

RAS APPOINTS TURF CURATOR FOR NEW SYDNEY SHOWGROUND STADIUM

The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Terry O'Keeffe to the newly-created role of Head Turf Curator for the new Sydney Showground Stadium.

The RAS has embarked on a "turf journey" to provide a premium playing field for the AFL's newest team – the Greater Western Sydney Giants' (GWS). The team's maiden home game kicks off in May 2012.

Peter Thorpe, Sydney Showground General Manager said the RAS is thrilled to welcome Mr O'Keeffe on board.

"The role of Head Turf Curator is more important than ever as the Stadium undergoes a major transformation in preparation for the 2012 AFL season, along with other events such as music festivals and the Sydney Royal Easter Show – Australia's largest annual event," Mr Thorpe said.

"Terry O'Keeffe's brings with him a wealth of experience and we look forward to his contribution. He will be an invaluable asset to the Showground team as the RAS embarks on this new and exciting chapter."

As a former ground staff member under Tom Parker at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), Mr O'Keeffe has an impressive track record and brings with him more than 25 years of industry knowledge.

"To be part of an organisation with such a rich and proud history as the RAS, and being involved in the growth and development of AFL in Greater Western Sydney, will be exciting and no doubt rewarding," said Mr O'Keefe.

"If a person was asked to look after the Domain for concerts, Rosehill Racecourse, the SCG, an equestrian facility and a rodeo ring, throw in thousands of movements from two and four legs – they would say it can't be done. Bring these things together and that's what makes this role unique in this country, a role which I am thrilled to be a part of."

Mr O'Keefe will be tasked with keeping a watchful eye on the Stadium turf during the Big Day Out and Soundwave music festivals, the Show which begins on April 5th, and then transforming the surface into an elite sports field in a matter of weeks – a true logistical challenge.

"I do love a challenge. If someone starts a sentence with "I bet you can't", I listen with great interest. It won't be an easy process, but I am confident the RAS can lead the way in showing the rest of the events and venue industry what can be achieved and I am looking forward to the feedback from around the country," Mr O'Keeffe said.

"From my experience as a young man leading Dairy cattle around the show rings, true story, to preparing the playing surface for international sports, I am excited and confident of succeeding in this opportunity that I have been given."

Mr O'Keeffe will commence in his role as Head Turf Curator of the Sydney Showground Stadium on 19 December 2011.

For further information, interview and high-res image requests:

Philippa Lampe - Manager Media & PR
P: 02 9704 1453 **M:** 0419 483 407
E: plampe@rasnsw.com.au

Anna Phelps - Coordinator Media & PR
P: (02) 9704 1239 **M:** 0408 657 451
E: aphelps@rasnsw.com.au