



# **RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED**

ABN 99 116 408 587

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2009 - 2010**



Ability • Freedom • Sport • Inspiration • Courage • Hope • Fun • Friendships



I saw a child who couldn't walk, sit on a horse and laugh and talk

I saw a child who could only crawl, mount a horse and sit up tall

I saw a child born into strife, take up and hold the reins of life

And that same child was heard to say

Thank you God for showing me the way

~~~~ John Anthony Davis ~~~~



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## ANNUAL REPORT 2009 – 2010

Each week over 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.

RDA is a voluntary, nonprofit organisation and limited company which provides opportunities for anyone with a disability to enjoy safe, healthy stimulating, therapeutic, horse-related activities in Australia.

RDA Centres provide suitable horses, trained volunteer helpers, accredited RDA coaches, riding and safety equipment to run a range of equestrian activities.

The RDA is structured as a federal body of 8 autonomous RDA member states & territories in Australia. The national office supports the work of the member organisations by acting as a central resource coordinating education, training, accreditation and other activities vital to the provision of safe and professional services.



RDA develops abilities & enriches lives through  
therapeutic & recreational equestrian activities



## DIRECTORS' REPORT

In early 2009, RDAA was beginning to emerge from a series of devastating environmental events (bushfires, floods & Equine Influenza) over the past few years. However these events, combined with the worst global financial meltdown in living memory, has made for another tough financial and funding year. RDAA was forced to draw down on its limited reserves to keep the national office operating and now needs time to rebuild its reserves. RDAA is not out of the woods yet but is slowly rebuilding its financial and funding capacities.

In August 2009, RDAA celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. As we started our fourth decade our organisation is changing and adapting to better meet the needs of our clients.

The RDAA chairman led a process of Board Renewal seeking applications from individuals with the skills and experience to be part of a board that would deliver significant benefits to our local, state and national organisation.

In November 2009, a new Board was elected at the Annual General Meeting. Seven Directors were appointed with a wide range of skills, including research, education, project management, horsemanship, international contacts and, disability experience.

As part of a process of consolidation and review and after consultation with State Presidents, the RDAA Board of Directors made the decision to relocate the RDAA national office from the National Equestrian Centre in Werribee in Victoria.

After tendering all RDA States, RDA SA was chosen as it has extra office space after successfully hosting the 2010 Special Olympics and offers the most suitable resources to accommodate the national office while providing a central location for the whole of RDA.

*“This decision was reached after consultation with RDA State Presidents in response to the current financial climate. This move will help RDAA reduce overheads and costs through shared office space and resources.”*

Ross Goulden RDAA Chairman

It has been a busy and productive year for RDAA. Thanks to generous grants from The Australian Sports Commission, The Ian Potter Foundation, The Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund, The PETstock Foundation, ANZ Trustees Foundation (Dyson Bequest) and Trust Company Ltd (Fred P Archer Trust), RDAA was able to roll out its new National Coach Development Program supported by new and emerging technologies.

The new RDAA chairman, Ross Goulden, through his close links with the racing industry is rolling out a new national donated Stallion Services Program to be sold on to brood mare owners. He has successfully approached Thoroughbred Studs in VIC, NSW, QLD & WA.

RDA Australia is also delighted to be chosen as the Official Charity of EQUITANA Melbourne 2010 which will be held at the Melbourne Showgrounds from 18 to 21 November where all types of equestrian activities will be on display. Readers can visit RDAA at EQUITANA Melbourne. RDAA will be located in the Ranvet Horse Health Pavilion, Booth #204.

RDAA will use this opportunity to launch its new unrestricted funding initiative RDAA Fundraising Vouchers Booklet. Over 56,000 visitors are expected over an exciting 4 days of all things horse-related, a great opportunity to raise awareness and funds for RDA.

Plans are also being shaped for the 2015 World Congress in Therapeutic Riding. Every three years FRDI (International Federation for Riding for the Disabled) holds a Conference on Therapeutic Riding which features the latest research and development results.

This conference is a unique opportunity to bring the world together to spearhead and promote equine-assisted activities.

At the 2009 FRDI International Congress for Therapeutic Riding in Munster, Germany, RDAA successfully presented an Expression of Interest for Australia to host the 2015 FRDI International Congress of Therapeutic Riding.

Bringing this event to Australia would not only help raise the profile of RDA's work nationally and internationally, but also help RDA lobby government departments for funding to help research and develop equine-assisted therapy in Australia to benefit our members.

RDAA now needs to find interested sponsors and partners to help us bring this great event to Australia.

### **Adopting Existing and Emerging Technologies**

RDAA is a national office that covers the whole of Australia with minimal staff and resources. This has led the RDAA board to identify and adopt where possible information technologies to enable maximum delivery with minimal resources through virtual administration & communication techniques. On that basis RDAA now utilises internet, email and telephone technology through:

- RDAA National Website - 2,500+ visits per month [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au)
- Coaches Portal - 200+ coaches' registered who can access information 24/7
- Teleconferencing - monthly RDAA Board Meetings
- RDAA has just registered its own dedicated 'You Tube' website. RDAA's You Tube video has been viewed by over 7,760 people.
- RDAA Facebook RDAA now has its very own [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/rdaa) page with 90+ visits per week
- RDA Grey Nomads dedicated website called the 'Silver Brumbies' [www.silverbrumbies.com.au](http://www.silverbrumbies.com.au)

## **COACHING REPORT**

### **Program Delivery**

The core business of RDA has always centred on providing high quality equestrian services to people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities.

Training, assessment and ongoing support of coaches, carriage driving whips and hippotherapists remains a high priority of RDA



Despite severe budget restrictions & cutbacks in 2009-2010; dedicated voluntary personnel helped RDAA staff its national Coaching Department. Duties such as recording coach accreditations, answering coaching queries, delivering training and working with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) on the coaching syllabus review was managed largely by a team of dedicated, long-term RDA supporters. Many thanks go to RDAA Life Members Norma Pearce, Mary Longden and Pauline Perry who stepped into vacant RDA office roles this year. Despite these cuts and with volunteers' wonderful support the RDAA Coaching Department still managed to achieve some great outcomes:

### **Coach Training**

The 2009-2010 National Coach Development Program provided by RDA Australia was hosted by various RDA State Associations:

- PETstock Young Coach Development Program, 12 - 15 Nov 2009, Bunyip VIC
- RDAA National Coach Assessor Workshop, 20 - 21 Nov 2009, Flemington VIC
- RDAA National Carriage Driving Workshop, 26 - 28 Mar 2010, Bendigo VIC
- Combined OTC/Level 1 Intensive Coaching Workshop, 29 Jun - 1 Jul, 2010, WA
- Combined OTC/Level 1 Theory Workshop, 19 June, 2010, Rockhampton, QLD
- RDAA National Coaching Workshop, 2 - 7 July 2010, Geelong, VIC

- Combined OTC/Level 1 Intensive Coaching Workshop, 25 - 26 Jul, 2010, QLD
- Carriage Driving Development Workshop, 14 - 15 Aug, 2010, Bendigo, VIC
- Level 2 Coach Development Workshop, 27 - 31 Aug, 2010, Adelaide, SA

These courses could not have been made possible without the generous support of RDAA funding providers:

- Australian Sports Commission (ASC)
- Ian Potter Foundation
- PETstock Foundation
- ANZ Trustees Foundation - Dyson Bequest
- Trust Company Ltd - Fred P Archer Trust

### 2010 NATIONAL COACHING WORKSHOP

2010 National Coaching Workshop was held from 2 to 5 July at Marcus Oldham College Geelong

with 87 attendees. This workshop is only held every 2 years providing a



valuable opportunity for coaches from all States to come together and learn about new policies & procedures, up-to-date information from quality presenters, to network and share information.

Sponsorship of these events is invaluable for keeping costs low as the majority of participants are voluntary coaches who fund the workshop fees and travel costs from their own pockets. ASC and Ian Potter Foundation provided financial support in 2010.

Workshop courses covered several key components of the new Coach Education Training Syllabus. A



Presentation Skills Course delivered by the Australian Sports Commission for Coach Educators, Mentors

and, for 'Train-the-Trainers' together with

various presenters throughout the workshop including:

- Demonstration of the new Coaches Portal
- Introduction of Special Olympics as a new program for RDA centres/riders
- Training RDA horses using Equine Behavioural Sciences

Mary Longden and Sally Francis delivered the highlight presentation which included the practical demo with



RDA riders and able-bodied riders to demonstrate teaching Beginner riders through to Advanced riders how to work over poles and small

jumps. They also assessed workshop candidates for their qualifications.

All participants dressed up for the Saturday night "Black Tie & Gumboots Dinner". We had the Gumboot Marx Bros, many more glamorously decorated outfits and gumboots - there was even a little "gumboot" handbag!



The after dinner speaker was Dr Andrew Mclean from the *Australian Equine Behaviour Centre*; the most recognised horse training and behaviour modification centre in Australia. Andrew talked about his methods for training horses to respond to rider aids and how to desensitize nervous horses to unfamiliar stimuli.

### Development of Coaching Materials

RDAA worked with specialists and writers to progress the completion and distribution of specialised coaching education resources, moving progressively to an online model to reduce costs, improve access and enable

more effective delivery of training and resources.

- RDA Coaching Syllabi for OTC, Level 1 and Carriage Driving is due in 2010 for review by the ASC (reviewed every 4 years).
- Discipline Committees for Riding, Carriage Driving and Vaulting undertook the mammoth task of upgrading and producing new workbook materials for ASC 4 year review.
- Submissions have been made to the ASC to have the new qualifications of OTC Whip and Level 1 Vaulting Coach accepted / recognised by the ASC later this year.
- Level 1 Coaching Resource Manual has been completed and released to trainees.
- New Volunteer Training Package was released in 2009 to standardise volunteer training around the country.

RDAA has also utilised telephone and internet technology to provide cost effective and responsive services to meet the needs of our coaches in the field through a new dedicated Coaches Portal /Wiki.

### Coaches Portal

A new secure online coaches' portal was developed for the RDAA national website with a generous grant from The Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund Capacity Building Grant 'Celebrating our Partners Project'.



The Coaches Portal was launched on 8 March 2010 to enable coaches to access information and to improve communication between RDA coaches and centres across Australia.

RDA Discipline Committees helped RDAA to collate all the new content required for the website.

Readers can view a short demo which explains just how coaches' can access and use the new coaches' portal at:

<http://www.rda.org.au/videodemo.aspx>



RDA Coaches must first sign up and then log on to access the secure online coaches' portal. Coaches can update their details online at any time (only RDAA can update Coaches' qualifications) to access coaching information 24/7. There is a Q&A and FAQ's section, coaches can upload and download lesson plans, photos, DVDs and podcasts, share photos, videos, ideas and network.

To date, over 200 Coaches have signed up to the new Coaches' Portal/Wiki.

### Coach Management Administration Support

RDAA will continue to support Coaching management, administration and programs through a dedicated person. Karen Aspery was appointed on a temporary part-time contract in April 2010 as Acting National Coaching Co-ordinator whilst longer term funding is being secured.

Karen currently splits her time between RDASA State Coaching/Volunteer Coordinator and RDAA as National Coaching Coordinator. She is a Level 2 RDA Coach, National Assessor and a member of the National Coaching and Safety (NCAS) Riding Discipline Committees. She was involved in planning the delivery of the equestrian demonstration sport for the Special Olympics National Games held in Adelaide, April 2010.

Karen worked with Pauline Perry (Chair of Program Delivery) on the ASC review of the RDA Training Syllabi for OTC, Level 1 Coach and Carriage Driving.

Karen and Pauline organised the RDAA National Coaching Workshop in July 2010 at the Marcus Oldham College in Victoria and will be organising the RDA Discipline Meetings to coincide with the Volunteer Awards Dinner and RDAA AGM in Melbourne in Nov 2010.

### Dressage Competitions

The National Dressage Competition is always an important part of the RDAA calendar. However, it can be expensive to compete when travel and accommodation costs are taken into account. Such costs can also restrict the number of contestants who may wish to participate.



In response to the current financial climate and in the interests of making the competition as accessible as possible, RDAA conducted the 2009 National Dressage Championships through the submission of videos by contestants. No travel or accommodation was required. RDA riders were able to compete at their local RDA centre.

The RDAA Dressage Committee ran both the Asia Pacific Dressage Championships and the National Dressage Video Championships in this new and accessible format for the first time in 2009. It was so successful that the 2010 National Dressage Championships will be run in the same format.

*"It's a wonderful idea because there are so many riders out there who want to compete but can't travel so this is going to open it up to a lot more riders."* Averil Troon, Alice Springs

*"It's quite a new thing where you can compete by making a DVD and you just send it off to the judges."* Karyn Clark, NT RDA Competitor

RDA riders were able to enter two National and one International competition in 2009:

- RDAA Asia/Pacific Video Competition Sept 2009
- RDAA National Video Dressage Competition Oct 2009

- 2010 Special Olympics National Games - as a demonstration sport hosted by RDA SA in Adelaide in April 2010.

### PETstock/RDAA Young Coach Development Program



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

Experienced OTC's were able to utilise the Young Coaches' Program to fast-track themselves towards RDAA's Level 1 Coaching Certificate.

*"The experience was 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'd 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 have made in the past few days into the future."*

(Calli Golab, SA)

Of those who were able to fast-track to Level 1 2 young coaches immediately started working on their Level 2 coaching accreditation:

- **3** young coaches completed their OTC
- **10** young coaches completed their L1

The RDA Young Coaches would like to thank the PETstock Foundation for its generous support and sponsorship of this new and exciting pilot program!



The PETstock Foundation also extended an open invitation to all RDA Centres to link in with their local PETstock Stores.

Young Coach, Nina Delzoppo from the McIntyre RDA Centre visited Indooroopilly PETstock Store in Brisbane to meet with Manager Glen Hutchinson and his wife Rosanna to thank PETstock 'in person' for sponsoring her to attend the Young Coach Development Program.



PETstock staff were delighted to receive a visit from RDA and are now making plans to work together to raise awareness & funds for RDA.

### Future Developments for the RDAA National Coaching Department

Following the success of the 2009-2010 RDAA National Coach Development Program it is hoped to continue delivering coach training aimed at developing coaches undertaking their RDA qualification subject to funding and sponsorship. RDAA would like to be in a position to offer the following National Coach Development courses:

- Young RDA Coaches (under 25 years) (\*PETstock have agreed to fund this again)
- Another Combined RDA OTC/L 1 Course
- RDA Coach Educator/Assessor Course
- Vaulting Coach Course - introducing the new RDA syllabus

Other items on the agenda include:

- Re-establishing the Coach Development Fund to support Mentor visits to States
- Creating a new Coaching Policy and Procedure Manual
- Publishing the new Coach Education Manuals for Riding, Carriage Driving and Vaulting
- Publishing supporting forms for the Coach Education system

- Establish a Recognition Process for other Equestrian Qualifications (APL)
- Update and release a new Volunteer Information Booklet
- Update the Draft Dressage Rulebook 2008
- Reinstate live National Competitions
- Develop Partnerships with Special Olympics Australia

RDAA will require ongoing financial support and funding in order to meet these clearly articulated needs by RDA coaches/volunteers.

### RDAA Coaching Events

#### 2009

- National Young Coach Development Program
- Discipline Committee meetings
- National Coach Assessors' workshop

#### 2010

- Carriage Driving Workshop
- National Coaching Workshop
- 3 Combined OTC/Level 1 Intensive Coaching Workshops, WA and QLD
- RDAA National Coaching Workshop, VIC
- Carriage Driving Dev Workshop VIC
- Level 2 Coach Development Workshop, SA

### RDA State Round-Up

#### RDASA

Special Olympics Australia IX 2010 National Games, the sporting competition for athletes with an intellectual disability took place in Adelaide, South Australia 19 - 24 April 2010. RDA SA hosted the demonstration sport for the Special Olympics Australia IX 2010 National Games. RDA had 26 athletes from QLD, WA, NSW, VIC and SA competing in four equestrian events:



- English Equitation
- Prix Caprilli
- Texas Barre
- Working Trails

Equestrian events took place over 3 days and athletes participated 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](http://www.specialolympics.com.au).

*“Andrew achieved 3 gold medals and 1 silver medal for his rides. I would like to thank the Special Olympics Australia for allowing RDA Equestrian athletes to be part of the Opening and Closing ceremonies and also being involved with this year's incredible event.”* Ray Tanner



RDAA Chairman Ross Goulden congratulates Rebecca Alison and Kate McDonald (QLD)

The RDA SA State Dressage Championships were held on 19 September 2010 at Mallala Equestrian Centre, in South Australia.

#### RDA WA

The RDA WA State Vaulting Championships were held on 28- 29 Nov 2009 at the beautiful Brookleigh Estate in the Swan Valley, WA.



**Daniel with pas de deux partner Abbey**

RDA WA vaulters participated in the making of the RDAA vaulting DVD 'Coaching Vaulting in RDAA Centres', now available on the RDAA Coaches Portal. The RDA WA State Vaulting Championships will be held once again at the Brookleigh Estate WA on 27-28 Nov 2010.

#### RDA VIC



42 people attended 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 wonderful property...



#### RDAQ

RDAQ ran 2 separate Combined OTC/Level 1 Coach Training Workshops in Rockhampton & Burpengary (in different parts of Queensland)

to ensure the opportunity for those who were unable to travel far could attend a closer workshop venue.

A total of 20 RDA coaches / volunteers participated in the workshops. The low costs of the workshop registration thanks to the generous grant from the Ian Potter Foundation and the ability to fund accommodation & travel allowed participants to attend who would not normally have the financial reach to do so.



The RDA Centres in Queensland feel like they have been given a huge vote of support by the State and National Offices, and their energies have been revived for the coming years.

*“Fantastic to see such an effort being put into coach training and assessment; as well as real investment in our wonderful volunteers!”*

Jane Sayer (Manager RDA Cartmill Centre)

#### RDA NT

On 30 Sept 2009, Alice Springs RDA Centre NT, along with RDA Centres in QLD and VIC, participated in the **World's Biggest Riding Lesson** with disabled and able-bodied riders around the globe - by completing a simple lesson routine devised by the **RDA UK** as part of its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations.

It was a fun filled action packed day that saw riders participate in a global lesson which also helped raise funds and build awareness of RDA



*“As this was part of a worldwide event we as a small centre in the Centre of Australia were thrilled to be part of this great event and bring some recognition to the general public, of the great achievements all centres around the world are providing for disadvantaged and disabled children and adults.”*

Karen Eva-Stirk Level 1 Coach  
RDA Alice Springs Inc

## Para- Equestrian News

On 1 Jan 2009 Equestrian Australia assumed responsibility for managing the Para-Equestrian High Performance program. Information and news is now available [www.equestrian.org.au](http://www.equestrian.org.au)



### Para-Equestrian CPEDI3\* International Competition, Werribee, VIC., 10-13 Dec 2009

Australia won the international Para-Equestrian Teams Competition at the Saddleworld Dressage Festival, Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre; 1<sup>st</sup> International Para-Equestrian event to be held in Australia.



The Australian team consisted of Sharon Jarvis (WA) and Nicole Kullen (NSW), who both competed for Australia at the Beijing Paralympics in 2008 and team newcomers Kate Dougherty (VIC) and Fleur Litster (WA).

RDA continues to provide a valuable pathway for many aspiring Para-Equestrians and keeps up to date with EA Para-Equestrian Team who will be competing at the World Equestrian Games (WEG) being held from 25 Sept to 10 Oct 2010 with Para-Equestrian events taking place Oct 5-10. This year is the first time in the history of equestrian sport that Para-Dressage will be included in the WEG's.



## Research

### International Research Study

RDA members were invited to participate in an International Research Study into the 'Effects of Therapeutic Riding' 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.

### National Research Study

RDA Centres participated in a national research study to investigate the presence of resistant worms in Australia, and the efficacy of a number of newly formulated drenches for horses. Participation was *voluntary* and *cost-free* to RDA Centres who participated in this important national research study.

## FRDI News



RDA is delighted to announce the election of Pauline Perry (President of Tasmania RDA) as the new International President of FRDI (Federation of Riding for the Disabled International). Pauline is a valued member of RDA Australia and was awarded an honorary Life Membership of RDA in 2008. She will serve as FRDI President from 2009-2012. We wish Pauline every success in her latest appointment.



Pauline Perry and Norma Pierce at 2009 Congress

Norma Pierce stepped down after serving 12 years as Executive Director of FRDI. Norma was a founder member of FRDI and served for 6 years on the Executive Board. Norma joined the RDA national Board mid-2009.

RDA Australia members attended the FRDI XIII



International Congress of Therapeutic Riding in Muenster 12-15 Aug 2009 *Horses for Body, Mind & Soul.*

RDA members attending FRDI Congress L to R Pauline Perry, Denis Keates, Norma Pierce, Julie Nicholson, Fiona Little, Mary Longden



Julie Nicholson, RDA WA State Coaching Development Officer, was awarded an RDA Travel Conference Bursary to enable her to attend the FRDI XIII International

Congress of Therapeutic Riding in Muenster, Germany. Julie provided RDAA with a comprehensive report of her experiences at the Congress.

RDAA also presented a successful EOI at this Congress to host the 2015 FRDI International Congress of Therapeutic Riding in Australia.

This Internationally renowned and accredited Congress occurs every three years - Germany in 2009 and Athens in 2012. This event brings together 41 countries to showcase what's happening in equine therapeutic intervention.

Currently there is little research being carried out in Australia on the benefits of animal-assisted therapy. RDAA's bid to host this conference would not only help raise the profile of RDA's work nationally and internationally, but also help RDA to lobby government departments, potential donors and sponsors for funding and assistance to help research, develop and roll out equine assisted therapy across Australia to benefit all of our members.

The FRDI Congress has never been held in Australia. Hosting such an event will enable many RDA riders, volunteers, parents and supporters to attend this prestigious Congress for the first and maybe only time in their lives; to meet and share ideas with RDA supporters from all over the world. Hosting such a prestigious and international event would benefit RDA in the following ways:

- Raise the national profile
  - Increase awareness of RDA
  - Foster growth of Equine Assisted Therapy
  - Foster international relationships
  - Provide information, training & exchange of knowledge of professionals - RDA personnel, therapists, equestrian coaches and the medical profession
  - Link RDA to research institutes, universities and hospitals
  - Develop professional links with national and international organisations
- Inform and educate the public, charities and professionals about our work
  - Showcase RDA
  - Increase our volunteer base and volunteers skills base
  - Attract professional interest to local RDA Centres

Bringing this event to Australia will not only help raise the profile of RDA's work nationally and internationally but would also help RDA Australia to lobby government departments for funding to help research and develop equine-assisted therapy in Australia to benefit our members.

### Volunteers

Volunteers are the life-blood of all nonprofit organisations. Without them, many nonprofit organisations could not function. RDA is no exception.



Without our dedicated volunteers / coaches we would not be able to put smiles on our riders' faces.

### RDAA National Volunteers Awards

Each year RDAA holds its national volunteer recognition and awards night to honour those volunteers. The annual National Volunteer Awards Dinner was held in Mooney Ponds Melbourne on 21 Nov 2009.



RDAA was particularly delighted to have the PETstock Foundation support the Young Volunteer Awards section of this prestigious annual event.

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



The 2009 Young Volunteer Runner-Up was Rachel Morris from Currumbin Valley RDA, QLD. Effie Aretos Manager of

Mooney Ponds PETstock Store presented a Horse Pamper Pack to Rachel.

### Special Tributes

RDAA would like to pay tribute to 3 people in this year's report.

#### Barbara Heine OAM

RDAA mourned the loss of a very special friend and supporter of RDA in 2010.



Barb's enthusiasm and professional skill in the development of an innovative therapeutic riding program 'Hippotherapy' nationally, was hugely valued and very much appreciated by RDA members in every State.

Barb's unique contribution, enthusiasm and generous spirit will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

#### Joan & Bob Lemmon

Joan & Bob are 'Grey Nomads' who have sold up their home and are travelling around Australia volunteering at RDA Centres along the way.

Joan is a RDA Level 2 Coach and Assessor. Her husband Bob quickly came to be known as 'Bob the Builder'. RDAA decided to harness



this amazing team's skills, dedication and experience, recruit them as national ambassadors renamed the Silver Brumbies with their own dedicated website see:

[www.silverbrumbies.com.au](http://www.silverbrumbies.com.au).

So far, Joan & Bob have visited McKay, Hervey Bay and Sunshine Coast RDA Centres. Last year, they visited the Cartmill Centre at Burpengary, Pender Centre in Redcliffe, Currumbin Valley and Maryborough RDA Centres. You can contact Joan and Bob on [rojoa@bigpond.com](mailto:rojoa@bigpond.com) to check if they are going to be in your area if your Centre needs help.

### FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Fundraising was particularly challenging in the current financial climate and RDAA is very grateful for all ongoing support in particular from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC).



RDAA Australia recognises and appreciates the fantastic contribution in sponsorship and in advice made by the Australian Sports Commission to RDA and look forward to the continuation of that special relationship.

#### Adopting Existing and Emerging Technologies

RDAA is a national office that covers the whole of Australia with minimal staff and resources. This encouraged the RDAA Board in conjunction with the RDAA Fundraising & Awareness Manger to identify and adopt where possible, information technologies to enable maximum delivery with minimal resources, though virtual administration and communication techniques. On that basis RDAA now utilises internet, email and telephone technology through:

- RDAA National Website [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au)
- Coaches Portal [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au)
- Teleconferencing - RDAA Board Meetings
- RDAA dedicated 'You Tube' website.
- RDAA dedicated Facebook
- RDA Grey Nomads dedicated website [www.silverbrumbies.com.au](http://www.silverbrumbies.com.au)

## National Website

A new national website was launched on the September 2008 with the aid of a gift from the Cassandra Gantner Foundation. This website and its detailed content incorporated RDAA's new logo and branding and has generated a great deal of interest from the public, funders and potential sponsors propelling the organisation worldwide high on Google search engines, receiving 2,500+ visits per month. You can visit the RDAA national website at [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au).

## Myer Foundation Grant

In 2009, RDA Australia was excited to be chosen as one of 37 charities across Australia to receive \$100,000 each from the Myer Family Philanthropy as part of its celebrations of 75 years of the Sidney Myer Fund and 50 years of The Myer Foundation - to help alleviate poverty and disadvantage and strengthen the nonprofit sector in Australia. This grant recognised the invaluable work of Riding for the Disabled Association and imposed few constraints on how the funds were to be used.



A new secure online coaches' portal/wiki was developed for the RDAA national website as part of this generous grant from The Myer Foundation and The Sidney Myer Fund Capacity Building Grant 'Celebrating our Partners Project'; which was launched on 8 Mar 2010. Over 200 RDA coaches now utilise the Coaches Portal/Wiki.



## Ian Potter Foundation

RDA Australia was delighted to be awarded a grant of \$100,000 from The Ian Potter Foundation towards its new National Coach Development Program.



## Trust Company

RDA Australia was delighted to be awarded a grant of \$30,000 from The Trust Company - The Fred P

Archer Charitable Trust towards its new National Coach Development Program.

## ANZ Trustees



RDA Australia was delighted to be awarded a grant \$25,000 from ANZ Trustees - The Dyson Bequest towards its new National Coach Development Program.

These grants provided huge benefits to all RDA Australia's members by helping to:

- Address the chronic shortage of trained, accredited RDA coaches.
- Increase the number of clients able to participate in RDA programs.
- Improve children's outcomes through early intervention programs.
- Reduce client waiting lists.

## PETstock Foundation



In 2009 RDAA was delighted to announce a new initiative - investing in its young volunteers to help replenish an ageing volunteer population.

The PETstock Foundation generously agreed to sponsor a dedicated 'Young Coach Development Program'.

This program was aimed at young aspiring RDA Coaches aged 17-25 years who wish to develop a more in-depth knowledge and understanding of RDA and what it means to be an RDA Coach.

Participation on this program also helped to fast track young coaches towards the next level of RDA accreditation.

As a result of this generous sponsorship 13 young RDA coaches/volunteers were trained and accredited at a 4 day Intensive Workshop run by Mary Longden International Judge, RDAA national coach consultant.

After a successful grant acquittal, the PETstock Foundation agreed to sponsor a 2<sup>nd</sup> Young Coach Development Course in 2010-11.

## Other Exciting Initiatives

### Silver Brumbies



RDA also launched a dedicated Grey Nomad Volunteer Program and website called 'The Silver Brumbies' to coincide with Volunteer Australia's National Volunteers Week 10 - 16 May 2010. A website was developed with part of a grant from The Myer Foundation and The Sidney Myer Fund.



The RDA Silver Brumbies are two very special grey nomads Joan & Bob Lemmon, who are travelling around Australia

calling in at RDA Centres to:

- Volunteer their time, skills and expertise to local RDA Centres
- Help raise awareness and funds for the work of RDA
- Carry out general maintenance and administrative tasks
- Support RDA coaches and volunteers

*"We love what we do and are passionate about RDA and the benefits they bring to families across Australia."* Joan & Bob

As the Silver Brumbies criss-cross Australia they chat to people they meet at caravan parks, lunch stops and camp fires enroute. The Silver Brumbies logo on their vehicles is a great conversation starter.

Another great 'spin off' has been the way RDA centres perceive that they are being supported in a practical way by the parent body RDAA when Joan & Bob visit them.

*"We answered a plea from Mackay to help them re-establish their centre after a 4 year break. When we left they were 'up & running' with 2 Level 1 coaches, 3 horses and 2 riders; with the aim of starting next year with 9 riders and over 20 trained volunteers."* Joan & Bob

### RDA Fundraising Vouchers



RDAA has launched a new awareness and fundraising initiative Fundraising Vouchers.

Fundraising Vouchers Australia (FVA) works in conjunction with Australia's Top Companies (e.g. Coles, Unilever, Street's, Nestle, Sanitarium, Pacific Magazines) in supporting nonprofit organisations with funding and awareness from the community.

The RDA Book of Vouchers will entitle the buyer to a variety of Australia's favourite products at their local Coles Express shop by simply presenting the Voucher and in return will receive a product of their choice (within the voucher book).

The aim is to raise awareness and funds for the great work of RDA. The general public will save money at the same time as supporting a great charity! Look out for the great new RDA Vouchers book...

### RDAA SUPPORTERS

RDA is truly grateful for the support it receives at all levels of the organisation, from individuals to organisations.

#### INDIVIDUALS

##### John Wright-Smith

A long time supporter of RDA, John has written and published a book of poetry called 'English is a Funny Language'. To date, proceeds from this book have raised \$986. All monies raised go towards the work of RDA.

#### ORGANISATIONS

##### COMPANIES

##### Woolworths



Woolworths Limited Group national office nominated RDA as its 'Charity of the Month' in November 2009. National office staff raised \$9,590 in conjunction with caterers Café Maurice and Caterez Enterprises. A big thank you to Woolworths head quarters staff!

## RDA 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY



In 2009, Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia (RDAA) proudly celebrated 30 years of delivering opportunities for therapy, achievement and enjoyment to children and adults with disabilities.

Founded as a national organisation in 1979, RDA now has 120 Centres across 8 States & Territories.



Every week, over 3,000 volunteers at RDA Centres across Australia donate their time to assist over 4,000 children & adults receive the benefits of horse related activities, including:

- Recreational & Therapeutic Riding
- Hippotherapy
- Dressage
- Vaulting
- Carriage Driving
- Games

As well as providing important pathways to able-bodied and Para-equestrian competition.

RDA is heavily reliant on voluntary donations (time and money) to deliver its services. We need this help more than ever.

To find out more about what RDA does or to get involved at your State or local level, please browse our national website [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au) from here you can access each State Office and drill down to your local RDA Centre.

## Conclusion

Despite the continuing challenges faced over the last 12 months, the Board of RDAA has worked hard to develop a more cohesive and focused organisation to give the Association the opportunity to grasp and develop the opportunities that are being presented to us. The Board recognizes the efforts of all our staff and volunteers throughout Australia and looks forward to working with them to enrich the lives of our wonderful riders and drivers.

I would like to offer a special acknowledgment to Rosemary Mc Donald, who is leaving RDAA after two and half years as National Fundraising & Awareness Manager.

Rosemary has developed an outstanding website and monthly newsletter Spotlight as promotional tools for RDAA; added a new dimension to annual reports; secured major grants from Foundations and Trusts which have enabled the launch of the National Coach Development Program; successfully developed a 'live' Coaches portal & dedicated volunteer website "The Silver Brumbies"; and instigated numerous other programs which have benefitted RDA greatly. Rosemary is now seeking out pastures new. On behalf of all at RDA, I wish her the best for the future.

Ross Goulden  
RDAA Chairman

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## RDAA Highlights (2009-2010)

### 2009

- National Coaching Department Restructuring
- Dedicated coaching website developed
- RDAA National Website has 2,500+ visits per month [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au)
- RDAA first National Dressage Video Competition run
- RDAA launches bid to host 2015 FRDI International Congress of Therapeutic Riding in Australia
- RDAA celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### 2010

- RDAA successful in its bid to host FRDI International Congress of Therapeutic Riding in Australia in Australia in 2015
- RDA Australia launches new Coaches Portal/Wiki on 8 March 195+ registered coaches' can access information 24/7
- RDAA launches new dedicated Grey Nomad - Silver Brumbies website
- National Office re-locates from Werribee, VIC to share premises with RDA SA
- National Coaching Workshop takes place at Marcus Oldham College, Geelong, VIC - 87 people attend Coaching Clinic
- RDAA registers its own dedicated 'YouTube' website. RDAA's YouTube video has been viewed by over 7,775 people.
- RDAA launches own Facebook 90+ visits per week

Remember **RDA** also means

**Riding**



**Develops**



**Ability**



**And its great fun too!!!**

## **Thank you to our 2009-2010 Supporters**

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### **Supporters**

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Griffith University

Victoria Racing Club

### **Memorial Acknowledgements**

Joy Campbell (Memory of Vin Cummins)

Von O'Brien (Memory of Vin Cummins)

For more information on RDA and how you can help please visit our website at: [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au).