

## RDAAGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Limited took place in Melbourne on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2009. The newly elected Board of Directors are:

- Ross Goulden - Chair (WA)
- Bill Ash – Treasurer (QLD)
- John Stirk – Company Secretary (ACT)
- Norma Pearce (VIC)
- Judith van Unen (VIC)
- Stephen Hutchins (VIC)
- Denis Keates (QLD)



RDAAGM board bios and photos at: [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au)

## NEW RDAAGM CHAIRMAN MESSAGE

October and November was an extremely busy period for RDAAGM staff and board members in preparation for RDA Australia's:

- Annual General Meeting
- PETstock/RDAAGM Young Coaches Program
- RDAAGM Disciplines and Assessors Workshops
- National Volunteers Awards Dinner

I would like to start by thanking everyone involved for all their hard work in organising and hosting these events.

I was honoured to be elected to serve as the new RDAAGM chair and look forward to working with staff, fellow members and all the wonderful volunteers that go up to make this great organisation.

Ross Goulden (RDAAGM Chair)

## BOARD UPDATE

The new board attended a 2 day intensive workshop in Melbourne on 13-14 December 2009.

The new RDAAGM Board of Directors would like to thank the outgoing Board members in particular Dr John Harte (RDAAGM ex-Chairman) for his hard work and contribution over a challenging 2 year term.

## 2009 DIARY DATES

- Oct 19 Board Meeting Teleconference
- Nov 21 Volunteer Awards Dinner
- Nov 22 RDAAGM AGM & Company Meeting
- Dec 2 Board Meeting Teleconference
- Dec 14-15 Two Day Board Workshop

## YOUNG COACH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The PETstock/RDAAGM Young Coach Development Program was held on 12-15 Nov 2009, at Bunyip in Victoria and attended by 13 young coaches from RDA Centres across Australia.

- Tanith Ramsdale - Jennibrook RDA Centre, SA
- Calli Golab - Jennibrook RDA Centre, SA
- Melody Jacobs - McIntyre RDA Centre, QLD
- Nina Delzoppo - McIntyre RDA Centre, QLD
- Casey Dekker - Toowoomba RDA Centre, QLD
- Melissa Stokes Arundel RDA Centre, QLD
- Annette Beeston - Cartmill RDA Centre, QLD
- Kate Irving - Peninsula RDA Centre, VIC
- Amy Smith - Doveton RDA Centre, VIC
- Michelle Rumball Hippotherapy SW WA
- Renae Tucci - Swan Valley RDA Centre WA
- Courtney Blackwell - Darwin, NT
- Mary Webb - Pegasus, ACT



The PETstock/RDAAGM Young Coaches Program included visits to the Officer RDA Centre and Pakenham Saddlery; practical workshops, talks and demonstrations; as well as group and individual work on Training Manuals for RDA accreditation.

RDA would like to thank Mary Longden (2008 Paralympic Coach) for organising and hosting this event as well as:

- Nicola Reynoldson Paralympic Physiotherapist - human/horse physiotherapy and riders with physical disability
- Shelley Earl - Coaching riders with acquired brain injury
- Cathy Prior - Coaching riders with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Anne Skinner (Paralympian) – Best practise coaching independent riders with disabilities
- Sarah Martindale (EA Coach) - Dressage paces
- Sally Francis (EFA, RDA) - Mounted games
- Karen Asprey (SA State Coaching Coordinator) and Julie Nicholson (WA State Coaching Coordinator), RDA Coach Educators spent 1:1 and small group time with our young coaches

A great time was had by all participants and trainers alike! Here is some of the feedback...

*'The last four days have been a truly fantastic experience. I have gained an immense amount of knowledge that I will be able to apply to my own RDA Centre. The progress I have made with my workbook has been fantastic, something that would have been very time consuming.'*

(Nina Delzoppo)

*'It has been amazing to meet and work with other young like minded coaches. These are connections that we will have for a long time.'* (Melody Jacobs)

*'I learnt so many new skills to use in my coaching and am very inspired by the people we have met and the things we have seen. It was great to see other RDA Centres and how they operated. I've learnt so much from this experience I will be implementing as much as possible of what I have learnt in to my RDA riding groups.'* (Kate Irving)

*'If this workshop was to run again I would love to be involved again to get my Level 2.'*

(Courtney Blackwell)

*'I found the experience invaluable. I gained an insight into other centres around Australia, how they work and the challenges they face. The networks I've developed with other young coaches has given me confidence in the future of RDA and inspired me to work towards achieving my Level 1 sooner rather than later. I had no idea that there was so many fantastic and motivated young*

*coaches already out there who were making committed contributions to RDA. I hope to continue to maintain the relationships which I made in the past few days into the future.*

(Calli Golab)

As a result of this intensive 4 day program our young coaches were able to complete and fast track their qualifications to the next level:

- **3** young coaches completed their **OTC Level**
- **8** young coaches completed their **Level 1**
- **2** young coaches working on their **Level 2**

RDA young Coaches would like to thank the PETstock Foundation for its generous sponsorship of this new and exciting program.

## COACHING UPDATE

RDA National Discipline Meetings, and, Course Review and Assessors Workshop were held from 19 to 21 Nov 2009 at Quest Flemington, Victoria.

## RDA DISCIPLINE MEETINGS

RDA National Discipline Meetings were held in Flemington on 19<sup>th</sup> Nov 2009.

Carriage Driving, Dressage and Riding Disciplines attended. Vaulting and Hippotherapy Disciplines did not require a face-to-face meeting this time. Those Committees present met for the first hour with Pauline Perry (acting Chair of Program Delivery) to discuss their wishes for RDA's role in supporting program delivery to the states. The following points were discussed:

- Establish the Program Delivery Panel
- Establish a Policy and Procedure in regard to a review and signing off process for all recommendations from the Discipline Committees
- Need for a National Coaching Co-Ordinator
- Wish list for 2010 – 2011

The various committees then followed with their separate Discipline meetings for the rest of the day. Discussion items from these meetings:

## CARRIAGE DRIVING

The committee working towards their competency based syllabus is near completion. Reminder: -

**Carriage Driving Workshop 26–28 March 2010 Bendigo, Victoria. Registrations close Dec 31 2009**

A very good response to date. Please contact Cathy Bantick: [c.bantick@bigpond.com](mailto:c.bantick@bigpond.com)

## DRESSAGE

Para Equestrian is now a discipline of the FEI. Equestrian Australia (EA) is now responsible for the management of Para Equestrian in Australia. As this discipline had previously been managed by RDAA, RDA members have voiced concerns regarding the future role of RDAA in Para Equestrian Sport. To assist the Committee and to clarify the situation, Brett Mace, High Performance Manager of Equestrian Australia was invited to attend our meeting on November 19, 2009.

This proved to be a worthwhile exercise as Brett was able to outline the program he had set up for Para Equestrian and to hear of some of the concerns and difficulties that were being experienced. Issues such as:

- *RDA riders who wish to be identified as Para Equestrians are required to be classified and to be members of EA, before attending a Talent Identification day?*

Brett took this problem on board and is looking into a possible solution. He also offered to look into the problem of NCAS coaches being able to coach an RDA rider who was not a member of EA & insurance issues of RDA riders riding at EA events.

- *Pathways for RDA riders wishing to become Para Equestrians?*

Brett also felt that RDAA definitely could provide a pathway for riders wishing to become Para Equestrians.

- *The definition of a Para Equestrian?*

A Para Equestrian is a rider with a physical disability who is classified and who is a member of Equestrian Australia.

We were very grateful to Brett for taking the time to come to the meeting and to listen to the thoughts of the Committee. I believe that we were all of the opinion that there was definitely a future for RDA Dressage and that the two organizations could work together.

## **National RDAA Dressage Championships**

Some disappointment expressed that more entries were not received for the 2009 National Video Dressage Competition. It was decided that in 2010 the National Dressage Competition would again be a video competition but the aim would be that in

2011 the RDAA National Dressage Championships, including as many RDA disciplines as possible, would be held, venue TBA. This is an exciting concept and will, hopefully receive strong support.

## **RDAA NATIONAL DRESSAGE COMPETITION**

2009 RDAA National Video Dressage Competition results are now available at [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au)

### **Other matters to be discussed were:**

- The 2010 Special Olympics in South Australia
- Corrections to some RDA Dressage Tests
- Classification
- RDA State Clinics which would cover all RDA disciplines & could use specialist Instructors in their State for: Dressage, Show Jumping, Carriage Driving, Vaulting, Games, etc.

## **RIDING**

A range of issues were covered in Riding Discipline meeting including:

- Coach Development Fund
  - Applications for funding can be made
- Risk Management Policy & Procedure 2003
  - Still valid but will be reviewed
    - One-off ride form - this is part of risk management and is still in use
- Update on Level 1 Manual
  - Completed & currently being proof read
- Sports Accreditation On-Line
- Provisional Centres
- Equipment
  - Special Equipment Register
  - Manual Handling
  - Mounting Ramps & Australian Standards
  - Helmet Expiry - date has been included on Band Check
  - Use of bit-less bridle
- Horses & Donkeys
  - Horse Assessment
  - Horse Welfare Policy
  - Use of Donkeys in RDA
- Coaching & Lungeing
  - Coaching from horseback
  - Teaching Over Poles
  - Lungeing for riding programs
    - Lungeing the horse
    - Lungeing the rider
- Volunteer Package

Thanks were expressed to Jo Skimin and Karen Aspery for their work with the Volunteer package. This is for the Riding Program and other aspects will follow. Forms will be put on

the Coaches Portal website and can be downloaded from there. The Volunteer Booklet is to be reviewed and reprinted to reflect the volunteer package.

### **RDAASSESSORS' WORKSHOPS**

RDAAS Course Review and Assessors Workshops were held in Flemington on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November 2009.

23 RDA Coach Assessors attended representing all RDAAS member states. With this expertise present it was a perfect opportunity to: integrate the ASC four yearly reviews; re-accreditation of the OTC and Level One Syllabus; along with a review of RDAAS assessment procedures.

This workshop was ably facilitated by Adam Horner, assisted by Pauline Perry. Adam is the ASC Sport Consultant who is reviewing the current OTC and Level One Syllabus with Pauline. The group was asked first of all for their expectations:

- Finalise Competencies for Assessment
- Assessing the Assessors
- Updating of Assessors
- Tools to Increase the Consistency in Assessment
- Standards Required for Assessors and Coach Educators
- Conflict of Interest in Assessment
- Consistency of Assessment Across Disciplines
- Percentage of Workbook Signed off by Coach Educator v Assessors
- Assessing a Person that You Acted as a Coach Educator For
- Who Assesses What Levels?
- Age of Retirement

The workshop was a great step forward with much lively discussion and achieving consensus on many initiatives and changes including:

- Many modules of the current syllabus for all the disciplines can be combined to be delivered across all disciplines.
- This will require a generic workbook and manual to be developed from the existing modules with updating and editing where necessary to meet current standards.
- Then workbooks and manuals to be developed for the disciplines from the existing modules of specific content.

- It was agreed by all that the current format progresses well and allows individuals to work through the process in their own time.

#### *Coach Educators*

- More clarity around the role of the coach educator
- Pre-requisites developed for coach educators

#### *Assessors*

- Look at more formalised approach to training
- Introduce a workshop to assist assessors
- Pre-requisites for assessors
- Updating document for assessors

#### *Reviewing*

- Discipline Committee are the ones that should complete the reviews
- Panel of members representing the disciplines are to work at reviewing the core modules
- RDA Australia needs a coordinator to collate and review and oversee implementation

### **Coaches Portal**

A new secure Coaches' Portal is currently being developed with assistance from each RDAAS Head of Discipline. Once content has been compiled and uploaded, and fully road tested it will be rolled out to all Coaches. Coaches must first sign up and then log on to access the coaches portal on the website.

Coaches will be able to update their details online (only RDAAS can update Coaches qualifications) and access all coaching information. There is a Q & A and FAQ's section, coaches will be able to upload and download lesson plans, photos, DVDs and podcasts. But remember, the Coaches Portal will only be as good as the content that is provided by you the coaches. If you would like to know more about this exciting new program development then visit [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au) and click on Coaches Portal to watch the explanatory DVD.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment in 2009. I look forward to working with you in 2010.

Pauline Perry

Chair Program Delivery

## **RDA 2010 COACHING WORKSHOPS**

- Carriage Driving Workshop 26-28 March 2010, Bendigo, VIC
- National coaching workshop: tentative booking at Marcus Oldham, VIC, July 2010.

## **RDA VOLUNTEER AWARDS DINNER**

The annual National Volunteer Awards Dinner was held in Mooney Ponds Melbourne on 21 Nov 2009.

Each year RDA holds its national volunteer recognition and awards night to honour those volunteers without whom the organisation simply could not function. Dr John Harte RDA Chairman was MC for the evening.

- **RDA Life Member Awards** for outstanding contribution to RDA went to Mary Longden, John Bennet and Bill Gibbins.
- **The Michael Field Memorial Volunteer Award** Jenny Stidston, Peninsula RDA Centre, VIC.
- **RDA/PETstock Young Volunteer of the Year** Tara Poulton, Alice Springs RDA Centre, NT.
- **RDA/PETstock Young Volunteer Runner-Up**, Rachel Morris, Currumbin Valley RDA, QLD.
- **National Volunteer Encouragement Award** Michelle Leach, President and Coach, Mt Barker RDA Centre, SA.

You can read more about this year's outstanding volunteers at [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au).

## **RDA/PETStock Young Volunteers Awards**

RDA was delighted to welcome The PETstock Foundation as its sponsor for the 'Young Volunteer of the Year Awards' section.



The 2009 RDA/PETstock Young Volunteer of the Year was Tara Poulton from Alice Springs RDA Centre, NT. Matt Bayles, CFO of the PETstock Pty Ltd, Secretary and Treasurer of the PETstock Foundation presented a horse blanket to Tara.

The 2009 RDA/PETstock Young Volunteer of the Year Runner-Up was Rachel Morris, from RDA Currumbin Valley, QLD. Effie Aretos, Managing Director of Mooney Ponds PETstock Store, presented a Horse Pamper Pack to Rachel.

## **FRDI International Congress of Therapeutic Riding**

Julie Nicholson (RDAWA) spoke at the Volunteers Awards Dinner about her experiences attending



this year's 2009 FRDI Congress of Therapeutic Riding in Germany at the Awards Dinner. Copies of her report are available if you email Julie at

[gnicholson@git.com.au](mailto:gnicholson@git.com.au).

Denis Keates (CEO McIntyre RDA Centre) also presented RDA's Expressions of Interest to host the 2015 FRDI Congress of Therapeutic Riding here in Australia at the Awards Night. Copies of the EOI are available online at [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au).

## **New National Volunteering Strategy**

The Australian Government under The Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Volunteer Sector, Senator Ursula Stephens, has begun discussions with the Third Sector and State and Territory Ministers to develop a new National Volunteering Strategy.

An Advisory Group of State & Federal Ministers and Leaders in the Nonprofit Sector has been established to develop a new strategy and vision for volunteering in Australia - including the Government's commitment to volunteering.

The release of the National Volunteering Strategy will coincide with 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United National Year of Volunteering in 2011.

Volunteering delivers a number of key social and economic benefits including creating social cohesion, contributing to community resilience and supporting services that meet the needs of communities. Australian volunteers play a significant economic role, with voluntary work contributing approximately 713 million hours to the community worth approximately \$42 billion to the economy.

Source: [www.probonoaustralia.com.au](http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au)

## **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. Many centres have up to a 5 year waiting list for its services. RDA is only limited by the number of volunteers, coaches and horses it can provide. If you would like to volunteer for RDA please visit our website [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au) for information on how you can give our riders a leg up not a hand out.

### **SPECIAL OLYMPICS IX 2010 NATIONAL GAMES - Adelaide, April 19 - 24, 2010 -**

The Special Olympics Australia IX 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 three days and athletes will participate in Opening and Closing Ceremonies and special event dinners. Tickets for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Special Olympics must be purchased before 11 Jan 2010. You will not be able to buy tickets on the day. To buy tickets go to the Special Olympics website [www.specialolympics.com.au](http://www.specialolympics.com.au) to download the Families, Friends and Supporters Guide which includes a Booking Form for tickets.

### **Mountain Cattlemen's Association VIC (MCAV)**

MACV members captured, gentled and auctioned a wild brumby mare Rose River in aid of RDA at their 35<sup>th</sup> Get Together in January 2009. RDA benefited from national exposure in the April/May Issue of R.M. Williams Outback Magazine courtesy of the Mountain Cattleman's Association VIC.

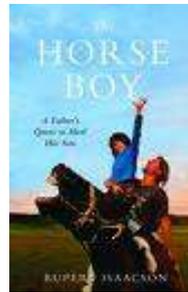


Mary Longden was delighted to present an RDAA commemoration plaque to Christa Treasure the MCAV's President in recognition

of their generous support for RDA at its 2009 AGM.

### **THE HORSE BOY** (report by Kaye Meynell)

The Horse Boy is the inspirational story of a family dealing with autism. Journalist Rupert Isaacson and his psychology professor wife, Kristin, struggle to cope with their autistic son, Rowan. The only time he's calm is when he's on horseback.



When Rupert and Kristin Isaacson's child was diagnosed with autism at the age of two, they were overwhelmed. Fears of a lifelong struggle trying to communicate with their son Rowan, who was growing more distant every day and guilt that their only child would never lead a normal life haunted the young couple.

Whilst Rupert was amazed by his son's affinity with all animals, it wasn't until he witnessed Rowan's connection with Betsy, a stropky Quarter Horse well-known for being difficult, that he found hope. Hope that as parents they had found a way of reaching their withdrawn child; hope that Rowan's quality of life could be turned around. Wishing to combine Rowan's unique relationship with horses, that enabled him to communicate with people like never before, with the healing abilities of Shamans the family set off for Mongolia - a land where horses and shamanic healing went hand in hand. The plan - to free their son from a life of isolation and frustration...

This story is inspiring, heartfelt, a tale of hope. Rupert and Kristin are incredibly brave, with a level of patience and understanding many of us could only hope for. It highlights the lengths parents will go to in order to offer their child every available chance. *The Horse Boy* is about meeting each challenge head-on, and never giving up.

NB: RDA was invited to participate in Q & A panels after the Australian screening of 'The Horse Boy'. *The Horse Boy* is available as a book and film at: <http://www.horseboymovie.com/Film.php>

### **NATIONAL OFFICE**

This is the last edition of Spotlight in 2009. The RDAA National Office will be closed from 25 Dec 2009 until Jan 4 2010. Staff and Board would like to wish all RDA members, volunteers, supporters and donors a happy Christmas and peaceful 2010.