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Daryl Barines attempts to hold on during last year's Queanbeyan Rodeo. Photo: Andrew Johnston

RODEO GIVEAWAY

THE *Queanbeyan Age* is giving 10 lucky readers the opportunity to attend this year's Queanbeyan Rodeo on us.

We've got five double passes to give away to the big event on Saturday, March 8 at the Queanbeyan Showground.

Gates on the day open at 2pm with all the main action to get underway from 4pm until late.

To enter, simply email your name, address and contact number to comps.queanbeyanage@fairfaxmedia.com.au and you'll automatically be in the running.

Deadline for



Entries limited to one per person. Entries is 3pm, Thursday, March 6. Winners will be contacted by the *Queanbeyan Age* and will be required to pick up their tickets from the Queanbeyan Age office at 108 Monaro Street by close of business, Friday, March 7.

Ready to ride

By Andrew Johnston

RODEO

QUEANBEYAN Rodeo president Mark Mills is confident the event can "buck the trend" of falling competitor numbers at recent rodeos across this part of the state.

Numbers at several rodeos this year including Goulburn and Taralga have been down on previous years with marquee rough stock events like the bareback and saddle bronc riding particularly affected.

But with Queanbeyan having grown into the largest rodeo in NSW since being brought back from the dead in 1999, Mills said it was well positioned to maintain its standing as an attractive event for riders.

"Queanbeyan's pretty high on the agenda for most cowboys these days," Mills said. "The prize money is good and it's a well

organised rodeo all round so hopefully we can buck the trend a little bit.

"There seems to be a proliferation of cowboys up north at the moment but not as many around these parts. But we'll definitely attract some of the top cowboys to Queanbeyan."

In a bid to make this year's event as accessible for competitors as possible, Mills said entry fees had been lowered by an average of \$40 while the \$2000 prize money on offer per event will remain the same.

The Queanbeyan Rodeo now regularly attracts more than 4000 spectators each year making it the biggest annual single-day event on the city's calendar.

"There aren't many places you can go for \$15 and get the level of excitement you get at the rodeo," Mills said.

"We try and put something in there a little bit different each

year to keep the edge on it. If the weather's right we're hoping to have sky divers coming into the arena on the day which will be a first.

"We're also going to have merchandise on sale as well as show bags for the first time."

As well as providing an annual spectacle of guts and horsemanship, the Queanbeyan Rodeo also serves as a major fundraiser for a number of charities and local groups.

Following last year's event, the rodeo committee donated more than \$40,000 to various charities, the Queanbeyan Rural Fire Service, local pony clubs, girl guides and the scouts.

The Queanbeyan Rodeo will be held at the Queanbeyan Showground on Saturday, March 8. Gates open at 2pm, main event from 4pm until late. Entry is \$15 for adults, \$8 for pensioners and children under 12. Children under 6 are free.

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