

# History of a Grand Tradition

## Maleny Agricultural Show

### Many Queensland shows, including Maleny, have long and proud histories.

The Blackall Range and the Maleny district have often been called the "Garden of Eden" because of the ideal climate, scenery, productivity and generous rainfall.

From humble beginnings in 1923, the first Maleny Show was held on the same show-grounds site on Maleny-Stanley River Rd.

In 2020 we are making history again with the closure of the 83rd Maleny Show due to the 2020 Covid-19 situation.

During the Great Depression and unfortunately during some of years of the Depression the show was abandoned - in 1932, 1934 and 1935. A drought which caused great hardship in 1950 also caused the show to be cancelled in that year.

Agricultural shows have been a part of Australian culture since 1822 and are strongly connected to local communities through educational, competitive, social and cultural experiences.

Maleny would have so many stories to tell about those early pioneer days. There is no doubt agricultural shows are still important events where local communities gather and celebrate their farming achievements showcasing livestock and produce.

Agricultural Shows such as Maleny's would not be successful without the tireless work of local

volunteers who provide so much of their time to make the show a success for all who visit and compete. It has always been so, and the story of the Maleny show volunteers began in 1923, when Maleny's first show opened, on the June 26 and 27, 1923, in pouring rain.

Although the economy was still recovering after the First World War, there was enough pride in the region's agricultural production to generate interest in a show.

Facilities were sparse so the ladies of the district provided meals and refreshments from a tent on the hill. The area was a very different place then and things were done differently. A wood stove was how the cooking was done and if mother was lucky she might have an ice chest or later a kerosene refrigerator to keep food cool! This was an

Australian invention in 1923 with electricity arriving in the region in late 1939.

Delicious foods are still served at the show and many types of foods are on offer these days. Many of the recipes and cakes on display are perhaps from those early Maleny and district pioneering family recipes, handwritten into exercise books handed down over many years.

The Maleny Show Society used plans supplied by the Caboolture Show Society to construct an industrial pavilion measuring 24 metres by 11 metres which was near enough to completion to be used for the second annual show on April 23 and 24, 1924.

On July 30 1926, the *Nambour Chronicle* described the Maleny Show, in its fourth year, enthusiastically. "Wonderful! It seemed that this expressive

**Photo Below : Maleny Show Pavilion was near enough to completion to be used for the second show on April 23-24, 1924**



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adjective was upon everybody's lips during the two Maleny show days, and whether the fourth annual show is inspected from the viewpoint of the stockman, the lover of pavilion exhibits, or the horse fancier," the story read.

"The picturesque little show-ground has again been vastly improved during the past 12 months. Now we can notice a neat grandstand which will seat approximately 300 people and a spacious pig pavilion which were not on the ground 12 months ago. The committee and general public must have worked like Trojans to transform a patch of thick virgin scrub into the improved ground they have at present, and all in five short years."

In summing up the 1926 show, the paper gave high praise to the region's cattle. "To write of the exhibits, one must be excused for the frequent use of adjectives, but there are but few that will really give the reader a true idea of the excellence of some of the exhibition," the story read.

"Of course, it can only be expected in a rich dairying district such as Maleny, the dairy cattle were an outstanding feature of the show.

P.L. Nott MLA officially opened the show and the new purpose-built grandstand in 1926. He described the grand parade of prize-winning stock during the afternoon as "a most interesting event displaying fully Maleny's wealth of stud stock".

In 1927 the entertainment committee of the Maleny Show Society held a Pioneers Ball at the Maleny School of Arts in honour of the hardworking pioneers of the district. Mr A Bryce welcomed the guests by saying it was to honour the men and women who with strong hearts had laid the foundations of what was to become a prosperous community.

Renovations and extensions followed throughout the years.

In 1988, the show became known as the Caloundra City Show and then in 2008, due to council amalgamation, reverted to being called the Maleny Agricultural Show.

Maleny District Sport and Recreation Club Inc

