



MEDIA RELEASE

The Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania

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Uncertain times for Tasmanian agricultural shows

The Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania (RAST) is warning of highly uncertain times for Tasmanian agricultural shows during the Coronavirus restrictions imposed by the state and federal governments.

There are 24 annual agricultural shows in Tasmania, and as the largest, the Royal Hobart Show provides the necessary inputs to allow most other shows to proceed, from carnival rides and showbags, to competitive entries and entertainment.

The Society is a member of Agricultural Shows Australia (ASA) which has put an urgent submission to the federal government for a Recovery and Support Package for all the nation's agricultural shows to ensure they can survive beyond Coronavirus.

"In Tasmania our 24 shows are part of the rural and urban landscape, and we are very much a part of the local and regional economies", said Scott Gadd, CEO of the RAST.

"Yet, during the Coronavirus restrictions imposed by government, the RAST has seen its normal calendar of annual events evaporate. It is unlikely to return to a positive cash flow until next year at the earliest".

Agricultural Shows Australia, representing royal and country shows across the country, has released a statement to support its call for help, estimating that Australian agricultural shows contribute approximately \$1 billion to the national economy. (*Visit our website for today's ASA news release: www.hobartshowground.com.au*)

"The RAST has had severe limitations placed on its operations by governments in response to Coronavirus; so together with Australia's other agricultural show organisations, we're seeking assistance from the federal government to ensure our shows can survive".

The RAST does not meet the criteria for state assistance for tourism, even though it operates one of Tasmania's largest motorhome and caravan parks. Similarly, it does not meet state criteria for arts assistance, although the Royal Hobart Show mounts Tasmania's largest annual community art exhibitions.

"As an instance of our predicament, the Society spent \$40,000 this year to employ an expert to take one of our events, the nationally recognised Tasmanian Fine Food Awards, to a new level. As national entries were about to open, we were forced to cancel the event entirely".

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The Society will need to make a decision before June 1 on whether or not the Royal Hobart Show can proceed this October.

Irrespective of the immediate challenges created by the Coronavirus response, the Society is pressing ahead with planning for the redevelopment of the Hobart Showground. Worth up to \$200 million, this project is now even more compelling, providing an entirely new public use precinct in Hobart's northern suburbs.

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