

RDA CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The summer is over, autumn is with us, and thousands of children and adults are involved in a multitude of activities at RDA Centres all around Australia. Children are learning to ride, teenagers are having organised lessons with enthusiastic Coaches, adult riders are easing their aches and pains with the gentle rhythmic movement of that wonderful animal, the horse.

Revered for centuries, loved by millions, and partnered in work and play by generations of humans, the horse is one of the most adaptable and capable animals of all time. Used in a wide range of activities, the many breeds can lift, pull, run, jump, carry, dance, step, dawdle, glide, spin, and be a loving partner for life.

RDA developed as an Organisation in order to offer people with disabilities the chance to experience the magic of horses. This magic includes a therapeutic aspect, which is being recognised and valued more as we strive to understand the best possible treatments for mental, physical and emotional dysfunction.

The sensitivity to its surroundings creates a challenge for anyone interacting with a horse, and learning to behave in a way that gets a positive response from that horse is very rewarding.

RDA riders' experience; and, volunteers, coaches and carers all recognise the magic that makes equestrian activities so effective for people. This is why we all work so hard to make it happen.

2010 DIARY DATES

Jan 13	Board Meeting Teleconference
Feb 17	Board Meeting Teleconference
Mar 17	RDA AGM & Company Meeting
April 23/24	RDA Board & State Presidents Meeting
May 19	Board Meeting Teleconference
June 16	Board Meeting Teleconference
July 21	Board Meeting Teleconference
Aug 21/22	RDA Board & State Presidents Meeting
Sept 15	Board Meeting Teleconference
Oct 13	Board Meeting Teleconference
Nov TBA	Volunteer Awards Dinner
Nov TBA	RDA AGM
Dec 15	Board Meeting Teleconference

It is very important for RDA to get this message out to existing and potential funders and sponsors. Every member of RDA can help with this process by sharing their stories, videos and photos with RDA, joining and promoting our newly launched Facebook and participating in the new Productivity Commission's Review of the proposed National Disability Insurance Service which is mentioned in this edition of Spotlight. We want you to share your stories with us so that we can share them with everyone else. *Ross Goulden* (RDA Chair)

Tribute to Barbara Heine OAM

RDA Australia is mourning the loss of a very special friend & supporter of RDA. Barbara passed away on 30 March after a long battle with cancer. She was 64.



Photo courtesy: MacedonTelegraph

Barb will be remembered for her contribution to RDA Hippotherapy, delivering fabulous training across Australia to physiotherapists and horse handlers. Barbara served RDA for more than 20 years, including 11 years with US counterpart NARHA. Earlier this year she was awarded an OAM for service to RDA and for work through her Kids and Families Foundation.

A memorial service was held on 7 April 2010 in Victoria. A tribute to Barb can be found at the RDA website www.rda.org.au.

National Office

The RDA national office is staffed five days a week by our Administrator, Caroline Partridge. She is contactable by telephone on 03 9731 7388 or you can email Caroline at admin@rda.org.au.

COACHING UPDATE

Coaching Report March - April 2010

The position of National Coaching Coordinator has been vacant for some time. Funding is being sought to fill this critical position. In the meantime, it was an RDA Board priority to fill the position in the short term in order to progress some outstanding program delivery outcomes.

As a result, Karen Aspery has been seconded from RDA South Australia for six months (one day a week) until ongoing funding for the position can be sourced and a full selection process initiated.

Karen is currently the State Coaching & Volunteer Coordinator for RDA South Australia four days per week. She is a Level 2 NCAS RDA Coach & National Assessor and has been a member of the National Coaching and Safety (NCAS) and Riding Discipline Committees for 5 years. She is currently involved in planning the delivery of the equestrian demonstration sport for the 2010 Special Olympics National Games which will be held in Adelaide during the week of 19th – 23rd April.

Karen will be working for RDA Australia on Fridays. She can be contacted by email at: kaspery@bigpond.net.au and will respond to your email within the week. If you would like to speak to her please include your phone number and she will call you on the next Friday.

Pauline Perry (Chair of Program Delivery) will also continue to assist the RDA National Office and is currently working with the Australian Sports Commission to review the RDA Training Syllabi for OTC, Level 1 Coach and Carriage Driving.

For any urgent queries, please continue to contact Caroline Partridge in the RDA Australia office on (03)9731 7388 or email admin@rda.org.au.

Coaching Accreditation Cards

RDA Coaching Accreditation Cards are now being issued to all new and renewing RDA coaches. Caroline Partridge has been working hard in the office to clear the backlog of registrations and updates. This week, State Associations will receive a batch of cards and accompanying letters to send out to coaches whom have been recently added to the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) database. From now on Caroline will send update cards directly to candidates.

There has been a period of transition to the new database system which we hope has now been resolved. There still remains the question of how coaches will record their coaching and training activities. RDA Australia is considering printing a run of coaching logbooks.

NB: If you would prefer to continue the logbook system, send an email to kaspery@bigpond.net.au with **YES TO LOGBOOKS** in the subject heading.

RDA National Coaches Workshop

I am pleased to announce that the program for the National Coaches Workshop is pulling together nicely. The **2010 National Coaches Workshop** will be held at Marcus Oldham College, Geelong, VIC., on **Fri 2 July to Mon 5 July**.

Please put this date in your diaries now! Program activities will include:

- **Roll out of the new Coach Training system**
Pauline Perry will announce the new system of training which will include generic components across all RDA disciplines followed by 'sports specific' training modules. The aim of the new system is to streamline the RDA syllabus and improve the quality of coach training.
- **Presentation Skill Course**
Adam Horner from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) will present this new course for Assessors and Coach Educators. Under the new system of training all trainees will be expected to attend at least one syllabus training session delivered by a trained presenter. It is **essential** that every State sends a representative who will be available to train at a state and regional level to support the new system of training.
- **Level 1 Polework**
Sally Francis will introduce the new Polework module for Level 1 coaches. The session will start with the Polework theory and be followed by a practical demonstration which will include setting a polework course for competition (and lesson variety). The afternoon will include opportunities for participants to practice and be assessed.
- **Level 2 Introduction to Jumping**
Mary Longden will continue on from Sally's Francis's presentation on polework with a demonstration on teaching riders to progress from polework to jumping a simple course of fences. The afternoon will include opportunities for participants to practice and be assessed.
- **Guest Speakers**
The weekend will include a range of guest speakers on horse care, disability and behaviour management.

National Coach Training Program

- Ian Potter Foundation -



State Associations have been invited to apply to deliver an intensive coach workshop for 10 or more participants to complete their next level of coach accreditation in their state. Each State can identify potential candidate to attend and up to three participants from interstate (per course) will have their costs of travel paid to attend. Northern Territory has already responded with a promising proposal.

All courses need to be held before the end of July 2010. If you are currently training towards your next qualification and are interested in attending intensive training you should contact your State Association or email the National Coaching Coordinator at kaspery@bigpond.net.au.

NB: Any RDA Coach who wishes to participate in one of these State based workshops must register with the RDAA coaches' portal. If you have not already registered please go to www.rda.org.au and register.

Level 2 Intensive Workshop: 30 June – 3 July 2010

I am pleased to confirm that Mary Longden will host the next Level 2 Workshop in Victoria with dates backing onto the 2010 National Coaching Workshop. Participants will have an amazing opportunity to learn from world experts, network with their peers and complete assessments in Level 2 modules.

Applicants are invited to submit an application to kaspery@bigpond.net.au including your name, address, photo, RDA centre, and a brief report about your coaching background, progress with your Level 2 training and the areas you would like to presented at the workshop.

Successful applicants will pay a registration fee of \$55 per person and all other costs of travel and accommodation will be covered by a generous grant from **The Ian Potter Foundation**.

Attention all RDA Assessors

This is a reminder to all RDA Assessors about the procedure for completing the Competency Assessment paperwork. When conducting an assessment, please adhere to the following procedure:

1. Check the candidate meets all the competency standards including:
 - a. Written and practical activities are signed off by Coach Educator/Assessor.
 - b. Candidate has completed required number of coaching hours.
 - c. Level 1 candidates have completed first aid certificate, attended approved training and visited another RDA centre.
2. Candidates are provided with verbal feedback and receive a copy of the Assessor comments. (pages 1 – 4 of Competency Assessment form)
3. Candidates sign the Coach's Code of Ethics.
4. Final page of Competency Assessment form is completed by Assessor.

To finalise the assessment Assessors must notify the relevant RDA body. For some Assessors that means sending copies of the Competency Assessment documents to their State Office who will notify RDA Australia. For some Assessors, you must notify RDA Australia directly.

To process the new accreditation, RDA Australia requires:

- Competency Assessment form (last page only).
- Payment of \$15 registration fee.
- Please also indicate if you would like RDA Australia to issue the certificate to the candidate.

NB: All other documents are to be held on file at the State RDA office. The State RDA office should also be notified if a candidate is determined as "not yet competent".

Karen Aspery
(Acting National Coach Co-ordinator)

2010 National Carriage Driving Workshop



42 people attended the 2010 National Carriage Driving Workshop in Bendigo, VIC on 26-28 March hosted by RDA Bendigo with practical activities being held on Andrea & Laurie Stringer's property.

Day One - Workshop Discussions

- Discussion on New Coach Education System
- Managing Anxiety-dealing with a anxious driver
- New Volunteer Training package for Carriage Driving and Volunteer Code of Practice
- Introduction of new Coaches' Portal

After discussion with attendees it was agreed that some time need to be spent visiting, mentoring & assessing some RDA/CD Centres in Victoria.

Day Two – Practical Workshops

- Selection and Assessment of CD horse
- Lunging and Long-reining the CD horse
- Correct Method of Harnessing
- Use of Whips
- Dressage Demonstration
- Carriage Driving Games
- RDA Bendigo host a wonderful BBQ

Day 3 - Workshops

- Different types of Carriages, wheel types, their purpose & braking methods
- Guided tour of Carriages (Andrea & Laurie)
- Weight Pulling Capacity of CD horse
- Horse Care

I would like to thank RDAA for their support in helping to have this workshop as without it many would not have been able to attend due to the cost.



Photo: Courtesy of Joan Lemmon

Special thanks go to RDA Bendigo for their hard work and thought that had gone into setting up and hosting this event. They are a friendly and wonderfully supportive team. Thanks also go to Andrea and Laurie Stringer for allowing RDA use their wonderful venue for our national workshop. Finally thanks go to all our presenters who helped make this workshop a great success!

Everyone has gone home to start saving and plan for the next National Carriage Driving Workshop which WA have offered to host in 2012.

Cathy Bantick

(RDAA National Carriage Driving Committee Chair)

NEW COACHES PORTAL LAUNCH!

The new secure online Coaches' Portal developed with a generous grant from **The Sidney Myer Fund** has been launched! Over 70 RDA Coaches have registered their details to date. RDAA is encouraging all RDA Coaches to sign up for this amazing free information service.



RDA Coaches must first sign up and then log on to access the online secure coaches' portal. Coaches can update their details online at any time (only RDAA can update Coaches qualifications) and access coaching information 24/7.

For instructions how to sign up to the portal go to www.rda.org.au watch the **Coaches Portal** sign up explanatory DVD; then click on the Coaches **logo** to sign up. It's as easy as that!

RDAA 2010 COACHING WORKSHOPS

- **National Coaching Workshop**
Marcus Oldham College, VIC, 2-5 July 2010
- **Level 2 National Coach Training Intensive Workshop**, VIC., 30 June -3 July 2010
- 2 National Coach Training Workshops TBC

ASC NEWS UPDATE

Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia supports Play by the Rules – a website offering free online training, information and resources to help keep sport in Australia inclusive, safe, fair and fun. Visit: www.playbytherules.net.au



'Play by the Rules' offers free **Online Training Courses** for coaches, administrators, officials and players about their rights under responsibilities under discrimination and child protection laws.

The courses are short (taking no more than two hours), may be done in part or all at once, and make extensive use of case studies. Users who successfully finish a course and its assessment module can print a certificate of completion.

Play by the Rules also offers short Interactive Scenarios on particular sports issues. These courses are not assessed and focus on raising awareness and providing information to assist sports respond positively to issues. Administrators and coaches should find them particularly useful

although the courses would be of interest to anyone involved in sport.

Want to Win Prizes of Up to \$1000?

Check out the ASC's new competition about inclusion in sport. Visit [Play by the Rules - making sport inclusive, safe and fair](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Play-by-the-Rules-making-sport-inclusive-safe-and-fair) at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Play-by-the-Rules-making-sport-inclusive-safe-and-fair/340348440293?ref=mf>

STATE NEWS UPDATES

RDASA

Special Olympics Australia IX 2010 National Games, the sporting competition for athletes with an intellectual disability, will take place in Adelaide, South Australia on 19 – 24 April 2010.

Riding for the Disabled SA is pleased to present the demonstration sport for the Special Olympics Australia IX 2010 National Games. RDA will have 26 athletes from QLD, WA, NSW, VIC and SA competing in four equestrian events:



- English Equitation
- Prix Caprilli (Dressage over poles)
- Texas Barre
- Working Trails

Equestrian events will take place over 3 days and athletes will participate in Opening and Closing Ceremonies and special event dinners.

For further information on this exciting event please go to the Special Olympics website: www.specialolympics.com.au

RDASA AGM will be held at the State Office, 215 Portrush Road, Maylands, on Fri May 7 at 6.30pm. It's open to anyone with an interest in how RDASA is run. It's also an opportunity to network with other people involved in our association, including RDA staff and Board members.

- RDA News Round Up -

Has your State, Centre or RDA Discipline any good news stories it would like to share with the rest of RDA, our supporters & funders? Please email your stories and photos to fundraising@rda.org.au.

Para-Equestrian Sport Update

On 1 Jan 2009 Equestrian Australia (EA) assumed responsibility for managing the Para-Equestrian High Performance (HP) Program. Information and news now available at www.equestrian.org.au



PARA- EQUESTRIAN EVENT CALENDAR

24-27 June 2010

2010 Para-Equestrian National Championships, Toowoomba QLD

16-18 July 2010 - **TBC**

2010 WEG Selection Event, SIEC, Horsley Park

Mary Longden Launches New Website and Blog

Mary Longden has launched her new website. The site includes a blog and online shop where you can get a sneak preview and purchase Mary's new three part DVD series *"Ride towards Excellence"*. DVD's are priced at \$69.95 each or the full series for \$179.95. Also available from the site is her well known book *"Coach with Courage"*. Visit Mary's site at www.longdencorp.com

FRDI NEWS



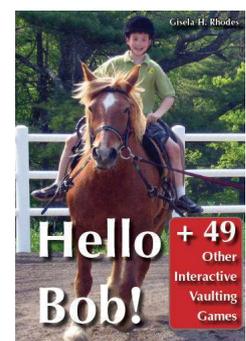
Would you like to work abroad for a Year?

The Turkish Equestrian Foundation is seeking motivated Advanced Instructors to assist in developing EAA programs in Istanbul, Turkey. The role will include developing and expanding programs as well as training/mentoring instructors and staff. This will be a challenging and rewarding international experience. They would like these Instructors to live and work in Turkey for one year; housing & food as well as a modest compensation will be provided. If you are interested in an opportunity to live and work abroad for a year contact Trisha Williams, at Turkish Equestrian Fed Istanbul Turkey email: trishawilliams22@live.com.

New resources available from FRDI

Hello Bob! + 49 Other Interactive Vaulting Games

This book is written for vaulting instructors & coaches who are looking for creative activities besides the vaulting compulsories. It is also an equally valuable tool for instructors of able-bodied & therapeutic riding sessions.



Each game features specific information on skills addressed, set-up and materials, and detailed instructions on how to play the game safely for horse and student. A gem of a book!

Author: Gisela H. Rhodes, M.Ed., is a NARHA Interactive Vaulting and Advanced Therapeutic Riding Instructor; as well as a Level 1 Instructor. FRDI Members \$19.50, ISBN: 978-0-9801325-0-2

Ground Schooling DVD

Following the techniques explained in Windridge's Standard of Behaviour for the Horse & Horseman – *Ground Schooling*, will establish a foundation for a therapeutic equestrian centre's staff, volunteers, program participants and horses. This unique 90 minute educational DVD has a *complimentary* workbook and course syllabus which may be downloaded free of charge or [download the workbook as a PDF](#).



Ground Schooling explains ageless horsemanship methods for the contemporary horseman and throughout this 90 minute film you will:

- Learn how to evaluate your ground schooling methods
- Compare your horse's ground manners against a standard
- Discover how to implement ground schooling skills that will promote the necessary fundamentals for communication, safety, and the evolution of a partnership between your staff and volunteers as they serve your centre's program participants.

DVD available from: Windridge Therapeutic Equestrian Center of East Texas, Inc.

E: windridgetx@aol.com

W: www.windridgetexas.org

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

International Therapeutic Riding Research

A new International Research Study into the 'Effects of Therapeutic Riding' is being carried out to assist in the production of *evidence-based research* to support parents and professionals claims that equine-assisted activities/therapies (EAAT) can assist children with special needs.

Are you an RDA parent or do you know one?

RDA parents are being asked for their input into a research project to '*help determine whether or not equine-assisted activities have any links with aggression and social competence in children with special needs*'. Many NARHA Accredited Centres (USA) and RDA UK Centres have already agreed to participate. RDAA would like to include RDA Centres in Australia.

Parents of children and adolescents 17 years and under are being asked to complete an online confidential survey. The survey will only take about 15 minutes to complete. No personally identifying information is being asked for - to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

1,000+ responses are being requested from participating countries (i.e. Australia, UK, & USA). It is hoped that this study will produce evidence-based research to support parents & professionals' claims that equine assisted activity can assist children with special needs.

The more parents who participate in this international study the more powerful the outcome. To access online survey please click: <http://surveys.marist.edu/quaskformserver/tr>

Thank you for your participation in this important research survey.

National Research Study

RDA has been invited to participate in a SCEC Pty Ltd research study to investigate the presence of resistant worms in Australia, and the efficacy of a number of newly formulated drenches for horses.

Participation *is voluntary* and *cost-free* to any RDA Centres who wish to participate in this important research study. SCEC Pty Ltd will provide kits, pay postage, provide all drenches and even drench the rest of the horses on the property (up to 100 horses).

They will provide participating centres with the results and any relevant information pertaining to our findings from the study. This could lead to gaining valuable information about what sort of worms are present on the farms, what they are resistant to, if anything, and perhaps the best products for future drenching plans on your farms.

If your RDA Centre is interested in being involved in this research project please contact Debbie Morrison at debbie@scec.net.au at SCEC Pty Ltd.,

Veterinary Research & Consulting, PO Box 6425, Alexandria, NSW 2015 or Telephone 02 9086 8060.

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Applications now open for Federal Government's \$21 Million 2010 Volunteer Grants Program

Volunteer Grants 2010 provide funding of \$1,000 - \$5,000 to help nonprofit organisations:

- Contribute towards the costs of training courses for volunteers and/or undertaking background screening checks for volunteers.
- Purchase portable, tangible, small equipment items to help volunteers.
- Contribute towards fuel reimbursement for their volunteers, including those who use their cars to transport others to activities, deliver food and assist people in need.

Volunteer Grants 2010 will provide practical and tangible support to community organisations across Australia to support volunteers and encourage more people to take up volunteering.

Applications close at 2pm on Fri 16 April 2010. To apply, or for more information, please visit www.fahcsia.gov.au or call 1800 183 374

Helping Children with Autism

The Australian Government has committed **\$190 million** for the four years up to June 2012 to deliver the *Helping Children with Autism* package. The package will help address the need for support and services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD's).

All initiatives include support for parents, families, carers and children from diverse cultural, linguistic and Indigenous backgrounds and those living in rural and remote areas.

The package includes:

- **Autism Advisors**
- Funding for **Early Intervention Services**
- **PlayConnect Playgroups** (access to PlayConnect Playgroups is also available to children with ASD like symptoms)
- **Early Days family workshops**
- An **ASD website**

Further information available at:

www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/progserv/people/HelpingChildrenWithAutism/Pages/default.aspx

How to Access Funds?

Following diagnosis, families contact an Autism Advisor in their state or territory who will provide information regarding eligibility, available funding and early intervention and other support services.

The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) has made new Medicare items available for children aged under 13 years (for diagnosis and treatment planning).

If you live in an outer regional or remote area you may be eligible to receive an additional one off payment of \$2,000 (paid directly to families) to assist with travel, accommodation, training, respite or resource costs associated with early intervention.

Invitation to all PETstock/RDAA Young Coaches and local RDA Centres

The PETstock Foundation has extended an invitation to all young coaches who participated in the *2009 PETstock/RDAA Young Coaches Program* to liaise with its local PETstock Store.

Local PETstock Stores would like to link up with local RDA Centres to raise local funds & awareness of the great work of RDA.

RDAA would like to encourage those young RDA Coaches and their Centre Chairs/Managers to visit their local PETstock Store to establish a similar relationship with local PETstock stores across Australia.

So calling all young RDA coaches - go out and spread the good word to your local PETstock Stores about how important their support is to you as a young coach and to your local RDA Centre.



To find **PETstock Store** locations in Australia visit:

www.localstore.com.au/stores/2953/petstock/

HOT TIPS & STRATEGIES

Advice on writing Grant Applications

- Never ask for anything. Sell an investment opportunity.
- Understand funders' strategic aims and objectives.
- Get very clear on your own strategic objectives.
- Get very clear on your own operational plan.
- Success sells more than sympathy.
- Share frustrations too.
- Tell a story. Be passionate about your cause!
- Wherever possible make a personal appeal.
- Don't make an application, develop a relationship.

Finally, fundraising is hard! It takes time and effort to develop a good working relationship with funders and to develop a solid track record. (Adapted from NCVO www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)

Useful Sources of Information on Raising Funds

Fund Seeker www.fundseeker.com.au

Fund Seeker is a self help support system for people seeking funds. Finding Funds is easy you just need to know how. (\$100 p.a. to join)

OurCommunity.com www.ourcommunity.com.au

Need more money for your RDA group? The **Community Funding Centre** provides free help sheets, services, newsletters, books and training to help groups improve their fundraising abilities and become healthier and more viable.

Easy Grants Newsletter (Our Community.com)

www.ourcommunity.com.au

Find a grant for your group from Government, philanthropic and corporate grants funding. (Annual subscription required)

Philanthropy Australia www.philanthropy.org.au

[The Australian Directory of Philanthropy](http://www.philanthropy.org.au) lists over 350 Australian Trusts & Foundations with their contact details and funding preferences. The Directory is intended to assist you to locate foundations which may be able to fund your organisation. (Annual subscription required)

Useful Sources of Information for Recruiting Professional Volunteers

goodcompany www.goodcompany.com.au

goodcompany is Australia's most effective meeting place for volunteers and community groups, inspiring a new generation of professionals who can make a positive difference in our communities. goodcompany makes volunteering easy by matching skilled professionals with community group needs. (Free)

Pro Bono www.probonoaustralia.com.au

Volunteer Match is an online service operated by Pro Bono Australia to connect Skilled Professional Volunteers and Not for Profit Organisations. Whether you are a skilled professional wishing to volunteer, or an organisation requiring the assistance of a volunteer, **VolunteerMatch** can help you find what you are looking for. (Free)

NB: **Pro Bono** also provides useful online up-to-date information for the nonprofit sector.

National Volunteer Week

Each year, community organisations across Australia acknowledge the tremendous contribution volunteers make in National Volunteer Week (NVW). The theme for NVW 2010, 10-16 May is '**Volunteering: Now, more than ever**' to raise the profile of volunteering & highlight that volunteering, now, more than ever, is important to Australian society and the contribution of all volunteers must be recognised. For the next three years, National Volunteer Week will be held on:

10 – 16 May 2010

09 – 15 May 2011

14 – 20 May 2012

Promotional materials produced by Volunteering Australia are available for use by volunteer centres, community organisations, libraries, government & networks. For more information: www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s02_article/default.asp?nav_top_id=55&nav_cat_id=357

RDA Volunteers

Each week 3000+ volunteers at RDA centres across Australia donate their time to assist 4000+ children and adults with disabilities enjoy the therapeutic benefits of horse related activities. If you would like to volunteer for RDA please visit our website www.rda.org.au for more information.



RDA Australia new to **FACEBOOK** 

Among other networking sites, **facebook** is becoming a social phenomenon. RDA now has its very own **facebook** page.

We would like to extend an invitation to **ALL** of our members, riders and volunteers alike to keep updated and show your support by joining RDA **facebook** page as a 'fan'. Through **facebook** we hope to accomplish a number of things.

1. Create Awareness of RDA and its wonderful work. By joining and contributing your stories on **facebook**, we make more information accessible to anyone that's interested in the valuable work that RDA achieves.

2. Educate the Public on the benefits of the services that RDA offers and raise awareness of our organisation. A lot of hard work goes into fundraising for all RDA centres. The most difficult part of fundraising is showing people that their donations, regardless of the amount, are going to a worthy cause. **Facebook** is a great way to thank people or businesses for their support by telling the world of their generosity!

3. Share Stories. RDA Australia would love to see our volunteers, riders, members or supporters share your story with us. If you have pictures, videos, funny stories or just a little something you would like to tell everyone post it on the wall or tag RDA Australia in the photo.

4. Create new Pen Pals. Find yourself an **RDA pen pal** in a different state or town and share your RDA experiences.

So please, check out the Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia (RDAA) **facebook** page, tell your friends and family to also join as fans, and stay tuned for updates and stories soon.

Megan Lockran (RDA Volunteer)

The RDAA **Facebook** Page is now available at:

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

It is now more important than ever to get our message out about what we do and why we do it...

Disability Care & Support in Crisis...

A recent ABC program *Four Corners* in Feb 2010, examined the impact on families and carers of children with severe disabilities and found that many families are at breaking point, due to a complex web of bureaucracy and a severe lack of resources and support.

A proposal to change the way disability services are funded in Australia could provide the additional resources required to address the current lack of resources.

A proposed *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)* is currently before the Productivity Commission which would result in a change to the taxation system that rivals the introduction of compulsory superannuation and tax.

"20% of Australians (1:5) report a disability (4 million people); 1:17 people (5.7%) have a profound or severe level of core activity limitation; 319,900 children aged 15 years and under (8%) report a disability." (4430.0 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003)

Those who acquire a disability through a workplace or a motor vehicle accident generally receive financial support. However, for those who acquire permanent disabilities in other accidents, are born with a permanent disability, acquire a permanent disability through a medical condition or have a permanent mental illness, there is no automatic support to meet their needs. Cerebral Palsy QLD estimates it costs \$45,000 a year to support and care for a child with complex needs.

Current disability funding is driven by a sense of emergency rather than long term planning and often ties to institutions, particularly for adults. Shortfalls and gaps in funding rely on public donations and charities.

A **National Disability Insurance Scheme** would provide funding for essential care, support, aids, equipment, home modifications and access to the community, education and training. An insurance based scheme, NDIS would be funded by taxpayers through general revenue or an extension of the Medicare insurance levy.

"We need to make that shift from a crisis driven system to an entitlement based system so that as soon as a child is born with a disability or as soon as someone has an injury that results in a permanent disability, they have access to the information and support that they need".

National Disability Services QLD

"By assisting people with a disability solely on the basis of need and not cause or the type of disability, in accordance with uniform, national guidelines and rules, an NDIS would be the fairest, most efficient and most equitable way to reform Australia's failing disability system."

Disability Services Australia 2009

The Productivity Commission is due to report on the feasibility of a NDIS in July 2011. If successful, a scheme could be put in place by 2012.

The Plan for a National Disability Scheme (July 2009) - a document prepared by a coalition of Australian disability service providers. Download The Plan at: [www.ndis.org.au/downloads/NDIS-The%20Plan%20\(LR\).pdf](http://www.ndis.org.au/downloads/NDIS-The%20Plan%20(LR).pdf)

Register Your Interest for PC Inquiry

The Australian Government has asked the Productivity Commission to undertake a public inquiry into a long-term disability care and support scheme. The Productivity Commission is inviting the public to register their interest in the forthcoming inquiry into a long-term care and support scheme for people with a disability in Australia. The inquiry will begin in early 2010 and report back by July 2011.

Have your say by participating in this public enquiry, visit:

www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support

FBT Changes Threaten Charity Workforce

The Federal Government's Henry Tax Review is widely expected to recommend changes to the current Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) regime which may impact on the income of charity workers.

Dr Nicholas Gruen's (Lateral Economics) Report says 80% of employees in the NFP sector regard the current concessions as a significant element of their salary and would consider leaving if benefits were removed. The FBT concession to charity is said to be worth over \$1 billion to charities/NPOs.

Gruen argues that the costs and risks of changing the current concession regime are very high (i.e. potential costs include the de-stabilisation of nonprofit organisations, disruption, even termination, of essential services).

Since the Hawke Government introduced FBT in 1986 some Charities/NFP organisations have relied on FBT concessions to attract staff by offering them access to exemptions that increase their after tax wages and reduce the organisations operating costs by providing these benefits rather than higher wages. Under current rules, some hospitals, nursing homes, emergency services, welfare agencies and charities can offer staff a range of tax-free benefits worth up to \$30,000.

Treasury Secretary Ken Henry is believed to have recommended, as part of the government's tax review, that the FBT benefits available to some charity workers be scrapped because they are too complex and open to abuse.

According to Gruen's report, if the FBT is scrapped many current employees in the NFP sector may face effective pay cuts and be forced to move jobs. He argues the proposed change carries significant risks; particularly in the aged care sector where the social costs of uncertainty and disruption in this particular domain are potentially very high.

Gruen's report also argues that many staff currently employed with FBT concessions as part of their pay, contribute more than the value of their pay because they are driven by altruism rather than money – these workers are driven by a desire to "make a difference". He warns that if FBT concessions are abolished and NFP organisations are required to pay for the extra work done by these workers, it could result in the organisations having to find money in their budgets to pay for work currently done for free.

The Rudd Government has so far refused to rule out scrapping the concession. The Henry Report is expected to be released next week.

The full Gruen Report is available online at: www.lateraleconomics.com.au

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<http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2010/04/fbt-changes-threaten-charity-workforce>