

Basic Detail Report

00001718

Title

International Exhibition Certificate awarded to Simpson & Co. for merino wool

Date

1876

Medium

Paper

Dimensions

Overall: 445 x 634 mm

Name

Certificate

History

The tradition of modern international exhibitions commenced in 1851 and continued approximately every two years around the world until 1893. While the attendance to these fairs was impressive, many millions of people, the cost to exhibit in the vast pavilions internationally was very high for many countries, particularly Australia. Exhibitions were initially seen as an invaluable opportunity to promote Australian produce to the world and attract investors. Agriculture, mining and the wool market were celebrated in elaborate displays designed to attract attention in crowded halls. Culturally and economically the far flung British colonies were also competing for enterprising immigrants who may not have considered Australia before. It was also a chance for countries to curate an image of how they wished to be perceived and how they distinguished themselves from others. The Australian states, still separate entities at this stage, had colonial baggage they wished to be rid of and presented themselves as not only producers of raw materials but also artistically developed and culturally sophisticated. But despite access to the world stage, international exhibitions soon presented the Australian states with problems, not the least that they were competing against each other. The benefits of the huge expense of shipping produce and goods to various locations, designing and constructing ever more elaborate exhibits were being argued. Even in 1876 when New South Wales alone won 25 awards for wool, including this one to Simpson & Co., doubts were being raised in local papers about the quality of the judging and the merits of even receiving an award. In Philadelphia alone there were approximately 12,000 medals issued.