

Eisteddfod still exists for kids to 'strut stuff'

KATE CRAWFORD

arts writer

THE Sydney Eisteddfod has vowed its show will go on amid confusion over the closure of the Rock Eisteddfod.

"Many people have heard about the demise of the Rock Eisteddfod and think we're closing, which we are definitely not," Sydney Eisteddfod spokeswoman Jennie Lees said.

"We've had telephones ringing all over the place with people worried about it."

The Rock Eisteddfod Challenge had been held for 30 years but organisers said a lack of government and corporate sponsors spelt the end of the popular event.

However the Sydney Eisteddfod, now in its 77th year, was in no danger of closure and was again presenting a huge program this year, Ms Lees said.

She said students disappointed about the Rock Eisteddfod may well have an opportunity to "strut their stuff" in the Sydney Eisteddfod.

After years of being known both as Sydney Eistedfodd and, the official title, McDonald's Performing Arts Challenge, organisers and sponsors have decided to simplify its name.

The competition will now be known as the McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod.

"One radio announcer reported that the Performing Arts Challenge was folding up due to lack of funds," Ms Lees said.

"But the Rock Eisteddfod is a completely different organisation."

The bulk of the 328 competitive events in the eisteddfod will be held at St Peter's Church or Shore School, both at North Sydney, and entries close on March 22.

"It is widely regarded as the most successful competitive festival of its type in the world," Ms Lees said.

The categories in the competition are: classical, contemporary and choral singing; piano, solo, instrumental, group instrumental, musical composition, creative writing, speech, drama and dance.

They include sections for choirs, bands and orchestras, along with creative categories for composers, writers and poets.

There are 128 dance events, 67 of which are held at Shore but due to the size of some dance groups, events are also held at the Science Theatre or the Opera House.

"Some people want to test their skills before a live audience, others simply for fun, but performing in public is great for confidence-building whatever paths entrants follow in future life," Ms Lees said.

The McDonald's Sydney Eisteddfod will open on June 1 and finish on September 26.

» Details: sydneyeisteddfod.com.au