

RASV | VAS
Victorian Agricultural Shows
RURAL AMBASSADOR
AWARDS 2011/12

Handbook for Organisers

2011/12 RURAL AMBASSADOR AWARDS

PRESENTED BY



RASV



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A Joint Project of the Victorian Rotary Districts

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The Rural Ambassador Awards (RAA) and the State Final is a partnership between The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited (RASV), Victorian Agricultural Shows Limited (VAS) and the Victorian Rotary (Rotary) Districts (9780, 9790, 9800, 9810, and 9820).

The Awards begin at a local show level, a winner from each participating show moves through to a Group final. From the judging at the Group level up to twelve candidates are nominated to participate in the State final, held each year at the Royal Melbourne Show. The State winner is then invited to participate at the national final in the following year.

The Awards highlight and celebrate rural and regional young people aged twenty to thirty, with a particular emphasis on candidates who are involved in their local show society. The Awards seek to draw attention to the talent, creativity and ingenuity of young rural Victorians and in doing so encourage the entrants to be engaged citizens across local communities. The Awards encourage and reward enthusiastic, industrious and accomplished young people living or having an involvement in rural environments.

During the judging process at the State level the entrants participate in public relations and leadership seminars to enable them polish their communication and delivery skills so they can put their best foot forward for the final judging.

The judging criteria is a points based system, and includes sections on community and local show involvement, general rural knowledge, communication skills and the entrants goals and ambitions.

Mr Benjamin Holmes from the Nhill Agricultural and Pastoral Society won the 2010 Rural Ambassador Awards and the runner up was Ms Maida Anderson from the Bunyip Agricultural and Pastoral Society.

As the 2010 Victorian winner Ben is going to the Royal Adelaide Show in September 2011 to compete in the National Finals of the Rural Ambassador Award.

The Rural Ambassador Award is a prestigious prize that benefits not only the entrants, but provides a platform to engage young people with their local community, show society, VAS, Rotary and the RASV.



BEN HOLMES
2010 WINNER, RURAL AMBASSADOR AWARD

Ben represented the Nhill A&P Society and then won the Wimmera Group Final.

I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for the Rural Ambassador Award. It helped me land my current job, which is working as a livestock agent for Landmark in Hay. It's an exciting opportunity; my area is Hay and surrounding districts, which presents an interesting variety of work.

With my prize money I'm going to use majority of it to go on a study tour of New Zealand and learn as much about the livestock industry and farming operations as I can and bring that knowledge back to Australia. A great way to learn fast is to get out there and see how others are doing it differently and I am really grateful for the prize money as I'll be able to get over to NZ soon and see how the Kiwis farm.

I'm planning to donate the other part of my prize money to the Merino P&A Society to help keep the show going. With the support of the Merino P&A Society I plan to implement a major fundraiser proposal and secure much needed funds for the future. My reason for giving the donation is that I wouldn't be where I am today if I didn't get the massive start and stepping stone that I got from being involved with the Merino show. I won the Victorian Rural Ambassador Award because of this start and by showing the P&A society support through my donation is something I want to do. Hopefully my donation will lead to more support and sponsorship and get the community behind the show. Local shows are a place to showcase rural achievements, including the Rural Ambassador. We all need to pitch in at times to make sure that they continue to run.

I have learnt so much from taking part in the Awards and I have come away with one motto "just have a go". Don't worry too much that you might not know it all, just have a shot, you will learn heaps through the process. You never know what you'll get out of it. The award has changed my life and I'm really grateful for the opportunity.



MAIDA ANDERSON
RUNNER-UP, 2010 RURAL AMBASSADOR AWARDS

Maida represented the Bunyip & District Agricultural Society and then won the Central and South Gippsland Group Final. Maida is a current member of the Rural Ambassador Awards Committee.

The 2010 Rural Ambassador Awards were a very valuable and influential experience for me both professionally and personally.

After completing my university studies at the end of last year I left my job behind the bar at my local pub to take on a full-time role as a Graduate Communication and Engagement Project Officer with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

The Rural Ambassador Awards were a great stepping stone, providing me with the confidence that I needed to pursue a career in a regional area in an industry that complemented my interests and ambitions.

Professionally, the awards helped me to develop and refine important skills such as public speaking, interview technique and media relations that I regularly make use of at work.

With the prize money I've received I'll be participating in a regional leadership program throughout next year. The program will build upon what I learnt from the Awards to advance my leadership skills so that I can continue to make a difference as a volunteer within the local community.

Ultimately, I have my local agricultural show society to thank for giving me the chance to be a part of the award and the experience of working with my community to organise the most important event of the year – our show.

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This planning guide has been produced as a combined activity of The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV), Victorian Agricultural Shows (VAS) and the Rural Ambassador Awards Committee. The guide aims to provide Group and Local Show Secretaries and Awards organisers with a reference that will assist them in developing, staging, and reviewing the activity of Victorian Agricultural Shows Rural Ambassador Awards ("Awards").

In developing this guide every attempt has been made to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each contributor to these Awards. As such, it aims to increase the amount of support the Awards currently have, thus contributing to the competition's longevity and sustainability into the future.

1.1 Critical Success Factors

The targets to strive for over the next three years in relation to the Awards are:

- Have a minimum of 50 local Show Societies coordinating and/or contributing to the Awards each year;
- Increase the amount of entrants competing at each Group final yearly;
- Improve the prestige and kudos associated with the Awards program;
- Encourage over 150 Local Show competitors each year;
- Encourage Local Show Societies to invite and motivate entrants to contribute to the organisation and delivery of the Local Show before and after the state final and into the future.

These Awards have many strengths that benefit not only the entrant but also the Show Society Network, Local Shows, local communities and the role of young people in these areas.

In order to reach these targets, the Awards need to have Local Show, Group and State Final contributors working together in an effective, unified and enthusiastic manner.



The Awards are held at the local Show level with winners progressing through to the next stage – the Group Finals. Entrants then compete at a Group Final (Northern, Wimmera, Western, Goulburn Valley Riverina, Midlands, South Western, Port Phillip, Central & South Gippsland, Central & Upper Goulburn, Gippsland, North Eastern/Murray Valley and the Agricultural Field Days), finally culminating in the State Final held annually at the Royal Melbourne Show.

2.1 Awards Organisational Structure

Local Award – Organised and administered by Local Show secretary or nominated person

Group Finals – Organised and administered by Group secretary or nominated person

State Finals – Organised and administered by RASV Event Coordinator

2.2 Role of Local Awards Coordinators

- Obtain competitors
- Coordinate the Awards at the Local level
- Coordinate the presentation function
- Obtain judges
- Source prizes
- Secure any sponsorship
- To assist in advertising and promotion of the Awards
- To liaise with Group secretaries regarding competitors and advise winners in a timely manner.

2.3 Role of Group Awards Coordinators

- To assist in obtaining competitors for Local Awards
- Coordinate the Group finals
- Coordinate the presentation function
- Obtain judges
- Liaise with Local Show winners
- Liaise with VAS Ltd Executive Officer particularly regarding winners in a timely manner
- Secure any sponsorship
- To assist in advertising and promotion of the Awards



2.4 Role and Responsibilities of VAS Ltd

- Source and secure competitors
- Promote the Awards
- Obtain sponsorship
- Have a board-appointed member on the Rural Ambassador Committee to act as a 'mentor'
- Host competitors during the State Final at the Royal Melbourne Show by providing a meeting place and refreshments
- Provide any other assistance for the Awards

2.5 Role and Responsibilities of RASV

- Coordinate the Awards at the State level
- Coordinate the presentation function at State level
- Coordinate the Rural Ambassador Committee
- Advance the portfolio of the Rural Ambassador Committee
- Develop the ongoing strategy for the Awards
- Compile and distribute all information and documentation to assist in the delivery of the Awards
- Assist in gaining competitors
- Provide promotional material to Local Shows
- Provide any other assistance for the Awards

2.6 Role and Responsibilities of the Rural Victorian Rotary Districts

- Nominate entrants at the local agricultural show level
- Provide Rotary Representatives as Judges at all levels of the competition
- Assist with the organisation of the Awards through participation at Local and Group level; and a seat on the Rural Ambassador Committee
- Provide State finalists with an opportunity to participate in various Rotary International programs and initiatives

2.7 Role and Responsibilities of the Rural Ambassador Awards Committee

The Rural Ambassador Committee is comprised primarily of former competitors of the Rural Ambassador Awards. In addition, other members include RASV staff and members of the VAS Ltd Youth Committee.

The Rural Ambassador Committee is 'mentored' by a VAS Ltd appointed representative and an RASV representative to oversee the smooth and efficient running of the committee and ensure conduct of a standard suitable to VAS Ltd and the RASV.

The Committee has been engaged to install a fresh, new approach to the Awards, increase enthusiasm within the community and assist in improving the delivery of the Awards from the local level right through to the State Final. The Committee will also act as the 'face' of these Awards and assist local and group Awards coordinators in obtaining competitors through promotion of the Awards throughout the State.

Other Committee tasks will include:

- Assist, if necessary, any Local Show secretary or Group secretary to coordinate the Awards. That is, if assistance is required in the general running and delivery of the Awards – finding judges, making phone calls, obtaining caterers, etc., any member of the Rural Ambassador Committee can be of assistance.
- Awards Promotion. Committee members are willing and eager to work with Local Show secretaries and Group secretaries to promote the Awards. If there is a conference or community group meeting taking place that may be a good avenue for promoting the Awards, please do not hesitate to contact your nearest Rural Ambassador Committee member and invite them to make a presentation at the gathering.
- Liaise with Local and Group Awards organisers to achieve Awards outcomes.
- The Committee Members will use their current networks to promote the Awards and to create new networks to further advance the Awards.



- To highlight the talent, creativity, and ingenuity of young rural Victorians and in doing so encourage entrants to be role models across local communities.
- To encourage and reward enthusiastic, skilful, and industrious young people living or having an involvement in rural environments.
- To assist all entrants through their participation to develop strong communication and leadership qualities.
- To enable entrants to gain greater proficiency in their chosen field and also develop entrants' stature and reputation in that chosen field.

4 General Conditions of Entry



- The Awards are opened to those who are permanent residents of Australia.
- Entrants must be aged 20 years or over and under 30 years as at 1st May in the year of the State Final.
- Entry into the Rural Ambassador Awards is via the official Application Form only. The Application Form must be completed and signed by the entrant and accompanied by a covering letter addressing the selection criteria, as outlined in Section 4.
- The Awards are open to both males and females.
- All entrants must be nominated by a Local VAS affiliated Agricultural Show Society, or Field Day.
- Entrants may be involved in a rural or agricultural-based industry, but do not necessarily need to reside in a rural community.
- Entrants should be actively involved, or demonstrate a readiness to become actively involved in their Local Show. They should also be knowledgeable about current rural issues pertaining to their local area, the state of Victoria and Australia and also have a strong affiliation towards agriculture.
- Tertiary qualifications are not a prerequisite for the Rural Ambassador Awards. The Awards seek to attract all young rural people who symbolise the rural spirit - people with vitality, who are forward-thinking and with a passion for the land and local country Shows.
- If successful at Group level, entrants are invited to attend the Awards Information Session in June, the State Final and all associated judging at the Royal Melbourne Show in September.
- The State winner is required to represent Victoria in the National Final and may be required to travel interstate to attend the National Final. In exceptional circumstances, if the State winner is unable to attend the National final, a runner-up may be selected to attend and represent Victoria.
- The Rural Ambassador Committee will not enter into any correspondence in relation to selection and the judges' decision is final.
- There will be no joint winners. If a final decision cannot be made, advice is sought from the Chairperson of the Rural Ambassador Committee.
- Prizes awarded to Rural Ambassadors are not transferable and must be utilised within twenty-four months of being awarded. This date is taken as being the date of the Awards Presentation during the Royal Melbourne Show. All prizes are subject to change without notice.
- All State Finalists will be invited to serve on an RASV Event Committee of their choice for the 12 months following the State Final.
- Previous State first place winners are ineligible to enter.



Local Show Societies are encouraged to actively run and promote the Awards at local level. The Awards are a tri-level 'feeding' process, meaning that entrants have to qualify through two rounds before reaching the State Finals. Hence, it is important that Local Shows are enthusiastic, motivated, and committed to coordinate this event to ensure that a large number of deserving finalists progress through to the State Final held at the Royal Melbourne Show. At the local level, the Secretary of each Local Show Society and/or appointed person coordinates the Awards.

Tasks include:

1. Sourcing entrants through various methods of promotion;
2. Sourcing and confirming judges;
3. Obtaining prizes for the local winner and other competitors if deemed appropriate;
4. Obtaining sponsorship for their local Awards;
5. Organising a function to announce the winner (eg. at Local Show, afternoon tea);
6. Liaising with the Group secretary; and
7. Liaising with competitors and judges;

5.1 Sourcing Competitors

(a) Advertising - Posters

The RASV attempts to assist local Shows in promoting the Awards by providing A4 and A5 posters. Each society should attempt extra activities to gain entrants and to promote the Awards, as outlined below.

(b) Radio Stations

Contact your local radio station(s). Supply them with relevant information on the Awards and indicate that you would appreciate their on-air promotion of the Awards. Information provided should include: aims of the Awards, requirements of entry, date of Awards, prizes available, how to enter and the application closing date.

(c) Local Newspapers

Contact your local newspaper and request an editorial on the Awards. Information provided to the newspaper should include: aims of the Awards, requirements of entry, date of Awards, prizes available, how to enter and the application closing date. In addition, you may like to supply the contact details of a previous winner, or their account of how winning the Awards assisted in opening doors and achieving their goals and dreams. A media kit (general information) is included in Appendix 1.

(d) Websites

Contact local councils, farming groups, rural groups and other associated organisations and enquire if they would consider posting information about the Awards on their sites. They may even incorporate a link to the RASV (www.rasv.com.au) or VAS (www.vicagshows.com.au) sites where the Application Form can be downloaded. A copy of the Application Form can be sent electronically to persons interested in posting the information on their website(s).

(e) Speaking at community meetings and other group meetings

The Rural Ambassador Committee is dedicated to improving the number of entrants at the local level. As a result, they are willing to offer their services to present an outline of the Award; benefits, prizes, etc. on behalf of your Local Show Society to any community groups in your area. As the coordinator of the Award at your Local Show, you are encouraged to make contact with the committee member(s) closest to you and advise of any relevant group meetings and invite them to make a presentation at that meeting. Presentations may be made at local TAFE colleges or universities, young farmer groups or other community groups.

(f) Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth is a powerful tool in gaining entrants year after year. Award coordinators and Show Committees should ensure that they have information about the Awards so they can discuss details with family, friends, neighbours and others.

5.2 Selection Criteria

Entrants are required to address the following selection criteria and submit it with the Application Form to the secretary of the Local Show Society to be represented.

All information in this application will be treated as confidential and will only be disclosed to members of the Society conducting the Award.

1. Please provide a curriculum vitae (CV) and address the following points:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Practical Skills
 - Personal Achievements
 - Other Interests (e.g. sports and hobbies)
2. Provide a summary of why you want to be involved in the Rural Ambassador Awards.
3. Provide a summary of your Show Society involvement (include any judging, stewarding and exhibiting experience as well as general responsibilities during your Local Show).
4. Provide a summary of your rural and/ or community involvement (e.g. volunteerism, employment, memberships).
5. Provide a summary of your ambitions and aspirations.
6. Describe how your selection could assist both you and your Show Society.



5.3 Judges

- Judges may come from the local Show network, the community (doctor, mayor, etc.) or may be potential sponsors involved in a related industry. Inviting potential sponsors is a good way to gain their involvement and allows them to understand the Awards, its strengths and the advantages it offers entrants.
- Judges should be briefed prior to the event, regarding judging criteria, what is expected and the regulations of the Awards.
- The Rural Ambassador Committee, incorporating former competitors and other representatives, would also be delighted to judge at your local Awards. Please contact the representative from your region directly.
- One idea is to invite the winner of your local Awards of previous years to return and judge.

5.4 Judging Criteria

Judging criteria is outlined below. Appendix 2 shows the judging sheet for the State Finals, which allows judges to give a point score for each section and to compare scores for each competitor. Hence, the winner is selected on the basis of accumulated points. This judging sheet may be adopted for local Awards judging purposes.

Community Involvement – 15 points

- Entrants must demonstrate an active involvement and a desire to be involved in the future and improvement of their local community.

Country Show Involvement – 25 points

- Entrants must demonstrate an active involvement and a desire to be involved in the future and improvement of their Local Show Society.

General and Rural Knowledge – 20 points

Entrants are required to demonstrate:

- a broad general knowledge and awareness of local community issues
- an understanding of current affairs relating to rural life and industry.

Personality – 10 points

- Personality traits consistent with both the Awards and the entrant's ambitions and goals will be assessed (e.g. enthusiasm, creativity, confidence, leadership).

Ambitions/Goals – 10 points

- Entrant's ambitions and goals will be assessed on their integrity and relevance to the Awards.
- Entrants must demonstrate steps towards achieving their goals.

Communication Skills – 10 points

- Entrants are expected to demonstrate effective communication skills – written, oral and interpersonal.

Style, Grooming and Deportment – 10 points

- Entrant's presentation will be assessed according to the suitability of their attire and conduct in a range of contexts.

Public Presentation (three minute speech) – 20 points

- Entrant's public presentation will be assessed according to the quality of the content, delivery and the extent to which it addresses the set topic.

TOTAL – 120 points

- The Judging Panel should seek from each applicant:
 - Reason(s) for entering – motivation and expectations; Ambition(s) in life and how they plan to achieve them;
 - Family, education and business background; Hobbies and other interests;
 - Views on topical and controversial matters at time of interview;
 - Views on the role of Government at local, state and federal level on matters affecting the rural industry;
 - Views on the role of agriculture in the development and economy of Australia.
- Judges should undertake to find out this information through a short interview with each competitor (approximately 10-20 minutes).
- Judges may find it easier to compare competitor responses to questions, if supplied with a list of approximately five pre-determined questions. This allows judges to accurately compare each of the competitor's answers directly.

Examples of questions asked at previous State Finals are:

- Describe what involvement you currently have with your Society and if you could change one thing, what would it be?
- Who, outside of family, has been the most influential person in guiding/helping you make choices so far?
- Describe a situation where you were not sure how to handle it, how you overcame it, and what you learnt from it.
- I notice that you indicate one of your goals is to..... What steps have you taken so far to achieve this goal?



5-5 Prizes

- Local Show winners will receive a certificate supplied by the RASV. Forms can be obtained by contacting the RASV Rural Ambassador Coordinator.
- Additional prizes for Local Show winners are the responsibility of each local Show Society. This may be a sponsored cash prize or a cash prize provided by the local Show Society. Alternatively, this prize may be sponsored product(s) from retail outlets within your community. Examples include a voucher from a clothing store or a voucher to attend a short course.

5-6 Sponsorship

Sponsorship for your local Awards can be in the following forms:

- Cash contribution to assist in the operating costs of running the local Award;
- Cash contribution to Awards the winner as a prize; or
- Contra (product) contribution that can be awarded to the local winner.

Who to attract?

- Sponsors can be attracted in many ways. It may be easier to attract sponsors for the local Awards who operate within your local community, or those companies who have a large target market within your community, such as newspapers, radio stations, councils, or retailers who operate in the area.

Sponsor incentives

- You should ensure that any sponsor, or potential sponsor, has an incentive to keep sponsoring year after year. Such incentives may include:
 - Having sponsor logos on local winner certificates - if you would like your sponsor's logo on the your winners certificate you should e-mail the electronic file of their logo to the RASV Rural Ambassador Coordinator at <catharine.redden@rasv.com.au> for inclusion;
 - Invite sponsors to act as a judge;
 - Invite a sponsor or their representative to present the Awards (cash or contra) to the winner; or
 - Invite your sponsor(s) to any function you may have to announce the winner.
- Looking for sponsors should happen throughout the year – not only at Show time. When you have confirmed their contribution, ensure you write them a letter outlining what you have agreed on. For example, if company XYZ will supply \$200, supply a tax invoice if required and let them know that you will contact them closer to the Show (or date of Award) to invite them to attend the presentation function (or whatever benefits you have discussed).

5-7 Liaising with your Group Secretary

- After your winner has been announced, please ensure you provide the winners details to your Group Secretary immediately, or as soon as is practical, after judging. This will allow enough time for the Group Secretary to coordinate the Group Final. Details you should provide include:
 - Name
 - Date of Birth
 - Age
 - Address
 - Phone Number
 - Show Society Represented

Only winners of the Award at Local level proceed to the Group Finals.



The Group Finals take place each year at a time after all Local Show Societies within the Group have conducted their Award.

At the Group level, the Secretary of each Group (Northern, Wimmera, Western, Goulburn Valley Riverina, Midlands, South Western, Port Phillip, Central & South Gippsland, Central & Upper Goulburn, Gippsland North Eastern/Murray Valley and Agricultural Field Days) or an appointed person will coordinate the Awards.

Tasks include:

- Coordinate the timing of Group Finals;
- Liaising with the Local Awards coordinators;
- Liaising with Local Awards winners;
- Sourcing and confirming judges;
- Obtaining prizes for the Group winner and other competitors if deemed appropriate;
- Obtaining sponsorship for their Group Awards;
- Organising a function to announce the winner (eg. at Local Show, afternoon tea); and
- Liaising with the VAS Ltd Executive Officer.

6-1 Timing of Group Awards

The timing of each Group Final is dependant on the Group Secretary, however, it must be held after all Local Shows have confirmed their winner, yet no later than the first weekend in May. The details of Group Final winners must be at the RASV office by the second Monday of May.

6-2 Liaising with Local Awards Winners

Group Final Coordinators should write to the winners of each local Show within their Group and congratulate the winner for getting through to the Group Final. The letter should also advise of the day, time and location of Group Final judging, the topic for the three minute presentation, who else is permitted to attend the Group Final as a guest and the format for the event.

6-3 Judges

- Group finals should have a judging panel comprising two or three judges.
- See details in section 5-3 for ideas regarding possible judges.

6-4 Judging Criteria

- All Group finalists must take part in a 20 minute interview.
- The interview should be structured such that judges are able to accurately grade/mark the Group finalists according to the criteria set in section 5-4 above.
- Judges may find it easier to compare Group finalists' responses to questions, if supplied with a list of approximately five pre-determined questions. This allows judges to accurately compare each finalist's answers. Examples of pre-determined questions are listed in section 5-4.
- Group finalists are required to present a three minute address to the judging panel on a topic to be determined by each Group. This topic must be articulated to all finalists in advance to allow adequate time for preparation.
- Such topics used in previous State Finals that you may consider include:
 - The Show must go on
 - How relevant is the outback to contemporary Australia?
 - Federation – Advance Australia Where?

6-5 Prizes

- Prizes for the Group finalists include:
 - State Jacket: Jackets are provided on the first day of State judging at the Royal Melbourne Show.
 - Trophy: Supplied to Group Secretaries to present at the time of the Group final. Contact VAS Ltd Executive Officer for information on trophies.
 - RASV Membership: Distributed after the June Information Session.
- Additional prizes for Group winners are the responsibility of Group. This may be a cash prize or product(s) from retail outlets within your community. Examples include a voucher from a clothing store or a voucher to attend a short course. Group Secretaries should attempt to obtain sponsorship for cash and/or contra prizes.



6-6 Promotion

See section 5-1

6-7 Sponsorship

See section 5-6

6-8 Liaising with VAS Ltd Executive Officer

Each Group Secretary should send/fax the completed application form to the VAS Ltd Executive Officer no later than the second Monday of May. This timing ensures the RASV can coordinate all State Finalists in preparation for the information session held in June.



7-1 Liaising with State Finalists

- All Group winners will receive a letter from the RASV Rural Ambassador Coordinator congratulating finalists on making it to the State Final to be held at the Royal Melbourne Show.
- This letter will also include the following information:
 - The date and format of the Information Session including location, what they will need to bring, who they are permitted to bring, etc.;
 - Accommodation request form; and
 - Any other necessary information.

7-2 Information Session

- The information session is held in June. State finalists, partners, sponsors and guests are invited to attend.
- Finalists will make a short, informal presentation of approximately two minutes duration about themselves, covering their interests, hobbies and any other necessary information.
- Finalists will be informed about elements of the State Final program including:
 - The judging process;
 - Accommodation arrangements;
 - Daily program while at the Royal Melbourne Show;
 - Presentation function;
 - Conduct whilst at the Royal Melbourne Show; and
 - Any other necessary information.

7-3 Judging

- Judging will take place on Friday 21 and Saturday 22 September and Sunday 23 September at the 2012 Royal Melbourne Show (TBC).
- Competitors are required to write an essay of **1,000-1,500 words** in length, describing how they anticipate benefiting from their involvement in the Awards and how they plan to use the prize money (see Section 7-5 below).
- Each competitor will have a **20 minute interview** incorporating a series of pre-determined questions. CV's will be studied by the judges prior to interviewing and questioning will focus on finalist's particular interests.
- An informal meeting with judges will be held at a function on the first Friday of the Royal Melbourne Show. This meeting will give finalists an opportunity to converse with judges in an informal setting and also allows finalists an opportunity to meet each other.
- Finalists are required to make a **three minute speech** during the Royal Melbourne Show on a topic selected by the Rural Ambassador Committee. Finalists will be notified of their speech topic at the Information Session.

7-4 Presentation Function

- The presentation dinner will be held on the first Saturday evening of the Royal Melbourne Show (22 September 2012).
- Each State finalist is required to make their three minute presentation at this dinner.
- Finalists, families, VAS Ltd representatives and guests are welcome to attend.
- Invitations for the dinner will be sent to competitors, competitors' families, Local Show secretaries, Group secretaries, VAS Ltd Board and RASV representatives in August.
- The cost of the dinner will be determined in August.
- Those who purchase a ticket to the function and do not have access to the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds will be sent one non-transferrable admission ticket.
- For more information on the presentation function, to reserve a table, or to request an invitation, please contact the RASV Rural Ambassador Coordinator.

7-5 State Final Prizes

The State Final winner will receive a major prize and the opportunity to compete in the National Finals. The State Final winner will receive \$8,000 of which \$2,000 is a cash prize and \$6,000 is to be put towards educational based activities. The runner up receives \$2,000 towards educational based activities.

RASV and VAS hope this document motivates all Shows Societies to run this prestigious Award, as well as allowing for greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in ensuring the Award is a success not only today, but also in the future.



Rural Ambassador Awards get behind rural youth

Do you know a young ambassador in your community who is worthy of recognition? Someone who is actively involved in social, business, civic, religious or sporting events that make living in rural areas better?

If so, why not encourage them to enter the Victorian Agricultural Shows Rural Ambassador Awards? By entering this fulfilling competition, not only will their efforts be recognised, they will have the chance to win prizes of significant value including a cash component.

Entrants will initially compete at a Local Show and then if successful, will proceed to a Group final. Ultimately, Group winners will compete at the State Finals, which will be judged at the Royal Melbourne Show in September.

What are the Victorian Agricultural Shows Rural Ambassador Awards?

The Victorian Agricultural Shows Rural Ambassador Awards are organised by The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria Limited and Victorian Agricultural Shows Limited.

The Awards aim to highlight the importance of young people in rural Victoria, identify and encourage enthusiastic, skilful, industrious and unselfish young people, and to provide young people with a forum to express their views through education and experience.

How to enter the Awards?

Contact your local Agricultural Show Society and complete an Application Form. Send the completed form to the secretary of the Agricultural Show Society that you wish to represent.

What are the criteria for the Awards?

Applicants must be aged between 20 and 30 years as at May 1st in the year of the State Final. Applicants need to be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about rural or agricultural based industries, or be associated with a Show Society. It is not necessary for applicants to reside in a rural community.

Applicants must also be able to attend the regional interviews, the State Final Information Session, the State Final judging, and the announcement of the Victorian Agricultural Shows Rural Ambassador Award at the Royal Melbourne Show.

Prizes

- Show Society level winners receive a certificate
- Group level winners receive a certificate, plaque, RASV membership and a state representative jacket.
- Access to networking groups.
- Represent Victoria at the National Finals, which are held in different capital city Royal Shows around the country each year.
- Participate in esteemed educational programs, symposia and other forums.
- Be an active part of the Royal Melbourne Show and also the entrants local Show Society.

For further information, contact your local Show Society or the RASV Rural Ambassador Coordinator on (03) 9281 7467 or e-mail catharine.redden@rasv.com.au

Rural Ambassador Awards 2011/12

Are you a dynamic individual concerned with issues affecting the rural community? Do you like a challenge and strive for excellence?

Then why not participate in an innovative programme aimed at highlighting the importance of your role in the community?

The Victorian Agricultural Shows 'Rural Ambassador Awards' identifies and encourages enthusiastic, industrious and skilful young people providing them with a forum to express their views through education and experience.

As a 'Rural Ambassador' State level winner you will receive prizes and cash up to the value of \$8000 as well as representing Victoria at the National Finals.

To enter you need to be aged between 20 and 30 years inclusive at the time of your local Agricultural Show, be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about rural or agricultural based industry or associated with a Show Society but not necessarily reside in a rural community, be able to attend regional and State final interviews as well as being able to attend the announcement of the Victorian Rural Ambassador Awards at the Royal Melbourne Show.

The Awards are judged across 12 regions in Victoria with winners at the local level going on to the regional final. Regional final winners then take part in the State final held at the Royal Melbourne Show each year with the Victorian winner taking part in the National finals.

"I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for the Rural Ambassador Award. Just have a go, you never know what you will get out of it", Ben Holmes 2010 winner.

"Being chosen to participate and winning the 2009 Victorian Rural Ambassador Award has been the most motivating and inspirational experience of my life so far!" says Lauren Mathers, last year's Victorian winner.

Since winning the Victorian State Final Lauren has addressed leadership groups in Northern Victoria and Melbourne and has been introduced to key people in the food and agritourism industry. With prize money from the Award Lauren is travelling to France in June 2010 to explore regional food markets, meet local food producers and retailers and learn how small communities sustain regular markets with seasonal local produce. She will then travel to Scotland to attend the 24th Commonwealth Agricultural Conference and the Royal Highland Show in Edinburgh.

Heidi Knowles, runner-up in 2009, says "I have benefited in countless ways including developing my professional networks and contacts and being nominated to hold a position on the RASV's Rural Ambassador Committee"

Think you would like to be the next Rural Ambassador?

Then simply contact your local Agricultural Show Society, the RASV or obtain an entry form on www.rasv.com.au

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**The Royal Agricultural
Society of Victoria**

Notes

