



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL &
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

Championing Agriculture, Connecting Community

A report into the impact of the Royal Agricultural
& Horticultural Society of SA

2025



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\$400 million

injected into the state economy

\$1 million


invested in competitions

\$402,000

in tickets donated to charities
each year

\$306,000

in tickets donated to new citizens



For more than 180 years, the RA&HS has brought people together – creating opportunity, strengthening community, and championing the industries that define our state. This report provides a snapshot of our contribution to agriculture, the agricultural community, and to South Australia in general.

More than 180-years of impact with the RA&HS

At the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of South Australia (RA&HS), our purpose has always extended beyond delivering events.

We exist to champion agriculture and horticulture, strengthen our communities, and create meaningful connections between city and country.

This Impact Report has been developed to share that story – to clearly demonstrate the difference our work makes across South Australia and to acknowledge the people who make that impact possible.

As a not-for-profit organisation with a proud history spanning more than 180-years, the RA&HS plays a unique and vital role in the fabric of South Australian life. From the Royal Adelaide Show to our year-round education programs, competitions, and community initiatives, we bring people together to celebrate excellence, support industry, and inspire future generations. The scale of this contribution is significant, but it is the human impact that matters most.

This report captures the breadth of our impact across three key areas: community, industry, and future growth. In our community, we provide inclusive experiences that ensure all South Australians can participate, connect, and feel a sense of belonging. Through donations, partnerships, and support for charitable organisations,

we help strengthen social connections and deliver tangible benefits to those who need it most. Within agriculture and horticulture, the RA&HS serves as both a platform and a catalyst. We support farmers, producers, and young people through competitions, scholarships, and hands-on learning opportunities that elevate standards, foster innovation, and build capability across the sector. We are proud to play a role in promoting the vital contribution that primary industries make to South Australia's economy and identity, while helping to ensure their ongoing sustainability and success.

Importantly, none of this impact happens in isolation. It is made possible by the passion, dedication, and generosity of our community. We are deeply grateful to the farmers who continue to share their expertise and produce with pride, to the volunteers who give their time and energy so generously, and to our staff, partners, and members whose commitment brings our vision to life every day. Together, they form the foundation of the RA&HS and enable us to deliver outcomes that extend far beyond the Showground.

This Impact Report is both a reflection and a statement of intent. It celebrates the legacy we are proud of, while reaffirming our commitment to creating enduring value for South Australia. As we look to the future, we remain focused on strengthening our connection with community, supporting the growth of agriculture and horticulture, and continuing to deliver meaningful, measurable impact.

The Show Society Foundation

The RA&HS established the The Show Society Foundation to secure the future of agriculture and horticulture in South Australia.

It focuses on supporting young people, industry professionals, and rural communities by providing funding for scholarships and grants that assist:

- Students and emerging leaders in agricultural and horticultural fields.
- Funding programs to encourage skill development and knowledge-sharing in primary industries.
- Maintaining historical aspects of agriculture while promoting innovation and sustainability.

Through these initiatives, the RA&HS and its Foundation strengthen South Australia's primary industries while maintaining strong connections between industry, education, and the wider community.

\$100K
of funding and in-kind support provided annually through scholarships, bursaries and sponsorships.



Andrew Hardy, President 2020-2025

Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society

Primary industries have always been central to our state's economic success and continue to shape its growth and prosperity.

Around one in five working South Australians rely on agriculture, food production, and related sectors for their livelihoods. Together, these industries contribute approximately \$20 billion in revenue and account for 50% of the state's total exports.

Behind these numbers are thousands of South Australian families, many of whom have spent decades working the land, driving innovation, and sustaining the productive land that fuels our state.

We celebrate the dedication, creativity, and excellence that drive modern farming at events throughout the year, including the Royal Adelaide Show.

Through scholarships, grants, and educational programs, the RA&HS empowers the next generation of leaders, innovators, and community champions.

These events give the public a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the agricultural processes that bring food and fibre from the land to our tables, while also sharing the stories of the farmers, growers, and producers who work tirelessly to meet the demands of a growing world.

Our hands-on experiences, educational programs, and large-scale public events all help people better understand agriculture's vital role in daily life, strengthening connections between those who produce what we rely on and those who consume it.

Drought Breaker lunch

As the devastating impacts and ongoing uncertainty of drought took their toll on South Australian farming communities in 2025, the RA&HS stepped up to support those doing it tough with the inaugural Drought Breaker Lunch at the Adelaide Showground.

The event united 600 business leaders and rural supporters from across the state, raising more than \$170,000 to help farming families access vital mental health services, emergency relief, and long-term wellbeing programs.

Held in partnership with Rural Aid and Rural Business Support, the lunch shone a spotlight on the strength and resilience of regional communities and the urgent need for continued support through keynote speaker, Olympian Jess Stenson, and panel discussions. Rural Business Support CEO Brett Smith said it was incredible to see the community rise up for regional families.

“Every act of generosity from the city or the country shows our farmers that they are being heard, and that no one should face hardship alone.

We're especially grateful to the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society for understanding that it takes events like this to bring us together, raise awareness, and amplify the message that this drought simply isn't going away.
-Brett Smith RBS CEO

“The money raised today will be used to provide ongoing support to farming families and rural small business owners across South Australia, making sure they can put food on the table, keep the lights on, and know that their community stands with them through the toughest times.”





Urrbrae Agricultural High School

The RA&HS proudly partners with Urrbrae Agricultural High School, South Australia's leading specialist agricultural school, to provide students with hands-on learning experiences, practical skills, and opportunities to deepen their knowledge of agriculture.

Since 2022, Urrbrae students have also taken on an education role through their management of the Learning Centre at the Royal Adelaide Show.

Each year, over 200 students lead hands-on activities and demonstrations, including interacting with baby animals, cow milking, sheep shearing, toy tractor rides, agricultural displays, and food workshops.

Through these efforts, they engage with over 150,000 visitors annually, sharing knowledge and inspiring a deeper understanding of agriculture and food production.

Beyond the Learning Centre, more than 800 students and staff compete across a range of Show categories and support the lead-up to the event by assisting with Wool Competition stewarding and the set-up of key areas.

The RA&HS continues to support students beyond their time at Urrbrae, providing a scholarship to graduates who attained the highest ATAR and have commenced an Agricultural, Horticultural, or allied tertiary program. Since its introduction in 2018, this scholarship has helped raise the profile and prestige of further study in agriculture, increasing the number of Urrbrae graduates entering tertiary studies and allied fields from 6% to an expected 20% of 2025 graduates.



Supporting education and innovation

The RA&HS supports young farmers and rural advocates with \$100,000 annually in scholarships, bursaries, and sponsorships.

This funding helps build successful careers in agriculture and horticulture.

These initiatives not only support their education and training but also build confidence, leadership, and industry connections that will benefit them throughout their careers as leaders in South Australia.



One bright future

The 2024 recipient, Caleb Schaefer, is a first-year student from a cropping farm in Loxton, at the heart of the Riverland. Having witnessed the devastating effects of drought firsthand, Caleb is eager to explore emerging technologies and practices that enhance sustainability and productivity on his family farm.

The scholarship's financial support enabled Caleb to embark on a study tour in southern Queensland and fully immerse himself in university life. It also allowed him to become an active member of the Adelaide University Agricultural Students' Association (AUASA), further strengthening his industry connections.

For Caleb, the chance to broaden his knowledge and experience through the scholarship will play a pivotal role in shaping his agricultural career. "I firmly believe that gaining fresh perspectives and adopting new approaches are essential for growth - not only personally but also for the agricultural industry as a whole," Caleb said.

These scholarships go far beyond financial support. They provide encouragement and reinforcement to the next generation, showing that our efforts and aspirations are valued by the wider community.

Preserving the past

With tens of thousands of competition entries and hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, the impact of the RA&HS in South Australia's agricultural, industrial, social, and cultural history over the past 186 years is undeniable.

The Adelaide Showground at Wayville, which celebrated its Centenary in 2025, has hosted historic moments, including the Beatles four sold out concerts, two visits from Queen Elizabeth II, Billy Graham's sermon for 60,000 people and the record 47,000 attendees at the 1963 Inter Dominion horse race.

The RA&HS Museum and Archives preserves this rich history, offering insights for researchers, staff, and the public. Visitors to our museum often feel deeply moved by the memories it evokes, reinforcing the deep connection between our past and future.

The importance of the RA&HS archival collection was formally recognised in 2025 when, following an assessment performed by an independent, qualified party, it was concluded that the RA&HS collection is of significance to both "the history of South Australia and the history of Australia". The assessment performed was made possible through the receipt of federally funded Community Heritage Grant, the structure of which supports a three-stage process to assess, preserve and manage culturally and historically significant collections.

With the first of this three-stage process completed in early 2025, another successful grant application is now enabling professional consideration to be given to how best the RA&HS should be preserving its important documents and artefacts. This second stage is nearing completion and will highlight what needs to be done to ensure the collection is appropriately preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Junior Heifer Expo

The RA&HS provided more than \$50,000 of cash and in-kind support for the 2025 South Australian Junior Heifer Expo, the largest and most successful junior beef industry education event in Australia.

Through this event, more than 5,000 young people from across the country have gained hands-on experience in cattle handling, competition, and industry education, helping to foster a lifelong passion for agriculture and regional industries.



Championing Agriculture and Horticulture

Through our events, competitions, educational programs, and advocacy, the RA&HS shapes the evolution of South Australia's horticulture and agriculture industries, ensuring their strength, sustainability, and celebration.

The Royal Adelaide Show

The Royal Adelaide Show is South Australia's largest and longest-running event, bringing together the best of the state's agriculture, livestock, produce, and rural communities.

Since its inception in 1840, the Show has served as a place where country meets city, blending nearly 200 years of tradition with a vibrant carnival atmosphere and injecting \$212 million per year into the South Australian economy through the event alone.

For regional South Australians, the Show is an important tradition and a gathering place for learning and opportunity, as producers from across the state travel to the city to compete, exchange ideas, showcase excellence, and strengthen connections.

The Show is also a launchpad for agricultural careers, with more than 1,000 regional students participating each year by exploring career pathways in agriculture and gaining hands-on experience through school competitions and industry engagement.

Recognising excellence

Every year, the RA&HS invests approximately \$1 million in supporting competitions, attracting over 25,000 entries across a range of categories, including livestock, produce, food, and wine.

Through expert judging and benchmarking, these competitions celebrate excellence, set industry standards, and drive continuous improvements in quality and innovation.

For many young South Australians, these competitions provide a gateway to the broader agriculture and horticulture community. The RA&HS works with hundreds of schools across the state to coordinate a range of student-focused competitions, which aim to develop the next crop of industry leaders.



Donated tickets

Each year, the Royal Adelaide Show donates more than \$400,000 worth of tickets to charity groups, including Northern Foster Care, Indigenous Youth Mobility Pathways Project, Catherine House, Canteen SA/NT and Brain Injury SA.

Every new South Australian citizen also receives a complimentary ticket to the Royal Adelaide Show as an opportunity to experience one of the state's most iconic community events. Since 2014, thousands of new citizens have enjoyed this special welcome.



Food for thought

At the Royal Adelaide Show, every bite counts, especially at our iconic charity food vendors who use the event as one of their biggest fundraising activities of the year.

Run by the Uniting Church of Australia, the Red Dove Cafe has been a Royal Adelaide Show institution for over 65 years, serving food and drinks to Adelaide's show-goers with the purpose of raising money for mission projects in South Australia.

Both organisations hold permanent buildings within the Showground, provided rent-free by the Society.

Since its establishment, the SACWA Country Cafe has served over 1,000,000 scones and countless home-cooked meals to Show-goers. The Show is their biggest fundraiser of the year, with all money raised goes towards supporting regional women and children.



Hands-on learning at the Royal Adelaide Show



For the Show's youngest visitors, Aggie's Farm offers a free, fun and interactive way to discover where the foods they know and love come from.

Through Aggie's Farm, more than 130,000 children each year experience life on a working farm, including collecting produce from a faux chicken coop, apple orchard, beehive, and potato patches before taking their goods to market.

New produce options are introduced each year as part of the RA&HS's ongoing commitment to inspiring young people's interest in agriculture and horticulture.

Aggie's Farm is proudly supported by PIRSA and The Advertiser.

A Show for all

The Royal Adelaide Show continues to innovate and create a fun, accessible experience for all South Australians. An accessible Ferris wheel, located in the southwest corner of the Showground, features larger, enclosed gondolas designed to accommodate wheelchairs and guests with additional needs, allowing them and their families to enjoy this classic Show experience.

Our Carnival Quiet Hour on selected days provides a low-sensory environment, with ride lights and music switched off at designated times to create a more comfortable experience for visitors who may feel overwhelmed. Feedback from the community was overwhelmingly positive, and extra days were added for the 2025 event.

Additionally, the RA&HS developed communication boards in consultation with Autism SA therapists. These boards are available at all Kiosks and the Show Office during the event to support individuals who are non-verbal or communicate differently.



Strengthening our community

The RA&HS plays a key role in the South Australian community, committed to fostering inclusivity and ensuring all individuals can engage with and benefit from its programs and initiatives.

Every year, approximately 400,000 people attend the Royal Adelaide Show, and it is vital that the event evolves and grows so all South Australians, regardless of their individual needs, can enjoy the iconic experience.

From specially designed rides and quiet hours to thoughtful communication tools and community partnerships, the Society continues to strengthen its role as a key community pillar.

Rosefield Community Shed

Located in the Farmyard Nursery at the Adelaide Showground, the Rosefield Community Shed offers a friendly and supportive space where individuals can connect, combat social isolation, and promote mental wellbeing through woodworking activities.

The group plays a pivotal role in the Royal Adelaide Show by creating signage, animal enclosures, and arbours showcased throughout the venue. In addition, they contribute to various other community initiatives within the local area.

The Rosefield Community Shed, initiated by the Rosefield Uniting Church in Highgate, is supported by the RA&HS.

Showbag testing

Every year, a special group of South Australian children are invited to test the latest offering of Royal Adelaide Show Showbags ahead of the upcoming event.

The RA&HS invites a school as well as children from charity partner Camp Quality to attend the testing, try out the latest bags on offer and take home two bags of their choice.

The hundreds of remaining bags are passed onto South Australian Police, who deliver the Showbags to children in hospital who would otherwise miss out on a Show experience.



SACARE Carer's Lounge



The RA&HS introduced the saCare Lounge as a dedicated space for individuals with additional needs, providing a quiet respite from the bustling crowds and offering a place to recharge for families and carers navigating the challenges of a large event.

This lounge features a sensory room, staffed for assistance, and a dignified space for visitors, families, and carers to feed and prepare meals privately. The lounge also includes a hoist suitable for individuals of all ages and weights, including adults.

Among the over 2000 people who used the space is Annaliese, who finds comfort in the area during what can be a long day out.

"I like going to see the animals each year," she says. "Being among the show's atmosphere can get a bit overwhelming, so that's why we need to have sensory rooms for those times, so we can come down a bit and enjoy the rest of the day."

Her carer, Kate, adds: "It's quite inviting, and there's a lot of things people can interact with. It is staffed too, so there is always someone there to help, whether it be directions or tea and coffee facilities.

"This space restores dignity to people. Here, they can be like everyone else and have their needs met. We (able-bodied people) take for granted that we have spaces we can utilise. Now, people who need care are no longer limited in what they can do to enjoy the event like everyone else."

-Kate, saCare carer



Variety Kids' Christmas party

Each year, the RA&HS proudly supports a wide range of community and charity events held at the Adelaide Showground, helping create meaningful and inclusive experiences that have a lasting impact on the lives of South Australians.

In 2025, we were delighted to support the Variety Kids' Christmas Party, which brought joy to thousands of children living with disability, disadvantage or special needs.

Held over two days in the Goyder Pavilion, the event transformed the Adelaide Showground into a vibrant, festive environment filled with entertainment, activities and connection for young people from across South Australia.

RA&HS contributed more than \$110,000 of in-kind support, covering venue hire, furniture and equipment, electrical services, cleaning, labour and operational assistance.

Our teams also worked closely with Variety across every stage of the event, providing forklift and furniture support, extensive WHS and event planning support, and in-event cleaning, as well as free car parking to make the experience smoother for the children and their families.

Community calendar

We are proud to work alongside a wide range of charity and community groups by making the Adelaide Showground available in support of their events, helping remove financial barriers and maximise the impact of their work for South Australians.

Through this support, we enable community organisations to extend their reach and direct more of their resources to where they are needed most, making a meaningful difference across the state.

This calendar highlights some of the community events we are proud to support and reflects our ongoing commitment to strengthening connections, fostering inclusion, and upholding the Adelaide Showground's role as a vibrant community hub for South Australia.

June

Nappy Collective

July

Junior Heifer Expo

September

Country Women's Association Café

Red Dove Café

December

Variety Kids' Christmas party



Adelaide Showground

Sustainability and environmental leadership

As the agricultural and horticultural sectors face growing pressure from climate change and resource limitations, the Adelaide Showground has developed a comprehensive approach to environmental leadership, aiming to inspire visitors, businesses, and future generations to adopt sustainable practices.

1million

visitors attend events
at the Adelaide
Showground

700(MWh)

of electricity generated
by rooftop solar panels

12,000m²

of solar panels across 6
pavilions

3.5M Litres

capacity of water tanks

Energy efficiency

The Adelaide Showground has taken significant steps in reducing its carbon footprint and improving energy efficiency through a range of initiatives.

More than 12,000 square metres of rooftop solar panels generate over 700 megawatt-hours (MWh) of electricity annually, preventing approximately 700 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year.

Excess energy is fed back into the main electricity grid, supporting nearby homes and businesses.

Beyond solar power, a windmill was installed to pump stored water to a header tank, providing a sustainable solution for landscape irrigation. We also introduced energy-efficient LED lighting across the site, including in the Main Arena light towers and main pavilions, further enhancing energy savings.

Water management

A 3.5-million-litre underground storage tank supports essential services such as toilet flushing, irrigation, and water features.

The Showground's roof catchment system collects approximately 10 million litres of rainwater each year, ensuring a sustainable water supply across the site.

Transport and infrastructure

Sustainable and accessible transport is vital to the success of the Royal Adelaide Show, ensuring visitors can travel to and from the event with ease.

Thousands of Show attendees use public transport, with convenient train, tram, and bus options available throughout the event in close proximity. We make public transport information readily accessible online and actively promote it in all Royal Adelaide Show marketing materials.

To further improve accessibility, the Showground has incorporated public bus facilities in the Goyder forecourt, enhancing access from Goodwood Road.

Bicycle parking is now available at both the northern and southern entrances, and provisions have been made for e-scooters as a transport option. Additionally, the Society supported the installation of a safe pedestrian and bicycle crossing from the Park Lands to the Showground via Hamilton Boulevard.

Waste management

In 2022, the RA&HS introduced a comprehensive waste management strategy aimed at reducing landfill and improving sustainability across all operations.

In partnership with Australian Green Clean, we worked closely with staff, contractors, and exhibitors to strengthen back-of-house protocols, deliver ongoing training, conduct in-event waste audits, and increase engagement in the program. This included transitioning all food and beverage packaging at the venue to commercially compostable alternatives.

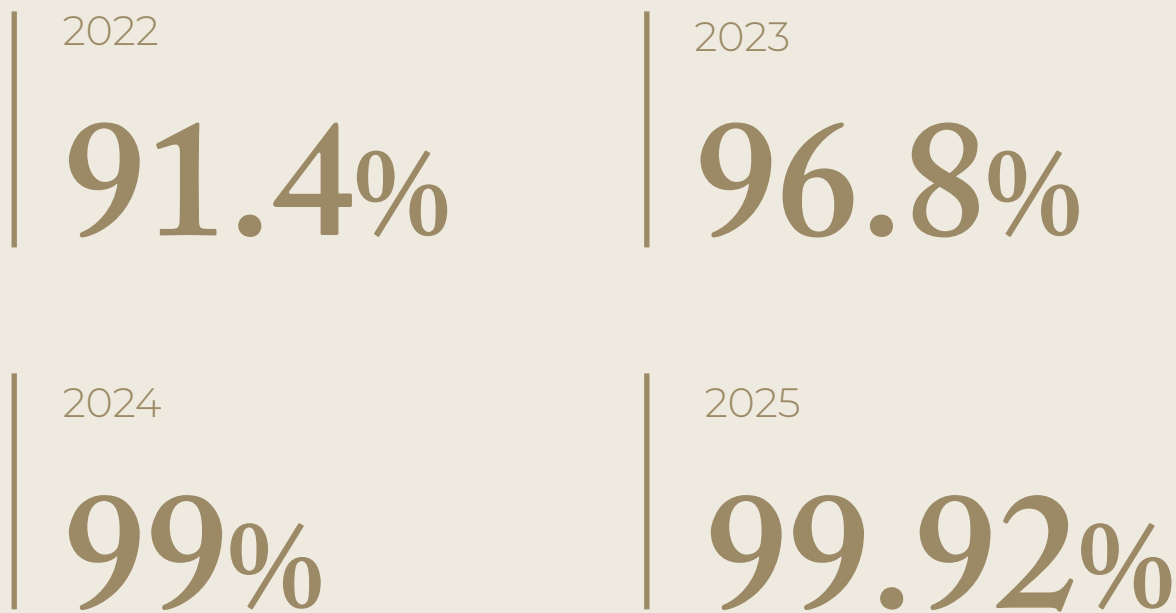
A three-bin waste diversion system was rolled out throughout the Showground, supported by clear

signage to educate patrons on correct disposal practices.

The RA&HS also collaborated with interstate showbag operators to ensure compliance with South Australia's single-use plastics legislation, with confectionery bags now made from paper and novelty items packaged in EPA-approved reusable bags.

Together, these initiatives have made a significant impact, *with 99% of all waste generated at the Royal Adelaide Show is now diverted from landfill.*

Waste diversion at the Royal Adelaide Show



Greening the Showground

After the Unley City Council identified the north-west carpark of the Showground as the hottest area in the Unley Catchment, the RA&HS launched a proactive greening initiative. Over 190 trees were planted, along with an additional 4290 sqm of grass, and more than 70 mobile and permanent garden beds were added along the northern fence line.

The RA&HS carefully selected the plantings to require minimal irrigation, and hydro soils combined with subsurface irrigation techniques were implemented to reduce water usage. Root cells were installed on all trees to enhance water retention and subsurface aeration.

The project transformed what was once a carpark into a thriving green space, playing a key part in reducing the heat produced.

Business awards



For almost two decades, the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of SA has championed a range of environmentally friendly and sustainable initiatives. These measures are aimed to not only reduce our footprint but make a lasting and positive impact on our community and Environment.

We are honoured that the Royal Agricultural & Horticultural Society of SA was recognised this year as a Leader in Sustainability & Environment at the 2025 City of Unley Business Awards.

This award is a testament to the commitment of our staff, volunteers, partners, and patrons who share our vision for a greener, more sustainable future. From energy saving initiatives including 10,000sqm of rooftop solar panels with the support of State Government in 2009, natural and LED lighting, smart climate control and even a 3.5-million litre underground water storage tank - the RA&HS is greener than ever before.

The RA&HS is proud to champion the Adelaide Showground as a welcoming, vibrant and efficient space, while always safeguarding precious water resources. Every planning and landscaping decision is made with the environment and the increase of green spaces front of mind.

More than 70 mobile planter boxes were purchased, planted out with a variety of trees and flowers, creating a greener and more inviting space, while in the North-West carpark and south east corner, 193 trees were planted and 4290sqm of turf laid to replace hard surfaces.

For more than 15 years, we've embedded sustainability at the heart of the Adelaide Showground - investing in sustainable energy initiatives, water conservation, superior waste management practices, and creating vibrant green spaces for across the Adelaide Showground.

The RA&HS is committed to using resources efficiently and to minimise waste generation through reduction, reuse and recycling and waste is managed in line with the Environment Protection Authority regulations and with support from Australian Green Clean. This has been recently boosted by the restructuring of our venue wide waste management practices to include an organic waste stream in all front-of-house areas.

When introduced, it was a substantial undertaking but showed our commitment to reducing our landfill waste. Thanks to the raft of these dedicated efforts, an extraordinary 99.92% of event waste was diverted from landfill in 2025—an achievement that places the Adelaide Showground among only a handful of venues and events in Australia able to claim such a remarkable result.

Along with various transport initiatives and championing sustainable travel options, the RA&HS and all its Members can be proud to be leading by example and continue to make the Showground a benchmark for environmentally responsible venue in Australia.



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