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THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NSW AND SYDNEY SHOWGROUND

Located within the Sydney Olympic Park precinct on an area spanning 30 hectares is the Sydney Showground, Australia's largest purpose built event venue and home to the biggest event in the Southern Hemisphere, the Sydney Royal Easter Show, an annual agricultural event attracting over one million visitors every year.

The Sydney Showground is owned and operated by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS). The organisation's history commenced in 1822 as a direct response to a shortage of food and the need to improve farming practices and machinery, to import better species of grain and livestock and to develop new techniques more aptly suited to the environment of the new colony. Production improved both in quality and quantity and the pace of progress continued to be maintained so that today, primary industry constitutes the economic backbone of the country and its products, one of the key sources of Australia's export income. A major contributing factor for progress has been Agricultural competition and education and the first show was held in Parramatta in 1823. In 1882 the show moved to Moore Park, which continued to be the home of the RAS and Sydney Royal Easter Show until 1998.

The relocation of the RAS and Sydney Showground to Sydney Olympic Park in 1998 was part of the NSW Government's regional plan for sporting and exhibition facilities and in 1996 the RAS and Olympic Co-ordination Authority signed an agreement giving the RAS a 99- year lease with a further 99 year option.

The Sydney Showground generates revenue through venue sales and event catering and this income is used to assist the principal charter of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW.