

Saleyard boss Tim Maguire's message to councils who run livestock selling facilities



By [Bryce Eishold](#)

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Kris and Tim Maguire, Emerald, who was crowned the Saleyard Industry Champion for 2024 in Melbourne at the Australian Saleyards Conference.

Picture by Bryce Eishold

The former manager of an Australian livestock saleyard says rural and regional councils need to stay in touch with the agriculture sector if they expect ratepayer-owned yards to prosper.

Tim Maguire, who managed the Emerald saleyards in Queensland for seven years, said council-run saleyards offered "huge benefits", but required the expertise and knowledge of people in the agriculture sector to function at their optimum level.

Mr Maguire was named as the Australian Livestock Markets Association & Australia Livestock Saleyards Association Saleyard Industry Champion for 2024 in Victoria last week.

The award was presented at the Australian Saleyards Conference at the Pan Pacific Melbourne.

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The 66-year-old recently stepped down from his role as saleyards manager at the Central Highlands Regional Council-facility, but said he planned to continue his livestock agency work which he started in 1976.

The Emerald saleyards has an annual average throughput of 80,000-100,000 cattle each year through a weekly combined prime and store cattle sale.

"Typically, saleyards where they're council-owned have oversight by council officers that may not have that industry background or knowledge," Mr Maguire said.

"Our model we've run in the last seven years is somewhat unique because we've had someone with a background in small business and industry knowledge run the saleyards."

During his time at the helm of the facility, Mr Maguire oversaw 45 capital works projects worth \$6.1 million.



Tim Maguire, Emerald, pictured at the Australian Saleyards Conference in Melbourne. Picture by Bryce Eishold

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The projects included a suite of improvements, including a full-deck weighbridge, lighting upgrades, extensive concreting through delivery lands and a major overhaul of 20 long-term spelling paddocks.

The facility also hosts three feature weaner and feeder store sales between June and August, and yards more than 120,000 transit cattle every 12 months.

Prior to Mr Maguire's management, the facility yarded fewer than 15,000 transit cattle each year.

The Emerald yards recorded the fifth highest throughput of cattle in Queensland in 2022-23 with 70,523 cattle.

Roma was the largest with 244,778 cattle, which followed Dalby, Charters Towers and Gracemere, with Blackall at six.

Those five facilities are also council owned and operated, except for Gracemere which is operated by CQXL, a subsidiary of RLX.

Mr Maguire started in the livestock industry in 1976 and ran his own company, Maguire's Real Estate & Livestock, until it was purchased by agency Grant Daniel Long at Emerald in 2023.

He took on the role of saleyards manager when the council was looking to improve the management of the facility.

"We've had a very good working relationship with all our agents, and we treasure their involvement fundamentally," Mr Maguire said.

"The council operates and maintains the facility, and we see the agent group, made up of several agencies, as being the marketing arm."

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Mr Maguire said his background as a livestock agency gave him the technical understanding to grow the facility, along with the support of his staff.

"We sit in a geographical area where agriculture is a huge part of the local economy," he said.

"Typically, our councillor make-up consists of a huge rural base and they have always recognised the value in what saleyards can bring to a local economy and region.

"Councils need to stay in touch with the needs and wants because it's a changing industry and forever evolving with a lot of time constraints."

Besides his agency work, Mr Maguire runs a small business which sells sheds and garages - with no immediate plans to stop either in the future.

Mr Maguire acknowledged the support of his wife Kris and his colleagues and staff at the Central Highlands Regional Council who contributed to the success of the saleyard.

Australian Livestock Saleyards Association president Gerald Leach described Mr Maguire as a backbone of Australia's livestock saleyard industry.

"(His) achievements have not only advanced the saleyards sector but have also set a benchmark for excellence," Mr Leach said.

"He has been a shining example to all of us, showcasing what can be achieved with passion, perseverance, and an unwavering belief in the value of our industry."