



HANDS UP IF YOU WANT A BOAT: Sophia Bunny was thrilled to win a boat at Boyne Tannum HookUp on Friday night.

Photo: Matt Taylor GLA040518BTHU

Little Sophia wins big

Three-year-old girl was thrilled to win a 3.51m Sea Jay tinnie

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THREE-year-old Sophia Bunny loves fishing with her father, Fred, and on Friday night she won her own boat.

"She was so keen to win the boat she made me stand right at the front with her for the announcement," Fred said.

"When the compere asked, 'Who wants to win this boat?' she put both hands in the air and never dropped them, then they called out her name and she ran on to the stage pumping her arms."

Sophia was the winner of a 3.51m Sea Jay tinnie with 6hp Yamaha motor.

According to Fred they'll go

for a few runs in it.

"When she gets older she'll start using it, but for now one of our friends who has five boys will use it for a while," he said.

"We're going to name it Sophia I."

According to Fred, Sophia has been fishing with him since she could walk.

"She's got her own little fish-

ing rod and she comes with me all the time to Pats Bait and Tackle, they all know her down there, I used to put her on the counter when she was a baby," he said.

Sophia's little sister is eight-months old and Fred says she'll probably be keen for a fish soon too.

"I did a couple of trips on

Awoonga Dam with Justin Knight from Gladstone Sports Fishing and since then I've been smashing them, so I'll be showing my girls how to reel them in."

Fred wasn't having much luck fishing yesterday though.

"We can't seem to hook one today, maybe Sophia used up all our luck last night," he said.

HookUp committee look ahead to bigger things

TRAVIS Pope, HookUp's new park co-ordinator, said future proofing of the event was already underway.

"We're looking at moving things around, creating a bit more space near the stage and adding a lot more audio visual equipment," he said.

"We'll try and get some deals

going with our rides and food vendors during the middle of the day when it's not so busy to create a bit more of a festival atmosphere during the day."

Project's coordinator, Lyndell Hansen said the future of the HookUp was to use the event as a local economic stimulus.

"We're not waiting for the next big thing, we're doing it ourselves, using assets in our community," she said.

"We can stimulate the local economy from the inside out using our region's assets."

"The Hookup is a huge asset, it's got the ability to bring in tourists and bring happiness to

locals."

Jenny McGuire, HookUp president agreed.

"We're seeing more input from local businesses on getting on board with the event," she said.

"More of them are seeing the benefits of the HookUp and they're offering deals to keep

tourists here longer. We'll be looking at ways we can encourage them."

Travis added that the HookUp was destined for bigger things with a vision to go Australia wide and even get world-wide recognition," he said.

"As a region, we should be proud of this event."



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