



FOUNDATION EXPO '88

Progressing the World Expo '88 Vision

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ABC RADIO BRISBANE 612AM INTERVIEW - TRANSCRIPT

Dr Judith McKay, Queensland Museum, and John McGregor, Foundation Expo 88,

Discuss Queensland At World Expositions and World Expo 2005 Japan

Producer: Mr Peter Gooch, ABC Radio Brisbane 612AM

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Brisbane, Expo City, Australia

[Muzac Intro] On 612 ABC Brisbane - you're with Kelly Higgins-Devine.....

[Kelly Higgins-Devine] Well for some of us it's hard to believe that 17 years have passed by since we had the extraordinary experience of Expo 88 in Brisbane – unfortunately I wasn't here – and I do mean unfortunately because everyone who talks about it says it was amazing. But while that Expo has passed into memory, Expos still continue around the world with another scheduled to open in March this year in Japan. And Queensland is again playing a major role in this upcoming World Expo – something we've done for almost 150 years. Exuberant Expo-phile Peter Gooch explains....

[World Expo 88 Official Theme Song intro....] [Peter Gooch, Interviewer] Expo 88 may have been the first experience of any kind of Expo for most of us, but the history of Expos reaches right back to the Great Exhibition of London, in 1851. These events were mostly a summary of world progress, showing the science, the culture, manufactures of the World - almost a stock-take of the Western world itself of that point in time....however, the concentration these days is more celebratory and theme-oriented. Expositions have grown to embrace much more than a celebration of life, philosophy and trade promotion in the West now. In fact, the next big Expo to hit the international calendar kicks off in March this year in Japan. And yet, like many expositions before it, we have a healthy presence at this Expo as well...But how have we been represented at Expos in the past? That's the theme to Judith McKay's book "Showing off: Queensland at World Expositions 1862 – 1988".

[Dr Judith McKay] Queensland at the time of the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851 was the northern part of New South Wales, so we didn't take part in our own right, although we did send timber from Wide Bay. But, the Colonies of the British Empire were poorly represented in that Exhibition - there wasn't time for them to take an active role, but the first time they were fully represented was in the next big Expo in Britain, which was London 1862. This was very soon after Queensland was separated from New South Wales. We took a considerable exhibit to that Exhibition, but right through the 19th Century, we were exhibiting as part of the British Empire – not really as part of Australia, but as one of the many colonies of the Empire.....after the Federation of Australia in 1901, we were exhibiting as a State of Australia.

[Excerpt from World Expo 88 Official Theme Song: 'It will only happen once in your lifetime!']

[Dr Judith McKay]....World Expo 88 was a Queensland initiative, but you might be surprised to know it's not the first World Expo to be held in Queensland. That first effort was 1897 – it was called the Queensland International Exposition. So, we really have been in activity for the good part, and over the years which my study covered from 1862 to 1988 we took part in no fewer than 23 World Expos as a major exhibitor.

[Peter Gooch] When we look back to Expo 88 does it all come out on hard on the State, do you think?

[Dr Judith McKay] I think it's hard to evaluate these events purely in economic terms...I think we'd all agree that World Expo really put Queensland on the world map. But almost more importantly it made Queenslanders more proud of their own society – we know that it showed world achievement – but we showed that we could perform equally to other older nations....and I think that was a very important lesson for Queensland. How do you put a value on that?

[Peter Gooch] Well, how do you put a value on that indeed? Together, we did show the world. And together many remember Expo 88 with pride. One man who is keeping that memory alive in Brisbane right now is John McGregor.

[John McGregor] I was just 18 at the time, I'd come back from Japan after being an exchange student – so, I had a really strong fervour to do something with Japan, in Brisbane, for World Expo 88....so, ummm... that was my eye-opener into the World Expo movement, and ummm... I worked for the Japanese Government Pavilion as a Pavilion Attendant,....but I also did some, you know, interpreting on the side which was also very exciting. Just recently in Spain there was an Expo conference to celebrate the launch of a new organization called the 'Assembly of Expo Cities and Regions' – which Brisbane being an Expo City, has the right to become an automatic member....One of the key things from this new Assembly, is that Expo cities should be cultivating and preserving their rich Expo heritage – because Expos aren't just for international tourists, they're moreover for the locals, and Brisbanites took to World Expo 88 like a storm....so, after I came back from that Conference in Spain I did a bit of research into what we had in terms of recording our own heritage and I found that there was very very little....so I thought to myself 'O.K. I'm going to do the ultimate web-site on World Expo 88'. We now have an interactive, interesting presentation on the web, if you want to find the web-site just type in the words 'members.aol.com/foundationexpo88', and the last '88' are in numerals - or the alternative is to go into any of your favourite search engines and just type in the words 'foundationexpo88'...'88' in numerals as I said before....so it's very easy to find that way too. The World Exposition movement has always really been about, you know, industrial progress and technological progress, but we're coming to this stage in human history now where we're going beyond that, and we have to think about the environment more...so this where this World Expo in Japan this year is really at the forefront of this movement. We have to be sensitive to the environment at the same time as having goals of further technological progress as well...so technology and nature have to work together.

[Excerpt from Song: 'Welcome to World Expo 88' by Australian comedian Les Patterson]

[Kelly Higgins-Devine] Les Patterson says G'day from the original Expo 88 soundtrack....and thank you to Peter Gooch for putting that together - and if you want to find out more about Judith McKay's history of our role in World Expos – she is conducting a lecture at the Queensland Museum Theatre this Wednesday, [Note: 2 February 2005] between 12.30 and 1.30 – it's called "Showing Off: Queensland at World Expos 1862 – 1988". That's this Wednesday at the Queensland Museum Theatre between 12.30 and 1.30. And her book of the same name is available at the Museum, Borders Books, and other selected stores. And you can find John McGregor's Expo 88 site by doing a search for 'Foundation Expo 88' in your favourite search engine.....

[Music fades in] [End of Interview]

For further information:

Dr Judith McKay, Senior Curator, The Queensland Museum; Author, "Showing Off: Queensland at World Expositions 1862-1988", Central Queensland University Press, <http://www.outbackbooks.com/Books/ShowingOff.htm>

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Dr Judith McKay will be the special guest of Foundation Expo 88 at the First Anniversary meeting of the Foundation, held at Southbank Parklands, Saturday 30 April 2005, 3.30 p.m. – 5.45 p.m. Contact Foundation Expo 88 for further information.

Aichi World Expo 2005 opens on March 25, 2005 and concludes on September 25, 2005. Visit Japan, and visit the site this year. Get further information on World Expo 2005 at <http://www.expo2005.or.jp>. For further information on Queensland and Australia's representation at the World Expo, visit the Australia Pavilion's web-site, <http://www.expo2005.com.au>.

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