

Albury Show Society changes venue for horse events and gets some top tips from Bungendore Show committee

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13 Jun 2017, 5:30 p.m.

The Albury Show Society plans to make its 160th year a real show-stopper, says senior vice-president Ray Walsh.

The leadership team will “move with the times” to create a more family friendly event, foster links to community and secure its viability long into the future.

The 2017 Albury Show will host its horse events on a separate date, September 17, at a separate venue for at least the next three years, Mr Walsh confirmed.

He said Albury-Wodonga Equestrian Centre was well-recognised for the standard of its facilities including superior competition surfaces, camping and parking access.

Moving the date forward and offering a wider variety of classes would also provide better opportunities for riders to qualify horses for the Sydney and Melbourne Royal shows, Mr Walsh added.

Meanwhile the traditional Albury Show will become a two-day affair on Friday and Saturday, November 3 and 4, with a renewed focus on a host of “free” family entertainment and activities once you’ve paid at the gate.



SHOWCASE: Albury Show Society's Ray Walsh (centre) with Bungendore Show vice-president Ashley Meyer-Dilley and president Marion Whalan.

Mr Walsh said the aim was to expand the show's appeal to the widest possible audience in the community and this year's event would feature a huge kids' zone and other "vibrant" attractions.

The Albury committee recently sought advice from its Bungendore counterparts after its one-day show was a finalist in the Agricultural Society Council's president's innovation award.

Bungendore Show president Marion Whalan and vice-president Ashley Meyer-Dilley delivered a presentation at Albury on June 8.

Ms Whalan said attracting young and enthusiastic volunteers like Ms Meyer-Dilley, 21, had brought new energy and ideas to the format.

From a partner-carrying competition and egg toss challenge to dachshund racing, old-fashioned fun helped inject a new lease of life into the show.

So much so the gate numbers increased 108 per cent in 2016 and gate takings went from \$28,000 to \$50,000.

"We would typically get between 3000 and 35000 through the gate and it went to 7500," Ms Whalan said.

"We are now sharing ideas which are easily able to be adopted by other shows to ensure their viability."

Like Bungendore, Albury was “not immune” to an ageing volunteer base, according to Ms Whalan.

“With Ashley on board we have been able to attract and retain other young people who bring wonderful energy and social media skills that helped grow our show,” she said.

Her parting advice for running a successful show:

“Continually review what’s on offer, welcome fresh blood with new ideas and, most importantly, promote the hell out of it.”