



An Updated Constitution

A special meeting of members of the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania was held recently which approved an updated Constitution for the organisation.

The amended Constitution means the governance of the Society now has a foundation embedded in modern law. It also preserves the Society's key traditional roles within the community: promoting the vital Tasmanian agricultural sector and its role in the everyday lives of Tasmanians and encouraging excellence in food and wine production.

The amended Constitution strengthens directorship of the Board in several ways. Potential new directors should have served in a Board position for a minimum of two years in a similar or larger organisation. The Constitution also allows for three direct appointments to the nine-member Board based on the proven skills they may bring to the Board.

For the first time in the nearly 200 years of the Society, the Constitution now introduces the concept of remuneration for the tasks carried out by directors and establishes a Board position of Society Treasurer.

The previous Constitution had not been updated in several decades. As we look to the future, the projected growth of the Society through the proposed Showground redevelopment made it clear that a more contemporary Constitution was required to deal with the complex issues surrounding the redevelopment, as well as governing the organisation through its many other activities.

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200 Years Merchandise

A special Royal Hobart Show is in planning for next year – the 200th year of agricultural showing in Hobart, together with a series of lead up activities to commemorate Australia’s oldest agricultural Show and one of the nation’s oldest institutions, the RAST.

Specially commissioned ties and scarves are now available for order.

Email exec@hobartshowground.com.au if you wish to place an order, alternatively, you can call the office on: 62 72 68 12.



Spotlight Construction

The development of the Spotlight retail centre on Showground land leased from the Society is moving ahead quickly.

Road widening on Howard Rd is expected to be complete before the end of this year with construction to begin early next year.

The Spotlight centre will include an Anaconda store, two other retail outlets, and a café. If construction goes to plan it should be open in the second half of 2021



Leaky roof replaced thanks to State support

It feels like a new building. That's the reaction of Society staff working in the Showground's main administration building following works carried out under the Tasmanian Community Fund.

The Fund recognises the ongoing need for community infrastructure to provide places for the community to participate, build connection and to learn. The Fund is administered by State Growth which allocated \$160,000 so that repairs could be conducted to the Society's administration building. This work included new roofing to replace the leaky old roofing structure, and new windows for the office.

The Society thanks the TCF for its commitment to the upgrading and acknowledges the importance of the State Government's Fund in supporting community organisations.

Showground as an emergency relief centre

The Society is planning the redevelopment of the Hobart Showground to include a relief centre role for people and animals during times of civil emergency. There is now no dedicated centre to fulfill this role in southern Tasmania.

The bushfire emergency of 2013 illustrated the Showground's versatility as a haven from disaster. We learnt then that people will often put themselves in harm's way to protect their animals and livestock. This lesson was repeated earlier this year when the disastrous mainland bushfires saw country showgrounds used as a haven for people and their animals.

Now the Glenorchy City Council has approached the Showground to sign an MOU to fulfil such a role over the coming Tasmanian bushfire season, and we are waiting to commence a dialogue with the Council along these lines.



Royal Hobart Wine Show 2020

A scaled back, COVID-safe Royal Hobart Wine Show last month proved to be a winner.

The Show attracted just over 500 entries from across Australia at a time when organisers were expecting just 300 entries due to the twin set-backs of Coronavirus and bushfires on the mainland. Most entries came from South Australia followed by Tasmania. Yet, apart from the Best Riesling, the other five trophy winners were Tasmanian wines.

An exceptional performance by the Tasmanian wine industry and a credit to a sector which increasingly punches above its weight on the Australian wine scene. Check out our winners at hobartshowground.com.au.

Due to COVID-19, we were unable to hold the usual awards dinner, which is always a big event in the wine calendar. Instead, winners were announced in a Face Book Live Streaming event – a format which seemed to work very well and gained hundreds of viewers. Hopefully next year, we can return to a full wine show complete with expanded judging panels, and interstate and international wine judges.

On behalf of our entrants and the wine industry, the Society thanks our sponsors who returned in a difficult economic period to support both this event and through it, the wine industry.

Events in November

Our calendar is rich with events at the Showground.

In recent weeks we have had two major activities at the Showground: the DeStash Market, which was organised by the RAST Creative Crafts Committee, and the Evolution Animal Care Hobart Show which was a two-day equestrian event featuring everything from Fashions on the Field to retired racehorses and greyhounds.

Both events attracted strong support from the community, as did two animal shows late last month, a cavies show and a goat show. Carols for Kids, a charity event hosted by Jordon King is taking place in the coming weeks. All proceeds going to the Royal Hobart Hospital children's ward.



Historic Milestone Celebrated

The RAST Board convened an informal meeting at the Central Hotel (formerly the Ship Inn) in Hobart on the 3rd December 2020 to commemorate the fact that exactly 200 years earlier at the same location a meeting was held by stock and land holders in 1821 to form an agricultural society and they wrote to the Lieutenant Governor that very day to seek his permission to hold a public meeting “for the purpose of establishing a Society, on the Principle of those existing in the Mother Country.”

The protection of property, prosecution of offenders, remuneration to sufferers, the establishment of a cattle show, the distribution of bounties to deserving servants, and “the Protection and Encouragement of Agricultural Pursuits in general” were the chief aims of those promoting the concept of an agricultural society.

The Lieutenant Governor, William Sorell, was very supportive and responded on that same day. “...the great additional Protection to be expected from a Local Court of Criminal Judicature, the general Adoption of more systemic Care and Superintendence with respect to Stock, and the Abandonment of the loose System of Grazing, which too much prevails, might be relied on, as a means not only of detecting, but preventing Robbery; and nothing, I am persuaded, would tend, more to this end than the Improvement which it will be so much in the Power of an Agricultural Association to inculcate and promote. Your most obedient, faithful, Servant, WM, SORELL”.

Subsequently the Van Dieman’s Land Agricultural Society was established on the 1st January 1822 and is now known as the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania. A special print of the newspaper article noting the meeting back in 1821 was presented to the hotel’s owner, Mr Paul Jubb by RAST President Mr Peter Spotswood.

