



Riding for the Disabled Association NSW

Bits 'n' Pieces

SPRING/SUMMER EDITION 2024

Welcome to the latest edition of Bits 'n' Pieces!

Well done again to Lizzie and Wagga Centre who were the first to send in their updates. It is certainly a very busy time of the year for all of us, personally and for our Centres, that's for sure!

Huge congratulations to the Griffith/Leeton Centre who won the 2024 Musical Ride Competition with their 'Simply the Best' entry. This entry will now be sent to the United Kingdom in 2025 for judging in the RDA UK Virtual Competition. This was a wonderful effort by this Centre, and well done to them and all of the other Centres who dedicated many hours to producing their own entries. It is really enjoyed by our riders, our volunteers and of course, everyone who can enjoy watching these entries. You can find the entries in the Members area of our website under 'Musical Rides from Centres'.

Wishing you a very bright and beautiful festive season. I hope you all enjoy some well-deserved rest and relaxation during this period. I will leave you with a festive photo of 30-year-old Eddy from the Central Coast Centre.

Warm Regards

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Marketing/Fundraising
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WAGGA CENTRE

From Lizzie at Wagga Centre:

Wow, we cannot believe we are getting ready for the end of 2024 already. We have enjoyed working alongside our existing volunteers and welcoming new ones to make our riders and drivers' lessons enjoyable.

This year RDA Wagga was the very lucky charity chosen to be the beneficiary of the TEYS Charity Golf Day. About 70 golfers attended the event at the Wagga Country Club for a great morning of golf, whilst RDA volunteers cooked up a storm for breakfast and lunch. Our beautiful Secretary Dawn then gave a little talk about the Wagga RDA history and what we do over the road. Afterwards Dawn was presented with a Cheque for \$55,000 and, needless to say, there was tears. Our Centre was also one of the chosen charities to be a beneficiary of this year's Miss Wagga Quest thanks to one of our long-standing volunteers being an entrant in the quest.



We held our biggest Mounted Games Day at the end of Term 3 this year since returning from Covid shut down with 32 riders attending the day. All of our riders had a great day riding and should be proud of their efforts. It was great to see everyone on the sidelines cheering on the riders.

The Finchley Centre was able to purchase a new ride on mower as the old one just wasn't cutting it anymore. The new John Deere is definitely making Darren's job easier with keeping the lawns looking great.



We also had a surprise visit from Maureen Turner which was fantastic. It is always great when friends drop in for a visit and catch up.

We look forward to seeing what 2025 has to offer and hope that everyone has a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.



ORANGE CENTRE

Riding for the Disabled Orange Centre has been quite active over Terms 3 and 4. Term 3 saw the riders and volunteers practice and record the musical ride-led section. Students from Glenroi Public School were involved in doing choreography to "Does your chewing gum lose its flavour on the bedpost at night". They were dressed in pyjamas and pretended to chew gum. Orange Centre was very proud to participate and came second in this section.

Term 4 means preparing for a major raffle and volunteers attended the 3 days of the Australian National Field Days held at Borenore, near Orange. We had great support from local sponsors, including the major prize of a helicopter ride for 5 people. It is also a chance to promote what we do at RDA. The mounted police dropped by our stand on Day 3 of the Field Days.



Volunteers at the Australian National Field Days meeting the mounted police.

November also brings the Melbourne Cup Day celebrations. During each of the 4 classes, the riders and horses with the volunteers paraded around the ring and then lined up before ribbons were awarded by visitors. The volunteers also had a Hat Parade and shared food as part of the celebrations.



Volunteers in their finest hats at our Melbourne Cup celebrations.



The Horse Parade at the Melbourne Cup celebrations.



The Riders and volunteers participating in the re-enactment of the Melbourne Cup-at walking pace.

If it wasn't for our hardworking volunteers, that fundraise, look after the Centre and horses and help in the arena, we couldn't do what we do!

WAUCHOPE/PORT MACQUARIE CENTRE

We have a great group of volunteers, but we would appreciate a few more men to help with the setting up of the arena in the morning as well as putting away after riding on Tuesdays.

A big thank you to our maintenance blokes who have helped with all that required attention. Also, a special mention to our horse feeders, they have been a great help. Trophies will be given at our Christmas Party for the most improved rider, selected by the Coaching Team and a trophy for the Most Favourite Horse, chosen by the riders. The Christmas Party is coming up and will be held at the Wauchope RSL Club. A very enjoyable time for riders, volunteers and families. Santa will be visiting on the day.

The last four months have been a series of ups and downs with our horses.

Several of our favourite RDA horses and ponies have had injuries or illness and been off work. All have returned to work in the last term. This included:

Riki, who has been out of action for nearly six months, had his left eye removed, was put on a re-training program to respond to voice commands, and is now back working with our riders.

Bari: was injured earlier in the year and had four months off and has come back to work like he was never away.

Jaffa (one of our ponies), who was unwell and out of action since November last year, has now recovered and been gradually returned to work. She is taking very light riders and is coping well with being part of the RDA program again. Some very positive news about these horses and ponies as our riders become so attached to 'their' horses.



Bari



Riki now back in work.

We have had to retire Nightmare (32), Ellie (34), Abbie (27) and Lex (25) which had been very sad for our riders as some of these horses have been carrying RDA riders for over 15 years. They have been fantastic contributors to the development of our riders, real confidence builders and we are sad that they can no longer continue, as are their riders.



Karli Quirk on Nightmare (32 years young)



Chrissy Anderson on Abbie (27 years young)

Last year we purchased Hamalky, an Off the Track Thoroughbred (OTT) though she finished racing 10 years ago. We have been training her since then to adapt to RDA life. For the last six weeks she has been taking two riders each week and is adapting well to her new and much slower life.

We have another new horse Noble that is being trained at the moment. He is being ridden in groups by our volunteers and is shaping up nicely. We plan to start using him next term if he continues to develop and adapt to the RDA life.

It's a constant challenge to find the right sort of horses to work with our riders and takes a lot of training and assistance from our volunteers to ensure they are suitable for the job. It's certainly a team effort.



A Thursday Volunteer Training Day

From John Smith President and the Coaching team.

COOTAMUNDRA CENTRE

From Olwen at Cootamundra:



Riding for the Disabled won the Outstanding Community Organisation Award at the presentation night 18th Oct 2024.



COOTAMUNDRA RDA

With hands on Hearts our Riders remember the fallen soldiers.
REMEMBRANCE DAY on the 11th of the 11th Month at 11.am.

Peter riding Annie
with Indie

Adrian riding Unique
with Bev

Josh riding Charlie
with Robyn

CENTRAL COAST CENTRE

Some Great New Coaches for our Centre

We are so fortunate to have some great talent at the Central Coast Centre – not only our wonderful volunteers but those who have undertaken the extensive training required to become a Coach. It has been a lot of work for them and Senior Coach (and Vice President) Gaynor who has been mentoring them this year.

Sally Carey qualified as a Coach and Merelynne Southall, Bob Blair and Pru Butler have attained the Assistant Coach status. With Jennifer Berryman undertaking her assessment as an Assistant Coach and Merelynne and Pru their Coach qualifications early next year we will be well equipped to successfully continue our operations into the future.



1. **New Coach Sally with Gaynor and Assessor Karen O'Neill.**
2. **New Assistant Coach Pru with Gaynor and Assessor Wendy Torr.**
3. **New Assistant Coach Bob with Gaynor and Assessor Wendy Torr.**



Huge appreciation is extended to these new coaches for their dedication to ensure a fabulous succession plan for our Centre and to Wendy, Karen and the Training Centre Coaching Program and facilitators who provided the tools and assessments.

Our volunteers recently held two BBQ fundraisers at a local nursery and raised some great funds, shared our RDA story with visitors and enjoyed each other's company in the process. The nursery was very happy to offer us the opportunity to fundraise at the front of their Centre after being approached by Bob (our BBQ King and new Assistant Coach). Bob will be cooking for our volunteers during the last week of our classes this year – and we are very happy to enjoy his skills!



We have some very skilled volunteers at our Centre. Joanne Tychonenko made a beautiful quilt that we were also able to raffle in our BBQ fundraisers.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

WOLLONDILLY CENTRE

From Jill at Wollondilly:

We have had a good year with a few new volunteers who have really enjoyed their days at Wollondilly.

We are still fortunate to have the army personnel from Holsworthy Rehabilitation Unit coming along to volunteer. They really enjoy interacting with the riders and working with the horses and they have been such a help to our Centre. Some days when the number of our regular volunteers is down due to illness, family commitments etc, the army have been a blessing and are ready to step up and help with whatever is asked of them.

People from the Department of Community Justice are still coming regularly to mow and maintain our grounds. We so appreciate their help which, like the army volunteers, is invaluable.

Bonnie our Brumby has had a great year helping our riders and has fitted in really well - as we knew she would as she has the most gentle, calm temperament.

Two of our darling ex Standardbreds Hummer and Chris will be retiring at the end of the year and are looking forward to a long happy retirement with lots of well -earned TLC.

We will be going into a Coaching Recess at the end of the year for perhaps twelve months.



Hummer

Hummer and Chris, on behalf of Wollondilly Centre, send everyone best wishes for a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Chris

MUDGEES CENTRE

Mudgee celebrates an extraordinary day at our Centre on 23rd October 2024. We were thrilled to host 35 riders, supported by 5 magnificent horses and an incredible team of volunteers. The energy was electric, and we felt grateful for the visits from our Regional Representative, Jan Pike, and Assessor Margot Bulger.

But what made this day truly special was our celebration of Pink Up Mudgee, in support of the McGrath Foundation and breast cancer awareness. It was a powerful reminder of the importance of community, compassion and kindness.

As a Centre, we've made a conscious decision to rise above the current controversy and focus on what truly matters - the well-being of our riders, horses and volunteers. We believe that Pearl Batchelor's vision for our Centre should be respected, and we implore everyone involved to put an end to the negativity.

Let's work together to create a positive, supportive environment that allows us to thrive. Thank you to everyone who made the day so special.





Extra Bits 'n' Positive Pieces

Here's a new page in our newsletter to give you some hints and things that are working at our Centres and remember - every good idea is a shared one!

This time it is finding more volunteers tips today to ensure the succession of our Centres.

We have some amazing volunteers throughout our Centres and we are so lucky to be able to source a lot of our 'talent' from our 'retired from work' community and those that are nearing retirement, as well as those needing to fulfill Service NSW's requirement to complete 15 hours of volunteering to qualify for benefits.

Our Centres are a wonderful venue for friendship and achievement - not only for our riders but also for our volunteers. Our volunteers come for a lot of differing reasons – to meet others, to get exercise, for the love of horses, to help the community and to help and watch the improvement of our participants with disabilities. Finding activities that volunteers enjoy whilst at our Centres - that are appropriate and available for them to participate in - is a great way to keep them busy, feeling wanted and welcomed and to recognise everything that they do whilst attending. I know that some Centres also celebrate birthdays, special occasions and have social events.

So many of our RDA volunteers are experts in what they do in their own area of expertise, and it is important that we recognise their achievements and personal accomplishments. Certificates of Appreciation, recommendations for Awards (both in RDA and outside of our own RDA community) and verbal reinforcement are a great way that we can do this. It is a lovely part of RDA to be able to participate in this recognition (and my personal favourite). We also need to remember the experienced volunteers/coaches who might go unrecognised because they have been in RDA for a long time or those who may be engaged in tasks behind the scenes. Everyone likes to be congratulated and celebrated for doing what they do – no matter how much they love doing it – and it is our privilege to be able to do so.

I have attached a simple advertisement that you can change to suit your own Centre - at the XXXXs. To gain interest for some younger volunteers I would suggest that you consider asking local schools/preschools and day care centres if you can place something like this in their newsletter or near their sign-in book. Not every parent needs to rush off to work and it can be a great way for them to have an enjoyable interest while their children are busy. Email me if you would like the Word version or if I can help personalise it for you.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW HOBBY - JUST FOR YOU??

WE CURRENTLY HAVE VACANCIES FOR VOLUNTEERS AT OUR xxxxxxxxxxxx
RIDING FOR THE DISABLED CENTRE
AT xxxxxxxxxxxx.

You just need to be energetic and happy to help our Centre conduct horse-riding classes for our local children with disabilities in a friendly atmosphere.

No horse experience is necessary – just a desire to have fun, make new friends and improve your fitness, whilst helping this great cause.

There are varied voluntary positions available at our Centre and classes are only held in school terms, during school hours.

Call our Centre contact below or send an email to find out more information. We look forward to meeting you soon!!



Email:

Phone: xxxx
(xxxx)

Address: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx