary took up a lot of time, with planning, marketing, and celebrating it was also business as usual across the site. Sydney Showground had a very successful 2022, concerts and festivals came back as did local and international events and exhibitions. Appreciative crowds have flocked to sporting events and our venues, including the stadium, are looking spectacular.

The AG Education team have had an incredibly successful year with the introduction of two outstanding initiatives, Farm Days and Ag in a Box. Launched at the start of the year, both are delivering agricultural experiences to primary and secondary students from all corners of the state and assisting teachers with vital lessons in agriculture.

In a similar vein, the RAS Foundation has helped sixty-nine students this year with Rural Scholarships, providing financial assistance towards tertiary education and training studies with a focus on supporting regional communities. As well, Community Futures Grants went to nine communities to help fund projects that will benefit and enhance community groups and facilities.

As this remarkable year ends, I'd like to wish a Merry and safe Christmas to all Members and to thank you for your continued support.



### RAS RECEIVES ACCOLADES FOR HERITAGE PROJECTS

**The RAS has enjoyed some recent success at the Australian Society of Archivists Mander Jones Awards, held on October 17. The awards recognise publications in the field of archives and recordkeeping, and we are pleased to announce that two heritage publications, developed to coincide with our bicentenary celebrations, have taken home awards.**

Our virtual museum was awarded 'Best publication to engage and communicate with clients or potential clients of an Australian archive or archival collection about Australia'. Judging criteria included subject originality, appropriateness of design, and relevance for intended audience. Launched on the RAS website in January this year, the virtual museum showcases a range of documents, photographs, historical facts, and personal stories that showcase the rich history of the RAS.

Our commemorative book, SYDNEY ROYAL – Celebrating 200 years of the Royal Agricultural Society, written by Gavin Fry, was a joint winner in the category 'Best publication that uses, features or interprets Australian Archives, written by or on behalf of a corporate body'. The category rewards publications that illuminate archives and archival collections for the community, taking into consideration design, originality of content and presentation, and the prominence and interpretation of archive material.

The RAS is both honoured and humbled to receive these awards for publications that, we believe, capture the heart and essence of the organisation's history, and we congratulate Heritage Centre Manager, Karen Finch, and her team, for the many hours spent on these two projects.

**R. M. WILLIAMS**  
EST. 1932, AUSTRALIA



R.M. Williams is proud to support  
the 2023 Rural Achiever Award

Wishing all the best to each of the finalists



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW



## MESSAGES FROM MEMBERSHIP

Thank you for your continued support of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS). As one of the oldest member-based organisations in Australia we would not be here without you, our Members. You are the reason for everything we do, and we thank you for the role you have played in our remarkable history.

As you know, your membership provides you with Sydney Royal Easter Show benefits so that you can come along to the Show as many days as you like and see the displays, special competitions, world-class entertainment, and be a part of the largest annual ticketed event in Australia!

As we head into Show mode, there are some things to make note of - your Show Bookings Form came with this magazine - Parking, One Day Royals and the Tyrrell's Members Preview Night. Please complete the form and return it to membership before

24 March, 2023. Remember, you must be a current Member for your order form to be accepted, so please make sure your renewal has been completed.

Charley Restaurant will be taking early bookings for dining during the Show. To reserve your table, please call Membership on 9704 1144 from 3 January 2023.

Your membership also comes with year-round discounts and offers to events outside of the Sydney Royal



Easter Show. We are currently reactivating reciprocal benefits with partner organisations and ask for your patience as we, and many other organisations, navigate our way through these arrangements. We can confirm reciprocal privileges to selected games at Accor Stadium (previously ANZ Stadium) will once again be available to our Members in 2023, along with specified cricket matches at the SCG, and Member benefits at selected ATC race meetings at the Royal Randwick, Rosehill Gardens, Warwick Farm and Canterbury Park. Please check dress regulations for all events when taking advantage of reciprocal benefits.

We will keep updating you throughout the year on RAS news and events, as well as exclusive deals and discounts, in this magazine and online at [rasnsw.com.au/members](http://rasnsw.com.au/members).

It has been an enormous year for the RAS as we celebrated our bicentenary, and it is with tremendous pride that we looked back at our history and commemorated our significant achievements. All our memories and milestones have been captured in Gavin Fry's outstanding book Sydney Royal, Celebrating 200 Years of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. The book can be purchased from our website [rasnsw.com.au/200years](http://rasnsw.com.au/200years), along with The Oral Histories of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, compiled by Honorary Councillor Adrian Howie. Mr Howie's book features a rollcall of prominent names sharing their RAS stories as they take a very personal walk down memory lane.

We would like to wish all Members and their families a Merry Christmas and extend our warmest wishes for a safe and Happy New Year. The Membership office will be closed from 5pm on the 16th December 2022 until 9am on 3rd January 2023.



*Your support for regional and rural NSW delivers rewards for you*

Don't forget to renew your membership so you don't miss any of your exclusive Members-only rewards and advantages.

Not only do you receive a variety of discounts and offers throughout the year, but you also get unlimited entry to the Sydney Royal Easter Show and access to all Members facilities on all 12 days of the Show.

To renew your membership, visit  
[www.rasnsw.com.au/membership/renew-membership/](http://www.rasnsw.com.au/membership/renew-membership/)



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW



THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NSW WOULD LIKE TO THANK ITS 2022 SPONSORS FOR SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

**Gold**



**Bronze**



Food Authority



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW



## IT'S A FINE TIME TO DINE

Salivate over the winners from the 2022 Sydney Royal Wine, Dairy and Fine Food Shows.

### SYDNEY ROYAL WINE SHOW

**The Douglas Lamb Perpetual Trophy for Best Riesling. Donated by the Family and Friends of the Late Douglas Lamb**  
Grant Burge Wines, Barossa Valley, SA – 2017 Grant Burge The Vignerons Reserve Riesling

**The McCarthy Perpetual Trophy for Best Sauvignon Blanc. Donated by J McCarthy and Co Pty Ltd**  
Evans & Tate, Margaret River, WA – 2022 Evans & Tate Wild Cape Sauvignon Blanc

**The David Clarke Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Best Semillon. Donated by Jane, Timothy and Angus Clark and Maxine Cooley**  
Tyrrell's Vineyards Pty Ltd, Hunter Valley, NSW – 2013 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Semillon



**The RAS of NSW Prize for the Best Pinot Gris or Pinot Grigio**  
Howard Vineyard, Adelaide Hills, SA – 2022 Howard Vineyard Pinot Gris

**The A P John Coopers Perennial Trophy for Best Chardonnay. Donated by A P John Coopers**  
Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd, Barossa Valley, SA – 2021 Penfolds Bin A Chardonnay

**The Bert Bear Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Best Other White Varietal. Donated by the First Thursday Luncheon Club of which Mr Bear was an original member**  
Artwine, Adelaide Hills, SA – 2022 Wicked Stepmother Fiano

**The Liquorland Perpetual Trophy for Best White Blend. Donated by Liquorland**  
Xanadu Wines, Margaret River, WA – 2021 Xanadu Circa 77 Sauvignon Blanc Semillon

**The Hanaminno Perpetual Trophy for Best Sweet White. Donated by Mr Michael Arnott and family**  
Brown Family Wine Group, King Valley, VIC – 2019 Brown Brothers Patricia Noble Riesling

**The RAS of NSW Annual Prize for Best Current Vintage White**  
Silkman Wines, Hunter Valley, NSW – 2022 Silkman Wines Single Vineyard Blackberry Semillon

**The Dr Henry John Lindeman Memorial Perpetual Prize for Best Mature White. Donated by Lindeman (Holdings) Limited**  
Tyrrell's Vineyard Pty Ltd, Hunter Valley, NSW – 2013 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Semillon

**The Leslie Kemeny Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Best Rosé. Donated by Kemeny's Food and Liquor**  
Artwine, Adelaide Hills, SA – 2022 Temptress Rosé

**The Geoffrey Crundall Perpetual Trophy for Best Pinot Noir. Donated by Geoffrey Crundall Cellars**  
Hardys, McLaren Vale, SA – 2021 Eileen Hardy Pinot Noir

**The George Mackey Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Best Grenache. Donated by Wine Australia**  
Hentley Farm, Barossa Valley, SA – 2021 The Old Legend Grenache

**The Drinks Association Perennial Trophy for Best Shiraz. Donated by the Liquor Merchants Association of Australia**  
Shingleback, McLaren Vale, SA – 2019 The Gate Shiraz

**The Arthur Kelman Perpetual Trophy for Best Shiraz Dominant Blend. Donated by the daughters of the Late Arthur Kelman**  
Shingleback, McLaren Vale, SA – 2021 Local Heroes Shiraz Grenache

**The Dan Murphy's Perennial Trophy for Best Cabernet Sauvignon. Donated by Dan Murphy's**  
Fermoy Estate, Margaret River, WA – 2019 Fermoy Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

**The Jones, Steains and Waller Perpetual Trophy for Best Cabernet Dominant Blend. Donated by A W & A Pardey**  
Devil's Lair Pty Ltd, Margaret River, WA – 2021 Devil's Lair Honeybomb Cabernet Malbec

**The Wine Communicators of Australia Perpetual Trophy for Best Other Red Varietal. Donated by the Wine Press Club of NSW**  
Hardys Tintara, McLaren Vale, SA – 2021 Hardys Tintara Tempranillo



## PENFOLDS

Generally known for their exquisite reds, Penfolds have proved their versatility and continued standard of excellence with their 2021 Penfolds Bin A Chardonnay taking out the top prize at this year's Sydney Royal Wine Show. Established back in 1884, Penfolds pride themselves on the merging of science, art, and innovation to create some of the world's most respected wines. No stranger to success, Penfolds have picked up perfect scores in some of the most influential wine magazines in the world.

### The John Swann Perpetual Trophy for Best Other Red Blend. Donated by The Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation

Shingleback, McLaren Vale, SA – 2021  
Davey Estate Tempranillo Touriga

### The Rudy Komon Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Best Mature Red. Donated by Mrs Ruth Komon

McGuigan, Hunter Valley, NSW – 2017  
McGuigan Personal Reserve Vanessa Vale Shiraz

### The Thorp Annual Trophy for Best Sparkling White or Rosé

Printhie Wines, Orange, NSW – Swift NV Cuvee Brut

### The J C M Fornachon Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Best Fortified. Donated by the Late Rudy Komon

Morris Wines, Rutherglen, VIC – Morris Wines Old Premium Topaque

### The Dan Murphy's Value Perennial Trophy for Best Value Wine (White, Rosé, or Red). Donated by the First Estate Wine Merchants

Shingleback, McLaren Vale, SA – 2021  
Red Knot Classified Grenache Shiraz Mourvedre

### The International Guest Judge Annual Prize. Supported by the RAS of NSW

DB Production, Rutherglen, VIC – 2021  
Rutherglen Estate Arneis

### The NSW Department of Primary Industries James Busby Perpetual Trophy for Best NSW Wine. Donated by the NSW Department of Primary Industries

Lerida Estate, Canberra Region – 2019  
Lerida Estate Shiraz

### The Restaurant and Catering Industry Association Perpetual Trophy for Best Small Producer Wine. Donated by the Restaurant and Catering Association of NSW

Boydell's, Hunter Valley, NSW – 2021  
Boydell's Reserve Chardonnay

### The Len Evans Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Best Single Vineyard Wine. Donated by the Wine Committee of the RAS of NSW and the family and friends of the Late Len Evans AO

Larry Cherubino Wines, Margaret River, WA – 2020 Cherubino Dijon Chardonnay

### The Albert Chan Memorial Prize for Best White. Donated by friends of the Late Albert Chan

Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd, Barossa Valley, SA – 2021 Penfolds Bin A Chardonnay

### The Dr Gilbert Phillips Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Best Red. Donated by the Wine Society

Hardys, McLaren Vale, SA – 2021  
Eileen Hardy Pinot Noir

### The Tucker Seabrook Perpetual Trophy for Best Wine of Show. Proudly sponsored by KPMG

Penfolds Wines Pty Ltd, Barossa Valley, SA – 2021 Penfolds Bin A Chardonnay



## SYDNEY ROYAL BEER & CIDER SHOW

### Champion Packaged Beer

Wayward Brewing Co, Camperdown, NSW – Wayward Raspberry Berliner Weisse

### Champion Draught Beer

Sydney Brewery, Surry Hills, NSW & Hunter Valley, NSW – Sydney Brewery Speak Easy Black IPA

### Champion Experimental or Specialty Beer supported by The Star Sydney

Australian Brewery, Rouse Hill, NSW – Reign of Darkness

### Best NSW Beer supported by The Star Sydney

Sydney Brewery, Surry Hills, NSW & Hunter Valley, NSW – Sydney Brewery Speak Easy Black IPA

### Champion Perry

The Barossa Valley Cider Company, Barossa Valley, SA – Squashed Pear Cider

## SYDNEY BREWERY

Sydney Brewery stole the show at the Sydney Royal Beer & Cider Show this year, being the only brewery to take home 2 champion trophies, both for their Speak Easy Black IPA. Having exhibited in the Show for the past 10 years, and picking up a swag of gold medals along the way, this year marked their first Champion Trophies since 2015. Located in both Surry Hills and the Hunter Valley, the independent brewery focuses on producing a large range of drinks, that cater to everyone's tastes and are "all kinds of different"



## SYDNEY ROYAL CHEESE & DAIRY PRODUCE SHOW

### Champion Butter

Fonterra Spreyton, Spreyton, TAS – Duck River Premium

### The Jim Forsyth Perpetual Trophy for Champion White Milk

Tilba Real Dairy, Central Tilba, NSW – Tilba Real Dairy Full Cream Unhomogenised Milk

### Champion Flavoured Milk

Hunt and Brew (Produced by Brownes Dairy), Balcatta, WA – Hunt and Brew Colombia Cold Brew Coffee

### The NSW Food Authority Perpetual Trophy for Champion Cheddar Cheese

Bega Cheese, North Bega, NSW – Bega Rindless Cheddar

### The NSW Food Authority Perpetual Trophy for Champion Specialty Cheese

Berry's Creek Gourmet Cheese, Fish Creek, VIC – Oak Blue

### The Dairy Australia Perpetual Trophy for Champion Cow Milk Cheese

Berry's Creek Gourmet Cheese, Fish Creek, VIC – Oak Blue

### Annual Trophy for Champion Cheese of Show supported by the Dairy Produce Committee

Berry's Creek Gourmet Cheese, Fish Creek, VIC – Oak Blue

### Australian Cheeseboard Perpetual Trophy to the Exhibitors of the five Gold medal-winning cheeses, selected by the Chair of Judges

Bega Cheese, North Bega, NSW – Bega Rindless Cheddar  
Berry's Creek Gourmet Cheese, Fish Creek, VIC – Oak Blue  
Blackall Country Cheese Pty Ltd t/as Woombye Cheese Company, West Woombye, QLD – Woombye Ash Brie  
Meredith Dairy Pty Ltd, Meredith, VIC – Meredith Dairy Fresh Goats Cheese, Chevre  
Pecora Dairy, Robertson, NSW – Pecora Dairy Yarrowa

### Champion Full Ice Cream or Gelato

Gelateria Gondola, Chatswood, NSW – ARACHIDI

### Champion Low/Reduced Fat Ice Cream or Gelato

Cow and the Moon, Enmore, NSW – Strawberries and Cream

### Champion Novel Ice Cream or Gelato

Mr Pisa Gelato, Rydalmere, NSW – Mr Pisa Cannoli

### The Bega Cheese Perpetual Trophy for Champion Yoghurt or Cultured Milk Product

Mundella Foods Pty Ltd, Mundijong, WA – Mundella Greek Honey

### Champion Cream

The Little Big Dairy Company Pty Ltd, Dubbo, NSW – The Little Big Dairy Company Single Source Double Cream

### Champion Dairy Dessert, Custard, or Mousse

Yalla Foods Pty Ltd, Botany, NSW – Vanilla Cheesecake with gluten-free gingernut biscuit base

### The Simon Johnson Perpetual Trophy for Champion Sheep, Goat, Buffalo or Camel Milk Product

Pecora Dairy, Robertson, NSW – Pecora Dairy Yarrowa

## SYDNEY ROYAL FINE FOOD SHOW - AQUACULTURE

### Champion Fresh Fish

Tassal Operations, Hobart, TAS – Tassal Fresh Salmon Hog

### Champion Smoked/Cured Product

Aquna Sustainable Murray Cod, Griffith, NSW – Aquna Sustainable Murray Cod - Aquna Hot Smoked Murray Cod

### Champion Other Farmed Aquaculture Product

Yumbah Aquaculture Ltd, Wingfield, SA – Yumbah Australian Greenlip Abalone Whole in Shell

## SYDNEY ROYAL FINE FOOD SHOW - BRANDED MEAT

### Champion Lamb

Midfield Meats International, Warrnambool, VIC – 'Union Station'

### Champion Beef

Jack's Creek, North Tamworth, NSW – Jack's Creek Wagyu

### The Dick Stone Perpetual Trophy for Branded Meat Grand Champion Exhibit

Midfield Meats International, Warrnambool, VIC – 'Union Station'

## SYDNEY ROYAL FINE FOOD SHOW - OIL AND OLIVES

### Champion Boutique Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Bytenew Pty Ltd, Mandemmar, NSW – Yaraandoo Estate Frantoio

### Champion Single Varietal Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Commercial Volume

Cobram Estate, Lara, VIC – Cobram Estate Ultra Premium Hojiblanca

### Champion Blended Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Commercial Volume

Cobram Estate, Lara, VIC – Cobram Estate Classic Extra Virgin Olive Oil

### Champion Flavoured or Culinary Oil

Flavourista (Flavourista Pty Ltd), Molendinar, QLD – Yuzu Olive Oil

### Champion Table Olives

Gooramadda Olives, Gooramadda, VIC – Gooramadda Olives Kalamata Table Olives 500g



## SYDNEY ROYAL FINE FOOD SHOW - PASTA

### Champion Fresh Pasta

Mancini Pasta, Beckenham, WA – Mancini Squid Linguine

### Champion Filled Pasta

Pasta Di Porto Pty Ltd, Anna Bay, NSW – Pasta Di Porto Portobello Mushroom, Roast Garlic & Truffle Ravioli in Porcini Mushroom Pasta

**SYDNEY ROYAL FINE FOOD SHOW – SMALLGOODS & CHARCUTERIE**

**Champion Bacon**

Gold Coast Fresh Meat Centre, Burleigh Heads, QLD – Taylor’s Premium Streaky Bacon

**Champion Ham**

Sunshine Meats, Milperra, NSW – Double Smoked Bone-in Ham

**Champion Salami Type Product**

Papandrea Fine Foods, Wetherill Park, NSW – Papandrea Cacciatore Fennel Hot

**Champion Dried/Cured Product**

Coles (Produced by Primo), Hawthorn East, VIC – Coles Pancetta

**Champion Other Charcuterie Product. Prize (annual trophy) supported by the NSW Food Authority**

Posh Foods Pty Ltd, Marrickville, NSW – Posh Pate Pistachio & Brandy 150g

**The Champion Fresh Sausage Perpetual Trophy, donated by Graham J Crouch**

Andrews Meat Industries, Lidcombe, NSW – Sausage Gourmet Lamb Merguez Thick



**PAPANDREA**

Papandrea Fine Foods had a successful competition this year with 7 gold medals, and a Champion Trophy in the Salami products category of the Smallgoods & Charcuterie competition. In a hotly contested category, with 12 gold medals awarded in total, Papandrea’s Cacciatore Hot Salami emerged with not only the Champion title, but the highest score across the entire Sydney Royal Fine Food Show. A family-owned business, the Papandrea family have been making salumi for generations, crediting their recipes to family secrets from Calabria. All their products use fresh, 100% pure Australian meat.

**SYDNEY ROYAL FINE FOOD SHOW – PROFESSIONAL BAKERY**

**Champion Bread**

Mouthwater Foods P.L., Moss Vale, NSW – Seeded light Rye Sourdough - Mouthwater Sourdough

**Champion Cake**

Newcastle’s Pudding Lady, Cardiff, NSW – Traditional Christmas Pudding

**Champion Biscuit**

Cacao Chocolates & Patisserie, Cheltenham, VIC – Raspberry Macaron

**Champion Pastry**

Living Free Naturally (Produced by Wholegreen Bakery), Waverley, NSW – Wholegreen Bakery Gluten-free Pork and Fennel Sausage Roll

**SYDNEY ROYAL FINE FOOD SHOW – SPECIALTY FOODS**

**Champion Sweet Preserve or Product**

Springmount Fine Foods, Springmount, VIC – Gingered Quince Paste

**Champion Savoury Preserve or Product**

Spice Vine Pty Ltd, Turrumurra, NSW – Spice Vine-Coriander Zing-Marinade & Stir-Fry Paste – An invigorating paste of coriander, chillies & lime inspired by the Goan Cafreal masala.

**Champion Spice, Pickled Product or Vinegar**

Rice Culture, Carrara, QLD – Rice Culture Organic Vintage Miso

**Champion Other Specialty Product**

Made by Kade, Alexandria, NSW – Shroomi Burger ■



**MADE BY KADE**

Made by Kade’s Shroomi Burger was a standout performer in this year’s plant-based section of the Specialty Foods Competition, going on to be crowned ‘Champion Other Specialty Product’, a title which excludes only preserves, vinegars and coffee. Made by Kade’s success is reflective of a growing consumer demand for quality plant-based products. The wholesale business set out to fill a gap in the market, resulting in an innovative range of falafels & burgers that are vegan, gluten-free, preservative-free, and, by all reports, absolutely delicious.



# Celebrating Australia’s finest

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# And that was 2022

It has been a remarkable year for the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, one in which we not only marked our bicentenary but also welcomed a Royal visitor and infiltrated primary and secondary schools across the state with one jam-packed box.

WORDS MEREDYTH HAYES BELL



The first few months of the year were all about the Sydney Royal Easter Show... not only were we planning a Show to celebrate two hundred years since our establishment but one that would host Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne, the Princess Royal.

We launched our Official Bicentenary merchandise collection in February, including the limited-edition medallion and the commemorative book, Sydney Royal, Celebrating 200 Years of the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales, by noted historian Gavin Fry. The book was launched at Government House by our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, the Governor of New South Wales. At the launch, it was noted our second President, following Sir John Jamison, had the rather unfortunate name of Barron Field – but he did go on to write and publish 'First Fruits of Australian Poetry' the first volume of verse to

appear in Australia, and our success as an organisation proves the fields of NSW have been far from barren.

We lifted the lid on a world of agriculture with Ag in a Box, planting the seed for careers connected to the land with primary and secondary students in term one this year. Each box is packed with sensory learning resources, programs and investigations developed by educators for educators. Distributed upon request – one for each term – the boxes are carefully linked to the agricultural curriculum and provide a one-stop-shop for teachers following the field to fibre and paddock to plate concepts. This year more than seven hundred schools have received Ag in a Box.

The 'orange army' hit Sydney Showground in March with a big weekend of AFLW and AFL including a massive pre-season double-header in the AAMI Community Series with GIANTS Stadium hosting the GWS Giants v Collingwood and Sydney Swans v North Melbourne.

And then it was all about the Show – two hundred years of celebration crammed into 12 days, with not only a Princess but also a staggering 900,000 eager and interested visitors, 164 woodchoppers, six scarecrows, and 8,240 animals including 1091 dogs and two hundred merino sheep.

No time to relax after the Show – it was straight back into events and the AFL season for the Sydney Showground teams, with GWS Giants games, the Meatstock festival, electronic music sensation Marlo in concert, events, expos, and the Cake, Bake & Sweets Show.

The middle of the year saw an influx of school students attending Farm Days excursions whilst Sydney Royal judges donned the white coats for Cheese & Dairy Produce judging along with the Wine and Beer & Cider competitions. Sydney Showground welcomed craft and quilt aficionados before opening the doors to comic fans at Supanova, and then let everyone get hands on at LegoCon and the 4 X 4 Outdoor Show. It was also



time for the RAS Foundation to launch their major giving campaign, kicked off by an incredibly generous donation of \$2,000,000 by John Fairfax AO.

Before we knew it 5 July arrived, and the RAS officially marked two hundred years. At the first official RAS dinner in 1822, it was noted “Eighty gentlemen of the first rank and opulence in the colony sat down at 6 o’clock to a splendid dinner.” This year the entire RAS Council joined with the Board, all staff, key stakeholders, and Members drawn from a ballot to enjoy a celebratory cocktail function and the unveiling of the Bicentenary plaque.

In the following months the AFL wrapped up and the AFLW began, the Dog Lovers Show once again took over

the showground, and expos for weddings, pregnancy & babies took place. Fine Food competitions began with judges assessing everything from jam and chutney to grain fed beef, linguine and even Christmas pudding. The ultimate celebration of wining and dining took place with the Grape, Grain & Graze festival popping the cork on more than 1800 varieties of wine, beer and cider alongside grazing stations of Sydney Royal award-winning food, and the Spring Garden competition launched for those who prefer to spend their weekends with a trowel in hand. The RAS Foundation welcomed applications for the Rural Scholarship program and donated \$20,000 to flood-ravaged showgrounds in the northern rivers region before launching the Community

Futures Grant Program to provide further assistance to regional towns and their community projects.

The year has closed with a total of 3800 students attending Farm Days, an abundance of trade and consumer expos, the beginning of Big Bash League cricket, and the return of music festivals including Fridayz Live and festival X. The RAS Foundation will once again distribute Christmas bundles to regional communities with Good360, including toys and kitchen goods, and Sydney Royal Easter Show competitions are finalised and launched. The countdown has well and truly begun until the Easter Show opens on 6 April 2023. ■

**We lifted the lid on a world of agriculture with Ag in a Box, planting the seed for careers connected to the land with primary and secondary students in term one this year.**

**Sydney Royal judges donned the white coats for Cheese & Dairy Produce judging along with the Wine and Beer & Cider competitions.**



# Tree change trials

RAS writer Olivia Gee experimented leaving the big smoke to get her hands dirty in the world of agriculture.

I am not a farmer. While I research and write about agriculture, gaining insight from those who do work diligently in the industry, I haven't personally delved into the daily tasks and challenges of commercial farming and food production. But recently, this paradigm shifted.

After interviewing some fascinating individuals running market farms in NSW, I was inspired to investigate if this profession and lifestyle might be a good fit for me. I had recently left a full-time position in journalism working in Sydney's CBD, and with leaving the big smoke on my mind, I figured I would go all-in and try my hand working in agriculture. I sent out feelers to see if any nearby operations might be in need of an enthusiastic farm hand with no experience (a big ask), and I struck gold on my old home turf in the Southern Highlands.

The husband and wife team behind Mussett Holdings took me on a few days a week and tutored me in the art of regenerative farming. I collected and packaged more than 1,000 eggs a day thanks to their flock of free range chooks, bottled raw honey collected from the farm's hives, and harvested dazzling mushrooms from special growing rooms powered by solar and wind energy. It was a marvellous education in sustainably minded food production and running a small business. Whether you're thinking about delivery routes, new farm equipment or caring for livestock, innovation and adaptation is constant.

Ultimately, I decided not to turn my experiment into a permanent move. This largely came down to the lengthy commute, as I wasn't quite ready to cut ties to Sydney life. But over the last few years, more and more city dwellers have committed to similar tree change endeavours around Australia. In the March quarter of 2022, the number of people moving from capital cities to regional areas was 26.7% higher than the average during the two years prior to Covid-19. These figures come from the Commonwealth Bank Regional Movers Index and represent a five-year high in regional migration.

While this population shift has the potential to benefit expanding communities – with new residents bringing skilled labour to the regions



and stimulating local economies – it comes with drawbacks that flow into industries like agriculture. The cost of housing in historically more affordable areas has been driven up dramatically by increased demand. Data from property analysis firm CoreLogic shows regional rental prices have increased by 10.8% over the 12 months leading to July 2022, while availability has continued to tighten. This comes off the back of steady increases since 2020, with sale prices showing a similar trend.



On top of this, many regional movers on higher incomes have maintained their metro-based employment through hybrid work models, rather than working in their new hometowns. This leaves people in local industries in a housing crisis: they're often on lower salaries and can't compete with the soaring house prices in their area.

This is just one of the many factors fuelling farming labour shortages. A 2022 report from the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) found regional job vacancies and ads are at record or multi-decade highs, with the most significant gaps seen in hospitality, tourism and agriculture. The pause on international migration during the pandemic and increasing cost of living pressures have played a role in this trend. David Lamb, chief scientist at agrifood research centre Food Agility CRC, says developments in agritech are fuelling innovation in the industry and require current and prospective farmers to upskill in new areas.

**This leaves people in local industries in a housing crisis: they're often on lower salaries and can't compete with the soaring house prices in their area.**



“There are currently about twice as many jobs listed annually for workers related to farm and food production than there are graduates coming out of universities,” Lamb says.

“So there’s no workforce issue in terms of autonomous systems knocking out job opportunities, it’s creating more jobs, and we can’t even fill what’s there already. It’s a new dimension to farming – so not just swinging shovels and checking fencing.”

Whether it’s sensors tracking soil moisture, trough levels or animal activity, there are numerous ways technology can be used by producers to help with tactical decision-making and cutting out time-consuming tasks. However, Lamb says the real opportunity is taking it one step further.

**“There are currently about twice as many jobs listed annually for workers related to farm and food production than there are graduates coming out of universities.”** *David Lamb, chief scientist, Food Agility CRC*

“The jobs of today and the future are going to be in the analytics side. Monitoring the water flow into a trough is one thing, but you could eventually take that kind of tech and use it to identify animal behaviours and health. You could apply it to soil moisture in terms of understanding plant growth rates and trajectories towards crop yield. All these things can be achieved by elevating the humble sensor and what the data is telling you to the next level.”

National Farmers’ Federation president, Fiona Simson, says there’s room for a huge variety of professional growth across the industry. “You could be riding a horse with the sun on your back and dust on your boots mustering cattle in the outback. Then there’s science-based roles like agronomy where you’re meeting with farmers in their paddocks



or research roles based in laboratories. As new technologies emerge, it increases opportunities from a farm level right through to their development.”

These innovations also present opportunities to improve the environmental impact of food production. “That same source of data that’s helping in your tactical decision-making and workflow management is also feeding into optimising your footprint on the ground to suit what nature can supply,” Lamb says.

“Straight away you’re thinking about maintaining your grazing pressure to ensure good pasture bounce-back, good biomass retention and good ground-cover. For crops, you’re directly matching the fertiliser inputs to the water available in the soil, so you’re reducing issues around leaching of nitrates.” If you do things right, Lamb says soil quality and the diversity of the land’s ecosystem will improve over time and produce the positive effects of regenerative agriculture.



With so many potential areas of growth and roles to fill, the government has implemented a variety of schemes to help people kick-start careers in the industry. The AgUP pilot offers grants for industry-led projects that foster upskilling and career progression, while AgCAREERSTART places young Australians in paid regional positions to develop skills in the industry and come out with a nationally recognised qualification after a year.

Simson says these programs are part of the solution, but there is work to be done to encourage more people into the industry and retain that workforce. “We need a suite of tools including suitable visa pathways to welcome overseas workers and keep them safe on-farm, plus measures to facilitate people in the country to take up the work. This includes lifting restrictions on work rights for temporary migrants and seniors, and relocation support.”

One of the key outcomes of the Federal Government’s September Jobs and Skills Summit was the formation of a

**These innovations also present opportunities to improve the environmental impact of food production.**

working group (made up of government, industry and unions) to better skill, attract, protect and retain workers in the agricultural industry. This came alongside an increase in the permanent skilled migration rate to 195,000 by 2022-23, with 34,000 places dedicated to the regions, amounting to an increase of 9,000 spots.

Lamb agrees that government initiatives are a good starting point to improve perceptions around agriculture and affordable access to career development. “But I think we can be way more systematic and broad in engaging kids earlier. It’s a fantastic industry, big in tech and working outdoors with a great lifestyle. We should be putting this into our kids’ DNA at a much earlier age, that’s where the opportunity lies.”

If you’re thinking about a relocation or

career move that lands you in agriculture or the communities that support the industry, there’s a lot to consider. You could be entering a brave new world powered by innovative technologies that advances your professional skills in ways that translate to a variety of other roles and industries.

You might take my experiment in farming one step further and completely reassess your priorities to aim for a career and lifestyle centred around supporting the environment and the land. If you do take the leap and make a permanent move, you’ll want to think about how your presence in a regional area impacts that economy and the locals who rely on affordable housing and local industries. Whatever steps you take, be sure to keep the needs of the broader community in mind as you tackle any tree change trials. ■



**“It reduces the stress not only for myself, but also my family, and has allowed me to focus on my studies rather than how my family is going to afford to pay for it.”**

*Annabella Fairbairn,  
Rural Scholarship recipient*

# Updates from the RASF

The RAS Foundation has had an incredibly busy year in 2022, making the most of the attention and affection directed towards the RAS in its bicentenary year.

From Rural Scholarship presentations to attracting new donors and continuing to provide much-needed funds and support to rural and regional communities, the RASF continues to play a vital role in addressing the disparity between city and country.

After receiving DGR status in 2021, a major focus for the RAS Foundation this year has been the \$5 Million Major Giving Campaign. Hosting a celebration dinner on 13 May to launch the campaign and share the achievements of the

Foundation, a special tribute was paid to guest of honour John B Fairfax AO. An incredibly generous \$2 million donation from Mr Fairfax was the driving force behind the campaign, a gift described by Foundation Chair Robyn Clubb as one that highlights his deep commitment to the objectives and longevity of the RAS Foundation. This Campaign will allow the RAS Foundation to do more – to maintain and grow a greater number of regional communities, respond in a more meaningful way to natural disasters, and to expand the reach of the scholarship programs – assisting much larger numbers of those wanting to further their education.

The successful launch saw more donations pledged, leading to a thank you lunch for major supporters hosted by RAS Foundation Patron Mr Dennis Wilson. Taking place at Government House the lunch was also attended by Her Excellency, The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC. The \$5 Million Major Giving Campaign has raised close to \$3 million to date, and the Foundation continues to appreciate the generosity of all who have contributed.

It was another big year for scholarships with the Foundation awarding 69 Rural Scholarships, and a further 10 Wine Study/Wine Professional Development

Scholarships. Regional presentations were held at TOCAL College, Paterson campus and in Wagga Wagga, with 20 scholars presented with their award in front of family, friends and fellow students.

Amongst those receiving their scholarship awards, Annabella Fairbairn said she felt privileged to receive a scholarship and is grateful to the Foundation for easing the financial burden of study,

“It reduces the stress not only for myself, but also my family, and has allowed me to focus on my studies rather than how my family is going to pay for it.”

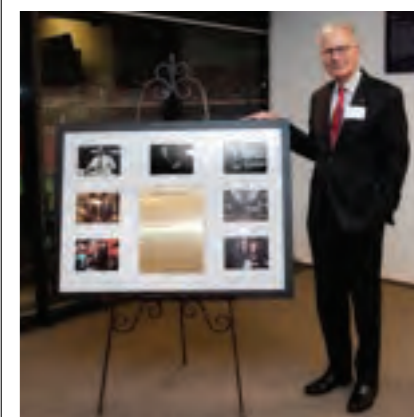
The investment in scholarships continued in September, when RASF Manager, Cecilia Logan, travelled to Tamworth for the National Nuffield Conference, to present the Foundation’s third RAS Foundation Nuffield Scholar Award. This year’s recipient was Fiona Aveyard, a central west NSW lamb producer who plans to help drive the future of the red meat industry by exploring value-add opportunities. Fiona will use her scholarship money to travel to the US, Germany, France, the UK and Ireland to study niche marketing, investment and mechanisation.

After announcing the 2022 Community Futures Grants recipients earlier this year, the Foundation is pleased to announce the recent completion of two projects. Inverell Show Society used their grant to install an on-site portable grandstand. The new structure will be invaluable during the Inverell Show for events that are held away from the main arena and is a much-needed solution to the expensive and labour-intensive task of borrowing and moving in a temporary grandstand each year.

Cooma Pastoral Care have also completed their grant project, installing a new refrigerator in the Cooma Multi-Function Centre, complete with new electrical works and wiring, as well as new barbecue equipment. The Centre is a shared community resource, used for everything from education days to football presentations, and even emergency response situations. The new equipment will help with future fundraising opportunities, and has also helped restore a sense of community, with local suppliers and contractors have coming together to complete the project.

Ending the year with another tremendous achievement, the RAS Foundation has been listed as a registered charity with the NSW

Government’s ‘Return and Earn’ program. The twelve-month bottle recycling program will see the Foundation receive 10 cents for every recycled container, with the money going towards the agriculture plots of regional and rural schools in NSW. Participating schools have been provided with marketing tools and all the information needed to start recycling in their communities. The Foundation has joined in a partnership with Sydney Olympic Park’s Uptown Charlie Café, who promise to provide a full recycling bin every 2 weeks. All RAS Members are encouraged to download the Return and Earn app and set the RAS Foundation as their active payout. ■





# Hearing Voices

The RAS Heritage Centre has over 140 oral history interviews in its collection, recorded over the last 30 years. The audio-only recordings capture the memories of people with long connections to the Show and intimate knowledge of its workings. Our current oral historian, **Vicki Hastrich**, tells us about the process.

WORDS VICKI HASTRICH

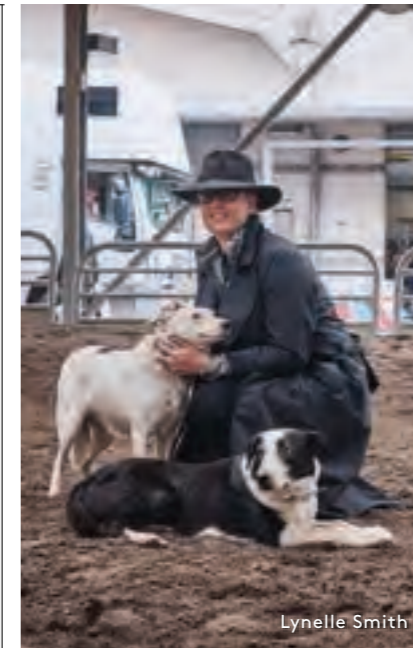
Every time I set up my microphone across the corner of a table in someone's home or an office at the RAS, I'm nervous. I've done my homework. I've thoroughly researched my subject and written a meticulous list of questions and topics as memory-prompts, for me, for my interviewee, to keep our conversation going and make sure we get the important facets of this person's life and times. But I'm still nervous. Because the next couple of hours is a performance, a test for me in real time, and I need to be on my game. I must concentrate on several levels at once: listening intently, staying in the moment and responding appropriately, but also thinking ahead and in overview. The aim is to finish up with an interview that flows, that can balloon out to accommodate anything spontaneous, but which still has a structure and covers ground. I must be ready to step in when required, but otherwise keep out of the way. On the run I must find a way to fit in with this person so they can be their best, most expansive self.

I greet my subject warmly, doing my best not to look nervous at all. As part of the preliminaries, I tell the interviewee that I will identify the recording before I ask the first question to set us in motion. We are ready to begin. I press record. The red light holds steady. I smile confidently at my guest and say: *This is an oral history recording for the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales...*

We're away.

Why on earth did I worry? In no time the conversation hits a good place, the way it always does, because it's always so interesting when people talk about something they love.

I've been privileged to do these kinds of interviews five or six times a year for more than ten years, but I'm only the most recent of the RAS's oral historians. The RAS first began conducting oral history interviews in the early 1990s when it was understood that collecting records to put in the Archive was all well and good, but documents and artefacts don't tell the whole story. Missing from the Archive was a wealth of knowledge contained in the minds and memories of people who had long associations with the organisation, from staff and



Lynelle Smith

exhibitors, through to stewards and councillors. A big change was also coming as the Society prepared to move from its city digs to a new Showground. So many precious stories and traditions were wrapped up in the old place: it was important to secure them before they were lost.

On 21 April, 1993, the very first RAS interview was done with Ron Rheinberger, long-time manager and stalwart of the Southern District Exhibits.



Ken Cameron (on left)

His interviewer was oral historian, Wilma Drane. She held that role for two years before ill-health forced a change and Richard Raxworthy took over. The RAS was lucky to get the esteemed historian. Raxworthy's special expertise was in interviewing trades and working people and he is still famous today in oral history circles for his series of recordings with men who worked on the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Richard's last RAS interviews took place in 1999 and a ten-year hiatus followed before I was given the task. By then, the Society had settled into its new home at Sydney Olympic Park and there were newly-formed memories to gather along with the old.

When conducting these interviews, it's usual to start by asking people to talk about their early life and upbringing, to provide future listeners with a context for understanding the person who is talking. So often in the case of the RAS, that background is directly relevant, with many people having long family

**It's always so interesting when people talk about something they love.**



Neville Russell  
RAS Feedlot Competition Bellata 2017



Grand Parade c1980



Adrian Howie



JK (Ken) Mackay (Ringmaster)

connections to the RAS, and most having attended the Sydney Royal Easter Show as a kid.

Some people are natural raconteurs, colourful and wide-ranging in the topics they touch upon – ring steward, Ken Cameron, is a case in point. His many amusing stories invariably also contain insights into the running of the Show. For example, as young stewards, Ken and another bloke allowed a horse class to be judged early, which caused knock-on effects to the program. The ringmaster, Ken Mackay, balled them out: 'You pair of bastards have just run the ring thirty-five minutes early. Very shortly a phone call is going to come to the Ringmaster and some grandmother who has battled her way from out of Parramatta or Windsor [has] got here to see her granddaughter or grandson

lead those big shaggy buggers and it will be all over and she's coming to speak to me ... Unhappy ringmasters are not to be trifled with – thou shalt not run early!

Other interviewees provide detailed information about practices and processes to do with their agricultural specialties. Dairy cattle guru, Neville Russell, comes to mind as one of those. A little story about watching cows drink from a pipe becomes beautiful in its particularities, providing a telling glimpse into the vigilance and care that goes into animal husbandry at the highest level.

And then there are testimonies that adjust the historical record. At the ceremony marking the last Show at Moore Park, soil from the main arena was scooped into an urn for later reburial

at the new Showground. The urn was put in a safe. A month later the RAS's Head of Entertainment, Lynelle Smith, went to the safe to get out trophies. She recalls thinking, what idiot has put dirt in this urn? 'So I actually threw out the dirt.' When Lynelle finally realised what she'd done, a hasty trip back to Moore Park was arranged to dig up some substitute hallowed ground. Those who solemnly poured it out at the official baptism of the new arena were none the wiser.

After every oral history interview, a transcript is made which is lodged in the Archive along with the recording. The transcripts are easiest to consult for quick reference, but researchers must always be mindful that they only provide an outline. More information lies in the recording. The timbre and intonation, the rise and fall in volume, the irony, the dryness, the belly laugh, the hesitations and silences, the cracks and quavers of emotion: these variations are more than just clues to help us interpret the content – they are the content. Only the voice tells it all.

**Any user of oral histories must also be aware that people's perceptions differ and recollections can be unreliable: no two accounts of the same event will match exactly.**



Ceremony for Last show at Moore Park

Any user of oral histories must also be aware that people's perceptions differ and recollections can be unreliable: no two accounts of the same event will match exactly. Personal attitudes, values and opinions also come into play. For these reasons, the History establishment frowned on oral history when it first emerged as a practice in the mid-20th century. But documented history, though apparently evidence-based and therefore seemingly more 'truthful', also reflects its authors and is a product of prevailing ideas and biases. Over the last 50 years, notions of what constitutes history and who has the right to make it have broadened; history has learnt to pay attention to people it previously ignored. As Australian historian Anna Clark has said, history is not only made at the Governor's table.

The scope and richness of the RAS's oral history collection can be gauged by a wonderful new book, put together by Honorary Councillor and member of the RAS Heritage Committee, Adrian Howie. Called *The Oral Histories of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW:*

**Their commitment to the values of the organisation and its agricultural activities was so genuine and heartfelt it seemed to come from a place of love.**

*The Soul of the Organisation*, the book gathers quotes together under subject headings encompassing every aspect of the Show. It was a colossal effort on Adrian's part to comb through the histories and pick out these gems. What struck him most overall was the strength of people's affection for the Show. Their commitment to the values of the organisation and its agricultural activities was so genuine and heartfelt it seemed to come from a place of love. As the death of the Queen this year has shown us, we deeply value the trusted, service-oriented institutions that endure to accompany us throughout our lives.

And that reminds us that oral history is a mortal business. The tongues of a great many of our contributors have been stilled, but their voices continue to be heard. Together, with the living, they make a rich choral work. ■

**OWN A PIECE OF RAS HISTORY**

The Oral Histories of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW: *The Soul of the Organisation* by Adrian Howie is available for purchase on the RAS website along with other items commemorating 200 years of the RAS.

Scan the QR code below to listen to a sample of RAS oral histories at the RAS's award-winning Virtual Museum.



# Get out amongst it

Many regional agricultural shows are making a return this year and are ready to welcome visitors with open arms. But don't just stop at the Show – do a little exploring and you'll uncover some incredible natural wonders and regional treasures, and you may even stumble across a Sydney Royal producer or medal winner as well.



WORDS MEREDYTH HAYES BELL



## **BULAHDELAH SHOW** 18-19 NOVEMBER 2022

Also visit the Wootton Historical Railway Walk, Old Inn Road Vineyard and take your tastebuds on a farmer-to-fisherman foodie trail.

## **BANGALOW SHOW** 18-19 NOVEMBER 2022

Take some time to visit Minyon Falls in Nightcap National Park, stop by Mullumbimby Farmers Market if you are there on a Friday morning and look out for dolphins as you cruise along the coast and up to Byron Bay.

## **DORRIGO SHOW** 25-26 NOVEMBER 2022

Visit the Skywalk or pack a picnic for any of the stunning walks and trails you can follow in Dorrigo and enjoy Mother Nature at her finest.

## **PAMBULA SHOW** 7 JANUARY 2023

Make sure you have time to spend at the Potoroo Palace Native Animal Sanctuary and schedule an oyster tour as well – you are on Australia's oyster coast. Don't head home without visiting Tathra Oysters – home to the first RAS President's Medal and an untold number of Sydney Royal Gold and Champion ribbons!

If you didn't have enough time to see it all – come back for the Bega Cheese Bega Cup Two Day Carnival from Saturday 28 January 2023 to Sunday 29 January 2023 at Sapphire Coast Turf Club... Bega Cheese are winners of numerous Sydney Royal Champion titles in the Cheese and Dairy Produce Show.

## **BOWRAL SHOW** 14-15 JANUARY 2023

You can't go to Bowral Show and not

stop by Gumnut Patisserie in Bowral, Berrima or Mittagong – just look for the Sydney Royal medal artwork on the front doors and windows! Also, look for award-winning fudge from Fine Taste of Bowral, and bowl one over at the Bradman Museum.

## **CANDELO SHOW** 15 JANUARY 2023

For another beautiful weekend on the Sapphire Coast!

## **ALBION PARK SHOW** 21 JANUARY 2023

Also home to amazing planes and trains museums and exhilarating outdoor adventures, as well as farmers markets and some fine olive oil producers.

## **EUROBODALLA SHOW** 21-22 JANUARY 2023

There is a delicious food trail to savour as well, from olives and cheese to wine and seafood – and you are bound to taste a Sydney Royal winner or two.

## **BUNDARRA SHOW** AND RODEO 27-28 JANUARY 2023

Home to some of Australia's finest wool and the Seasons of New England Expo on 25 March, you can discover breweries, vineyards, distilleries, tea growers, chocolate artisans and more.





**KIAMA SHOW  
27-28 JANUARY 2023**

If a trip to Bundarra on the Northern Tablelands is not to your liking, venture down to Kiama Show and make a point of stopping at Pecora Cheese & Wine in Robertson for some Sydney Royal award-winning Yarrawa cheese – Australia’s first non-cooked Raw Milk cheese. You’ll also find Pecora cheese at Kiama Farmers Market.

**BERRY SHOW  
3-4 FEBRUARY 2023**

A trip to the Shoalhaven region isn’t complete without a donut from the Famous Berry Donut van, some paddock-to-plate fine dining and a walk along Seven Mile Beach.

**RYDAL SHOW  
3-4 FEBRUARY 2023**

If you have made the trip to Rydal, make sure you side track to a winery or two, including Robert Stein Winery, Robert Oatley Vineyards, and Ross Hill Wine – all have produced Sydney Royal medal-winning wines.

**TENTERFIELD SHOW  
3-5 FEBRUARY 2023**

Not only the home of our most famous saddler, but this is also the region to visit if you want to taste wines and sparkling meads and get your hands on some of Australia’s finest Sydney Royal medal-winning beef and lamb including Milly Hill Lamb and Jack’s Creek Wagyu.

**URALLA SHOW  
4 FEBRUARY 2023**

Another stop for some award-winning beef and lamb, craft brews and boutique wineries.

Other towns and Shows to visit in February include;

**Nimmitabel Show**  
4 February 2023

**Glen Innes Show**  
10-12 February 2023

**Dunedoo Show**  
10-11 February 2023

**Cobargo Show**  
10-12 February 2023

**Nowra**  
10-11 February 2023

**Henty**  
11 February 2023

**Crookwell**  
11-12 February 2023

**Oberon**  
11-12 February 2023

**2023 BANJO PATERSON  
AUSTRALIAN POETRY  
FESTIVAL**

And don’t miss the 2023 Banjo Paterson Australian Poetry Festival to be held in Orange from Friday 17 February (Banjo’s birthday) to Sunday 26 February 2023. The Central West region is home to an incredible range of Sydney Royal medal winners, from salsas and relish to wineries, locally grown cider producers, goat cheese artisans and even chocolatiers – it is well worth the trip. ■



**The Bundarra Show  
is home to some of  
Australia’s finest wool.**



# What's on

AT SYDNEY SHOWGROUND | SYDNEYSHOWGROUND.COM.AU

## THE PET SHOW

SATURDAY 6 - SUNDAY 7 NOVEMBER

The Pet Show is all about positive pet ownership, sharing education, entertainment and products for all pets from tails to scales and everything in between. Experience and learn everything you need to know about dogs, cats, fish, birds, reptiles and small animals.

[www.thepetshow.com.au](http://www.thepetshow.com.au)



## RNB FRIDAYS PRESENTS FRIDAYZ LIVE

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER

Australia's biggest party returns this November! Live for the fifth instalment featuring Macklemore, Akon, TLC and more performing hip-hop, RNB and party hits from the 90s to now. Save the date, assemble your crew and picture yourself partying to endless bangers this November.

[www.fridayz.live](http://www.fridayz.live)



## FLUME – PALACES WORLD TOUR

FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER

One of Australia's biggest-selling international touring artists, Flume has just announced he will bring his World Tour to Sydney this November, presented by Triple J.

[www.frontiertouring.com/flume](http://www.frontiertouring.com/flume)



## BOOK FAIR AUSTRALIA

SATURDAY 26 - SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER

Book Fair Australia presents a literary festival that celebrates stories of all genres. A thrilling weekend fit for any book lover, come by with friends and family to explore a world of storytelling right in Sydney.

[www.bookfairaustralia.com](http://www.bookfairaustralia.com)

## FESTIVAL X

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER

Festival X returns in December to kick off the summer festival season with Calvin Harris and Megan Thee Stallion! Festival X will once again represent the best in hip hop and electronic dance music across multiple stages hosting global superstars alongside the hottest local talent.

[www.festivalx.com.au](http://www.festivalx.com.au)

## BIG BASH LEAGUE

Sydney Thunder return for BBL|12 with 4 matches being played at Sydney Showground Stadium.

- Sydney Thunder v Adelaide Strikers - 16 December 8:10pm
- Sydney Thunder v Brisbane Heat - 27 December 7:15pm
- Sydney Thunder v Sydney Sixers - 8 January 2023 7:15pm
- Sydney Thunder v Perth Scorchers - 13 January 2023 6:30pm

[www.sydneythunder.com.au](http://www.sydneythunder.com.au)

## ST JEROME'S LANEWAY FESTIVAL

SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2023

Laneway Festival, the beloved six-city event is back for the first time since 2020 and primed to be better than event with a blockbuster line-up. With a line up including HAIM, Joji, Phoebe Bridgers and more, this is one you don't want to miss!

[www.lanewayfestival.com](http://www.lanewayfestival.com)



## PREGNANCY BABIES & CHILDREN'S EXPO

SATURDAY 11 - SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2023

Australia's largest and best parenting expo bringing you up-to-date expert parenting advice and education. Showcasing big brands, best prices, brand new products launches and the latest innovations all under one roof, it is the expo you can't afford to miss.

[www.pbexpo.com.au/promo/sydney-expo](http://www.pbexpo.com.au/promo/sydney-expo)

## JAY CHOU – CARNIVAL WORLD TOUR

SATURDAY 4 MARCH 2023

The Jay Chou Carnival World Tour celebrates Mando-pop King Jay Chou's more than 20 years of achievement in the music industry. This will be his first Australian concert to be performed at an outdoor stadium. Fans can expect a visually energising representation of his much-loved songs.

[www.teglive.com.au/events/jay-chou](http://www.teglive.com.au/events/jay-chou)

## PALM TREE MUSIC FESTIVAL

FRIDAY 10 MARCH 2023

Get ready for global DJ superstars Tiesto and Kygo to hit Australian shores in March! Experience unmissable sets from both icons, who will be joined by Lost Frequencies, Sam Feldt, Frank Walker and an array of local talented set to be announced. Assemble your crew and get set to make your own memories with this one-of-a-kind music event.

[www.teglive.com.au/events/palm-tree-music-festival](http://www.teglive.com.au/events/palm-tree-music-festival)



## RECIPE

## Gingerbread Tree Stars

There's nothing better than making your own Christmas decorations like these Gingerbread Tree Stars with your little ones. Of course these are lovely gingerbread biscuits in their own right and you can choose any shape you like, but there's something very special about making stars to hang on the tree.

MAKES APPROX. 30

PREPARATION 20 MINUTES

COOKING 15 MINUTES

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons golden syrup
- 2 tablespoons soft brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 120 g unsalted butter
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1½ cups (225 g) plain flour

## METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan-forced 160°C). Grease a large baking tray.

Combine the golden syrup, sugar, spices and 1 teaspoon water in a small saucepan and stir constantly over medium heat until the syrup melts. Bring to the boil, then remove from the heat and add the butter, bicarbonate of soda and baking powder. Stir until clear and smooth. Blend this hot mixture into the flour until a dough is formed.

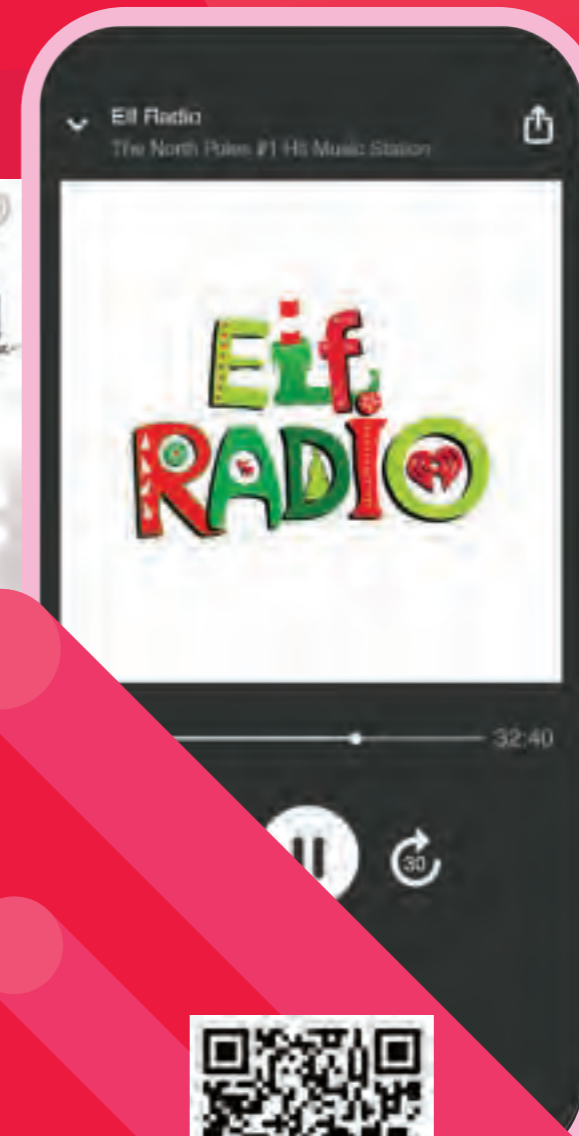
Roll out the dough on a floured board to a thickness of about 6 mm. Refrigerate for 10 minutes, then using an 8 cm star cutter, press out stars. Put the end of a dead match or piece of straw where you want a hole to be (to hang the biscuit from).

Place on the tray and bake for about 10 minutes or until the biscuits are golden brown. ■



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Royal Agricultural Society of NSW