

TOP OF THE SOUTH COUNTRY TALENT QUEST RULES 2026

Contestants will be judged on musical and vocal ability, diction, stage presentation, emotional impact, entertainment value, and suitability of song for the contestant and the section.

1. All songs performed at the Talent Quest must be of **Country Origin**.
2. Entries must be made via our Sun City Awards Website. **Your entry will only be officially accepted once the entry fee has been transferred via internet banking.**
3. No entries will be accepted after the closing date – **8th April 2026**. The committee reserves the right to limit the number of entries once maximum capacity is reached, or extend closing date if required.
4. **Age Groups:** contestants ages are as of the first day of competition – May 2nd 2026
 - Junior: Under 13 years**
 - Intermediate: 13 years and under 18**
 - Senior: Over 18 years**
 - Veteran: 55+ years**
5. Open Sections (NZ Song and Duo/Group) are open to all ages and will be considered for overall prizes in the section winner's respective age category. To be eligible for Senior Overall the duo or group must contain at least one Senior member.
6. All sections are for solo competitors only except for the Open duo/group section. You must select **either** a group or duet in this category you **may not perform both**. Backing band will be available for this section, including group performances.
7. **Country Gospel Section Definition:** Gospel is a song that is primarily about someone's faith and their relationship with God.
8. **NZ Song Section Definition:** All songs performed in the NZ Song section must be written or co-written by a New Zealander. Contestants must name the composer as part of their song introduction.
9. **Country Rock Section Definition:** There is no set tempo ruling for Country Rock, however, a good guideline for choosing your Country Rock song would be to select a song that includes all or some of the following qualities (in tone with the genre):
Edgy - gritty - party pumping/ High energy. Often 'raunchy' in mood, attitude, groove, and style.
10. You may not add to the backing band supplied (with the exception of instruments played by competitors themselves.)
11. A rhythm setter will be supplied to convey the rhythm and tempo of the song to the backing bands. No pre-recorded music allowed.
12. Each contestant is required to have **FOUR** copies of their chord charts stating key, rhythm, timing and tempo (a metronome 'bpm' timing is preferred)
13. All contestants must report to the Stage Manager 30 minutes prior to audition and remain in the venue. Chord charts are to be handed to the backstage chord chart assistants at reporting time.
14. Entrant's equipment is used & stored at their own risk. Neither the Nelson Country Music Club nor the Sun City Awards Committee will be held responsible for the loss or damage, theft, etc to an individual's personal property or effects.
15. Judges decision is final and binding and no correspondence will be entered into.
16. No contestants, backing band members, officials or helpers may possess, consume or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs in or near the hall or backstage during auditions or finals.
17. The Awards Committee reserves the right to refuse admission to any of the functions during the weekend.
18. Any violation of the rules could result in disqualification.
19. The Committee will decide the number of finalists in each section. The Committee reserves the right to decide the number of finalists in each section, pre-judge or delete any section and recall any contestants at the discretion of the Convenor.
20. Finalists only will be refunded for finals tickets. NO other refunds.