

Kinast Australia's answer to Canada's Sharland

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Of The News

Irene Kinast is to the Miss Rodeo Australia pageant what Laurie Sharland is to the Miss Rodeo Canada one.

The only difference is Kinast has been chairman of the board since its inception in 1977 — Sharland was only recently elected to the Cana-

dian board.

The Australian national queen quest has grown from very humble beginnings, says Kinast. Now it is bigger in every way both in sponsorship (in the last two years they've had double sponsorship from Qantas Airline) and in entrants.

"It has grown as a promotional

vehicle for professional rodeo and the sponsors.

"The number of contestants in the quest in Australia doesn't depict the interest for all the country as we don't have state finals in all the states. At present we accept entries from local rodeos as well as circuit rodeos. Eventually, we will have state rodeo queen quest finals in all six states and the two territories."

While acting as travelling companion to Vicki Lincoln during her promotional tour of North America she makes sure press releases are sent back to Australia to keep the folks at home up-to-date on what Miss Rodeo Australia is up to.

She's also here to officially invite Miss Rodeo Canada, Shellie Sodero and Miss Rodeo America, Vicki Vest, to the Miss Rodeo Australia finals in Queensland in October.

"I hope they can come. (Three Miss Rodeo Canada's have attended the finals in Australia before). Miss Rodeo New Zealand has confirmed that she will be a guest; if the other two accept it would mean four national rodeo queens in the same place at one time — that would be a world first if it falls into place."

Kinast, who is as warm and outgoing as her Canadian counterpart, says what's nice about the exchange visits between the queens is that firm friendships often develop between them.

If the rapport and affection that has grown between Sodero and Lincoln is anything to go by, it's certainly true.

"Also I feel personally it's educational for the girls to visit other countries.

"This trip has been tremendous, the hospitality is out of this world. Canadians are so friendly and so welcoming."

The pair's schedule has been tight, but she says it's been very well organized. Nothing has been forgotten or left out.



Irene Kinast, chairman of the board of the Miss Rodeo Australia pageant, left, and Laurie Sharland, Miss Rodeo Canada chairman of the board, share an amusing anecdote after watching their respective queens win a few more friends.

—News photo Mike Fiala

Contestants shoot for Hat crown

There are five competitors shooting for the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Queen crown this week.

You can follow the contestants starting this evening at the horsemanship section which begins 7 p.m., at Stampede Park.