

CULTIVATE WA

THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA September 2014 Volume 4

LEADERS IN THE FIELD

The men at the top of the RAS



RAS CONCEPT PLAN

THE FUTURE OF THE SHOWGROUND UNVEILED

HIGH-TECH HARVEST

NEW EXHIBIT DISPLAYS TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE





CULTIVATE WA

September 2014 | Volume 4

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VIEW FROM THE TOP

Welcome to the Show edition of our magazine, Cultivate WA. As the new president of the Royal Agricultural Society of WA I am looking forward to keeping education at the core of our organisation.

Our new Farmtech exhibit, which you can read about in these pages, will showcase how modern and progressive our farmers are.

See you at the Show!

Dr Rob Wilson, President
The RAS of WA

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ON WITH THE SHOW

The youngest ever CEO of the Royal Agricultural Society, father-of-two Peter Cooper, has a clear vision for his role in the evolving organisation

From a youngster with vague ambitions to a high-flier within private and government enterprises, the Royal Agricultural Society's new CEO Peter Cooper has found success through his willingness to adapt and turn his hand to any task on offer.

Having spent three years as chief operating officer, Mr Cooper is no stranger to the RAS. Following the retirement of former CEO Martin Molony, he was keen to step up and take on the task of steering the RAS through changing times.

With an MBA and MBEAM (Asset Engineering) from the University of WA and a wide background of corporate management experience behind him, Mr Cooper is well-prepared to be at the frontline of the RAS.

Mr Cooper believes he is in an ideal situation to position agriculture and the Perth Royal Show to play a pivotal role within society.

"As far as the Show goes, we will focus on careful change," he says.

"Every year about 450,000 people come through the Claremont Showground gates to celebrate everything West Australian.

"The RAS is in a unique position to be able to promote the ever-increasing importance of agriculture,

particularly to those who have little connection with the land and where their food is sourced.

"For many city children the Show is the first experience they have of farming.

"Following research undertaken by the RAS we know only about two per cent of visitors to the event are from an agricultural background.

"How good is it that, as an organisation, we can improve that figure."

With education as the core of the RAS, Mr Cooper says last year's Farm 2 Food exhibit has pointed the way ahead.

"It was a massive success. When an exhibit is attracting more than 22,000 visitors daily you know you are on the right track!"

The impact of that display has placed a full-throttle effect on this year's exhibits.

"This year will see greater interactive displays which will highlight the use of technology used on-farm in making key decisions and improving efficiencies in cereal and livestock production," he says.

"This in turn will promote better understanding of the origin of our food, be instrumental in closing the farm and urban divide, command a greater respect

and appreciation for our WA farmers and highlight sophisticated 21st century technology and show how farmers use this equipment to grow crops and livestock for food.”

At 42, Mr Cooper is a lot younger than his predecessors and the task of paving the way for the RAS to move into the future has to a large extent been placed at his door.

Mr Cooper’s varied background shows he is not afraid of change and is flexible enough to make the most of any situation.

As a 17-year-old he worked in fast food outlets until he left school to study hospitality and tourism. At 19 he went to a Broome resort chasing a job as a pool cleaner.

On the bus to Broome he met his future wife Marnie. In Broome he ended up doing bar work then left for Darwin to pursue a job at the Sheraton Hotel.

“It took two days to get there and I then found out the hotel was up for sale and there was no job.”

Undeterred, Mr Cooper took casual jobs in hospitality before following Marnie to Sydney where she joined the former Ansett airline.

“Any development or any key initiative we undertake will need to demonstrate where it adds value to the Show.”

Meanwhile, he worked in various roles at the Sheraton Hotel. When the hotel was sold and another bought at Darling Harbour, Mr Cooper was elevated to special projects manager, responsible for reviewing structures within the organisation and implementing new systems.

When the call came from the conglomerate Westfield to move west as facilities manager, Mr Cooper took it. His experience led to him taking various positions within Carousel, Whitfords and Galleria shopping centres.

Mr Cooper then moved to the Perth Market Authority as general manager before moving to the RAS.

As CEO he sees his key role as moving the RAS forward to ensure it is in step with modern practices.

“As a not-for-profit organisation it is essential the fiscal element of the society is firmly in place,” he says.

“The commercial reality of anything the RAS does is to make enough money from the development of part of the site to service the debt – whatever that is likely to be – to give us the surplus for the next stage of the redevelopment.

“We will look at multiple funding models. You can have partnerships with government, private investment, financial institutions; the list goes on... to enable the things you need to do.”

For now, Mr Cooper is concentrating on setting systems and processes in place to ensure the internal effectiveness of the organisation.

“We will be putting into place new financial management systems, new software and new computerised maintenance and risk systems.

“Externally, we will be driving the realistic development of the organisation, with a road map for the next 20 years.

“We will be devising ways forward and capitalising on opportunities as a result of having a clear vision, identifying the needs and the partnerships which will lead to improved facilities, with the key objective of delivering value to the Perth Royal Show.

“Any development or any key initiative we undertake will need to demonstrate where it adds value to the Show.

“It is not about changing the function of the Show, it is the format that we can make the old into the new. There are a lot of opportunities out there in terms of redevelopment that we can take advantage of.”

Like most West Australians, Mr Cooper has fond memories of growing up with the Show.

“I remember as a kid coming to the Show and my family are ardent supporters of this iconic event, which is an important part of the fabric of WA’s community,” he says.

“Being CEO and a father of two young children leaves me well aware I am fortunate enough to be in a responsible and ideal situation to make a difference.”

PLAY WINS PRAISE

A new play commissioned by the RAS gives WA primary schoolchildren an insight into the wonderful world of agriculture

After months of rehearsals a new play “The Country Life” is taking primary schools around Perth by storm as it tours throughout term three in the lead-up to the IGA Perth Royal Show.

As part of the RAS’ FarmED program, the play uses catchy tunes, energetic choreography, puppetry and a fun story-line to raise awareness of where our food comes from.



Around 25 children gathered at Claremont Showground in the July school holidays to watch a full dress rehearsal of the 45-minute play, funded by the RAS and written and directed by Kathy Prosser of Possum Music.

Featuring three energetic and talented young performers, Kris Kingwell, Kimberley Harris and Thomas Moir (pictured), it follows the journey of a city girl, Janet, as she learns about different aspects of farming.

“Most of the kids watching the show will be from the city and Janet’s character gives them someone they can connect and relate to,” Mrs Prosser said.

“The challenge was bringing in technical information in a way that was entertaining and engaging.”

Free to schools, the FarmEd program covers a variety of farming topics including sustainability, food production and security, technology and careers in agriculture. The program has so far reached 50,000 children in 125 schools State wide.

PASTORAL PASSION

The achievements of two leading lights of the WA agricultural industry have been celebrated with their induction into the RAS Hall of Fame

Dawson Bradford, renowned for his work within the lamb industry, and agricultural scientist Professor Clive Francis, have been inducted into the RAS Hall of Fame.

Popanyinning farmer Dawson Bradford is a national leader within the prime lamb industry. At his poll dorset stud he adopted groundbreaking genetic improvements and stock from his Hillcroft farm stud produces prime lamb sires that are rated in the top one per cent within Australia.

Mr Bradford also played a large part in early research on straw-based sheltered housing for pigs, now used throughout the industry.

Agricultural scientist Professor Clive Francis (1938-2012) led the field when it came to the development of subterranean clover. He facilitated the collection of seed samples from around the world to expand Australia’s capability for biodiversity.

This pioneering man devised a groundbreaking breeding program for more than 20 varieties of subterranean clover, catapulting his name into the history of contributions of major scientific firsts that make WA farming the most efficient in a mediterranean zone climate.

Established in 1999 under the auspices of the RAS, the Agricultural Hall of Fame pays tribute to the men and women who have had significant impact on agriculture, past, present and future.

Portraits can be seen at the David Buttfield House at the Showground and will be on display during the IGA Perth Royal Show.

Pictured: (l-r) Professor Clive Francis’ widow Margaret, former WA Governor Malcolm McCusker and Dawson Bradford



IN TUNE WITH THE FUTURE

With a finger on the pulse of the RAS and an extensive background in agriculture and corporate agribusiness, the recently elected RAS president Dr Rob Wilson is set to lead the not-for-profit business into a thriving and profitable arena

In 2012 the RAS initiated a project to define the future of Claremont Showground, the RAS and the IGA Perth Royal Show to ensure its footprint extends into the next 100 years.

For the incoming RAS president Dr Rob Wilson, the challenge will be to drive this change and improvement without compromising on two important areas.

“One is the vision of the RAS – we need to remain clear and focused on all aspects of agriculture,” he says.

“The second is not to lose sight of the historical context of the organisation.”

Education remains high on the agenda. Last year’s highly successful Farm 2 Food interactive and educational exhibit will be extended this year to showcase the technological side of farming.

“WA farmers are the best dry land farmers in the world and are using some of the most sophisticated, high-tech processes across many areas of agriculture,” Dr Wilson says.

“The RAS is intending to show how progressive and modern our farmers are.

“The technology to be exhibited in future Shows will be centred around productivity and sustainability, land care and land management, animal production and welfare and consumer interest in quality and safe food practices.”

Dr Wilson is keen to instigate the concept plan for the creation of modern world-class facilities that accommodate education, commercial and community needs while preserving the Showground’s heritage.

Dr Wilson says part of the redevelopment of the Showground should include a permanent farming display on-site.

“This may showcase a working farm; the Scitech for agriculture!

“We might have crops growing, a demonstration of precision farming techniques, farm animals, nursery and a farmer on site for school and general public visits.

“At the same time, there would be opportunity for an entertainment hub for the community with facilities for exhibitions, concerts and seminars.

“We could have street music and theatre and pop-up farm to food markets throughout the year – the potential is unlimited.”

Dr Wilson says the Showground could also inform and encourage other agricultural-related pursuits such as recycling, renewable energies, soil, health, horticulture and forestry.

He also has ambitions for the RAS Art Awards.

“The RAS is intending to show how progressive and modern our farmers are.”

“We intend to promote the art competitions to improve the recognition of the RAS Art Awards to the point where the art exhibition becomes one of WA’s top galleries,” he says.

“We will be investigating the areas where the RAS can improve and earn sufficient income from to ensure the RAS is sustainable and profitable for the next 100 years,” says Dr Wilson.

He certainly has the ‘agricultural pedigree’ to lead by example.

After earning a PhD and MBA, Dr Wilson moved from Victoria to WA to lead and improve production within the pig industry.

He has extensive and varied experience as a consultant on animal nutrition, genetics, animal husbandry, production, research and development, management, technology transfer and environmental and waste management systems, as well as the practical aspects of running large intensive animal production facilities.

In 2007 he was awarded membership of the general division of the Order of Australia for service to the pork industry, including contributing to business development and market expansion and improving farm management practices to protect the environment.

When he is not working at the frontline of the agricultural industry or representing the RAS as the organisation’s president, Dr Wilson indulges his passion for folk music.

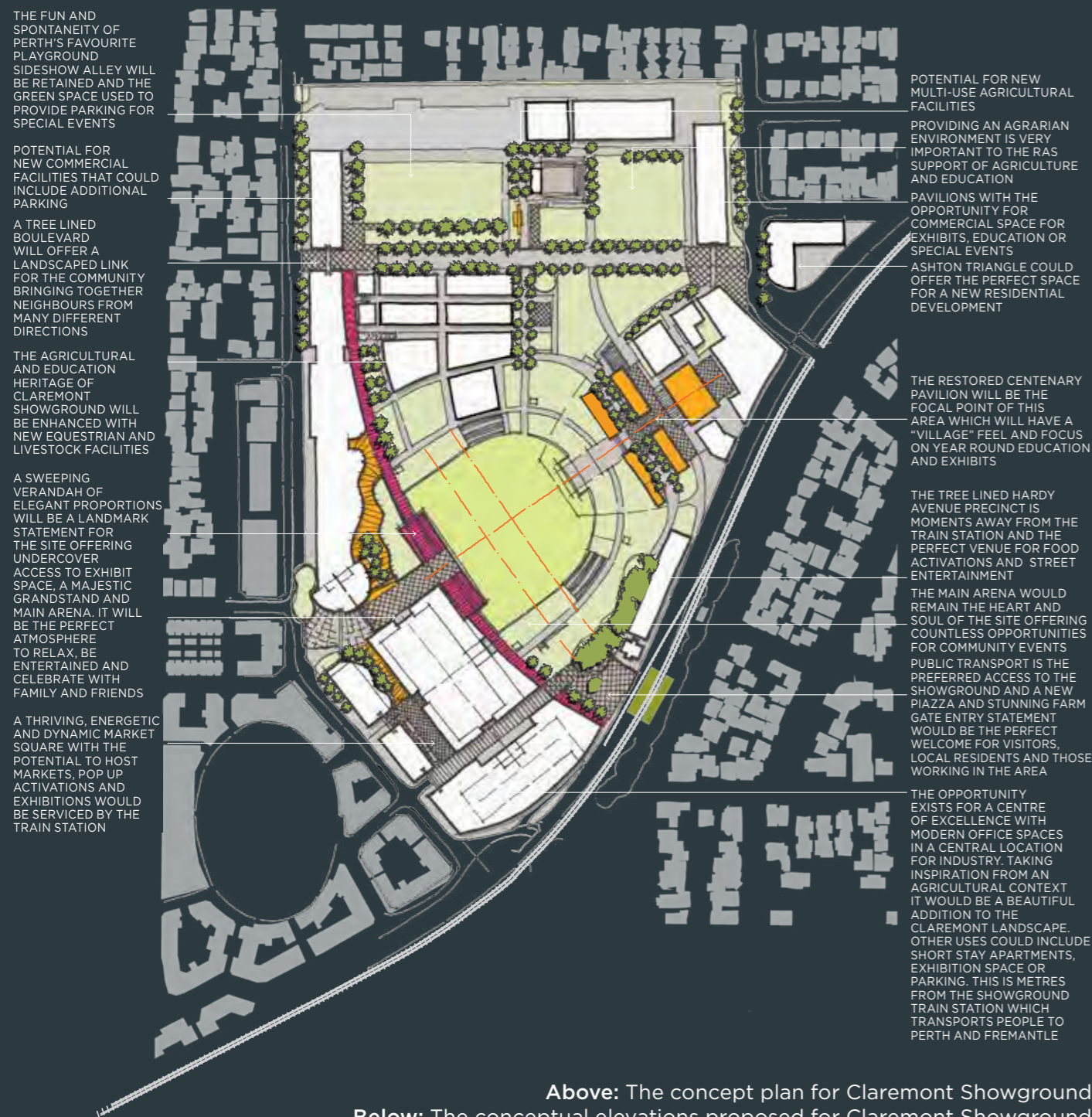
Along with his wife Lola, a former air stewardess and teacher of children with disabilities, the couple can be found enjoying festivals and concerts.

“I enjoy the traditional folk music and have a large and eclectic record collection of Celtic music, Australian bush music and early American country and blues,” Dr Wilson reveals.

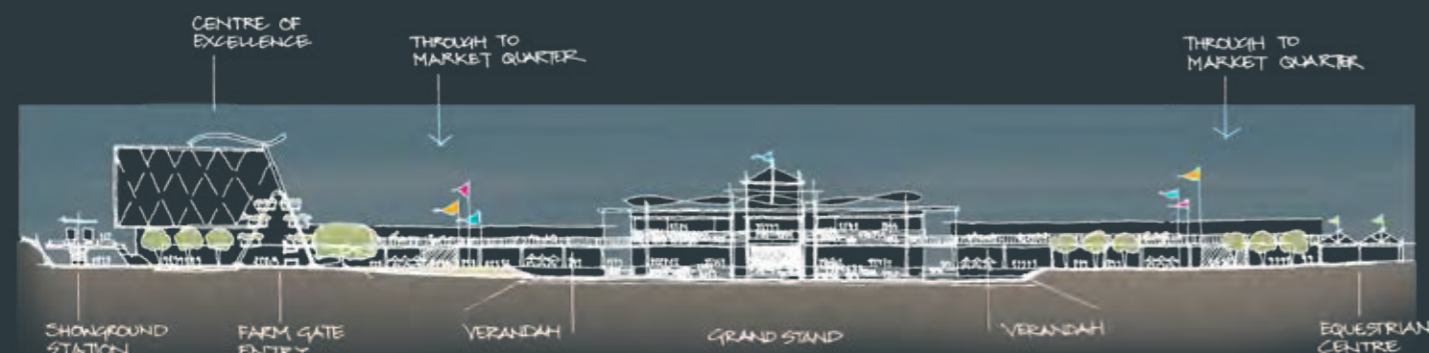
He also has a talent for mastering musical instruments. “I can play almost anything with strings, though now I am more of a collector of old and rare vintage guitars, mandolins and ukuleles, rather than an active musician.”

With his varied background Dr Wilson clearly has many strings to his bow – stay tuned...





Above: The concept plan for Claremont Showground
Below: The conceptual elevations proposed for Claremont Showground



RAS APPROVES CONCEPT PLAN

A CONCEPT PLAN WHICH BRINGS TOGETHER THE HERITAGE OF CLAREMONT SHOWGROUND'S AGRICULTURAL HISTORY AS WELL AS PROVIDING INSPIRING MODERN FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACES FOR COMMUNITY ACCESS HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF WA

According to president Dr Rob Wilson, the concept plan brings a step closer the RAS vision of adding value to Claremont Showground and to the State of WA especially from a year round educational perspective.

The RAS mission to rejuvenate Claremont Showground began in 2012 with a series of workshops and focus groups that asked stakeholders what they wanted from the site in the future. Stakeholders, including local residents, were clear about two things. The Showground must be retained as an asset for the community and it must remain the home of the iconic Perth Royal Show. WA firm of architects Hames Sharley was appointed in October 2013 and over a number of months the concept took shape.

"We are very excited by this latest milestone and we are confident that government, industry and the community of WA will view it positively."

Dr Wilson said the RAS was presented initially with three options all of which had some great elements but with none achieving the right balance. Further work was undertaken before the RAS gave its seal of approval.

The concept plan incorporates an undercover verandah of elegant proportions which overlooks the main arena and provides access to exhibit facilities, a new grandstand, the potential for a

living farm gate entry statement, a year round education hub, flexibility for a range of events and pop up activations as well as the agrarian environment so important to the RAS support of agriculture and education in WA.

"We are very excited by this latest milestone and we are confident that government, industry and the community of WA will view it positively."

Dr Wilson said the next step for the RAS was communicating the opportunities presented by the concept plan and seeking feedback from all stakeholders.

"We want to know what people think and we want to make sure that we get this right. We are taking a long term view – one that will stretch between 15 to 20 years with the first stage completed within five years.

"This will give us the ability to look at how we fund the project elements. We are eager to explore synergies with potential partners," explains Dr Wilson who is adamant the core objective of the plan is education about agriculture.

"We want the Showground to seamlessly integrate and engage with the community and visibly connect the city to education about agriculture."

Dr Wilson said the concept plan would provide a lasting legacy for the people of WA and ensure that the State's largest community event, the Perth Royal Show, remained in Claremont as a platform for education and a benchmark of agricultural and industry excellence.



PEARL OF THE NORTH

FROM THE WHITE SANDS OF CABLE BEACH TO MAGNIFICENT WILDERNESS REGIONS, BROOME ENTICES ALL THOSE WHO YEARN FOR WARMTH, RELAXATION, ADVENTURE, FUN AND A UNIQUE LIFESTYLE

As the Guest Town at this year's IGA Perth Royal Show, the pristine and colourful charms of Broome will be under the spotlight - from art to astronomy, food and beer to tourism... visitors to the exhibit will be able to see all of the things that make this region so enticing.

Among the featured highlights will be one business that has contributed for more than 65 years to the region's economy and tourism, Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm.

This family-owned business, founded by Dean Brown in 1946, has become one of the most internationally recognised enterprises for cultured pearls.

It is famed for the unique find of what is believed to be the largest cultured pearl in the world, which will be on display under heavy security at the Broome Guest Town.

This gem, weighing 156g and measuring 22.24mm, is considered to be priceless.

The pearl was one of a bumper crop harvested at Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm in 2004.

***Watch out for a chance to win the Ultimate Broome Getaway at the Guest Town.**

James Brown, third generation pearl farmer, marine biologist, founder of the Kimberley Marine Research Centre and general manager of Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm, recalls the find well.

"I was one of three technicians harvesting in that crop of pearls," he says.

"The entire crop was just amazing. The priceless tag is, as far we know, undisputed. Although we have been offered \$1,000,000 for that South Sea pearl, it will remain in the family.

The rare find was the result of 50 years of hard work, cultured pearl technique and reliance upon the environment.

With a hatchery farm boasting 50,000 seeded shells, Mr Brown reveals growing a pearl is a lengthy and sometimes financially risky business.

"A pearl's life starts two years earlier when it is first seeded. Having harvested the pearl, it will take another two years after reseeded before the next harvest. If we are extremely lucky, we are able to extract a third pearl two years after that.

"Every time you reseed a shell, the quality drops. We will be lucky to get 80 per cent saleable pearls out of a crop and out of that figure, only about 20 per cent will be round and about five to 10 per cent of them will be A grade gem quality."

Situated at the top of the Dampier Peninsula overlooking the pristine bay, this slick operation is Australia's oldest pearl farm and boasts a history rich in pioneering spirit.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, company founder Dean Brown made his way to the Kimberley, fishing for the South Sea oysters *pinctada maxima*.

Recognising an opportunity to establish a cultured pearl industry Dean persuaded his son Lyndon to join him before the youngest son, Bruce, became involved.

It was Lyndon who became the Australian innovator of pearl seeding, having worked out how to graft the oyster.

The progression of the company was boosted when the pearl farm began an association with a wholesale distribution company, and soon Cygnet Bay pearls were sought-after worldwide.

Mr Brown has spearheaded the company into tourism and is involved in feasibility studies into the viability of rock oysters for edible oysters.

"We are the first commercial pearling farm to open our doors to the public and have been pouring investment into the farm for the past four to five years," he says.

"People are able to come to the farm and pick their own loose pearl that has been harvested from the bay in front of them".

"This project has been bringing a lot of people to the region. Tourism and pearling mix perfectly and in many ways we are trying to replicate what the cellar door did to the wine industry."

A COUNTRY OF CONTRASTS...

India, as our Guest Nation, promises a kaleidoscope of colour, culture, tourism, products, business, education and entertainment offered by more than 65 participating Indian companies.

Organised by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) and the Consulate General of India, showgoers will have the opportunity to sample the delights of Indian art and culture.

India's status as the world's second largest producer of food and one of the world's largest producers of textiles and garments will be highlighted. The special daily attractions will include a food festival to fire up your taste buds, wine tastings, soul-stirring music and dance programs, fashion shows and product demonstrations.

Handicrafts, garments, home textiles, organic clothing, leather products, gems and jewellery, candles and fragrance diffusers will be among the products on display.

The participation of Indian companies is expected to strengthen trading ties with WA.

The ITPO says recent years have seen remarkable growth in the trading relationship with Australia.

"India offers enormous opportunities for West Australians to import consumer products," the organisation states.

"ITPO is committed to showcasing excellence achieved by the country in diverse fields, especially trade and commerce."

HIGH-TECH HARVEST

Keen to build on the educational aspects of the IGA Perth Royal Show, this year the RAS will wow showgoers with a pavilion displaying technological aspects of life on the land



Last year's popular Farm 2 Food exhibit aimed to close the farm and urban divide and build knowledge and appreciation of the importance of agriculture. The success of this exhibit with children and their parents will this year see it expanded in exciting new ways.

The RAS has developed an experience that will be the benchmark for future exhibits.

The new Farmtech exhibition leads families on a journey of discovery to find out how technology is used by farmers.

Exciting interactive displays will demonstrate the use of technology on farms in making key decisions and improving efficiencies in cereal and livestock production.

Eye-opening, hands-on experiences will showcase how farmers use sophisticated technology to grow crops and livestock for food.

Displays will demonstrate the evolution of farm machinery and methods and show how weather affects crops and livestock production and the technology that helps farmers to plan ahead.

On-farm use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) has been lauded as the next quantum step in precision agriculture and it will be on display at the Show.

A specialist UAV pilot will be on hand to explain the technology and future of UAVs within agriculture. Kids will then be able to have a go using a simulator with a joy stick and screen.

Another major attraction will be a New Holland tractor in which the children can sit and explore the electronics and computer equipment, before trying out their own neat piece of farm machinery - toy pedal tractors with a farm implement attached.

Like a farmer using a tractor with GPS for guidance, the young drivers pedal around keeping within lines on the ground.

Having completed the pattern the youngsters will move over to an auto steer simulator with a screen, steering wheel and GPS system. Wicked!

The key message from these activities is that by using this equipment within a tractor there is greater accuracy which ultimately reduces input costs and increase yield for production.

The fun keeps on coming as kids move into a sheep crush with an inbuilt ear tag scanner. Wearing a headband with sheep ears and an electronic identification device (EID) they will be drafted into a pen depending on their 'fleece' micron.

A wireless weather station with a colour LCD screen will see participants using tools such as a hairdryer to increase the temperature, and a hand fan to observe a change in wind direction and speed on the screen.

Last but by no means least, the landmarks in farm mechanisation display will give visitors the opportunity to see how agricultural machinery has grown progressively larger.

By the end of the exhibit they will have seen 21st century farming at its best!



PAWS IN MOTION

EVERY YEAR AUDIENCES ARE 'ROCKED TO THE BEAT' AS TALENTED DANCERS TAKE TO THE FLOOR AT THE IGA PERTH ROYAL SHOW. WITH DETAILED PRECISION EACH PERFORMER DEMONSTRATES A SKILLFUL, CHOREOGRAPHED PRESENTATION TO MUSIC, INSPIRING RAPTUROUS APPLAUSE

DANCES WITH DOGS

It is little wonder spectators are awestruck: the dancers are prancing pooches! The popular Dancing with Dogs has been part of the Show's competitions since its introduction by dog handler and trainer, Jill Houston, in 2010.

Mrs Houston, who left the UK for warmer climes in 1980, has spent most of her adult life training and working with dogs.

A former horse riding instructor, she started training dogs in 1964, the year after she married her chef husband Patrick.

"As a child I was never allowed to have dogs at home so when I married Patrick a dog was the first thing I bought," chuckled Mrs Houston who opted for a Great Dane.

"I joined dog clubs and a whole world opened."

That world has seen this handler, trainer and judge not only take on other nations competitively but also introduce Dancing with Dogs to Australia.

"With basic obedience skills, any dog can learn to strut their stuff," says Mrs Houston, who operates from the family's Upper Swan home.

The canine dance moves were learned from the UK 'leader of the pack' Mary Ray, famed for claiming umpteen trophies at the famous Crufts Dog Show.

"Mary Ray is acknowledged as the leading expert on heelwork to music or Dancing with Dogs," says Mrs Houston, who became friends with the internationally renowned dog trainer while living and participating in competitions in the UK.

Not only has her German Shepherd Sabre Potterspride of Brynbank been named reserve champion in the obedience dog championships at Crufts,

Mrs Houston recently took her skills to the Crufts International Freestyle competition, representing Australia along with Mrs Ray's dog Ozzie.

"We did a routine to Waltzing Matilda and Thank God I'm a Country Boy. There were 16 countries competing and the Aussies in the crowd cheered us on. We came 10th and I had a blast."

An accredited obedience judge, Mrs Houston runs a thriving boarding kennel, obedience club and demonstration team of doggie dancers, is a breeder of Border Collies and successful competitor in obedience and agility competitions.

"It has only been the last five years that Dancing with Dogs, which is also called freestyle, obedience or heelwork to music, has entered the competition scene," says Mrs Houston.

"Not only is it a fun thing to do but it requires innovation and creativity as well as an excellent rapport between the handler and the dog. The routine not only moves in time to the music but interprets the music by telling a story. The style of dance and music varies from team to team."

There is one aspect that never wavers - it is a fantastic spectator sport.

"Although it has only been going for a relatively short time within the world of canine competitions, it has been really successful," says Mrs Houston who, together with daughter Amanda, can still be seen competing in major classes.

"The Royal Show is the premier event. The crowds love watching the dogs having fun, bopping to Michael Jackson, Elvis and Cliff Richard, to name a few artists."

Not surprisingly, Mrs Houston's training skills are much in demand. "We get the puppies at eight weeks old and train them as good citizens from the start," she says.

"Dancing with Dogs is obedience-based. We tend to walk the dogs for an hour twice a day and during the morning teach them obedience. They are given high-value rewards such as chicken, liver and bacon treats, so everything is carried out in a positive way and they don't feel as if they are working.

"Generally we break down the tricks into small parts for rapid success. If we get what we want in the first couple of minutes, we stop the training. If we need to keep going we will, but for no more than 15 minutes with one dog and that would be the absolute max.

DANCES WITH DOGS

"In the ring we are not allowed to speak to the dogs for fear of elimination and a zero score, so they have to learn hand signals.

"They have to learn tricks too, such as roll over, skipping, crawl, weaving through your legs, standing on their hind legs and walking backwards for the handler. We also use a variety of props, depending on the choreography.

"The routine can go from one minute to a maximum of four minutes. Three judges mark the performance - like ice skating judges do - on musical interpretation, technical merit and routine content.

"When you get to the advanced classes, the judges are looking for a lot more tricks."

"The crowds love watching the dogs having fun, bopping to Michael Jackson, Elvis and Cliff Richard, to name a few artists."

According to this seasoned competitor, shopping for an outfit is high on the agenda.

"Actually we will buy our outfits first, and then choose the music before doing the hard part - actually training the dog!"

Together Mrs Houston and Amanda have 12 dogs in advanced sections competing at the moment.

"It is pretty tough to win," she says, though she has managed to accumulate an array of trophies, ribbons and awards.

Mrs Houston judges at the Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide Shows and she and Amanda also conduct workshops in Malaysia.

"We have even conducted our first dog wedding in Singapore," she reveals with a smile, explaining the 'bride and groom', wearing selected outfits, walked down an aisle in the centre of a shopping centre to commemorate its opening.

The pair will be off to Singapore again in August to take part in their 100th dog show and have been asked to train a number of dogs in their namesake - Houston - next year. But they are especially looking forward to the IGA Perth Royal Show.

"Our dogs will be performing and I will be doing some commentary for the agility classes," says Mrs Houston. "We have been competing as a family with horses or dogs since 1981 and we have never missed a Show, we really love it."



ROLL UP, ROLL UP...

The IGA Perth Royal provides patrons with the opportunity to experience the best WA has to offer

Kids 12 years and younger will enjoy free entry to the Show this year, when accompanied by an adult, thanks to the State Government. And when it comes to free fun and frivolity from the world of entertainment, we are showcasing acts second to none...

TITAN THE ROBOT

This mechanical marvel wows the crowd with his cheeky mix of comedy and street theatre.

The 2.4m metal wonder, dubbed the largest entertainer on the planet, is back to strike awe into his audience. Never one to be shy, Titan has kicked soccer balls with fans in Moscow, appeared with superstars including Rhianna, will.i.am and JLS, made his presence felt at the Abu Dhabi F1 Grand Prix and is an all-round electrifying entertainer.

PIGS MIGHT FLY!

Show rules may not permit any money exchanging hands, but we bet you will be all a-flutter as this spectator sport involving racing and diving pigs has you cheering on your chosen, highly-trained



piggy athlete. We guarantee you will want to stay for the finale, when two of the porky contestants climb 2.5 metres and dive into a pool!

LET'S GO LEGO®

Budding builders will revel in the creative, hands-on fun of the Show's LEGO® Brick Zone. From free play and building at custom-made LEGO® play tables, kids of all ages will find plenty of activities to keep them entertained. There will be daily Speed Play competitions and great prizes including Ninjago accessory packs, Chima 3D stickers and Chima character wheels. There's also the chance to say hi to LEGO® mascot Max.

WHAT A PAIR

Little people will love the Bananas In Pyjamas show, featuring Australia's favourite twins. The lovable pair with their catchphrase, "Are you thinking what I'm thinking B1?" And the inevitable reply, "I think I am B2", will get the crowd going with their much-loved hit songs and dance steps. These cheery bananas are a-peeling, to say the least...



READY TO ROAR

HAVING MOVED TO THEIR NEW HOME AT THE SHOWGROUND, THE CLAREMONT TIGERS FOOTBALL CLUB PLAYERS ARE READY TO CLAW THEIR WAY BACK TO THE TOP

While the \$45million redevelopment of their home ground takes place, the Tigers have relocated to Claremont Showground for the next two years.

So far the move has proven beneficial for both the Tigers and the Royal Agricultural Society.

Club CEO Todd Shimmon said after 89 years of being 'in residence' at their 5,000sqm home ground, they have negotiated with the State Government, Landcorp and the Town of Claremont Council in a bid to continue to survive in today's economy.

In a tidy \$16,500,000 deal with the State Government, the Club sold off the banks and land around the perimeter of Claremont Oval for the development of close to 800 residential dwellings and commercial buildings, as well as 200 bays for park 'n' ride commuters.

"Inside the new development there also will be a commercial gym, sports facilities, medical offices, a café, shop and two function centres that can cater for up to 500 people," Mr Shimmon says.

Meanwhile the Tigers and coaches, admin staff and volunteers have moved into an admin building at the Showground, acquired change rooms at a pavilion and are storing equipment in sea containers.

They are now becoming familiar with their new football ground - the Main Arena.

While the move was difficult logistically for players and coaching groups, "the one thing that must be said is: they didn't whinge once," Mr Shimmon says.

"We all knew it would be messy for a while but that has now settled down and the teams are playing good football, which has been commended - from the board to players to volunteers. The transition has been made as comfortable as it can be.

"When the weather is not the best we have the opportunity to train indoors at one of the large RAS pavilions. No other WAFL club will have the opportunity to train like that," Mr Shimmon says, with some satisfaction.

"The recent disruption coupled with the loss of 17 players through retirements and travel from the previous year initially took a toll on the club, and saw them slip from the top of the league table ladder, but that trend has since seen a reversal."

It hasn't all been smooth sailing.

"It took the players about five games to become used to the ground and facilities," Mr Shimmon says.

"But they are now on a winning streak.

"One of the good things about being at the Showground is the fact we didn't have to move too far from our own environment.

"We utilise buildings for admin and change rooms, although showers are now of the mobile variety, and we are able to use the arena to train every night.

"For club games we have the use of a number of rooms in which to host and entertain our sponsors and guests, including WA Premier Colin Barnett, at home games.

The Tigers have 110 metro players in three grades taking to the arena throughout the season while recently, 150 players from the country zones of Great Southern and Ongerup also tried out the arena as they battled for supremacy during the Landmark Championships.

Manager of Football Operations Dean Horsington says, "Whilst we have had a poor start to the year, the ability to rebuild within the same year has been more than pleasing for myself and our coaching group."

His confidence is backed up by the recent signing of former AFL St Kilda player, Beau Maister and Simpson medallist Ian Richardson.

The coup de resistance has been the two-year extension of current coach Michael Broadbridge, who was previously assistant coach at the Fremantle Dockers, West Coast Eagles and Collingwood clubs.



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