

AKUBRA STARS WITH THE STARS AT THE AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Akubra made a guest appearance at this year's Australian Open at Rod Laver Arena courtesy of Eurosport and four of the world's former top tennis players.

Eurosport sent their team of tennis presenters including pictured (from left) **Henri Leconte, Annabel Croft, Barbara Schett and Mats Wilander** from their head office in Paris to Melbourne to head up the television coverage beamed back to Europe and the UK.

Roopa Fulivai, the Head of Communications at



Eurosport's Australian office, organized a get together of all journalists covering the open and their partners to meet the Eurosport team.

"I wanted something

uniquely Australian to give our European presenters and nothing is more so than Akubra," Roopa said.

"We gave them an Akubra each and they loved them and wore them

for much of the tournament.

"This year's coverage of the Open in Europe and the UK in terms of viewers was by far the biggest yet and is only going to get bigger.

"Europe has really embraced the Australian open, even if viewers have to get out of bed at 3am to watch.

"It is the first of the Grand Slams and for that reason carries so much importance for tennis fans throughout Europe.

"It is so gratifying that an Australian icon like Akubra could play a part in our coverage."

CROWNED WITH AN AKUBRA



CROWNED WITH AN AKUBRA: Tamworth's Queen Of Country Music for 2013 Sophie Dewhurst and Princess, Katherine Coburn..

Most queens and princesses receive a crown or a tiara at their "coronation" but they do things a little differently at Tamworth's (NSW) famous country music festival.

The festival queen and princess are both crowned with Akubras and on top of that sit their tiaras.

This year, for the first time, the outgoing queen, Dimity Chaseling and princess Shae McIntosh, were recognized for their efforts over the last 12 months by being presented with pink Akubras.

Akubra hats play a big role at the Tamworth festival and particularly in helping to identify the candidates for

the queen and princess titles.

The 21 entrants this year each wore sashes and Akubras as they attended to their many commitments and public appearances before and during the festival.

This year's Queen of Country Music is Sophie Dewhurst and Katherine (Kate) Coburn is the Princess.

The Queen of Country Music Quest was introduced by Tamworth Business Chamber in 1984 as a promotional event for local business involvement

in the country music festival.

Sophie, Kate and the other 19 entrants took home more than \$50,000 in prizes donated by local businesses and their Akubras.

Sophie reinforced the decision of the judges by presenting a perfectly composed speech after the crowning.

Both Sophie and Katherine will travel to Tamworth's sister city Gore, in New Zealand, in June to represent the region at the Gore Country Music Festival.



PINK AKUBRAS: Last year's Queen Of Country Music Dimity Chaseling (centre) and Princess of Country Music Shae McIntosh with (from left) the president of Tamworth Business Chamber Tim Coates, the Chamber's Executive Officer Marjoly Thomas and the Regional Manager, New England and North West Business Chamber, Kellon Beard.

AKUBRA HELPS SAVE LUKE'S LIFE

The wife and sons of Queensland fencing contractor Luke White say their father owes his life to his sturdy Akubra with, they claim, some help from God.

Luke and his sons Matthew and Dan and another worker, Ted Monighan, were installing a barbed wire fence across the Bilpa clay pan between Birdsville and Bedourie just a few days before Christmas.

They were straining up three strands of wire with a piece of railway line when it broke, flew back and hit Luke in the head.

"The impact of the line punched a hole in his Akubra, through the felt lining and the hat band," his wife, Lyn, said.

"It drove him into the ground and he lay there unconscious for about three minutes with his eyes open, in front of our boys.

"Matthew raced over,

looked down and thought he was dead.

"Eventually Luke regained consciousness and was wandering around the camp as though nothing had happened while we were packing up.

"His eyes were open but no one was at home.

"It was a two hour drive to the nearest clinic at Bedourie and the nurse stitched a 10cm wound."

The Royal Flying Doctor

then flew Luke to Mount Isa where a scan found no fracture, no swelling of the brain and very little bruising.

"The Akubra must have spread the impact with the help from God," Lyn said.

"Luke is fully functioning now."

The next day Matthew, Dan and Ted went back to complete the job but kept their Akubras firmly in place, just in case.

LANDMARK VICTORIAN STORE TO CLOSE

Carters, a land mark store in the Victorian town of Echuca, on the banks of the Murray River, is to close next month after 73 years of trading.

John Carter, the fourth generation of his family to run the business and his wife Lyn, are closing up after leasing their building to clothing chain Cotton On.

"In the late 80's we re-invented ourselves by refurbishing the store and becoming computerized," John said.

"It was time to re-invent ourselves again with online selling but Lyn and I am only

three years away from retirement.

"Early last year Cotton On came to us with an offer and after a lot of thought we decided to accept it.

"Our children worked in the shop during school holidays which makes them the fifth generation.

"Less than one percent of family-run businesses last five generations."

John expects the business, known as Carters of Echuca, to close its doors in the early part of March.

"The rest of the month will be spent out the back tidying

up and filing and possibly discovering things we had forgotten about," John said.

"I know there is a blue dragster bike in the roof still in its flat pack that I never had time to assemble.

"It will come down.

"We have a hat stretcher which was used in our Bendigo store back in the gold rush days and it will be going to the museum."

John and Lyn had a unique way of marketing their wide range of Akubra hats.

"We always had a sombrero beside our Akubra dis-

play and people loved putting it on and getting their photo taken," John said.

"Many times it brought them back to buy an Akubra.

"Over time we sold 10 sombreros and we would always get another one to replace it.

"We sold our last one only recently but there won't be anymore."

John and Lyn might be retiring but they won't be sitting still.

"We will be kayaking on the river, riding our mountain bikes and I might even get in a spot of fishing," John said.

HOW LOVED CAN AN AKUBRA BE?

How much can you love your Akubra before it is time to let go? Probably when it gets to this point.

Ricky (he wants to leave it as that) recently walked into New Zealand's Ruapehu Farm Supplies and High Country Clothing at Taihape, wearing his worn out Akubra and telling staff he thought it was time for a new one.

"I am more than happy with the way it has lasted

but I don't think I can hold it together much longer," Ricky told them.

"I kept stitching it up because I love it so much."

Ricky shouted himself a new Coober Pedy but carefully took his old Akubra home as well.

"I couldn't bear to part with it," he said.

TIME TO BE RETIRED: The very loved and much stitched Akubra and Ricky shows it off for the last time.



ATHLETES DO AUSTRALIA AND AKUBRA PROUD

Five Australian athletes with an intellectual disability brought home 13 medals from the 10th Special Olympics World Winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea.

The team marched into the stadium at the opening ceremony wearing their official uniform including the iconic Aussie hat donated by Akubra (pictured).

The team was among 2,300 athletes from 127 countries who competed at the Games in eight sports - alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, short-track speed skating, figure skating, floor hockey and floor ball.

The achievement is even more extraordinary considering that this is the first Australian team to compete in snow sports at a Special Olympics.

Nicole Harris (NSW), Nicole Bartley (QLD), Luke Forster (QLD) and Bryce Fuller (QLD) participated in Alpine Skiing,



while Craig Muhlbock (NSW) competed in snowboarding. They were supported by Jeremy Smith (Head of Delegation), Sharyn Harris (Head Coach) and Hannah Kennedy (Assistant Coach).

Now Australia is to host the inaugural Special Olympics Asia Pacific Games which will be held in Newcastle (NSW) between November 30 and December 7.

It is expected to attract more

than 1700 athletes, 600 coaches, 4000 volunteers and an expected 200,000 spectators from 25 nations across the Asia Pacific region.

Just the place, at the beginning of summer, for an Akubra.

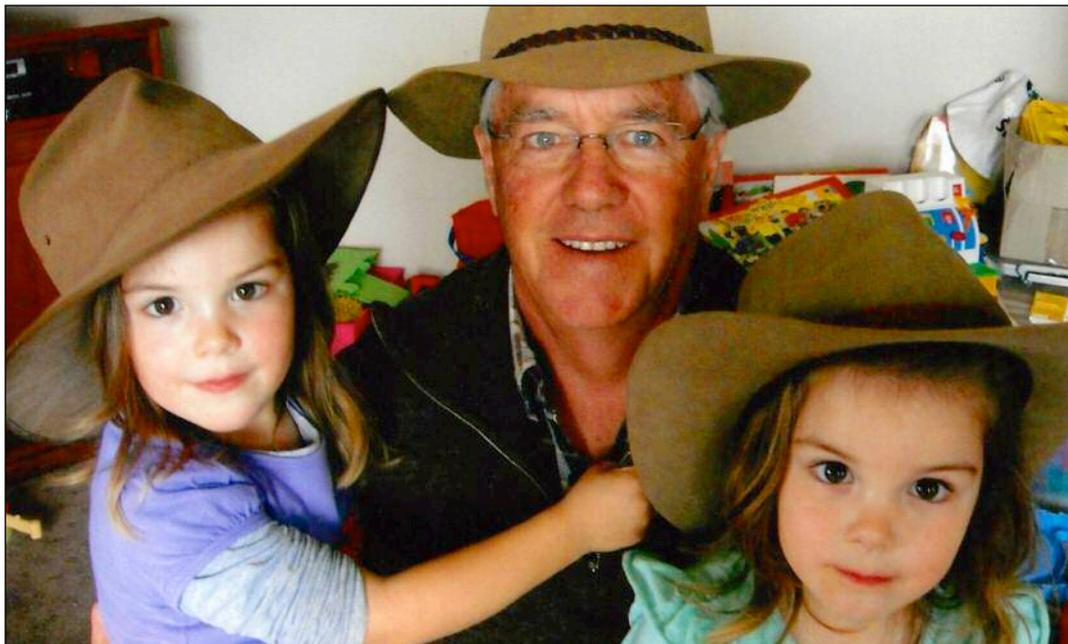
GIRLS, WHERE ARE MY AKUBRAS?

Identical four year old twins Charlotte and Loe Bramich, from Port Sorrell in Tasmania, can't wait until they are old enough to have an Akubra each to call their own.

In the meantime they make do by "borrowing" Akubras from their father and their grandfather (pictured).

"We live on a farm in the centre of Tasmania and the girls have been taught to always wear a hat when they go outside," their mother, Judy, said.

"We think this photo is a great advertisement for Akubra."



TRY THESE FOR SIZE: Twins Charlotte and Loe trying on their Dad's Akubras with help from their grandfather.

AKUBRA – ON TOP DOWN UNDER