



QUEANBEYAN CITY 175th BIRTHDAY GIFT CARNIVAL

Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th November

QUEANBEYAN PARK | www.visitqueanbeyan.com.au

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Viktor the Viking set for Gift raid

By Andrew Johnston

■ QUEANBEYAN GIFT

DURING his 32-year stint as the Canberra Raiders' beloved mascot Victor the Viking, Queanbeyan's Tony Wood reckons he's probably done "about 100" mascot races.

"And I've come dead last in just about every single one of them," he adds with a laugh.

It's a record that hardly bodes well for Wood's debut appearance as his costumed alter-ego at this year's Queanbeyan Gift.

Wood will be defending the honour of the Green Machine against the likes of ACT Brumbies galloper Brumby Jack and Greater Western Sydney's G-Man in the carnival's inaugural Mascots Sprint.

"Every mascot I've entered the same thing goes through my head; these boots are not made for running," Wood says ruefully in relation to Victor's padded, oversized footwear.

"My vision inside the suit isn't too crash hot either. But it's not just the suit. The body inside it



Queanbeyan resident Tony Wood a.k.a Viktor the Viking will be competing against Brumby Jack and a giant bee in this weekend's inaugural Queanbeyan Gift Mascots Race.

Photo: Andrew Johnston

isn't built much for running either to be honest."

But with his most likely competitors set to take the shape of an gym fit bee

and a financially sound pig, Wood said he was quietly confident of

turning hometown advantage into an historic maiden victory.

"I've actually got a bit of hope for this one," he said. "I've heard of a few of the other mascots in the race and they don't paint a pretty picture."

"I think I'm odds on to come a place. Whether it's first place or last place though I'm just not sure."

A long-time Queanbeyan resident, Wood, meanwhile, said he was looking forward to being a part of the Gift for the first time in an 'official' capacity having supported the event for many years.

"I go down to the Gift every year for a look," he said. "It's a great community event and Queanbeyan should get behind it."

This year's Gift carnival will also include the inaugural *Running of the Codes* with representatives from Queanbeyan's various sporting clubs going head-to-head with considerable local bragging rights at stake.

The Queanbeyan Gift Mascot Race will be held at about 12.45pm on Sunday immediately following the Running of the Codes.

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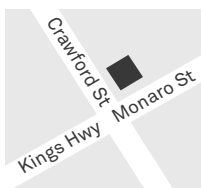
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