



# NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

OCTOBER 2012

A Publication from RDA Australia Ltd

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

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

A busy month of major RDA events was concluded on October 20 with the RDA Australia AGM. Other events included the hugely successful National Championships and the Annual National Volunteer Awards Dinner.

Special thank yous go out to the RDA staff, Theresa and Sharon whose extra efforts went "above and beyond" to ensure these events were delivered at a high standard. Pauline Perry was a driving force behind the National Championships and her guidance and direction were invaluable to the smooth running of the competition.

Many of the volunteers for the competition were RDA Victoria members and all commented on the camaraderie and chance to catch up with old friends after so many years. Coordination from RDA Victoria was invaluable and special thanks go out to Edwina Boase-Stratford, Lesley Hewitt and Catherine Shelley for organising and supplying pool horses; to Edwina for assisting with the rules and equipment for Trec and to Sally Francis for the rules and course design for showjumping.

The spirit of volunteering that was evidenced at the Championship was further celebrated at the Annual Volunteer Awards Dinner where three volunteers were recognised for their outstanding contributions in 2012. This was followed by our AGM the next day. I extend my thanks to outgoing Board Members Judith van Unen and Norma Pearce for their support and collaboration over the past two years and welcome new Board Member Andrew Boeyen, whom you will meet next year at our National Meetings.

*Karen Aspery  
National Executive Officer*

## HETI REPORT

It is with great honor and respect that I am writing this note. First, I would like to thank Mrs. Pauline Perry for all of her efforts on behalf of the organization and its membership. Her leadership and friendship are truly an inspiration to all of us. While at the International Congress in Athens and immediately following, I have received notes of congratulation, offers of support, and suggestions from many of the Past-Presidents of HETI as well as from many of you. I hope to carry on the work of helping to guide HETI into the future with the same level of commitment and belief in the ideas and efforts of those who have preceded me.

The HETI Executive Council has already met through "voice over internet" phones (VOIP) and we have designated several task forces to ensure that HETI continues to uphold its mission and strategic plan. Plans are already being made for the XV International Congress in Taiwan. A financial review of the budget will be on-going. An educational support program continues to be developed. And, we continue to review the membership program - what HETI can do to support all of its members, maintaining dues during this difficult economic time, and improving the communication between individual members.

HETI is truly a world-wide organization - its membership and its structure attest to that. We must remember this as we move forward as advocates for our equines, proponents of world-wide educational opportunities, and providers of service.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the next few years.

All the best,

*Ann O'Shallie  
President, HETI*

*\*Excerpt from HETI newsletter*

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARDS



A wonderful evening was held on Friday 19 October in Adelaide to celebrate our annual Volunteer Awards Dinner. The award winners were:

### Young Volunteer of the Year

Samantha Pearn (SA)



### Volunteer Encouragement

Cherie Freeman (SA)



### Michael Field Memorial Award

John Dent (QLD)

(Presented to RDA Q Lyn Crichton – pictured)



Special guests Amanda Beehag (Australian Sports Commission) and Belinda Jackson (New Zealand RDA) helped with trophy presentations as well as Life and Board Member Norma Pearce who presented the Michael Field Memorial Award and gave everyone some insight into Michael's contribution to RDA.

Presentations were made by RDA SA and RDA WA, both of whom are celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries this year. Jill Ribbons (State President of RDA SA) and Ron Baker (former President of RDA WA) gave a history of their respective states as well as an

overview of the celebrations that have taken place this year to commemorate their anniversaries.

Karen Aspery (RDAA EO) presented the resigning Board Members, Judith van Unen (Chair) and Norma Pearce (Secretary) with an engraved pen each as tokens of appreciation for their time spent on the RDAA Board. Another presentation was made to Pauline Perry for her work in RDA, in particular all her assistance in organising the recent National Championships.



Pauline Perry



Norma Pearce



Judith van Unen

We are also very grateful to HorseWyse Magazine who, this year, sponsored the Young Volunteer of the Year Award and donated prize packs to the winner and runner up.

Nomination for the 2013 National Volunteer Awards will open on June 14, 2013 and will be sent to State Offices. Start thinking about someone you would like to acknowledge for their service to RDA!

## CHANGE IN RDAA BOARD

State Delegates and the RDAA Board met together on Saturday 20 October starting with a General Meeting, followed by the AGM at 3.00pm. At the AGM, Chair, Judith van Unen, and Secretary, Norma Pearce, resigned from the RDA Australia Board after serving for three years. While we bid a fond farewell to Judith and Norma, we are pleased to welcome Andrew Boeyen to the Board. Carol Bradley is the new Chair of the Board and Catherine Evans has taken up the role of Secretary. John Stirk remains in the position of Treasurer. Continuing Board Members include Rosemary Norman-Hill and Jeanne Stratford. The new Board will have their first face to face meeting in Adelaide on Friday December 21, before celebrating Christmas lunch with the office staff.

## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The National Championships were held this year for the first time since 2008 at Werribee Equestrian Centre. There were 28 riders all together from Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and even New South Wales!



As well as dressage, other events included Prix Caprilli, Showjumping, and Trec. Vaulting was a demonstration activity this year. Categories ranged from Walk Led up to Canter Advanced, allowing for all ranges of riding abilities. There were also Classified dressage classes. Anne Skinner was one of the riders competing, saying that, **“The RDA national competition is very important to the future of Para Equestrian and I'm committed to doing everything I can to getting the two bodies working in the same direction.”**



Paralympic gold medal winner, Joann Formosa, attended the event and was an inspiration to other riders. Many queued to have their photo taken with Joann and her Gold Medal.

A fancy dress BBQ dinner was held on Thursday evening at Werribee Park. The State teams made a terrific effort with their costumes and NSW won the prize for best team costume with their Blues Brothers outfits.



A vaulting exhibition set to music by Sue Tuck and her vaulting group was lovely to watch during dessert. It was followed by a “Come-and-Try Vaulting” session on the vaulting barrel and there were many eager partakers, including Mary Longden, judge Jan Geary (who was dared by Mary!) and even RDA Australia Office Manager, Theresa Moore! Theresa also got to experience vaulting first hand on Digger, vaulting on and performing a kneel (but only at the walk!)



Mary Longden



Jan Geary

Congratulations to Tasmania who won 3 of the Team trophies for Dressage, Prix Caprilli and Trec. Western Australia received the Showjumping Team trophy and South Australia won the overall Team Trophy, which was based on points for 1st, 2nd and 3rd placings in all events.



RDA South Australia Team

Lauren French, Natalie Mellors, Dian Thalbourne, Andrew Tanner and Team Coach, Jill Shelton

We would like to thank all the volunteers who came and lent a hand throughout the week, as well as our sponsors Wintec, Jurox and HorseWyse. Wintec donated showbags for all volunteers and riders, saddle bags and rugs for prizes as well as a Saddle worth \$1000 for our raffle!



We were lucky enough to have great coverage of the event. RDA Victoria entrant, Nicole Blanks, wrote daily articles for Equestrian Life. Have a look on our [facebook](#) page or follow this [link](#) to the Equestrian Life website to see these articles as well as some of the great photos that were taken at the Championships. Professional photographer, Derek O'Leary, took some great photos throughout the competition which are on his website [www.derekolearyphotography.com.au](http://www.derekolearyphotography.com.au) as well as some in the Horse Deals gallery: [horsedeals.com.au](http://horsedeals.com.au)

Full results of the competition can be found on our website: [www.rda.org.au](http://www.rda.org.au)

Plans are underway for the 2013 National Championships. Dates and forms will be circulated to states as they become available but if you are interested in entering, contact your coach now to start practicing!

## HOPE CUP IN TAIWAN

RDA Victoria Coaching Coordinator, Edwina Boase-Stratford recently attended the Hope Cup in Taiwan with a squad of 4 riders. Since returning to Australian shores, Edwina has put together a brief report about the competition. We are now looking forward to the 2014 Hope Cup Competition.

I must say that the RDA Victorians performed magnificently. Not only did they perform as athletes but they performed as sports people - humble, gracious and friendly. New friends were made and ideas were exchanged. It was a truly fabulous experience that benefited all involved. Thanks to David Rak, Maddie Cooke and Liam Richardson for being fantastic ambassadors.

The riders rode well - none of them looked out of place, even though some of the other riders had been competing at 1,2 and 3 \* level. Their results reflected this.

It showed the benefit of the squad program for riders.

It showed the benefits of using educated horses and the importance of continuing the education of horses, even in centres.

It showed that if you teach any rider the basics correctly then you are setting them up for success. If you teach balance with the horse (to the best of their respective abilities), sympathetic aids, basic training scale principles, *even in a very short time frame*, then they are equipped to ride a very pleasant test that scores well. Thanks to the judges, Nick Rogers (FEI PE judge) and Waldo Yeh (FEI Level 2 judge), for their one on one feedback for the riders and team.

It gave me valuable insights into sports psychology and how to read riders to try and get the best performances from them.

It was, by far and away, the best experience of my RDA life and, I think I can safely say, of the rider's equestrian lives. It has made everyone a better person for the experience and showed what is possible.

It also showed where we are lacking and what needs to happen on a regional, state, national and international level so that riders have a truly accessible pathway if they wish to compete. It shows the need for profile 39 (ID) to be recognised

in PE or be allocated a separate grading so that riders with an intellectual disability are not being discriminated against. Alternatively we need to provide more opportunities for SO athletes and really develop the SO pathways all the way to an elite level. It has inspired me to come back and work with SOV on this. Also to work with the other coaches I met and develop a network to provide the riders with the best opportunities.

### RESULTS

Grades 1a, 1b, II:

1st Maddie Cooke (out of four)-also an SO athlete

2nd Liam Richardson

Grade III:

5th David Rak (out of nine)- also an SO athlete

Grade 1a, 1b, II (freestyle):

1st Maddie Cooke

It was a fantastic demonstration that if you really want to achieve something, you can. We had the entry emailed to us 16th June. We had a team selected and almost fully funded by September. We had four training days with me travelling to the riders or riders travelling to me and borrowed horses in Sept/Oct. Some sessions were held after school and I taught to 7 o'clock (poor Liam got home at 9pm that night!). We had a training day with Mary Longden the Friday before.

It has also inspired Lesley and I to organise an RDAV trek in Mongolia (based on what Japan and Taiwan do there)! Also to develop competitions, both current and new, open to international competitors. Watch this space....



The Hope Cup Team

For more information have a look at our [facebook](#) page where information was posted daily.

## Diary Dates

<b>Nov 1</b>	<b>RDAA Annual Survey starts</b>
Nov 6	Melbourne Cup
Nov 15-18	EQUITANA Melbourne
<b>Nov 21</b>	<b>RDAA Board Meeting</b>
Nov 23-25	Adelaide International Horse Trials
Nov 26	RDA ACT AGM
<b>Nov 30</b>	<b>RDAA Annual Survey due</b>
Dec 1	RDA SA Anniversary Race Day
Dec 3	International Day for People with Disabilities
Dec 5	International Volunteers Day
Dec 14	RDA Q office Closes
<b>Dec 21</b>	<b>RDAA Board Meeting in Adelaide</b>
<b>Dec 21</b>	<b>RDAA Office Closes</b>

## 2013

Jan 7	RDA Q Office Opens
<b>Jan 14</b>	<b>RDAA Office Opens</b>
<b>Jan 16</b>	<b>First RDAA Board Meeting</b>
<b>Apr 5-7</b>	<b>Strategy Meeting &amp; General Meeting – Melbourne</b>
May 13-19	National Volunteer Week
<b>June 14</b>	<b>National Volunteer Award Nominations open</b>
<b>29 July – 4 Aug</b>	<b>RDA Awareness Week</b>
<b>FEB – National Disciplines Meetings – Dates TBA</b>	

## COACHING REPORT

Sharon is currently in New Zealand attending their National Coaches Workshop – we look forward to hearing about her trip and the details will be included in the next edition of Spotlight. Sharon did, however, include this in the most recent Coach's Newsletter.

*This year has been very busy for RDAA, with the National Coaches Workshop in Geelong in June/July and the National Championships in Werribee in October.*

*A big thank you to all those who helped organise these events, and especially to Edwina Boase-Stratford and RDA Victoria for all of their support in sourcing and organising horses and riders etc.*

*Sharon Nichols  
National Coaching Coordinator*

## CONGRATULATIONS JOANN!



In champion style on Saturday 1 September 2012, Joann Formosa delivered Australia its first Paralympic Games Equestrian gold medal since Sydney 2000. She is only the second person to win Equestrian gold for Australia.

One of the last combinations to enter the arena, Joann and her 17 yo Stallion *Worldwide PB* were cool under pressure and went on to score 75.826% to take the gold.

We were also lucky enough to have Joann Formosa assist with medal presentations at the National Championships in Werribee. See page 3 for the full write up!

## RIDER LETTER

Clint Robins, a rider at RDA Maryborough in Victoria, sent this to RDA Australia.

*“As all would be aware at the recent Maryborough RDA AGM we had a change of positions resulting in Judy Tranta becoming our new club president. Congratulations Judy and all other members on you positions within our club on behalf of myself and all riders at Maryborough.*

*Not to be forgotten, our previous president Kevin Marshall, who was a terrific president doing in my opinion a fantastic job. If it wasn't for Kevin I would not be where I am today, going way beyond the position of president. Every word from Kevin was filled with passion and encouragement making myself and all other riders at the centre strive to achieve our best.*

*This following statement from Kevin is one I will have with me forever etched in my mind.*

*“You may not have the best in life But you make the best from what you have in life.” Thank you, Kevin, for being in my life and making my road to recovery all the much easier. There are really no words to describe my gratitude and feelings.*

*Thank you  
Clint Robins.”*

## **BABY NEWS!**

Congratulations go to Stacey Murray, RDAA Administration Assistant, who gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Thomas Mitchell, on October 21. Congratulations Stacey and James and all the best!

## **STATE NEWS**

### **RDA SA:**

South Australia has had more than its fair share of action in its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, with its AGM held at Parliament House including adoption of a new constitution. A reception at Government House in June, hosted by the Governor of South Australia, honoured RDA SA's 40 years of volunteering.

The RDA SA dressage championships at the Brice family's Mallala Equestrian Centre on September 16 were again a success, five centres represented among the 20 riders. Sadly, Mr John Brice OAM passed away in early October. He and his wife Rae have allowed us to use their magnificent indoor arena and property each year.

The former RDA Blackwood centre has been renamed RDA O'Halloran Hill, reflecting its new location. RDA Mount Barker has moved off the property of champion showjumping rider Jeff Evans, to the famous Oakbank racecourse, and renamed RDA Oakbank centre. Jeff Evans had accommodated the centre for 10 years on his Wistow property, and RDA SA is grateful for his support throughout that time.

In state office, Theresa Moore resigned to take up full-time work with RDA Australia. Then Karen Aspery

resigned as state coaching co-ordinator. Theresa and Karen haven't moved far; they are still in the same building, just on a different phone number and doing different work.

State Manager, Kay Milton, is leaving RDA SA after more than 10 years in the position. She says, "It is time for me to pursue fresh challenges and other interests, and it is time for RDA SA to have a leadership change." Kay's departure also means retirement of her husband Mark Boon as an RDA SA volunteer. Mark, a retired journalist, has edited "RDA SA News" for the past decade.

We thank Karen, Theresa, Kay and Mark for their work, and wish them all the best in the future.

An anniversary reunion at "Balyana Conference Centre", Clapham on October 27 included launch of "Keep Moving Forward", a history of Riding for the Disabled in South Australia. Special guest who officially launched the book was Mrs Margaret De'Ath who, with her late husband Gordon Willoughby, ran Nanto Equestrian Centre, near Mylor, and was a driving force behind registering RDA SA as "Riding for the Handicapped Incorporated" as an association and a charity in 1972. Copies of the book can be purchased for \$28 (includes GST, p&p), or \$25 over the counter.

Rounding off the anniversary year will be the RDA SA "Day at the Races" on Saturday December 1, at Morphettville racecourse. This special event, to be held in the "Tapestry Pavilion" overlooking the entire racecourse, will be a major fundraiser and "friendraiser" for RDA SA. All welcome!



Riders from NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia for medal presentations at the 2012 National Disciplines Championships, Werribee, Victoria

**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: 21 December 2012

## 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**

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