



NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

DECEMBER 2012

[A Publication from RDA Australia Ltd](#)

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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Riding-for-the-Disabled-Association-of-Australia-RDAA/135449168732>

EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

This month my travels have taken me to Canberra where I attended the Pegasus AGM along with RDA Australia Board Secretary, Catherine Evans (Qld). The Pegasus RDA centre, always a centre of excellence for RDA programs, is like many not-for-profits, suffering from reduced funding sources in the current economic climate. The ACT Board welcomed Margaret Morton, new Executive Officer for RDA ACT, who laid out her action plan for improving Pegasus's funding over the next 12 months. State President, Richard Lucas was re-elected to the Board and will continue in his role as delegate to the National committees. My visit to Canberra was an excellent opportunity for me to catch up with our sports consultant, Amanda Beehag from the Australian Sports Commission. The Australia Sports Commission have just completed their post-Olympic review of Australia's performance and on Friday, November 30, 2012, launched their new Winning Edge plan for the next 4 - 8 years to develop elite performance in sports. These goals include Australia being in the top 5 high performing countries for the Olympics and Paralympics and in the top 15 for Winter Olympic sports; Australia being number one at the Commonwealth Games and Australia producing 15+ World Champions.

The Winning Edge plan shows a strong focus on improving talent identification processes for elite athletes. For RDA this means continuing to build our competition opportunities at State and National levels; working with Equestrian Australia (the peak body for para-equestrian) to improve our athlete development pathways and negotiating with the Australian Paralympic Committee for more trained para-equestrian classifiers (our target is one in every State). Equestrian Australia representatives attended the National RDA Championships this year and noted potential up-and-coming riders. Australian Paralympic Coach Julia Battams delivered a talk to riders, coaches

and parents on the process for selection to the Paralympics.

Other recent AGM's were held in Victoria and Western Australia. RDA Board members Jeanne Stratford attend in Victoria and RDA Board Treasurer John Stirk attended in Western Australia. We welcome new State President, Ron Fleming for RDA Western Australia and Lesley Hewitt continuing in her role as State President for Victoria. State Presidents will participate in national meetings on April 4 and 5 in Melbourne.

For more information about the Australian Sports Commission Winning Edge plan visit:

http://www.ausport.gov.au/news/ais_news/story_508509_australias_winning_edge_targets_world_best_results

*Karen Aspery
National Executive Officer*

<u>Diary Dates</u>	
Dec 21	RDAA Board Meeting in Adelaide
Dec 21	RDAA Office Closes
<u>2013</u>	
Jan 7	RDA Q Office Opens
Jan 7	RDA SA Office Opens
Jan 14	RDAA Office Opens
Jan 16	First RDAA Board Meeting
Jan 18	Coach Registration Letters Mailed
Feb 22	RDA V Autism Spectrum Workshop
Apr 4-7	Combined National Disciplines Meetings and National Delegates Strategy Meeting & General Meeting – Melbourne
May 13-19	National Volunteer Week
June 14	National Volunteer Award Nominations open
29 July – 4 Aug	RDA Awareness Week

CHAIR REPORT

I feel honoured to write as the new Chair of RDA Australia. Judith van Unen's time as Chair with her extensive expertise in governance issues, her national and international networks and unflinching energy will be a very hard act to follow. I'd like to express thanks to her and to Norma Pearce, the national secretary who has dedicated so much of her life to RDA, on behalf of us all. We'll miss you both at national level.

A bit about me: I have a background in working in the Human Services and university sectors, and am passionate about social justice issues and the area of disability. My husband, Tony Dunn, has been a rider with RDA following a horse riding accident, and I've served for a few years on the board of RDA South Australia. I work with people with disabilities and also work in our boutique vineyard, which specialises in producing fine Shiraz wine. I've also recently joined a new Accommodation Reference Group for one of South Australia's service providers for people with intellectual disabilities.

Just after being elected to the Chair in November, I travelled to Singapore and onto Hong Kong on winery business and took the opportunity to contact the RDA centres in each city.



The covered arena in Singapore is enormous and gives all year round protection.



Rosemary, the Chief instructor, and Carol

Hong Kong:

It was great to meet Ann-Sofi Poyhonen the Level 3 instructor at RDA in Pok Fu Lam on Hong Kong Island. They have about 60 riders of whom 6 are 'independent' riders. They share their facilities and

have very close ties with the HK Jockey Club which runs public riding schools and uses RDA horses for lessons. This works well as it's seen as very good for the horses. RDA occasionally uses the Jockey Club horses for some riders too.

As one might expect, the incredibly high cost of land in Hong Kong means that the facilities don't include any paddocks (though the sand arena is referred to as a paddock) but they do have double storey stables reached via a ramp with a non stick surface. I did look for a lift and the escalators...

RDA Pok Fu Lam has a total of eight paid staff including Dominique who is the Operations Supervisor (focussing on the rehab side of the organisation as opposed to the sports side), Simon their full time administrator as well as all the instructors. They have no Government funding but a culture of charity support at the corporate level is high in HK and fundraising is done by the committee. And despite having no ties with the Equestrian Federation, they had 3 riders who gained qualifications for the Paralympics in 2012!



Ann-Sofi on left and Donimique



Dominique, Carol & Ann-Sofi



*Carol Bradley
RDA Australia Chair*

ADELAIDE INTERNATIONAL 3 DAY EVENT



RDA Australia and RDA South Australia recently joined forces to host a stall at the Adelaide International 3 Day Event, held near the Adelaide CBD on November 24. Staff from RDA and volunteers from RDA SA manned the stall during the Cross Country competition and were lucky enough to be very close to the water jumps as well as have a very good view of another jump close by.

Merchandise was sold, balloons were handed out and colouring competitions were entered, making the RDA stall one of the most popular in our area. Fans and water sprayers and sunscreen were all made use of to combat a very warm day with the temperature ticking a bit over 38°.

Objects like gloves, painted glasses and ear muffs were used by passers-by to give them an idea of what life can be like with a disability.



One of the young girls got right into this activity, donning all three at once!



Thank you to all the volunteers who lent a hand throughout the day

COACHING REPORT

On October 27 & 28 I was fortunate enough to visit our RDA New Zealand neighbours across the Tasman to attend their National Coaches Clinic.

It was held in the picturesque Hutt Valley, near Wellington. I really did feel like I had wandered into

Middle Earth! The recently built facilities were surrounded by lush green fields sprinkled with yellow flowers and a river flowing nearby, surrounded by forest-clad mountains on both sides. All under the one roof their facilities included an 40 x 20 flood-lit indoor arena, office, "therapy room", 3 separate toilets, large modern kitchen and dining area and a training/board room! There was also an outdoor arena.

There were 35 coaches representing most of the 56 centres in NZ. Colleen Wright is the National Program Manager and has a wealth of knowledge and experience, both in and outside of RDA. The other facilitator was Jeanette Garrett-BHSI, Ad.Dip.Ed. Needless to say, she also has a lifetime of experience with horses and all the disciplines of riding.

Topics covered were ground training and warming up the RDA horse, lunging both horse and rider, speech language therapy, lesson planning, coaching groups of riders and correcting rider's positions.

It was a well-run clinic with a good balance of theory and practical. It is nice to see that you can go to any RDA centre in the world and see the same lovely volunteers, patient horses, same clients and coaches and that we all have the same basic needs. It really broadens your perspective of RDA and what it is all about! I would like to thank everyone there for their warm welcome, and especially to Sue Allen and Colleen Wright.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2013

In other news, plans are underway for the National Championships to be held at Werribee, VIC November 13-15, 2013. Stay tuned for more details as they come out early next year.

ANNUAL COACHING REGISTRATIONS

Coaches can expect to receive their 2013 Annual Coach Registration form in mid-late January which will be due, with payment, by March 31. All registered coaches will receive a newly designed RDA specific Coach Logbook to keep track of their coaching activities for re-accreditation.

As RDA Centres wind down for the Christmas holidays I hope that everyone is able to take a break and re-charge their batteries ready for next year.

Have a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year!

*Sharon Nichols
National Coaching Coordinator*

MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS!

Carol Bradley – Chair



Carol served as a member of the RDA SA Board for many years, retiring 18 months ago. She has extensive experience working with not-for-profit companies and in the corporate sector. She is currently employed as an employment consultant for people with disabilities and is a carer for a family member with a disability (a former rider with RDA). Carol holds a PhD in Sociology, Cert IV Training & Assessment, Cert IV Viticulture and is a member of the Institute of HR and Training (UK). She also owns and operates a boutique shiraz vineyard in the McLaren Vale Wine Region producing gold medal winning wines.

John Stirk – Treasurer



John Stirk is a lawyer in Alice Springs practising in a broad spectrum of work with an interest and experience in governance, working in legislative reviews, indigenous organisations and restructuring of organisations.

John has been a Territory Resident for 30 years and has held positions as the President of the Northern Territory Law Society and a member of the Law Council of Australia for terms of two and four years respectively. He and his family have been involved with RDA activities over the last decade.

Catherine Evans – Secretary



Catherine Evans is a retired government veterinarian with professional interest in public health and quarantine. Catherine worked privately in Warwick, Queensland and the Commonwealth Department of

Primary Industry at the export abattoir in Gepps Cross, South Australia, as well as working with a number of other export abattoirs. Catherine transferred to Canberra and worked in exchange with the UK Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, retiring in 2004 preparatory to taking up the Soroptimist International (SI) Region President of NSW position.

Catherine was the National Representative/President for soroptimists in Australia until May 2012 and a board member of Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific for 2010-2012. Catherine is also a guardian for an elderly soroptimist member in her SI Canberra club and now lives in the Gold Coast, Queensland. Catherine is a member of the Australian Federation of Graduate Women and her local Anglican congregation.

Rosemary Norman-Hill – Director



Rosemary has been involved in community based organisations since 1997 and is currently the Director of Kirrawe Indigenous Corporation on the Gold Coast. Her experience includes policy development for federal government and lobbying politicians and government in indigenous child and family welfare matters. Rosemary holds a Bach Social Science, Dip Management, Dip Applied Science, Cert IV Business (Governance), Cert IV Workplace Training & Assessment and Cert IV Human & Community Services. Rosemary has been an active member of the Board since her induction in Toowoomba in December 2011.

Jeanne Stratford – Director



Jeanne spent 34 years in the education of students with disabilities, working in consultancy positions in charge of funding and grants allocations. Her experience includes curriculum adaptation, policy development, staff training, developing OHS codes or practice, managing budgets and extensive fundraising for major projects for people with disabilities (e.g. a hydrotherapy centre). Jeanne holds a Diploma of Teaching and was a school principal for 18 years.

Andrew Boeyen – Director



Andrew Boeyen is the Chief Financial Officer and Executive Manager - Corporate Services of Bedford Group Incorporated. He was appointed to the position of CFO in September 2003 and is well versed on the legislation governing the non-profit sector. More recently, Andrew has assumed responsibility for the Marketing, Fundraising and Public Relations activities of Bedford. Andrew is a Fellow of both CPA Australia and the Financial Services Institute of Australasia who holds a Bachelor of Economics degree and a Graduate Diploma in Applied Finance & Investment.

Andrew is married to Kathy with two children, Lauren (10) and Nicholas (7). His greatest passion is being in, on, or near the water, whether it be swimming, kayaking, surfing, fishing, walking on the beach, or anything he hasn't tried before. As well as this, Andrew enjoys family time, particularly summers spent at Pt Willunga (and the associated water time!)

STATE NEWS

RDA NT:

RDA Top End:

2012 has been another successful year for RDA in the Top End. Though sessions were interrupted due to the Northern Territory Government putting a trunk sewer through the middle of the property we were still able to provide a very successful program.

The centre was awarded the SA/NT Volunteer Organisation of Operational Excellence, Small Business and Centre Manager, Lesley Monro, won the Telstra Nokia Business Woman Innovation of the Year Award and represented the Top End at the National Awards in Sydney. This award has really given RDA in the Top End an incredible profile

RDA Top End held three very successful Quantum Savvy Natural Horsemanship clinics, one for children 6 – 12 years and the other 2 for those wanting to start their Level 1 training. 5 RDA horses participated with 2 volunteers, 2 riders and 1 Level 1 RDA Coach. Quantum Savvy is coming back in April 2013 for another clinic which will see our 5 participants get their Level 1 QS Certificates.

The NT Police Mounted Division hired our arena for 5 days for Tactical Training. Follow this link to see some television footage of part of their training:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoP8f8gQUZ0&list=UUAAQ7am1A1p314ALVhKR3Ow&index=5>

We have also operated Katherine School of the Air down at the centre. We had 10 students and part of their education was Cert 1 Stable Management and the RDAA Volunteer training package. They were an integral part of our program this year and all proved to be very competent horse handlers. All these students have mild disabilities.

Four of our riders went to Pony Club this year and all did extremely well, being awarded the following: Chief Instructors Award, Encouragement Award and Pony Club Rider Award 18 years and over.

Our tiny tots program this year was a huge success with ages ranging from 4 to 6 years. There was lots of fun and games, with shopping and ball throwing being the most popular activity.

Sessions have been many and varied with Barrel Racing, Mounted Games and Western Trail being the most popular.

RDA in the Top End would like to wish all a very Happy Christmas and a safe and peaceful New Year.

RDA QLD:

PCAQ/RDAQ Personality Quest

The Personality Quest dinner was held on the 24th of November at the Kedron- Wavell Community Centre.

We were excited to see the conclusion to what has been an excellent promotion.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who put so much effort into the event and we'd especially like to thank all our entrants. With much hard work and dedication you have raised some much needed funds for RDA in Queensland, enabling us to continue to help the disabled community.

The winners were:

Charity Queen:	Allegra Frunz
Bookseller:	Annabelle Gibbs
Junior winner:	Rebecca Canfield
Senior winner:	Jessica Dohle

Congratulations ladies! Thank you for all your hard work!

Office Closure

Just one last reminder that the Queensland State Office will be closing its doors for the holidays. The State Office will close for the Christmas break on Friday, December 14 2012 and will reopen on Monday, January 7 2013. Contact during this period, in the case of emergencies will be available via the administrative email: admin@rdaq.org.au

RDA SA:

It's been a busy and exciting couple of months for RDA SA. The organisation was a beneficiary charity for a golf day organised by national motor vehicle company, Adtrans. One of RDA SA's horses also helped with the fundraising. Located at the 10th tee, golfers had to try and guess the weight of the horse and make a donation. Some other wonderful news was received that RDA SA has been chosen by People's Choice Credit Union as its principal charity partner for 2013. Not only will this mean a great fundraising opportunity, but the organisation's profile will also be raised through this partnership. One of the fundraising opportunities will be the sale of 'pony banks', similar to piggy banks, at the Credit Union's branches. The final celebratory event of our 40th anniversary year was A Day at the Races lunch and race day held at Morphettville Racecourse on 1 December 1. One of our MCs for the day was 'Mr Melbourne Cup' John Letts – the ex jockey who has been a Patron of RDA SA for 31 years. Guests travelled from as far as Mt Gambier, and Katherine in the NT. It was a very successful day with great weather, great food and great company.

RDA Mount Gambier

RDA Mount Gambier will be holding RDA, Para-Equestrian Classes, EA Levels & FEI at Show Grounds, Naracoorte, South Australia in 2013.

If you would like to register your interest, please call Jodie Middleton-Clark on 0427778428 or email - barryclarkfarms@bigpond.com and we will send an information pack to you late January.

RDA VIC:

RDA Victoria held it's AGM on Monday November 26, 2012. It was held in the boardroom at Racing Victoria which is proving to be a fabulous venue for many of our functions.

The new RDA Victoria board for 2012/13 is:

President: Lesley Hewitt

Vice President: Jane Baker

Treasurer: Sue Robinson

Chair Coaching Committee: Sally Francis

Chair Centre Support: Jan Hutton-Croser, Alison Silcock, Fiona Orr and Roger Lord.

A display of RDA Victoria's achievements decorated the halls outside the meeting including a fibreglass, life - size horse adorned with Maddie Cooke's Hope Cup rug. Being located in Racing Victoria has its unexpected perks and we did cause a few laughs manoeuvring it through the corridors. Of course, exemplary manual handling practice was observed at all times.

Also included in the display were articles that had appeared in Inside Racing and on the Off The Track website, photos of the two specifically retrained standardbreds, Benucci and Buddy, that are now rehomed in two Centres in Victoria courtesy of Harness Racing Australia and Raising the Standards articles that appeared in Equestrian Victoria News promoting the RDA V Development Squad, medals, ribbons and other prizes. More importantly the display celebrated the diverse achievements of riders across the board. Personal attainments, such as sitting straight on a horse, participating in a trail ride and sharing a moment of joy with the coach and horse were captured pictorially.

Events such as the reception for Joann Formosa (RDAV squad member until end 2011), Sally Francis (PE Section Manager) and the two FEI stewards, Sue Tuck and Veronica Steward, who all attended the London Para Equestrian events and the Gala Dinner were also highlighted.

We also celebrated the input from the volunteers that are so vital for the running of the organisation. Photos and stories of volunteers coaching, horse handling, organising, cooking, celebrating, meeting Prince Charles at the Melbourne Cup made us remember all the fabulous times that we have had in 2012.

It was also the first time RDA Victoria held a Presidents / Centre Representatives Meeting prior to the AGM. This three hour meeting included presentations from the Treasurer, who disseminated financial information and encouraged discussion and questions. Branding, OH&S/Importance of volunteer training, the RDA Victoria Sunsmart Policy poster and President's Q&A time was also on the agenda. This encouraged all Centres to have discussions and raise any queries prior to the AGM. It proved to be extremely valuable and we will definitely be repeating the program in 2013.

RDA Victoria looks forward to embracing new challenges and achievements in 2013. We will be offering a wide variety of interesting workshops and seminars in 2013 and welcome other states to come along and join in.

We sincerely wish everyone out there in RDA land the very best for the Holiday season and we look forward to seeing you in 2013!

RDA Victoria will be open across the Christmas period, closing on 25th and 26th of December and 1st January.



The RDA Australia National Office will close on at 12.00 noon on Friday 21 December and re open Monday 14 January 2013.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Please email admin@rda.org.au if you no longer wish to receive RDAA's bimonthly newsletter, **Spotlight**.

Next issue: 15 February 2013

Mission Statement

RDA enables people with disabilities throughout Australia to experience enjoyment, challenge and a sense of achievement through participation in equestrian activities to improve their quality of life, attain personal goals and develop life skills.

RDA SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission



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