



Send in the clowns . . . Sherie Godfrey and Nathaniel Koren try their luck as the rain falls at the Ekka



If the hat fits . . . Chelsea Zorick and Amy Wilson, both 15, from the Sunshine Coast, stock up on show bags



Main attraction . . . crowds flock to sideshow alley to soak up the excitement of the exhibition

# How Ekka-sassperating

## First it was the flu, now it's the rain

by Andrew MacDonald

OF all days for the heavens to open . . . yesterday was People's Day at the Ekka and as if reduced attendances because of flu weren't enough, it rained.

But organisers were adamant - People's Day was far from a flop. Fears over the flu have seen Ekka attendances drop by about 30 per cent this year and the traditional Wednesday public holiday was no exception.

Responding to suggestions that this year's lower-than-average attendance would affect future Exhibitions, the Royal National Show, which runs the Ekka, says organisers will be taking stock when the show is over.

"It depends on how we finish up. We will be sitting down at the end of it all and assessing the situation," said RNA president Dr Vivian Edwards yesterday.

But despite a potential Ekka rethink, Dr Edwards said he was looking on the sunny side of things on People's Day. "It's been a very, very good day. The crowd is looking very healthy," he said.

An RNA spokeswoman said it was unlikely 2007 People's Day figures would match previous years.

"Numbers are still down. Usually we get about 80,000 to 100,000 people on the Wednesday. I think it's still down around that 30 per cent mark," she said. "There is a brighter feel though because it's well up on Monday and Tuesday."

With the Gold Coast Show due to get under way at Parklands on August 30, Gold Coast Show manager Doug Reiser says organisers here are not expecting diminished Ekka attendances to flow on to the Gold Coast event.

"We can't worry about these things. In 100 years it's never been a problem," he said.

"You can get the flu in any public place. You could hop on a bus with 20 snotty-nosed school children or go to the Gold Coast Show. I know where I would rather be."



Brazilian Sambeleza Dancers Helen Gramotnev, Sunin Tan, Mari Takashina and Chantal Huntley are not dressed for winter days ● Pictures: Fiona Harding

Mr Reiser said people should be encouraged to attend the Gold Coast Show.

"My life is this show and I want people to come here and enjoy it," he said. "It's for us, the people of the Gold Coast."

Those who did conquer their fear of the flu and ventured out to the Ekka yesterday did not let the early

rain dampen their spirits and the traditional showbags, sideshows, animals and carnival oddities were there to be enjoyed.

As the Sambeleza Brazilian dance troupe patrolled the showgrounds, group member Helen Gramotnev said the quartet's brief attire made for a bit of a chilly People's Day.



Constable John Moss puts a wristband on five-year-old Ekka visitor Zac Lui

Margaret East of Nerang with cocker spaniel Sammy, a second-prize winner

"We travel around to events to do Brazilian style dancing," said Ms Gramotnev. "When we start dancing, it will warm up a bit."

Flying the flag for the Gold Coast was Nerang-bred cocker spaniel Sammy and the one-year-old took out second place in the Queensland Classic, for pups aged six to 18 months.

"He travels very well," said owner Margaret East of Sagapore Kennels.

"I breed cocker spaniels and English setters. We've got Sammy's half-sister, who is three months old, at home but Sammy is the baby at the show."

"Sammy has had a very successful show."

## TRRD. Heading for the Gold Coast.

Refined power. Athletic driving dynamics. Performance personified. Toyota Racing Development, soon to be unleashed at Grand Motors.

Grand Motors

TRRD

265 Ferry Road Southport  
Phone: 5583 6888  
www.grandmotors.com.au