

## **BIGGER AND BETTER – Homestead Youth Talent Expo!**

Saturday, 5 August saw our 11<sup>th</sup> Homestead Youth Talent Expo come to pass and what a great day was had by all. A big thank you and congratulations to everyone who contributed. So many Homestead members put their hands up to do a job that it's sometimes hard to find a job for them all – but we always do. The food was great, the sound and stage work was first class and the whole day ran so smoothly.

Our only problem is having enough time to fit all the performances in. We cancelled 'Anything But Country' a few days before the expo and, if numbers remain at this level, we may have to trim another section – one for the committee to consider.

Homestead is one of a very small number of country music clubs who actively support young performers. Thanks also to the clubs that encouraged their youngsters to come along. It is heartening to have performers and their families travelling hundreds of kilometres to attend the expo. It's a fair effort to travel from places like Bundaberg and Broxburn for a one day festival. But the biggest effort this year was the appearance of the Byrne kids from Thargomindah – great to see you!

We had a swag of new judges in play this year. Joining our regulars, Cheryl Lee Garnett and Lance Coassin, we had former expo winner Kiara Rodrigues, Brian Drage, Vanessa Sanger and Luke Marriott. All six did a great job as usual and provided the contestants with a great deal of useful feedback on their judging sheets. Homestead is extremely grateful to the judges for giving their time so generously to our event. Judge, Luke Marriott, said it well... *There were plenty of judges there to help me when I was singing in festivals like this. I'm more than happy to support these kids any way I can*".

Each year the bar seems to be raised just a little higher and 2017 was no exception. The judges, our members and the audience commented frequently on the high standard of the performances throughout the day. Our youngest performers, our 'Joeys', all put their best foot forward and the more experienced juniors simply stunned the audience with many of their songs.

The full list of winners for 2017 is published in this magazine. Homestead Country Music Club congratulates our overall winner, **Sophie Volp**. This is Sophie's second time as Homestead Champion and she will have the opportunity to attend the CMAA Junior Academy in 2018 along with a parent. Sophie is clearly one to watch out for in the future. **Matthew Munro**, from Bundaberg, was our runner up and received a very stylish acoustic guitar from our good friends at Yamaha. Matthew has already attended the Junior Academy and it shows in every performance he gives. The Juvenile Champion was **Felicity Kircher** from Redlands. It is hard to believe that Felicity is still a juvenile. It seems we have been seeing her perform around the country music circuit for so many years now – what a star! Congratulations, Felicity.

Let's do it all again in 2018...

*Bob Cole – Homestead Expo Committee*