

# Red Dirt Glory: *New Champions Crowned at the 2025 Mount Isa Rodeo*

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The red dirt of Buchanan Park has seen legends made for more than six decades, but the 2025 Mount Isa Mines Rodeo presented by Akubra felt different. For the first time, the legendary event ran fully under the reins of a new community board, and the atmosphere was electric. Almost 16,000 fans packed the stands to watch almost 800 competitors from across Australia, New Zealand and the USA chase down history on the famous Kalkadoon Arena.

This year brought new energy, new champions, and a fresh sense of pride. A record-breaking prize pool raised the stakes across every division, ticket prices were slashed to welcome more families, and rodeo royalty returned in force. Fans witnessed the triumphant comeback of legendary bucking stallion Elvis, the sell-out debut of the Cowgirls in the Capital Cocktail Brunch, and the launch of The Back Paddock, a family-friendly zone alive with music, poetry, and community spirit. Add in NRL star Sam Thaiday

stepping up as the first-ever ambassador of the Indigenous Rodeo Championships, and Isa 2025 wasn't just bigger: it was bolder, brighter, and brimming with red-dirt pride.

## Junior Stars Lead the Way

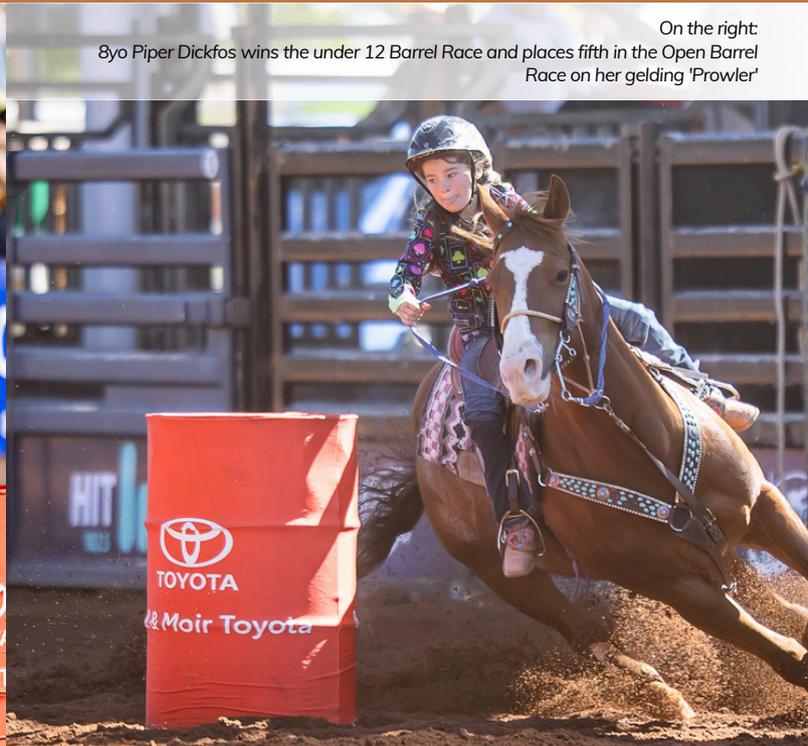
The future of rodeo charged down the arena with dazzling speed. Townsville cowgirl Sunni Paterson, just 15 years old, and her nine-year-old gelding Ragna were untouchable in the Junior Barrel Race, stopping the clock at 17.015 seconds, the fastest run of the entire rodeo.

Not to be outdone, eight-year-old Piper Dickfos and her gelding Prowler turned heads across both junior and open competition. Piper not only won the Under 12 Barrel Race, she also placed an astonishing fifth in the Open Barrel Race, against some of the sport's most seasoned competitors. The crowd knew they were watching a star in the making.

On the left:  
Townsville cowgirl Sunni Paterson and her 9yo gelding 'Ragna' win the Junior Barrel Race by running the fastest time of the event, a 17.015 sec run



On the right:  
8yo Piper Dickfos wins the under 12 Barrel Race and places fifth in the Open Barrel Race on her gelding 'Prowler'



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Willow Tree NSW cowboy Heath Nichols makes it back-to-back Rope and Tie titles and his fourth Mount Isa Rope & Tie title overall

## Champions With History

For Willow Tree cowboy Heath Nichols, Isa is familiar ground, but that doesn't make winning any less sweet. Nichols defended his title to make it back-to-back Rope and Tie victories and his fourth overall at Mount Isa, underlining his reputation as one of the greats.

The Breakaway Roping brought one of the weekend's most emotional finishes. Queensland twins Melissa and Stacey Wilburn, better known to television audiences as Stack and Mel from Travel Guides, went head-to-head for the buckle. In the final, both clocked 3.50 seconds, but Melissa's faster first round gave her the edge. As the sisters embraced, the crowd rose to its feet.

## The Willoughby Legacy

For some, Isa is a long road trip. For Tom Willoughby, it's a family tradition. Having travelled almost 40,000 kilometres on the Northern Rodeo Run, the Victorian cowboy capped it off in perfect style. With the help of hazer Aaron Bookluck, Willoughby threw down his steer to claim the Steer Wrestling buckle, adding his name, and his family's famous history, to Isa's champion roll.



Victorian cowboy Tom Willoughby, hazed by Aaron Bookluck adds his famous family name to the list of champions at Mount Isa winning the Steer Wrestle

## Bucking Horses, Big Scores

The famous Gill Bros bucking stock once again stole the show, but so too did the men game enough to climb aboard. Ben Rasmussen of Nevertire, NSW, rode Gill Bros' Big Brother for 85 points in the opening round, setting up a winning aggregate of 169.50 points over two head to take the Saddle Bronc buckle.

Further down the chutes, Tamworth's Daniel Rogan made sure his name will forever be linked with Mount Isa. After covering Buffalo Soldier on Friday, Rogan returned Sunday to mark a stunning 88 points on Fight Club, splitting the short-go and sealing the Open Bull Ride title with 172 points across two bulls.



Nevertire NSW cowboy Ben Rasmussen marks 85pts in the first round on 'Big Brother' to set up his title win with an aggregate 169.50pts over two head



Melissa Wilburn stops the clock in the final in 3.50 secs, the same time as her twin sister Stacey but takes the title with a faster first round

## Ladies Barrel Race Breakthrough

First-time competitor Katina Matthews of Tamworth made her debut in unforgettable fashion. Riding her colt Filthy Rich 'n' Famous, she scorched the pattern in the Ladies Barrel Race, running the fastest time of the weekend to claim the buckle. For a rider on her maiden Isa trip, the red dirt welcomed her with open arms.

## A Rodeo Like No Other

Beyond the arena, the 2025 Isa Rodeo marked a new chapter. The return of legendary bucking stallion Elvis, the introduction of the Cowgirls in the Capital Cocktail Brunch, and the launch of The Back Paddock vibe zone gave fans new ways to connect with rodeo culture. NRL legend Sam Thaiday made history as the first ambassador of the Indigenous Rodeo Championships, which once again showcased the depth of Indigenous talent.

And then there were the legends. Ninety-five-year-old Bob Holder, the oldest professional cowboy in the world, was back in the red dirt arena, proving once again that rodeo is a sport for all ages.

## Pride in the Ride

With almost 800 competitors from across Australia, New Zealand, and the USA, and a record prize pool luring the best in the sport, the 2025 Mount Isa Mines Rodeo confirmed its status as the jewel of the rodeo calendar.

But the heart of Isa wasn't just in the numbers. It was in the lightning-fast barrels of Sunni, Piper and Katina. It was in the raw power of Rogan and Rasmussen. It was in the sisterhood of Melissa and Stacey, and the family pride of Tom Willoughby and Heath Nichols. In the end, it was about the same thing it has been since 1959: courage, community, and pride in the ride.



On her first trip to Mount Isa, Tamworth cowgirl Katina Matthews and her colt Filthy Rich 'n' Famous' win the Ladies Barrel Race



Tamworth cowboy Daniel Rogan mark 88pts on 'Fight Club' to split the short-go and win the title



Winners are grinners! Melissa Wilburn takes the title of 2025 Mount Isa Mines Rodeo Breakway Roping Champion



MOUNT ISA MINES  
**INDIGENOUS**  
RODEO CHAMPIONSHIPS  
10 AUGUST 2025



*Back in Community Hands!*

# 2025 Mount Isa Mines Rodeo RESULTS

**Best Overall Cowboy – Campbel Hodson** – Queensland (second consecutive year, and now four overall!)

**Best Overall Cowgirl – Leanne Caban** – Emerald (her fourth Best Cowgirl overall at Isa)

## Open Bull

Daniel Rogan – Tamworth

Charlie Bailey – Oberon

Clint Glass – Willow Tree

## Saddle Bronc

1st: Ben Rasmussen – Nevertire, NSW

2nd: Bailey Odell - Victoria

3rd: Toby Collins VIC and Cade Ferguson

Cloncurry, and in his first year riding Opens

## Bareback Bronc

1st: Jarrod McKane – Wodonga, Victoria

2nd: Henry Watkins - NSW

3rd: David Stacey - VIC

## Team Roping

1st: Campbell Hodson and Kia Clarke – QLD and NSW

2nd: Lochlan Flanagan and Dallas Flanagan - VIC

3rd: Joseph Foxley and Bradley Shaw – QLD and SA

## Steer Wrestling

1st – Tom Willoughby – VIC

2nd – Bradley Alloway

3rd – Luke Ford

## Breakaway Roping

1st: Melissa Wilburn - QLD

2nd: Stacey Wilburn - QLD

3rd: Eileen Hobbs - QLD

## Open Barrel Race

1st Katina Matthews - NSW

2nd Leanne Caban – Emerald, QLD

3rd Brooke Parker - TAS

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1st Katina Matthews - NSW

2nd Leanne Caban – Emerald, QLD

3rd Brooke Parker - TAS

## Rope and Tie

1st Heath Nichols- NSW

2nd Stuart McGuire-Spalding -

3rd Shane Iker – Delrosa, Central QLD

## Second Division Bull Ride

1st- Hank Woodward

2nd - Max Meredith and Matty Ahern

4th – Fraser Innes

## Second Division Saddle Bronc

1st Mitch Schnieder -

2nd Cade Ferguson – Cloncurry, QLD

3rd Jesse Remfrey Cloncurry, QLD and Ben Cox

## Second Division Bareback

1st Jesse Ripper - VIC

2nd James Fyfe – Central Coast, NSW

3rd Lauchlan Waters – Oakbank, SA

## Over 55s Team Roping

1st Mark Thompson and Colin Ferguson – Mount Isa and Cloncurry. Mark 'Tommo' Thompson is Chair of the Isa Rodeo Board and this was his first ever Isa Buckle!

## Mini Bull (8-12)

1st Axton Hale (USA)

2nd Carter McDonald - VIC

3rd Chilla Hartley



# MOUNT ISA MINES RODEO

8-10 AUGUST 2025

MOUNT ISA MINES  
**INDIGENOUS**  
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### **Mini Bull (11-14)**

1st Lawson McDonald - VIC  
2nd Hunter Kerr  
3rd – Maverick Callahan

### **Junior Bull Ride**

1st Bronzon Mara-Skellern – Cloncurry QLD  
2nd Max Meredith  
3rd Hank Woodland

### **Junior Barrel Race**

1st Sunni Paterson  
2nd Kodah Lovett - QLD  
3rd Clara Perry  
4th Piper Dickfos - QLD

### **Junior Steer**

1st Dakota Struckel  
2nd Cooper Hoare - QLD  
3rd Noah Dingle - VIC – and Bill Galloway

### **Junior Team Roping**

#### **Header**

1st Kashlyn McIntyre  
2nd Kade Odea - SA

#### **Heeler**

1st Billy Callaway  
2nd Beau Middleton - QLD  
3rd Don Flanagan - VIC

### **Junior Breakaway**

1st Kade O’dea - SA  
2nd Dekota Caban - NSW  
3rd Riley Wood – Waikato, New Zealand

### **Junior Barrel Race**

1st – Piper Dickfos - QLD  
2nd – Teal Borghero - QLD  
3rd – Phoebe Shrimp - QLD  
4th – Katie Pierce - NSW

### **Under 12 Breakaway Roping**

1st – Beau Middleton - QLD

### **Under 12 Steer Ride**

1st – Wyatt Gill - NSW  
2nd – Ryder Pierce - NSW

### **Under 12 Junior Tema Roping**

1st – Beau Middleton - QLD  
2nd – Mason Iker – QLD  
3rd – Wyatt Gill - NSW



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# 2025 Mount Isa Mines Indigenous Rodeo Championships

The 2025 Mount Isa Mines Indigenous Rodeo Championships delivered a thrilling day of red-dirt heroics, with some of the nation's best Indigenous riders battling for top honours. In the arena, Jack Stower claimed the Bull Ride title ahead of Alan Gilbo and Ezekial Douglas, while Jesse Amber took out Bareback and Clayton Brayden topped the Saddle Bronc. Brooke Pokarier was fastest in Breakaway Roping, and Joseph Foxlee secured Rope & Tie glory. Max Hardin muscled his way to victory in Steer Wrestling, with Mount Isa's own Cordell Gosbee in second. On the barrels, Leila Rose Aliya Simpson shone with a Junior Barrel Race win, while Abby Plate took the senior crown. The Jnr Steer event went to Simon Collets, with podiums also for Hunter Kerr and Mackewan Hookey-Lansen. In the Mini Bulls, Cloncurry's Dallas Murphy – runner-up in 2024 – rode to an 8–10yrs victory, while Wyatt Gill claimed the 11–14yrs division.

## **Bull Ride:**

- 1st Jack Stower
- 2nd Alan Gilbo
- 3rd Ezekial Douglas

## **Bareback:**

- 1st Jesse Amber
- 2nd Harrison Oscar (Western Australia)

## **Saddle Bronc:**

- 1st Clayton Brayden

## **Breakaway Roping:**

- 1st Brooke Pokarier

## **Rope & Tie:**

- Joseph Foxlee

## **Steer Wrestling:**

- 1st Max Hardin
- 2nd Cordell Gosbee (Mount Isa)

## **Jnr Steer:**

- 1st Simon Collets
- 2nd Hunter Kerr
- 3rd Mackewan Hookey-Lansen

## **Mini Bulls (8 – 10 years):**

- 1st Dallas Murphy (Cloncurry) – he came second in 2024
- 2nd Logan Booth
- 3rd Kolton Rice

## **Mini (11 – 14 years)**

- 1st Wyatt Gill
- 2nd Mackewan Hookey-Lansen
- 3rd Zackahn Willetts

## **Junior Barrel Race:**

- 1st Leila Rose Aliya Simpson
- 2nd Skyla Rainbow
- 3rd Wyatt Gill

## **HISTORY:**

Back in 1959, the first Mount Isa Mines Rodeo offered just over £500 in prize money—a mighty sum for its time, but a whisper of what's on offer now. Since then, it has grown to become the largest rodeo in the Southern Hemisphere, and one of the most prestigious anywhere in the world. The 2025 event confirms its status as a juggernaut of the sport, drawing riders, fans, and media from far and wide.

The Mount Isa Mines Indigenous Rodeo Championships is proudly supported by the Queensland Government. The Mount Isa Mines Rodeo is supported by the Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland.

For media opportunities, imagery and more, please contact **Kath Rose** on [kath@kathrose.com](mailto:kath@kathrose.com)

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