

May 15, 2017

The state's country music greats unearthed at Ekka

It's time for the state's hidden country music stars to warm up their vocal chords and belt out their best tunes, with entries for the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) Country Music Showdown Competition now open.

The competition that helped launch The Voice AU contestant Heath Milner's music journey will return for its fourth year in 2017, and is calling all country music artists aged 12 years and over to enter the state-wide Showdown.

Queensland's rising stars will have the chance to showcase their talent and get a true live music experience when they are backed by a live band at Stockmen's Bar and Grill during Ekka this year.

But these country crooners will get more than just a taste of the action; they'll also be in with a chance to win part of the Showdown's \$10,000 prize pool, with top prizes including a Studio Recording with Taramalin Sound and the Troy Cassar-Daly Scholarship to the Tamworth Academy of Country Music 2018.

Applicants will also go in the draw to win a 'Wildcard Workshop,' where stage coaching mentor and Judge Rob McGowan will show them the ropes of live performance before they take the main stage.

Last year's competition unearthed Felicity Kircher, the Junior Category Winner and Heath Milner, the Open Category Winner. Heath went on to become a contestant on the Voice AU, where Coach and music icon Boy George gifted the talented teen a ticket to Nashville to continue his music journey.

RNA Chief Executive Brendan Christou said the Ekka was about celebrating what makes our state great and encouraging the development of new talent in all industries, including the arts.

"Ekka's Country Music Showdown has been a huge success over the last four years, with some fantastic artists unearthed. The music industry has continued to support the competition and has once again offered incredible prizes for the winners," he said.

"The Ekka is all about bringing the country to the city, and this competition provides a platform for these emerging artists. Ekka wouldn't be Ekka without country music."

Aspiring musicians with a passion for country music – it's time to shine. Enter now at www.ekka.com.au/entertainment

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