

# ATSA Newsletter

## Message from ATSA's CEO, Serena Ovens

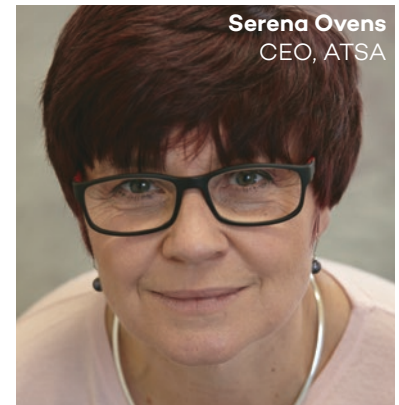
With just under a month in the CEO role under my belt, I welcome you to ATSA's August newsletter and want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has already reached out to introduce themselves and make me feel welcome as I get up to speed on all things ATSA and assistive technology!

Firstly, congratulations to this year's ATSA award winners. As an early introduction to my role I was able to attend both Perth and Melbourne expos, and was blown away by the commitment members place on supporting the requirements of all those that attend the expo, alongside of the innovative and interactive displays and amazing AT on offer across a broad range of categories. Recognition of this by category winners was truly well deserved.

Now that the expos are over for a little while, my focus goes to reviewing the proposals coming out of the Aged Care and NDIS reforms, so that we can ensure any changes do not disadvantage ATSA members. To that end, ATSA has engaged NEM to undertake an independent, de-identified survey of the sector to allow us to have the hard facts and data to speak with authority where we feel the changes may put both suppliers and end users at risk. Whilst I know it's a significant effort, I urge all members to please assist by completing the survey.

Finally, if I have not had the opportunity to meet with you yet, please know that I'll be doing my best to get out and about and visit members over the coming months!

*Serena*



**Serena Ovens**  
CEO, ATSA

## ATSA Board Members

**Chair**  
Nikolas Witcombe (Total Ability)

**Vice Chair**  
Philippa Bell (Board Appointed)

**Financial Director**  
Andrew Webster (Country Care Group)

**Directors**  
Amin Akbarian (Mobility Engineering)  
Matthew Butterworth (Magic Mobility)  
Michael Linke (Vision Australia, Board Appointed)  
Jacinta Maurin (Sunrise Medical)  
Stewart McDonagh (Independent Living Specialists)  
Jeff Watters (Automobility)



## Important dates

### 2023

**Rehacare, Düsseldorf, Germany**  
13-16 September 2023

**Call for Papers - Adelaide**  
Closes 22 September 2023

**ATSA Independent Living Expo, Canberra**  
8 – 9 November 2023

**ATSA AGM, Sydney**  
November 2023

### 2024

**ATSA Independent Living Expo, Adelaide**  
6 – 7 March 2024

**ATSA Independent Living Expo, Sydney**  
22 – 23 May 2024

**ATSA Independent Living Expo, Brisbane**  
29 – 30 May 2024

**ATSA Awards Dinner, Brisbane**  
29 May 2024

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Phone: (02) 8006 7357  
Mail: PO Box 562, Ryde NSW 1680

Email: [info@atsa.org.au](mailto:info@atsa.org.au)  
Website: [www.atsa.org.au](http://www.atsa.org.au)

ABN: 58 628 080 517





What ATSA members have been up to

# New Showroom for Wild West Wheelchairs



It has been a big couple of years for Wild West Wheelchairs, from humble beginnings in 2017 (a repair service working out of a van) to moving into our first showroom / office in 2022.

January 2023 we completed the refurbishment of the showroom and office. Including a fully accessible bathroom to enhance the experience and comfort of our clients, a workshop for onsite repairs and a great space for showroom and conducting training sessions.

## ATSA Dealer of the Year 2022 & 2023!

We were thrilled to be nominated and awarded the ATSA Dealer of the year award for 2022 and to follow that up with another nomination & win in 2023 was remarkable. Our team has grown to include Peter, Kylie, Jack, Declan and Miss Max our office dog who greets every client with enthusiasm.

Wild West Wheelchairs are very proud to be offering a boutique range of exceptional products to the WA and Australian Market along with repairs for our clients.

We would like to dedicate our awards to our loyal Wild West Wheelchairs clients and therapists, we thoroughly enjoy working with them to deliver the best solutions for their individual needs.



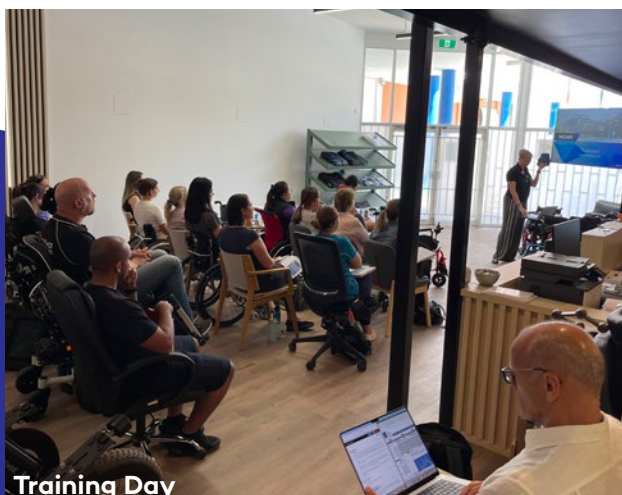
*Original Showroom*



Fully Accessible Bathroom



New Showroom



Training Day



Office Dog  
Miss Max



Wild West Owner Peter Kerkhof  
and Kylie Cunningham

# SWCo Retirement Announcement



Specialised Wheelchair Company and 24-Hour Positioning today announce that previous co-owner Iain Hogg will retire on the 31st July 2023, joining Rhonda Hogg who retired earlier in the year.

As a trailblazer and a visionary, Iain dedicated his life's work to empowering individuals with disabilities through innovative and inclusive technologies. As one of the founding members of ATSA some 23 years ago, he played a pivotal role in revolutionising the accessibility landscape setting the bar high for the whole industry.

Iain's passion, expertise, and unwavering commitment have left an indelible mark on the lives of countless people with disabilities, enabling them to lead more independent and fulfilling lives.

For decades, Iain and Rhonda wholeheartedly invested in the well-being of their clients,

therapists, and staff, navigating the funding and policy changes, and together, they have contributed significantly to the AT industry over the course of their careers. They are well loved and respected by industry professionals as well as staff and clients.

After an illustrious and transformative journey spanning over three decades in the assistive technology industry, Iain bids farewell to his career with a well-earned retirement. We wish Iain and Rhonda a happy retirement.



Iain & Rhonda Hogg



# Aussie adaptive fashion brand The Shapes United makes history as it launches in Walmart

theshapesunited.™

Melbourne-based inclusive clothing brand The Shapes United has become the first Australian adaptive fashion label of its kind to be sold at Walmart across the US, after the retail giant contacted the small business last year wanting to expand its adaptive clothing options.

It all started with a LinkedIn message in April 2022, when a Walmart representative contacted The Shapes United founder and Melbourne fashion designer Penny Weber asking to include her clothing brand – which has been designed for people with reduced mobility, sensory issues and any other additional needs – in the Walmart adaptive clothing range.

“To be honest, I didn’t think it was real. I spent some time researching first before I replied. It was legitimate and the person was real,” recalls Weber, who launched The Shapes United, and its sister brand Recovawear, after she narrowly escaped with her life when she was involved in a serious car accident in 2009 that saw the left side of her body affected.

The entrepreneur says the partnership is a real ‘pinch me’ moment.

“This feels like a strange moment in time,” she tells SmartCompany.

“To have such a small Australian brand included in a groundbreaking new product category with one of the largest retailers in the world is such an honor.

“It has been such a journey to get to this point. To set up the business correctly for the American market was more challenging than I originally thought but once we worked out how all the pieces connected, it all came together.”

The Shapes United products are being featured in Walmart as a part of National Disability Pride month, with the official launch on National Disability Independence Day on July 26.

Weber says the products are currently part of ‘adaptive on Walmart’ and featured on the front page of its website.

“Walmart has been so progressive in how they have been onboarding this new category,” she says.



## What ATSA members have been up to

### Continued...

“We initially just organised the stock we could within the short lead time. This included the top sellers of our adaptive and sensory ranges from Australia.

“Now that we are launched, we will send more of our new products for listing in the not-too-distant future. There is always that chance that this new category can make its way into stores.”

### Designing clothes that make “lives easier, more comfortable and colourful”

Weber says there are so many reasons why she decided to start The Shapes United.

“Firstly, I was significantly injured several years ago from an accident and very literally had nothing to wear, so we created the first sets of products based on what I needed at that time. I was living in a share house and had no way to dress myself, which really was the motivation for that first collection,” she explains.

“Fast forward a couple of years and my partner’s cousin approached me to make clothes for him. He is a wonderful human with the biggest heart but has issues finding the right fit for him given his non-standard body shape and mobility needs. He really needed clothes to be a spokesperson and go to the football, but there weren’t commercially available clothes for him.

“There have been so many requests for different types of products of varying levels of function and fashion along the way. It’s so great to have the team within The Shapes United, who love a challenge to address these needs with added personalised flair.”

In 2021, after working with the Remarkable startup accelerator, a division of the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Weber found there was a need in the market for a diverse range of clothing options that were more inclusively designed.

The founder says she finds it so fascinating that people refer to adaptive and/or functional clothes as niche wear.

“In Australia, one in five people are classified by the Census as having a disability. We have a section at the local department stores for maternity wear, which realistically is around 300,000 people per year, yet there isn’t a section at the department store for more functional wear for the 6.2 million people that might have differing needs,” she says.



“In the US, the numbers are even higher ... There are more available options in the US than in Australia however, everyone has their own function and style needs. It’s really a matter of personal choice.

“We find people that purchase The Shapes United come from all areas of life. Ultimately, what we are making can be used by anyone at any point in their lives. It really is a universal design.

“We are doing our best every day to help create those options that our community requests. It’s an exciting day when we get to see the look on people’s faces when they have something that can make their lives easier, more comfortable, and colourful.”

As for future plans for The Shapes United, Weber ended the chat with SmartCompany with a hint.

“We are back busy in our design labs working on our new product lines for more upcoming releases. One hint I will give, the future looks vintage,” she said.

### Writing Credit: Smart Company

<https://www.smartcompany.com.au/industries/retail/aussie-adaptive-fashion-shapes-united-walmart/>



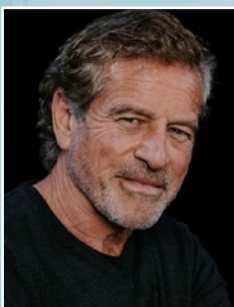
# LEADING WITH VISION

**Sunday 8 – Tuesday 10  
October 2023**

**RACV Royal Pines Resort,  
Gold Coast Queensland**

Join us at Leading with Vision, the ADIA Leadership Conference brought to you in partnership with ATSA, and take your business to new heights! Held on the beautiful Gold Coast, Leading with Vision is your opportunity to be inspired by fresh insights and network with industry leaders.

## Featuring...



**Entrepreneur  
and best-selling  
author,  
Mark Bouris AM**



**Triple Olympian,  
Lisa Curry AO**



**Co-host, The  
Gruen Transfer,  
Todd Sampson**



**Former Olympic  
gymnast,  
Brennon Dowrick**



**The Sales Dr,  
Ingrid Maynard**



**The People  
Whisperer,  
Anneli Blundell**

And many more still to be announced,  
this is an event not to be missed.

**ATSA MEMBERS**  
Bring your whole team and get  
exclusive member-only  
discounts on registration fees!

**Registrations open now!**  
Book early to take advantage of the early bird and  
take advantage of multi-ticket discounts.





# ATSA Wrap Perth – Sharing AT Innovation

I thought I knew what this year's Perth ATSA Expo was going to be like, and it wasn't anything like it at all – it was so much better!

Working with AT Chat puts me at the heart of a community that is generous in sharing with their peers the 'what' and 'how' AT helps them live their lives. I get to hear about the innovative use of AT and introduced to some amazing new products by the individuals who use them.

While the worldwide web and many online connections help fill some gaps, there is nothing like immersing yourself in an expo invested in providing a space for people with disability, their families, carers, and professionals to explore the latest innovations in assistive technology.

Andrew Fairbairn shared; "To be very honest, I have been to many of these in the past and so was not really expecting anything to take my breath away. Well, I was very wrong. A remote-controlled wheelchair. That's insane, I can see so many uses for that."

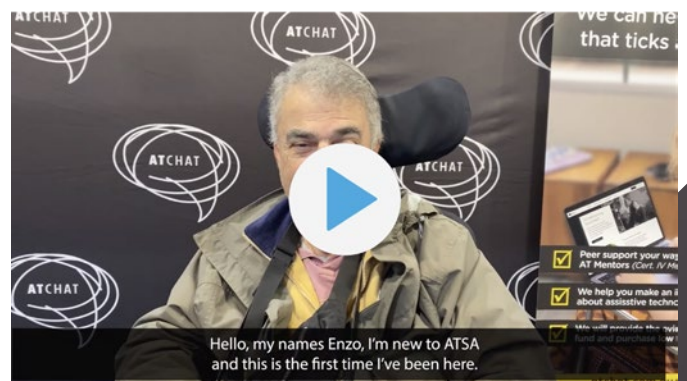
Another attendee Debbie said that; "I came to the ATSA Expo with my companion. And I have been looking for a pull-down clothesline that can be installed in my laundry or a pull-out one on my patio, and I happened to come across the 'Up line', and they have the products that I want".

It just happens that AT [Chatter Martin wrote about his purchase of his mechanical clothesline which you can read on our AT Portal here.](#) (Opens in new tab)

The portal is a great resource co-designed with our community of AT users. It houses a library of short videos and articles co-developed with our community to share the AT that helps them live, play, work.

If you couldn't make it to the expo, don't worry. We have some videos that will show you some of the amazing AT products that can help you live your life below including Brainfingers, Memory Machine, and KandoKutter. [If you're interested in the seminar sessions, you can find some of the presentations by following this link.](#)

**Check out what Enzo had to say about attending the expo below.**





## ATSA Perth continued



### Brainfingers

Brainfingers is a technology product that allows people with physical disabilities to control their computers and other electronic devices using their brainwaves and facial muscle movements.

[Learn more about this product here.](#)



### KandoKutter

The KandoKutter allows people to prepare their own food without the worry of cuts and injury. This safe kitchen knife is designed to cut through all types of food - from tomatoes to steak - while keeping fingers safe. They have been designed to support children and adults to be more independent in the kitchen.

[Learn more about this product by following this link.](#)



### Memory Machine

Memory Machine is an omnichannel digital platform that integrates with a variety of hardware devices to help families contribute to the care of their loved ones. It is designed to help with the challenges of memory loss and can help with forgetfulness, losing things, and isolation. It was born out of the desire to give control, connection, and reassurance. Not only to the people living with memory loss but also to their carers, family, and friends.

[Learn more about this product by following this link.](#)

Another highlight of the expo was the seminar program, where experts and users shared their insights and experiences on various topics related to assistive technology. Kristy Harper, Innovation and Growth Manager at iLA, that powers AT Chat, presented AT Chat's new Australia-wide AT Mentor Service. Kristy said:

"It's great to be able to share with ATSA attendees the important work AT Chat is doing to provide a space for people with disability to share their lived experience about assistive technology with each other.

We also launched the AT Mentor Service which provides an opportunity for people to work with an AT Mentor to research the assistive products that help them pursue their goals and provide the evidence they need to purchase it."

She added that due to the increased interest in the service, there is a waitlist and that [people can register their interest in accessing the AT Mentor service via the AT Chat website](#). She also said that ATSA 2023 was a huge success, and they were happy to be a part of it again.

We would like to thank the organisers of the Perth ATSA Expo for putting together such a wonderful event and shout out to all the AT Chatters who came to visit us at our stand to share their thoughts on the expo and to just say hi!

If you would like personalised support to find and purchase AT to meet your needs using your NDIS funds, [follow this link to learn about our AT Mentor Service](#).

# The 2023 Australian Access Awards: Celebrating Digital Accessibility



The Centre for Accessibility Australia (CFA Australia) has proudly announced the return of the Australian Access Awards for 2023. The event, which takes place every two years, is a national celebration that honours organizations, designers, developers, and content creators committed to promoting digital accessibility across various platforms.

The Australian Access Awards are full of success stories, but one in particular came about from a surprising twist of events.

Gisele Mesnage, an advocate who is legally blind, took on supermarket giant Coles in a legal battle after facing discrimination while attempting to use their website for online shopping, after a website upgrade in 2013. Despite years of negotiation with Coles to address the issues, a lasting solution remained elusive. As a result, she chose legal action as the last resort to seek equal consideration and accessibility for herself and other customers with disability.

After Gisele Mesnage won the case against Coles, she decided to nominate the supermarket giant for the commercial

website category of the 2019 Australian Access Awards, where they in fact emerged as the winner.

This success story serves as a testament to the impact that businesses can make when they prioritize accessibility in their digital offerings.

As we move forward, CFA Australia continues to champion accessibility and its vital role in fostering a more inclusive society. Through the Australian Access Awards, CFA Australia – along with its valued sponsors such as ATSA – aims to inspire organizations and individuals to create digital spaces that welcome everyone, and contribute to a more accessible and equitable future.

## **ATSA is proud to be a Community Sponsor**

To learn more visit

<https://www.accessibility.org.au/awards/>







## Reminder from the NDIA to providers

**During presentations at the Melbourne and Perth Expos, the NDIA has asked providers to check the following:**

- Ensure you are using the right code for the AT device.
- More than one code is required if the AT is more complex, don't use a single code.
- Make sure the correct dollar amount is on the claim.
- Ensure the use of the AT Supplementary Charge code is correct. Errors here may delay payment or even result in fraud or sharp practices investigations.
- Making sure you follow the NDIA processes will help speed up the claiming and payment processes for your business.

## Available now – Guide for providers

A new booklet Aged care reform: a guide for providers is available to download for free from the department's website.

Download here: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/aged-care-reforms-a-guide-for-providers>

This booklet gives aged care providers – both home and residential – an overview of what reforms impact you, as well as how you can access support and have your say about the reforms.



# LEADING WITH VISION – Gather with like minded business leaders

Convened by the Australian Dental Industry Association (ADIA) in partnership with Assistive Technology Suppliers Australia (ATSA), the 2023 Leading with Vision conference will be held this October on the Gold Coast, bringing together leaders from across the country in sales, training, and culture.

Leading with Vision represents a significant opportunity for industry professionals to gain fresh insights, connect with industry leaders, elevate their businesses, and strengthen their teams. Leading with Vision is the place to learn about resilience and branding and gain market insight.

“This is a first for ATSA as we partner with ADIA to provide our members the opportunity to join with ADIA members and build general business skills. The conference is great value for money, and the program looks fabulous. I’d recommend it to any ATSA member wanting to give their business a boost!” said Serena Ovens, CEO of ATSA. “I look forward to seeing you on the Gold Coast.”

Leading with Vision brings together a strong lineup of some of Australia’s leading speakers, in sales, training, and culture.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE INSPIRING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

**Mark Bouris AM:** Australian entrepreneur and executive chairman of Yellow Brick Road, renowned for helping Australians achieve their dream homes.

**Lisa Curry AO:** Three-time Olympian, motivational speaker, and TV presenter, offering insights on resilience and success.

**Brennon Dowrick OAM:** Former Olympian and expert in sales, training, and culture, sharing valuable strategies for business growth.

**Todd Sampson:** Co-host of the hit TV show, The Gruen Transfer, Todd Sampson is an adventurer, environmentalist and technology strategist. Take advantage of this rare chance to hear from Todd, whose inimitable style will inspire you with his fresh take on business strategy.



Entrepreneur  
and best-selling  
author,  
Mark Bouris AM



Triple Olympian,  
Lisa Curry AO



Co-host, The  
Gruen Transfer,  
Todd Sampson



Former Olympic  
gymnast,  
Brennon Dowrick



## LEADING WITH VISION



## Business and Leadership Conference

## EXPERT MASTERCLASSES

Along with the main program, delegates can head to the Gold Coast a day early to participate in expert masterclasses featuring The Sales Doctor, Ingrid Maynard, and Karen Eck of eckfactor. Ms Maynard, who has spent more than 25 years guiding Australian organisations to improve their sales performance, is presenting on discovering what customers value in you. Ms Eck, a publicist for a range of world-class names, including Oprah Winfrey, National Geographic and CNN, is presenting on building your professional brand for career success using the power of visibility.



**The Sales Dr,  
Ingrid Maynard**



**Founder & Presenter,  
eckfactor, Karen Eck**

**The Sales Doctor, Ingrid Maynard:** With over 25 years of experience in sales performance improvement, Ingrid will guide participants in discovering what customers truly value.

**Karen Eck of eckfactor:** Esteemed publicist for global icons like Oprah Winfrey and National Geographic, Karen will explore the power of visibility in building a professional brand for career success.

Leading with Vision will also host a social networking program, including a Welcome Reception on Sunday evening and a Networking Dinner on Monday night.

**Registration for Leading with Vision is now open**  
[Find out more and register today](#)



LEADING WITH **V**ISION

# Sunday 8 – Tuesday 10 October 2023

# RACV Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast Queensland

# YOUR BUSINESS MOMENTUM



Results, not recommendations

## GENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP – Adapting your leadership style to attract and retain a skilled workforce

**Virtual Workshop**  
**Thursday 17 August 2023**  
**10:00 am AEST**

[Click here to register](#)

Workforce shortfalls are limiting geographic and population coverage. This in turn compromises the quality of our industry. According to the 2022 Global Report on Assistive Technology by the World Health Organization & United Nations Children's Fund, a survey conducted in 70 countries highlighted substantial gaps in the provision of services and availability of trained professionals in assistive technology. To address this challenge, it is crucial to implement effective recruitment and retention strategies in order to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Furthermore, understanding the wants and needs of different generations in the workforce is crucial for effective recruitment and retention. Millennials, Gen X, and Gen Z employees are quickly comprising the bulk of the workforce. They have unique values, motivations, and expectations from their work. Aligning these diverse needs with the organization's goals and culture becomes a critical factor in attracting and engaging top talent.

Is it possible that, despite good intentions, you've been accidentally diminishing the people on your team? Are you creating an environment where

people are just there for their pay or are we creating a thriving, growing culture where people are eager to learn and experience growth?

Join Greg Gunther and Joshna Daya of Your Business Momentum for this insightful session where they will explain...

**What is generational leadership?**

**What is an accidental diminisher – could you be one?**

**How to amplify the talents around your business and effectively enable your people to utilise the full range of their intellect and capabilities**

**How can you adapt your current leadership style to bring out the best in your people**

Join us in this webinar as we explore the motivations and values of different generations, enabling tailored approaches to attract and engage diverse talent.

## Questions?

Please email [events@atsa.org.au](mailto:events@atsa.org.au)

If there is a business topic or education session you would like to see in the 2023 calendar please let us know.





# Liability Insurance – The most common problem

We constantly assist ATSA members with their Liability insurance needs and have done so since 2019. A recurring issue on reviewing Liability needs are two important questions which may have never been asked of the member.

## **Do you have any agreements with your suppliers?**

## **Do those agreements contain any indemnity or hold harmless conditions?**

The answers are usually “yes” and “I don’t know”. It doesn’t take long to review the contracts and discover it is “Yes” and “Yes”.

Insurance companies take on your Liability risk in exchange for a premium. They are picking up Liability that exists under common law, contracts between suppliers & distributors often contain clauses that make your company liable instead of the supplier or waive your rights to recover from the supplier. In this case you now have a Liability that, without the contract, would not normally exist. This assumed liability is generally excluded by Liability insurance unless disclosed and the Insurer agrees to take the risk on.

The solution for our members is to simply provide the indemnities to our partnered insurer who review and so far agree to pick up the risk.

Were the members previously covered adequately? It’s not hard to conclude there would be claim issues at the very least involving products from those suppliers. If you have never been asked these questions it is most likely your business is in the same position and urgently needs to address it.

Our business specialises in insurance for Assistive Technology, it is what we spend most of our time doing. We are here to help.

For a quote or insurance advice please contact Brendon on 0433 166 036 or [brendon.watson@oraclegroup.com.au](mailto:brendon.watson@oraclegroup.com.au)



Australia's foremost  
assistive technology event

**BY THE INDUSTRY  
FOR THE INDUSTRY**

**CANBERRA**

**8-9 NOV 2023**

EXHIBITION PARK (EPIC)

**ADELAIDE**

**6-7 MARCH 2024**

ADELAIDE SHOWGROUND

**SYDNEY**

**22-23 MAY 2024**

SYDNEY SHOWGROUND

**BRISBANE**

**29-30 MAY 2024**

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EXHIBITION CENTRE

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