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Pumped up prize package for country music comp

In its bid to hunt for the hidden gems of Queensland country music the Ekka has doubled the value of the prize pool up for grabs in its annual Country Music Showdown Competition, taking it to a whopping \$11,000.

The Country Music Showdown, which will be held during Ekka in August, is calling on country music artists aged from 12 years and over to enter the statewide competition.

Headlining the Showdown's \$11,000 prize pool are the coveted wildcard entries for both the Junior and Open Category winners into the semi-finals of the prestigious Talent Search competition at the Gympie Muster soon after Ekka in late August 2016.

In the Showdown's third year of competition Queensland's rising country music stars will have the chance to showcase their talent and get a true live music experience when they are backed by live band "The Kelly Gang" at the Ekka's famous Stockmen's Bar and Grill on the final day of Show (14 August).

Last year's Competition unearthed Cassi Hilbers, the winner of the junior section and the Open Category winning duo Kathleen Maloney and Samantha Perren.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the Ekka was about bringing the country to the city and encouraging the development of new talent in all industries, including the arts.

"Ekka wouldn't be Ekka without country music," Mr Christou said.

"In just three years the Country Music Showdown Competition has really taken off with the local country music industry getting behind it. We are particularly excited to announce the \$11,000 worth of prizes up for grabs this year which includes the "money can't buy" opportunity such as the Gympie Muster Talent Search entry.

"I encourage anyone who is passionate about country music and has a real talent to enter," he said.

The first prize in the junior competition (aged 12-16) is valued at \$5,251 and it includes the sought-after Troy Casser-Daley Ekka Country Music Scholarship to the Tamworth Academy of Country Music; the Gympie Muster Talent Search entry; a recording session with the Music Industry College and two four day passes to the Gympie Muster.

The prize for the Open Category winner (17 years and over) is valued at \$6,161 and it includes the Gympie Muster Talent Search entry and two 4 day Gympie Muster passes; a studio recording session with Tarmalin Sound; a song writing workshop with the Music Industry College; and a photography session with Hannah Photography.

Aspiring musicians should warm up their vocal chords, dust off their boots and show us what they've got – enter now.

<http://www.ekka.com.au/entertainment/music-competition>.

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