



NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

DECEMBER 2011

A Publication from RDA Australia Ltd

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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As 2011 comes to a close and I finish my term as Chairman of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of those who believe strongly in the need for a National body as part of our great Organisation. While it is possible to operate as separate States and individual Centres, the bringing together of representatives allows for discussion on common goals and the furthering of new developments.

The Board of the last 2 years has worked as a unit with the aim of stabilising the RDAA model and building value as a reputable part of the National Organisation. The State Presidents, Executive Officers and Coaching Coordinators have come together to develop unity amongst the governing and managing sectors. The Office staff at the new headquarters in South Australia have worked extremely hard to create a new system for accountability, financial management and record keeping.

To all of you involved, congratulations and thank you. I appreciate your support.

My best wishes go to the incoming members of the Board and those continuing.

Merry Christmas and happy New Year to all.

Ross Goulden – RDAA Chairman 2009-2011

The 2012 RDAA Board has a good mix of in-depth RDA knowledge, as well as 'fresh eyes' that can question and provoke new thinking. The HO staff are a formidable team that will work in unison with the Board in striving for best practice in all things RDA.

There is a strong common thread amongst us all of the need to continue building the governance, brand and the full participation of everyone who cares for RDA and who work tirelessly for the best outcomes of everything we believe in and stand for.

At RDAA, we are committed to 2012 being a year of growth and recognition for the organisation.

Judith van Unen – RDAA Chair

EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

What a year! I'm sure everyone feels ready for holidays, sleep-ins, good food, catching up with friends and long, relaxing rides with their horse. That's my plan anyway!

It's been a year of tidying up the processes in the RDA office and getting to know you all. We've talked to lots of people on the phone this year and we hope you've noticed that we are more accessible and available to answer your questions.

We've travelled to Perth, Melbourne, Toowoomba, Alice Springs and Kuala Lumpur. Our Silver Brumbies, Joan and Bob, are currently touring country Western Australia and next year Theresa will visit our RDA partners in New Zealand while I head to Athens for the International Congress on Therapeutic Riding. We are frantic this last week trying to finalise dates for 2012 and get our RDA insurance organised.

Our highlight for the year was a "big tick" from the Australian Sports Commission. We moved our performance rating up from low to medium, received approval for all our new coach education syllabus and commendation on our Board Induction Packs (available on request to admin@rda.org.au).

With 5 exciting events on the calendar next year – National Coaching Workshop, National Carriage Driving Workshop, Equitana Melbourne, National Volunteer Awards and a proposed National Competition for October – we will reopen the office on 9 January 2012 full steam ahead!

Best wishes to everyone for a safe and happy holiday. Many thanks for all your continued support and dedication to RDA. See you all next year!

Karen Aspery - National Executive Officer

ASC CEO REPORT



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

The lead-up to an Olympic and Paralympic year is always hectic and often quickly forgotten when the big events roll around. It's worthwhile reflecting on what has been achieved.

Australian athletes and sports celebrated many triumphs, with the likes of Cadel Evans, Sally Pearson, James Magnussen and Sam Stosur producing stunning international performances.

While our athletes' successes are a great source of pride for Australians, it's a result of hard work, commitment and innovation. Our collective commitment to excellence is critical; in my short time in this role, I've been extremely encouraged by the support our athletes receive.

A significant moment for Australian sport came off the sporting field with the signing of the National Sport and Active Recreation Policy Framework by the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments.

For the first time, we will all be working to a shared vision by contributing to common objectives ranging from growing participation at the grassroots level to enhancing high performance sport.

The endorsement of the National Institute System Intergovernmental Agreement also provides a new national approach to improve coordination and better align Australia's high performance effort. Its aim is simple: deliver world class Australian athletes.

Here at the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) we've been actively involved in some exciting initiatives including: the Green and Gold project; the opening of the AIS European Training Centre; the Captains' Forum; and the recent launch of the Prime Minister's Olympic and Paralympic Challenges.

Although I'm relatively new to the CEO role, I am proud of this high level of achievement and excellence. 2012 shapes up as an exciting and challenging year for us all, especially for those with their sights set on London.

I would like to thank ASC staff and our sporting partners for your hard work and commitment over the past year and wish everyone a safe and happy festive season.

Simon Hollingsworth
CEO, Australian Sports Commission

PARALYMPIC EQUESTRIAN TEAM

ANNOUNCED

The Australian Para-Equestrian Team has earned their place at the 2012 Games following a successful weekend at the Regional Team Qualifier CPEDI 3* held at the National Equestrian Centre in Werribee, Victoria.

The qualifier was a two-team battle between Australian and New Zealand. Australia came out on top with a team score of 388.547 points to New Zealand's 373.752. Supported by the Australian Paralympic Committee, this event was the final Oceania Team Qualifier for the 2012 Paralympic Games.

The Australian Team consisted of Jan Pike (Winston Hills, NSW) on *Pinky*; Grace Bowman (Greenacres, SA) and *Kirby Park Irish Joy*; Hannah Dodd (Arcadia, NSW) riding *Waikiwi* and Sharon Jarvis (Donnybrook, WA) aboard *Showdown*.

NEWS FROM FRDI

No further news regarding the situation in Belgium regarding the lack of communication and finalizing of the name change. One of the executive has contacted a lawyer business acquaintance who is based in Geneva about the possibility of basing HETI in Switzerland. The members were reminded that there has already been a lot of consultation with respective parties in Geneva and the HETI Full Member contact in Switzerland contact is willing to assist.

Until the name change is formalised, we are hampered in the production of any promotional material. It was agreed that the delay in promoting HETI is losing opportunity.

It was reported that the transfer of arrangements to receive membership fees at the same time each year (on an annual basis) is progressing and it will take a couple of cycles to rationalize. Meanwhile, Gisela is making pro rata arrangements with members to get payments into sequence.

All full members have been sent ballot papers to vote on some amendments to the current constitution, which must be recorded on the ballot paper provided and returned (hard copy) via the Full Members' postal system. The RDAA Board is currently considering these proposed amendments.

NATIONAL MEETINGS

RDAA held its AGM and Strategic Planning Meetings on 3-4 December in Toowoomba, Qld. 19 people, including State and Territory delegates, National Board members and RDAA staff, attended both meetings. In addition, Amanda Beehag from the ASC attended the AGM and the following Board Meeting with the newly elected Board. Much positive feedback has been received about the meetings, with a united view to keep moving forward in 2012. Dates for the State Delegates Meeting and AGM and Strategy Meeting combined weekend are being discussed and will be finalised in early 2012.

AUTISM GRANT FUNDING FROM RDAA



We are very pleased to announce the following successful applicants for the First Round of funding from the RDAA Autism Grant.

RDA Victoria are holding a Coach and Volunteer Workshop about *'The benefits of horse riding from the Coach and Educator's perspective for children with Autism'*. RDAA was able to pay the baseline fee for these professionals through the Autism Grant. (Read more about the workshop on page 5.)

RDA Barossa and Light (SA) applied for the purchase of coloured and ladder reins to increase the confidence and understanding of rein use of their riders with Autism. The RDAA Autism Grant covered the entire cost of purchase for these reins and we are confident they will make a striking difference in the communication between these riders and their horses.

RDA Victor Harbor (SA) applied for assistance in purchasing a vaulting roller to begin a Vaulting program at their centre. With the majority of their riders on the Autism spectrum, RDA Victor Harbor successfully demonstrated that riders with Autism would benefit directly from assistance with this purchase. RDAA were able to put \$500 toward this purchase through the RDAA Autism Grant and we are looking forward to hearing more about the outcomes from RDA Victor Harbor's Vaulting program.

If you can think of a creative way to help riders with Autism, talk to your centre or State Office about applying for the RDAA Autism Grant today! The Second Round will open on 2 February and close 8 March, 2012.

Diary Dates

Dec 22	RDA National Office closes
Jan 9	RDA National Office reopens for 2012
Jan 10	RDA Qld & RDA SA Offices reopen
Jan 23	QLD Term 1 start
Jan 26	Australia Day Public Holiday
Jan 30	NT, SA Term 1 start
Feb 1	VIC, WA Term 1 start
Feb 3	ACT Term 1 start
Feb 14	TAS Term 1 start
Feb 15	RDAA Board Meeting
Feb 24	RDA VIC Coach and Volunteer Autism Workshop (Flemington)
Mar 21	RDAA Board Meeting
Mar 24	RDA SA Centres' Forum
Mar 30	QLD, VIC Term 1 end
April 1	RDA WA 40th Anniversary Garden Party
April 5	NT, SA, WA Term 1 end
April 6-9	Easter Long Weekend
Apr 10	QLD Term 2 start
April 13	ACT Term 1 end
April 13-14	RDA SA State Coaches Workshop
Apr 15	TAS Easter break end
April 15-21	National Volunteer Week
April 16	NT, VIC Term 2 start
April 18	RDAA Board Meeting
April 23	SA, WA Term 2 start
April 24-27	International Therapeutic Congress, Athens, Greece
April 25	ANZAC Day Public Holiday
April 28-29	RDA VIC State Games
April 28-30	National Carriage Driving Workshop (WA)
April 30	ACT Term 2 start
May 12-14	Special Olympics Invitational Games (SA)
May 15	RDA SA AGM
May 16	RDAA Board Meeting
May 17	NZ RDA 50 th Anniversary Dinner

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS, ATHENS



XIV
Congress of
Therapeutic Horse Riding

Athens, Greece / 24-27 April 2012

The International Therapeutic Congress for 2012 will be held in Athens, Greece. Pre congress workshops will be held on 24 April with the Congress being held 25-27 April. Early Bird registrations for the Congress have been extended until 31 December 2011, saving 60 € for full registrations.

Please visit www.frdi-athens2012.gr for all the information about the program, abstracts, costs, venues and much more!

2011 NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The 2011 National Volunteer Awards Dinner was held in Toowoomba, QLD on Saturday 3 December.

Angelo's was full of guests, including delegates attending the RDAA National Meetings and many volunteers from RDA Q centres.

Peter Rookas, CEO of the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation and White Ribbon Day Ambassador, was a very entertaining MC for the night and Claire Byrne moved everyone with her story about what she has been able to achieve with RDA.

Michael Field Memorial Award:



Cathy Bantick (TAS)
(Presented by RDAA Life Member
Norma Pearce)

Volunteer Encouragement Award:



Christine O'Neill (WA)
(Presented by NZ RDA Executive
Director Guy Ockenden)

Young Volunteer of the Year Award:



Magdelaine O'Moore (SA)
(Presented by RDA Q State President
Lyn Crichton on behalf of 2010 Young
Volunteer of the Year, Heidi Torrens)

Thank you to the RDA Q staff and everyone else involved in organising this wonderful event!

Nominations for the 2012 National Volunteer Awards open on 15 June. Contact your centre or State Office for more details.

COACHING REPORT

November was a busy month with the National Discipline's Committee Meeting held at the Quest Apartments in Flemington, Victoria. Just around the corner is the swanky new RDAV State Office adjacent to the Flemington Racecourse which we got to have a peek at. Very impressive!

There was a lot of passionate and enthusiastic discussion about new Policies and Procedures at the meetings and, by the end of the weekend, everyone was ready to unite and form a working partnership with RDA so that we can provide the most excellent service to our members and clients.

Some of the policies discussed were:

- the implementation of the Annual Coaches Registration in 2012;

- a Coach's Policies and Procedures Handbook (to be released at the National Coaches Workshop in Victoria in June next year);
- the release of the new Coaching Syllabus (available now and will be officially launched at the National Coaches Workshop);
- new application to Train forms which are available now to coincide with the new syllabus;
- return of the round design of the coaching badges with the new RDA logo; and
- a National Competition in 2012 which will include all of the RDA disciplines (more about this in the next newsletter).

RDAA is now very busy implementing everything before we close for Christmas. Next year is shaping up to be exciting and eventful and with all the States and Territories working together, there is no limit to what we can achieve!

We are also looking forward to a National Carriage Driving workshop to be held in Western Australia in April 2012. Keep an eye out for more details.

A NEW BOARD

A new Board was elected at the 2011 RDAA AGM, held in Toowoomba, QLD. Ross Goulden (Chairman) retired from the Board, along with Board Members Bill Ash, Stephen Hutchins and Peta Wellstead. Judith van Unen, John Stirk and Norma Pearce were nominated to continue on the Board. John and Norma have retained their positions as Treasurer and Secretary respectively, while former Vice Chair, Judith, has now been elected as Chair.

We welcome new members Carol Bradley, Rosemary Norman-Hill and Jeanne Stratford and thank them for their commitment to RDAA.



Above: RDAA Board and Staff enjoy Christmas lunch. Jeanne Stratford, Theresa Moore, John Stirk, Norma Pearce, Karen Aspery, Carol Bradley, Rosemary Norman-Hill, Judith van Unen and Sharon Nichols (Stacey Seal is behind the camera!)

RDA NEW ZEALAND



New Zealand Riding for the Disabled
Association Inc.

RDA was lucky enough to have Executive Director, Guy Ockenden, visit us in Toowoomba and attend our AGM and Strategy Planning Meeting. Guy gave a great presentation about RDA in New Zealand and how they operate. We are very excited about developing a relationship with New Zealand RDA and RDA staff Karen Aspery and Theresa Moore are planning to represent RDA at NZ RDA's 50th Anniversary celebratory Dinner in May 2012, which will be combined with their AGM and Presidents' weekend. They will also have the opportunity to visit some of the centres in New Zealand. Guy wrote this report about his weekend with RDA.

I was pleased to be able to accept the kind invitation of RDA to attend the AGM in Toowoomba in early December. For NZRDA, it represented a real opportunity to be able to establish ties with our counterparts, to learn about the work that you are doing and to develop a proposal of working more closely together in the future.

RDA has a big heart! Whether this is in NZ or Australia I have found that we are all very similar. I was struck by the openness of the Board, the National Team as well as the State counterparts. RDA are a great bunch of people who were all generous in their time with me, willing to share their ideas and work hard to ensure that all the riders get the best out of their time in RDA. We are without doubt a people driven organisation and Australia has some great people! I learned so much and I know that our people in NZ will benefit from this opportunity.

The weekend was really well organised moving seamlessly from meetings to the Awards Dinner, which was a real highlight for me. There is nothing more inspiring than seeing how RDA touches the lives of others.

I would like to thank Dr Peta Wellstead who suggested I visit as well as Ross Goulden who made this possible, as well as everyone who was involved in this weekend. Thank you, it was certainly some

of the best professional development that I have had for a long time.

NZ is:

56 RDA Centres; using

700 Horses with

2000 Riders who are assisted by

3000 Volunteers, who together produce over
1.5 million "rides" per year

Guy Ockenden

Executive Director

New Zealand Riding for the Disabled Association Inc.

STATE NEWS

RDA SA:

RDA SA has a special "Hero Fund", where monies raised at some RDA SA activities are held specifically to help centres buy horses. Hero was a delightful bay Welsh Mountain gelding and was beloved by all at RDA Jennibrook Farm. He became the "face" of RDA SA with rider Louise Howson. Sadly, Hero passed away in 1999 and was buried, with special council permission, at RDA Jennibrook Farm.

The "Hero Fund" honouring his life was set up in 2004, using proceeds from several RDA SA "Night at the Races" annual dinners and other fundraisers to provide a pool of funds for centres to share.

The "Hero Fund" has so far helped 10 of our 13 centres purchase good quality horses to work in RDA programs and six horses have been purchased through the "Hero Fund" in 2011 at a cost of \$10,500.

RDA VIC:

RDAV will be holding a workshop, 'Exploring Effective Means of Communicating with Riders with Autism', on 24 February 2012 from 9.30am to 4pm at Racing Victoria, 400 Epsom Road, Flemington.

The workshop will cover the Psycho-social benefits of therapeutic horse riding in an RDA program for children with Autism from the coach's perspective and the educator's perspective and will explore effective means of establishing two way communication with riders with Autism including signing, PECS, managing echolalia and challenging behaviours.

Presenting at the workshop will be Dr Rwth Stucky and Emma-Rose Parsons.

Please contact Edwina Narain, RDAV Coaching Coordinator, on edwina.narain@rdav.asn.au for more information, or to book (tickets are \$15 per person and includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea), before Friday 17 February 2012. Places are limited so book early!

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

Next issue: 16 February 2012

Mission Statement

RDA enables people with disabilities & volunteers throughout Australia to experience enjoyment, challenge and a sense of achievement through participation in equestrian activities, resulting in the development of life skills, improved quality of life and attainment of personal goals

We are dedicated to providing these services through an organisation which is relevant, innovative, effective and rewarding.

RDA SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission



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