

New Zealand Championships

Twists and twirls will be in full swing as the Invercargill Rock n Roll Club hosts the New Zealand Junior Championships next year.

The event is expected to attract over 300 competitors, along with 700 supporters, to Invercargill during Easter as the country's most talented youngsters vie for coveted titles.

Invercargill Rock n Roll Club president Karl Herman said the championships would feature dancers aged between 5 and 17 years old.

"There's a huge mix of ages and also talent," he said. "The juniors are just amazing with what they can pull out of the hat when they're performing.

"Combined with the costumes and the music, it really transports you back to the 1950s era and it's a fantastic and fun weekend."

The ILT Foundation has granted \$6,000 to assist with staging the event, which will be held at Stadium Southland's ILT Velodrome.

"This city has earned a strong reputation for hosting national events and the rock n roll championships present another opportunity to reinforce our abilities to visitors from throughout New Zealand," ILT Foundation chairman Alan Dennis said.

The Invercargill club would field its largest team in many years with 20 couples set to contest the event – a reflection of the genres' surge in popularity.

"It's amazing to see the growth which has occurred," Mr Herman said.

"Schools are doing rock n roll-themed events and it's just huge now wherever you go. Initiatives like the Rocking with the Stars fundraiser for Hospice Southland reinforced it even more and we're benefitting from the snowball effect.

"The rock n roll era is definitely still alive in Invercargill."

Earlier this year, the brother-and-sister pairing of Caleb and Brittany Lay secured the club its first junior title in 15 years.

"They pulled off a fantastic win and we are definitely hoping to repeat the feat on home turf," Mr Herman said.

Competition categories would include traditional couples, three couples, same sex teams, cheerleading and a novelty section which enables dancers to "really let loose with their creativity".

Ends.