



# NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

**FEBRUARY 2013**

A Publication from RDA Australia Ltd

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

## **CHAIR REPORT**

The national spotlight on sport in Australia is currently shining brightly - unfortunately for all the wrong reasons.

Accusations of cheating, drug taking and competition fixing abound. Sports team members previously thought of as heroes to thousands of fans are shown to have cheated. Coaches, advisors, administrators and support staff are seen to have feet of clay, some mired in a bog of lies and cover up.

I think we can all put our hands on our hearts and state in all honesty that no one in RDA has cheated, taken performance-enhancing drugs or fixed the results of competitions. Nonetheless, as a sporting organisation, we would be well advised to take note of the current situation and learn from it.

Essentially the issue is one of good governance. Included in governance of course is transparency, accountability, doing things properly according to the rules and making sure that the policies and procedures of the organisation are not only in place, but that everybody knows about them and follows them. This ensures that we are not only squeaky clean and do things properly but are seen to be so as well.

It's some years since the reorganisation of the RDA national board in 2009, and since then a fair amount of work has gone into developing the rules and regulations and getting the organisation once again onto a sound financial footing. But the matter doesn't end there and we need to recognise that this is all an ongoing effort. We need to keep our eye on the ball, and keep getting things right.

As you may know, we are in the process of looking again at those rules and regulations through setting up a working party to review the RDA constitution. We need to look at our documented records to see if they can be made clearer and more transparent. We

need to think before we act, consider if all our actions are proper, and hold ourselves fully accountable for all our decisions. We may have done it before, but that doesn't mean there's no room for improvement.

So this year, the focus at national level will be on good governance - improving the way we do things and making sure that we've got it right. Many corporate enterprises spend thousands of dollars on systems consultants telling them how to do things better - a complaint does it for free. So let's take criticism on board, actively encourage complaints, even thank people for complaining, then let's make sure we put right what was wrong and prevent it from happening again. If people never complained to us, the chances are we couldn't know what we were doing wrong or how to improve things. So we're not afraid of change, we're not afraid of being told that things could be done better, and we're not afraid of telling it like it is. And if we all do the same, the "spotlight" can shine brightly at all levels of RDA as we truly become a learning, well governed and effective sporting organisation, living up to our Mission and Vision.

### **OUR MISSION**

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

### **OUR VISION**

We are dedicated to providing these services through an organisation that is Relevant, Innovative, Effective and Rewarding. Operated by trained and caring people committed to our aims now and in the future, RDA is recognised as having active involvement within the equestrian and general communities.

*Carol Bradley  
Chair, RDA Australia Board*

## **COACHING REPORT**

I hope that all Coaches and Volunteers had a great break over Christmas and New Year and are coming back to RDA feeling refreshed and ready for another big year!

Coach Accreditation renewals have been sent out to coaches and we have already started to receive some back. The deadline to have them in by is the 31<sup>st</sup> March. This year coaches will receive a newly designed 2013 Coaching Card with all of their RDA Coaching Accreditations on it and a new RDA Coach Log Book to record all of their Coaching activity for the coming year. The RDA National Office is very excited about our new database which will enable us to keep better and more up-to-date records of its members.

One of the numerous projects RDA is working on is to update the Volunteer Handbook, which hopefully will be finished and distributed later this year.

The National Championships will be held again in November at Werribee Park, Victoria. Last year was very successful and I hope that coaches are able to work with their riders towards attending this year to make it even bigger and better! The disciplines available for entry will be decided at the National Disciplines Committee Meetings in April. Contact me with any expressions of interest for more information.

*Sharon Nichols  
National Coaching Coordinator*

## **NATURAL DISASTERS IN RDA**

RDA Australia sends condolences to any centres damaged by fire or flood, as wild weather wreaked havoc across the country earlier this year.

RDA Cartmill in Queensland was one of the more badly damaged centres, being flooded again this year after floods last year; fortunately, no people or horses were injured. They had the additional challenge of only just having cleaned up after their centre was damaged by vandals during the holidays, the worst part being their hoist was broken. Thanks to everyone who has helped out at the centre, cleaning up the mess and getting the centre ready for lessons as soon as possible.

RDA Bundaberg (Queensland) also suffered flood damage from the storms. Again, no people or horses were harmed. While we haven't heard as much about the progress of this centre, there was lots of damage in the whole town and we send out support to

everyone in Bundaberg as they face a long road to recovery.

Thanks to everyone who sent messages of support on the RDA [Facebook](#) page. It was great to have such a flow of information coming to hand and keeping everyone updated.

## **RDA ICON SADLEY PASSES**

Joan Frost joined RDA in 1990 and was a valuable volunteer, coach, mentor and assessor for RDA Carriage Driving for many years.

Joan's knowledge and experience helped many trainees in Western Australia to move forward in Carriage Driving.

She represented RDA WA on the National Carriage Driving Committee (NDCD) for many years.

Joan kept all in WA and the NDCD on their toes with her expertise and personal stories until her retirement in 2005.

Joan will be sadly missed by her RDA family and our thoughts are with all at this sad time.

*Cathy Bantick  
Chair, National Carriage Driving Committee*

## **CHRISTMAS DONATION TO RDA!**

As mentioned on our [Facebook](#) page in January, staff at  International Racehorse Transport decided that in lieu of buying cards and gifts for their clients for Christmas they wanted to donate the money they would otherwise spend to a worthy cause. IRT very generously donated \$10,000 to Riding for the Disabled Association in Australia.

Have a look at their [website](#) for more information and stories from Joann Formosa and Meg Wade.

<u>Diary Dates</u>	
<b>Feb 20</b>	<b>RDAA Board Meeting</b>
Feb 22	RDA V Autism Spectrum Workshop
Feb 24	RDA Qld AGM, Deception Bay
<b>Mar 20</b>	<b>RDAA Board Meeting</b>
Mar 31	Coach Registrations due to National Office
<b>Apr 5-6</b>	<b>Combined National Disciplines Meetings – Melbourne</b>
<b>Apr 6-7</b>	<b>National Delegates Strategy Meeting &amp; General Meeting – Melbourne</b>
<b>Apr 17</b>	<b>RDAA Board Meeting</b>
Apr 20	RDA Tas State Championships
May 13-19	National Volunteer Week

\*Please send us your AGM dates as they come to hand

## **STATE NEWS**

### **RDA NT:**

#### **From RDA in the Top End**

It has been an extremely tough start to the year with no monsoon and extreme heat and humidity. Schools have postponed starting until the weather improves. We are all mindful of putting the students, volunteers, coaches and horses under undue heat stress. We look forward to full commencement in the very near future.

On a more positive note, RDA in the Top End would like to thank the following companies;

- Variety NT for supplying hay to take us through to the dry season, with following deliveries of much needed round bales when there is no feed on the ground during the dry.
- Rotary Club of Darwin North for supplying vaccinations for all our horses against the Hendra Virus, plus micro chipping
- Bendigo Bank – Community Grant Program, 3 new saddles and volunteer shirts
- Skal Darwin – Association International Tourism and Travel Professionals, for the purchase of a much needed buggy which will assist pulling the feed trolley, shifting bales of hay, checking fences etc



We are looking forward to 2013 and being able to provide another successful and ever expanding program.

Our thoughts at this time are also with those who endured the dreadful fires and flooding and we wish you all the best, please take care.

### **RDA TAS:**

Tasmanian Riding for the Disabled Association are holding their State Championships at RDA St Helen's centre on the 20th April.

Two dressage tests and a Prix Caprilli test will be executed by each rider under judges Fiona Fehlberg and Judith Atkinson from the Dressage Association of Tasmania.

The State Team will also be chosen to represent Tasmania at the RDAA National Championships this year so that training and fundraising can commence.

Several riders have been attending specific dressage movement lessons over the holidays to have a better understanding of what dressage is about.

#### **From RDA Kingborough**

RDA Kingborough in Kingston, Tasmania (just south of Hobart) has been searching for a 14.3 – 15hh weight carrier for many years, but the right one could not be found or if we were successful in finding something suitable, it was out of our price range.

In 2010 we were successful with an application for the support levy grant with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), but could not find a weight carrier.

After applying for an extension, we did find a lovely, much needed bigger horse, but unfortunately still not that Clydie Cross or similar we were desperately looking for. So the search went on.

In 2011 we were successful in our application for the Staff Community Fund Grant with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA). Another heavy search, this time even wider including Victoria, and we thought we needed to apply for another extension to the grant when we received a phone call from someone in the north of the state selling a 4 year old dark bay draft horse called Goblin.

Goblin came on trial for 6 weeks and although still very green, he showed the right temperament for a potential RDA horse. Being such a young and green horse we decided that his further education was extremely important, as not only would he be a riding horse, we also have our eye on him as a vaulting horse. So arrangements were made to send him to Andrew McLean at the Australian Equine Behaviour Centre in Victoria. With the fantastic support and sponsorship from Tasmanian Horse Transport, he went to Andrew in January and will be away for 6 – 10 weeks.

So far he's being introduced to different surroundings and is already becoming more relaxed in these new environments. He's starting to get a rhythm and they are working towards getting him to stay on his rider's line. So far, so good. Stay tuned for another report on Goblin's progress in the next edition of Spotlight.



**LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD**

**MAY**

**May 13-19**

National Volunteer Week

**JUNE**

**June 14**

National Volunteer Award Nominations open

**JULY**

**July 29 – Aug 4**

RDA Awareness Week

**Jul 31**

Nominations for National Volunteer Awards due to State Offices

**AUGUST**

**Aug 31**

Nominations for National Volunteer Awards due to National Office

**OCTOBER**

**Oct 18**

National Volunteer Awards Dinner, SA

**Oct 19**

RDA Australia AGM, SA

**Oct 20**

National Delegates Strategic Planning Meeting, SA

**NOVEMEBR**

**Nov 13-15**

National Disciplines Championships, Werribee, VIC

**DECEMBER**

**Dec 20**

RDAA National Office close for Christmas Break

Please email [admin@rda.org.au](mailto:admin@rda.org.au) if you no longer wish to receive RDAA's bimonthly newsletter, **Spotlight**.

Next issue: 19 April 2013

## Mission Statement

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

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### **RDA SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS**



**Australian Government**

**Australian Sports Commission**



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