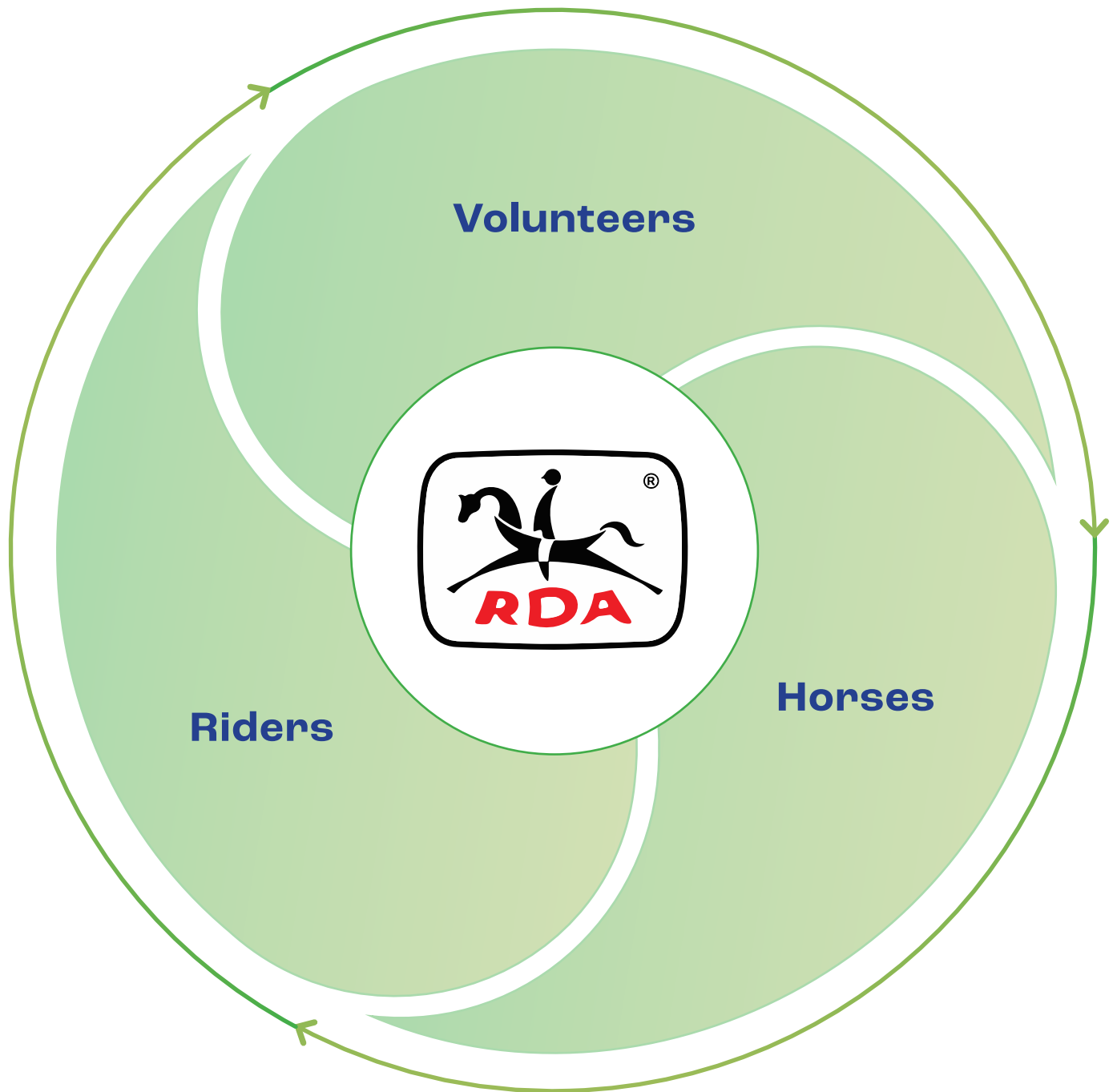




**Riding For
The Disabled
Association
(NSW)**



2023 Annual Report



Why a circle of three parts?

Riding For The Disabled Association (NSW) runs on the combined effort of our **Horses**, **Volunteers** and **Riders**. Each are integral to our organisation.

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About RDA (NSW)

The primary objective of **Riding for the Disabled (NSW)** is to provide people with a disability, the opportunity to ride and drive and enjoy all the activities connected with horse riding. Riding for people with a disability is both therapeutic and recreational and **RDA (NSW)** is in fact one of the few organisations to offer a multi-diagnostic service, catering for people with a wide range of disabilities.

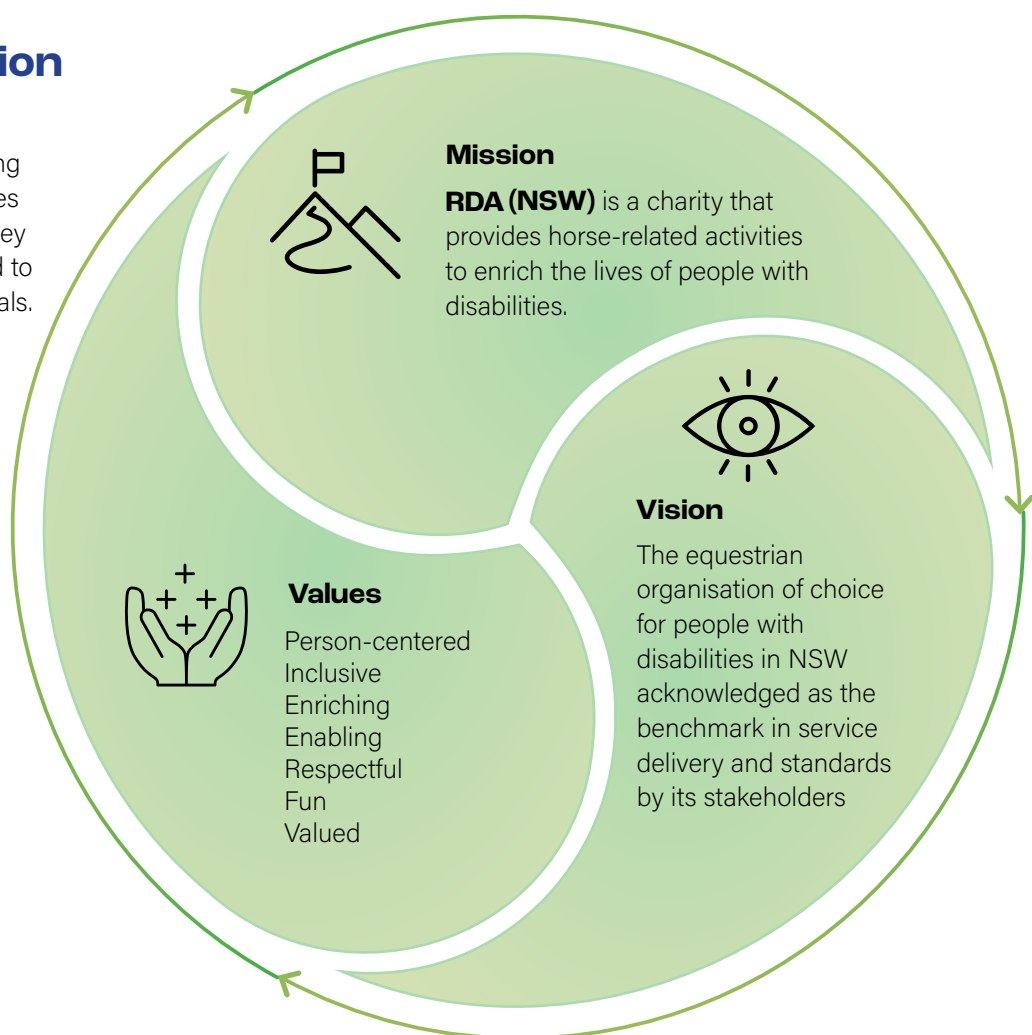
The objectives of **RDA (NSW)** are to encourage, support and assist Centres to provide riding therapy, sport, recreation, connections, training and safety programs for people with disabilities. **RDA (NSW)** offers horse riding, carriage driving, dressage, mounted games and Equine Facilitated

Mental Health and Learning (EFMH&L) and caters for people with physical, intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

RDA (NSW) currently has 34 Centres spread throughout NSW with 90% of Centres based in regional areas. The Centres cater for 1,042 riders annually and are supported by our volunteers. Our community therefore embraces the Centres and the volunteer infrastructure. To adequately support riders with disabilities **RDA (NSW)** adopts a person-centric focus where all support services are focused on the rider to create a practical, life-changing experience.

Value Proposition

RDA (NSW) provides the highest standards and training for Centres to develop abilities by enabling them to know they are compliant and supported to help people achieve their goals.



Strategic Priorities

Sustainable Governance and Financial Management To build a sustainable organisation at all levels by developing and implementing recognised high standard practices

Communication To create clear and effective communication strategies with all stakeholders

Marketing (promotion and revenue generation) To increase awareness of the organisation and the services provided at local community level that increases and diversifies revenue streams

Coach development To retain accreditation procedures

Participation To grow participation by broadening the disciplines and numbers and providing pathways via Centre capacity

Volunteers To retain existing, recruit new and recognise a volunteer's value and contribution

Regional Centres & Representatives

North West

Gunnedah, Narrabri,
Coonabarabran, Tamworth,
Armidale & New England

Rep: Jenny Wilkinson



North Coast

Tweed Valley, Ballina
& District, Coffs Harbour

Rep: Clarry Quirk



Central West

Bathurst, Orange, Mudgee,
Forbes (Steering Committee)

Rep: Jan Pike OAM



Mid North Coast

Manning Great Lakes,
Kempsey-Macleay,
Wauchope/Port Macquarie

Rep: Wendy Dunbar



Riverina

Cootamundra, Wagga
Wagga, Griffith/Leeton,
Albury-Wodonga, Tumut

Rep: Heather Baker



Hunter

Central Coast, Upper Hunter,
Kendall, Raymond Terrace
& Lower Hunter,

Rep: Jenny Cameron



Southern Highlands

Wollondilly, Moss Vale, Cowra,
Illawarra, Goulburn, Young

Rep: Angus Malcolm



Metropolitan

Ryde, Blue Mountains,
Box Hill, Richmond

Rep: Margaret Norman OAM



Founder and Life Patron of RDA (NSW)

Pearl Batchelor OAM (dec.)



Directors Reports



Kempsey-Macleay

Chairperson's Report

The past year has been a true rollercoaster ride for our organization, characterized by both moments of triumph and challenges. We have experienced the pain of loss, celebrated numerous successes, and faced the resignation of three directors, leaving a small but resolute team to carry the torch.

Despite these changes, we have pressed on with Joe as Executive Officer, Jan serving as our Company Secretary, Olwen as MPIO and Communications, Clarry as Development Officer, Allan as Riders Rep and myself as Chairperson, Grants and assisting in communications. It has been a period of transition, but we are committed to steering the organization through these changes.

Over the past 12 months, we have witnessed the resurgence of many of our centres, a testament to the hard work and dedication of our centre volunteers. We recognize the invaluable role that volunteers and horses play in the success of each centre and have made efforts to ensure their continued support. I am grateful for the support we have received from Ian Travers, and the Hawkesbury races, as well as the funding we have been able to allocate to five of our centres.

The big topic is The Golden Eagle – mind-blowing and a windfall that WILL make a difference.

However, it has also been a year marked by loss, as we bid farewell to some of our beloved horses due to age and illness. Additionally, several of our centres have experienced personal losses, and some of our RDA family are facing health challenges. Our thoughts and support are with them during these challenging times.

Amidst these trials, I have found great encouragement in the stories and photos shared with me by many of you. Your dedication to our cause and the impact of our work on the lives of others is truly inspiring. I have been privileged to attend some of our centres and witness firsthand the positive impact you are making. The recent SIAC event was particularly outstanding, and I am looking forward to seeing more of our centre's participate and thrive in the coming months.

Looking ahead, we are planning connections workshops which will be a significant step forward for us. I want to emphasize that our directors are approachable, and I am personally available should any of you need to chat or require assistance. I am constantly inspired by the amazing work our centres are doing, and I am eager to see what the future holds.

Thank you all for your hard work, dedication, and unwavering support. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Warm regards,

Tracy Lucas



**A dream you dream
alone is only a dream.
A dream you dream
together is reality.**

**All of us are
DIFFERENT
none of us
are less**

Grants Officer's Report

As Grants Officer, I have had the privilege to witness the transformative power of numbers in the form of centres, riders, participants, volunteers, horses, and smiles of achievement and success. My initial aversion to numbers has been replaced with a deep appreciation for their impact on our community.

Throughout 2023, I have had the opportunity to assist in the allocation of grants that have significantly impacted various centres. The funding has facilitated the acquisition of new horses, tack, infrastructure, feed, and medical care for the horses, as well as shade for the riders, helmets, office equipment, chairs, and kitchen maintenance adjustments. Witnessing the tangible results of these grants has been immensely rewarding, and I am proud to have played a part in these achievements.

Two standout moments from 2023 exemplify the impact of our work. Firstly, supporting Tweed Valley in securing funding more than \$400,000 for their arena stands as a significant milestone.

The opportunity to contribute to such a worthy cause was truly incredible. Secondly, attending the Golden Eagle race and witnessing Obamburamai emerge victorious was a memorable experience, especially alongside fellow RDA members. I remain committed to ensuring that the allocated funds are effectively utilized to support our centres, as they are the lifeblood of our programs.

Looking ahead, I am keenly focused on continuing to support our centres through grants. Each centre's growth and the stories of those they impact serve as a constant reminder of the value of our work. I am dedicated to nurturing these vital resources and contributing to their ongoing success.

In conclusion, I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to make a meaningful difference through grant allocation in 2023. I am committed to furthering this impact in the future, and I look forward to witnessing the continued growth and success of the centres we support.

Tracy Lucas



Executive Officer Report

I need to commence this Report by acknowledging, and thanking, the RDA (NSW) Office Coordinator, Lucy Pentony. I am sure that everyone who has ever had to contact State Office recognises the tremendous amount of high-quality work and attention to detail that Lucy performs for RDA (NSW) and the Centres as well as all those who are involved in any way with RDA (NSW).

Congratulations need to go to Jenny Cameron of the Central Coast Centre who was recognised for her long and tireless work for RDA (NSW) at many levels by being awarded with the Pearl Batchelor Medal at a dinner attended by volunteers of the Centre and RDA (NSW) directors.

I would also like to thank all RDA (NSW) directors for the work that they do, and the many hours of work that they do daily for the organisation in their role as directors as well as the volunteering that they do for their respective Centres.

The role of a director includes such additional duties as dealing with many different issues such as discrimination issues, mediation matters, including those that are referred to the NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), various litigation matters in different venues, including Court and Tribunals as well as assisting in various insurance issues.

I look forward to continuing in this role, working with, and supporting, the volunteers of the RDA (NSW) Centres.

Joseph Orland



CASP Report

In 2023 CASP was busy with updating and reviewing some of our training modules in preparation to add them to the updated aXcelerate Turbo system.

This now allows trainees to find all the information in one place and enables the theory work to be submitted online. This system will always need tweaking and updating to improve the student experience, and feedback is constantly being monitored to make necessary adjustments.

The next Certificate III program has also been reviewed with industry stakeholders in preparation for re-accreditation in February 2024. This was submitted in November 2023.

If anyone needs help with these, our assessors are very helpful and friendly and are also always available.

We have also had some centres that need help and guidance with a few problems, we realise that since Covid, not all centres have the same amount of volunteers come back to help. We don't think there is a clear answer for this.

We do hope all centres remember CASP is here for any help, advice, guidance or problems and are just an email or phone call away.

There have been a few workshops this year, and all seem to have gone well and have more coming up.

In 2023, we conducted Trainee and upgrading coach workshops at Arundel in Queensland and Young New South Wales Centres, incorporating Carriage Driving components for the first time since pre-Covid.

The State Coaching workshop was conducted in June and hosted by Ryde centre with the focus being the "Disciplines of RDA". Thank you to our Discipline Sub Committees for their input into the sessions.

In our meetings, we discuss any emails and phone calls that come to us from centres and individuals and try to resolve or answer their questions and concerns and hope we can do this in a quick and timely manner, but please keep in contact as we are only human as well...

Hope all centres have a great year!

Nicole King



Finance Officer Report

RDA (NSW)'s financial investments include properties, shares, term deposits and general bank accounts. The company has a balancing date of 31 December and the income and valuations are shown as at that date unless otherwise stated and all amounts are shown rounded to the nearest dollar.

The properties owned by RDA (NSW) are located at Ballina, Box Hill (Gables) and Raymond Terrace. As RDA (NSW) is holding these properties on capital account, they are held at historical valuation for the use of respective Centres and are not intended for any other use. Therefore, revaluing the properties is not considered necessary.

The RDA (NSW) share portfolio was valued at \$1,996,874 as at 31 December. This is a net increase in value of \$320,072 since acquisition, representing a net capital increase of 19.09% despite their value being \$53,578 lower at 31 December than as at the start of the year. This increase is in addition to the income return which, for the 2023 year resulted in share portfolio incomes totalling \$137,891, including franking credits totalling \$39,144.

Income from "trading and other activities" was \$743,808 of which \$525,000 was the result of a once-of donation to RDA (NSW) from Racing NSW. But for that donation, RDA (NSW)'s "trading income" was \$218,808, with trading expenses being \$354,023, resulting in a "net trading loss" of \$135,215.

This trading loss was offset by income from shares (including \$39,144 franking credits) of \$137,891 and interest of \$24,232, for a total of \$162,123, with a net operating result for the year being \$26,908.

Joseph Orland



Company Secretary Report

Having been new to this role, I must admit it was a daunting and challenging year. I have attempted to advise the Board in my role, as to my interpretation of the State Constitution where required. I have also been actively involved in Board meetings and Executive meetings throughout the year.

There have been many issues that have affected the operation of the Board and have in some cases disrupted the principle function of governance by the Board.

Hopefully some of these have been resolved and the administration of RDA (NSW) can continue to grow in strength and confidence.

One of the greatest honours I have experienced is my repeated opportunities to represent our Association at a variety of events. It makes me very humble to be part of such an amazing organisation and to see us growing as a community offering a valuable service to such a variety of participants across our society.

Jan Pike OAM



Coaching Stats

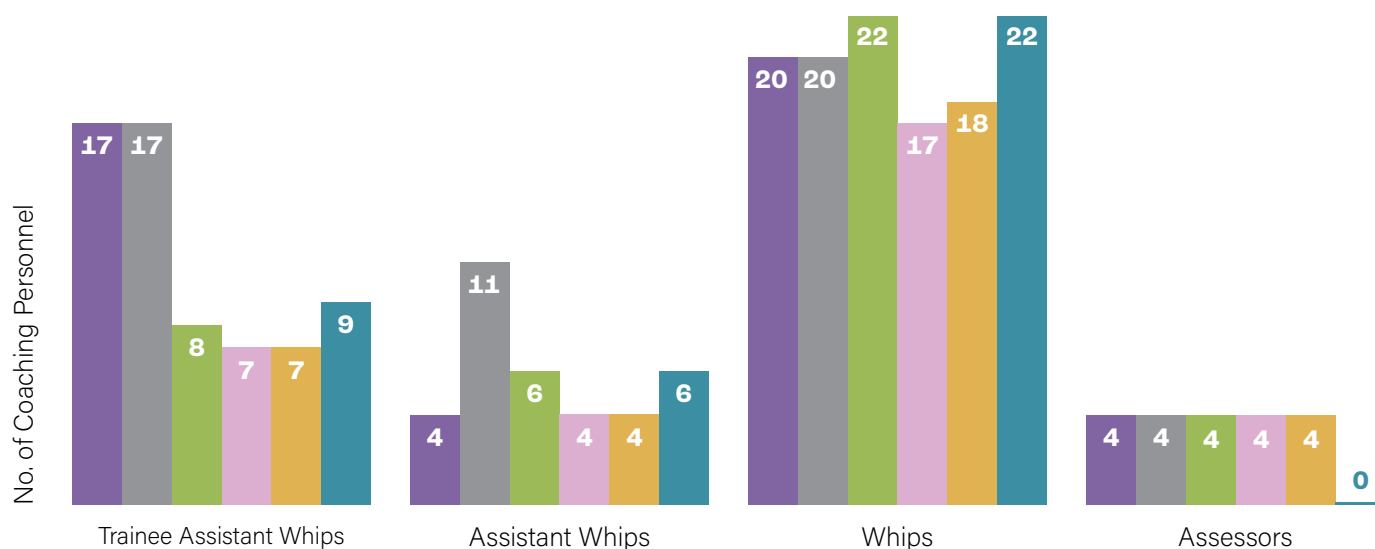
RDA (NSW) Coaching Personnel

| Accredited | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Assessors | 10 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 13 |
| Senior Coaches | 10 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 13 | 9 |
| Coaches | 118 | 117 | 89 | 85 | 82 | 115 |
| Trainee Coaches | 10 | 16 | 20 | 14 | 8 | |
| Assistant Coaches | 47 | 71 | 37 | 30 | 31 | 35 |
| Trainee Assistant Coaches | 69 | 48 | 59 | 40 | 28 | 46 |
| | 264 | 276 | 230 | 190 | 170 | 218 |
| Non Coach - Hippo Horse Handlers | 17 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | N/A |

| Assessments Completed | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|
| Senior coaches | | 1 | | | | |
| Coaches | 4 | 3 | 2 | | 7 | 6 |
| Coaches (Qld) | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | | 4 |
| Assistant Coaches | 13 | 11 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 7 |
| | 20 | 19 | 7 | 12 | 17 | 17 |

| Carriage Driving | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Trainee Assistant Whips | 17 | 17 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 9 |
| Assistant Whips | 4 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Whips | 20 | 20 | 22 | 17 | 18 | 22 |
| Assessors | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | |
| | 45 | 52 | 40 | 32 | 33 | 37 |

Carriage Driving



KEY

2018

2019

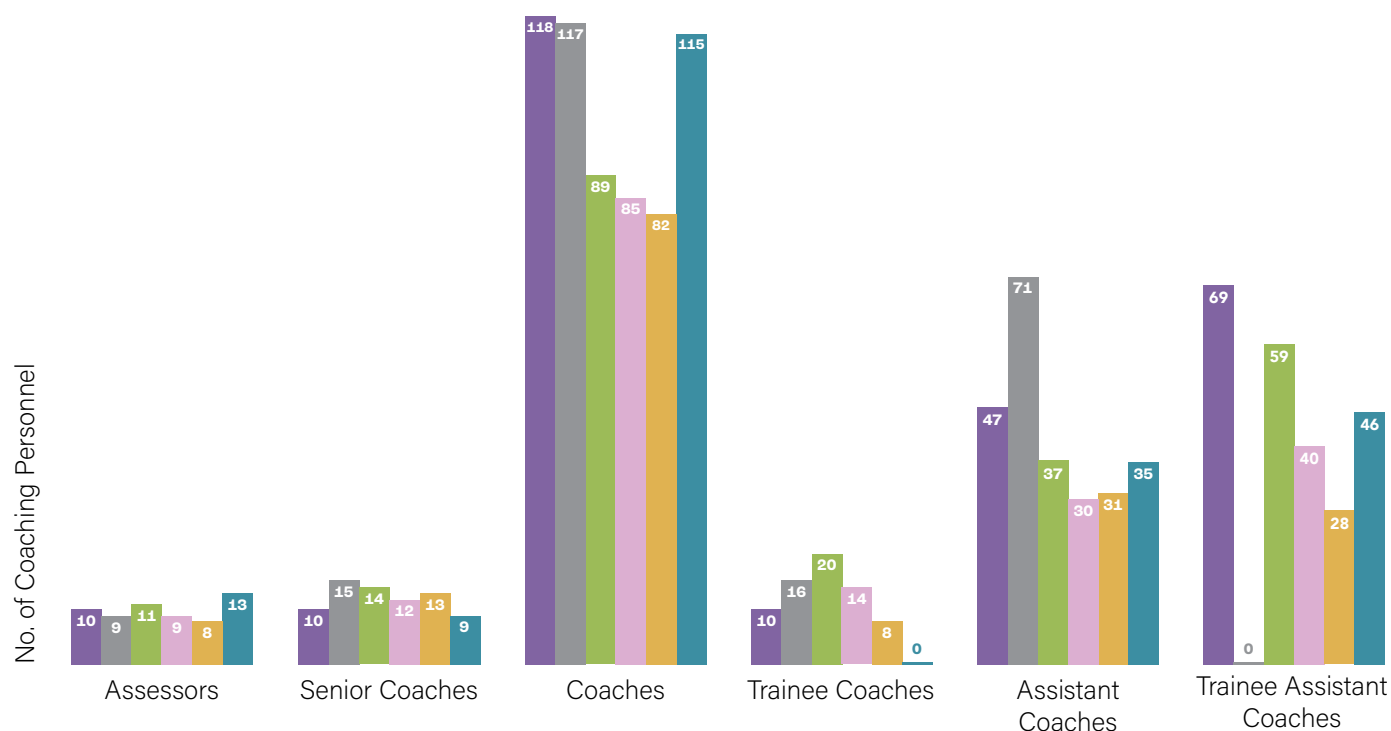
2020

2021

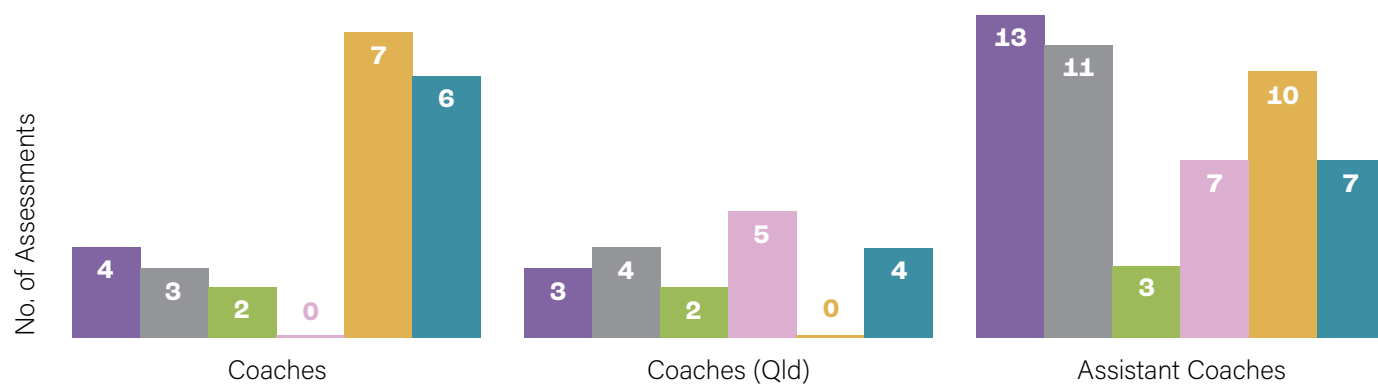
2022

2023

Accredited Coaching Personnel



Assessments Completed



Registered Riders

| Centre | No. of Registered Riders |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Albury Wodonga | 6 |
| Armidale and New England | 13 |
| Ballina & District | 19 |
| Bathurst | 24 |
| Blue Mountains | 21 |
| Central Coast | 61 |
| Coffs Harbour | 6 |
| Coonabarabran | 25 |
| Cootamundra | 13 |
| Cowra | 51 |
| Forbes Steering Committee | 0 |
| Goulburn | 19 |
| Illawarra | 6 |
| Griffith/Leeton | 37 |
| Gunnedah | 25 |
| Kempsey/Macleay | 21 |
| Kendall | 12 |
| Manning Great Lakes | 9 |
| Moss Vale | 13 |
| Mudgee | 26 |
| Narrabri | 19 |
| Orange | 52 |
| Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter | 10 |
| Richmond | 22 |
| Ryde | 102 |
| Tamworth | 46 |
| Box Hill "Tall Timbers" | 123 |
| Tumut | 30 |
| Tweed Valley | 22 |
| Upper Hunter | 26 |
| Wagga Wagga | 102 |
| Wauchope/Port Macquarie | 34 |
| Wollondilly | 14 |
| Young | 27 |
| Associate Riders | 8 |
| TOTAL | 1042 |

Letters of Support

Office of Sport



DIV24/702

Dear Ms Pike,

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 February 2024 regarding a letter of support for your 2022/2023 Annual Report. I am delighted to provide the following message for the Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW) Annual Report.

Message from the Chief Executive – Office of Sport

As the lead NSW Government agency for sport and active recreation, the Office of Sport is committed to building active communities and ensuring that everyone in NSW can participate regardless of their age, ability, gender identity or background.

I commend and acknowledge the Riding for Disabled Association's incredible work over the past year. To put on events, such as the 3-day 2023 State Dressage Championships, Gymkhana & Mounted Games at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre (SIEC) is a fantastic accomplishment. I understand that the event was very successful, and everyone, including the SIEC staff, had an enjoyable experience.

The NSW Government remains committed to supporting your organisation. Through your work, we see the power of sport to change lives and connect communities.

I congratulate you on the tremendous work of your organisation in delivering sporting opportunities for people with disability.

Sincerely,

Karen Jones

Chief Executive

11 March 2024

Level 3, 6B Figtree Drive, Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127
Locked Bag 1422, Silverwater NSW 2128
ABN: 31 321 190 047

13 13 02
sport.nsw.gov.au



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Message from

**Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales**

For 52 years, Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW) has provided life-changing experiences for people with special needs, enhancing freedom of movement, encouraging independence, developing self-confidence, and supporting the achievement of personal goals. With safety always the priority for riders and the ever-attentive volunteers and coaches, this past year has seen a welcome return to full activities.

And what a year it has been! The following highlights and milestones have underscored a busy program of equestrian, equine and therapeutic activities, including:

- **Coaching**
Workshops throughout the State have enabled existing and new coaches to develop their skills and RDA (NSW)'s highly developed coaching program is now being offered to other States. The Registered Training Officer has attended webinars and virtual sessions to discuss developments in training.
- **A trial in the use of brumbies**
Three brumbies have undergone rehabilitation programs to enter RDA NSW service on the retirement of faithful ageing herd members, and, reportedly, all brumbies are proving to be excellent acquisitions to the equine community.
- **Enhanced diversity of activities at Centres**
On-the-ground activities are increasingly on offer to people who choose not to or are unable to ride, and includes the grooming of horses, therapeutic activities and, where possible, sensory gardens and interactions with other smaller animals.
- **Extended Mental Health Awareness programs**
RDA NSW was fortunate to secure a grant from NSW Health to establish and extend its services to improve mental health and well-being. Developing workshops for volunteers, staff and board members will benefit participants with post-traumatic stress disorders and other social or psychological needs.

Two years ago, Dennis and I were honoured to host a wonderful 50th Anniversary of Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW) at Government House. That followed a challenging period for the community. We are heartened to see how the Association has forged ahead and continues to support people with disabilities to achieve their goals through its 34 centres around New South Wales.

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC Mr Dennis Wilson
Governor of New South Wales

Government House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000
telephone: 02 9228 4111 | website: www.governor.nsw.gov.au



OFFICIAL

The Hon Steve Kamper MP

Minister for Small Business
Minister for Lands and Property
Minister for Multiculturalism
Minister for Sport



Ref: CRML24/65

Ms Jan Pike OAM PLY
Director, Company Secretary
Riding for the Disabled NSW
PO Box 710
SYDNEY MARKETS NSW 2000

By email: stateoffice@rdansw.org.au

Dear Ms Pike,

Message for RDA Annual Report 2022/23

Thank you for your letter of 12 February 2024 regarding a letter of support for your Annual Report 2022/23. I am pleased to provide the following message for inclusion in the Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW) 2023 Annual Report.

Message from the Minister for Sport

The NSW Government is committed to promoting participation in sport and active recreation for all members of the NSW community regardless of age, background, abilities, and gender.

We are pleased to have continued, through the Office of Sport, to provide funding and support to the Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW) to enhance your equine programs for people with disability in NSW.

Your ongoing work through your network of members, coaches, and volunteers ensures people with a disability across NSW have access to exceptional equine programs that provide safe and enjoyable experiences in and around horses and riding.

I understand that the 2023 State Dressage Championships, Gymkhana & Mounted Games at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre (SIEC) was a particularly successful event, and participants, supporters and staff had very enjoyable and rewarding experiences.

I acknowledge the hard work and commitment that goes into providing these opportunities for participants, and I extend my congratulations to everyone involved in your organisation.

Sincerely,

Steve Kamper MP
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Lands and Property
Minister for Multiculturalism
Minister for Sport

52 Martin Place Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 5341 Sydney NSW 2001

02 7225 6140
nsw.gov.au/ministerkamper

1

OFFICIAL

Life Members

| | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| 1979 | Pearl Batchelor OAM (dec.) Josephine MacWilliam (dec.) | 1994 | John Plowman (dec.) |
| 1986 | Jenny Davis Margaret Norman OAM Nan Everingham (dec.) Sheila Hardy (dec.) Del Throsby (dec.) Phillip Edwards (dec.) Ross Field (dec.) | 2001 | Kerry Johnston |
| 1987 | Aileen Davis OAM | 2004 | Jan Pike OAM |
| 1988 | Maureen Turner | 2006 | Wendy Torr OAM |
| 1990 | Marguerite Francis OAM | 2007 | Peter Carn |
| 1992 | Judith Adam | 2010 | Fiona Little (dec.) |
| | | 2012 | Bev Amery OAM |
| | | 2014 | Jan Sharp OAM (dec.) Gerard Murphy OAM |
| | | 2015 | Eric Lengling |
| | | 2023 | Jenny Cameron |





**2023
CHAMPION**



WINNER



OBAMBURUMAI (JPN)

Golden Eagle 2023

RDA (NSW) were so fortunate to be partnered with the wonderful Japanese horse OBAMBURUMAI in 2023's Golden Eagle. Racing NSW notified us of our selection and of course we were "over the moon". This wonderful little champion and his fantastic jockey, Josh Parr, brought home the gold!

We met the owners and the trainer who were all so excited. Many thanks to them also for partnering with RDA (NSW). Ten percent of the prize money was donated to RDA (NSW).



CHARITY PARTNER



OBAMBURUMAI

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED NSW

Awards

Winners Of Each Region AGM Awards 2023

Pearl Batchelor Award

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Florian Wieser | Box Hill "Tall Timbers" | Metropolitan |
| Katherine Cole | Goulburn | Southern Highlands |
| Marie Purkis | Kempsey/Macleay | Mid North Coast |
| Tracy Lucas | Mudgee | Central West |
| Michelle Eastwood | Wagga | Riverina |

Volunteer Encouragement Award

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Kate & Jared Guild | Box Hill "Tall Timbers" | Metropolitan |
| Linda Bower | Central Coast | Hunter |
| Kristy Retzlaff | Wagga | Riverina |

Young Volunteer of the Year

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Lauren Downey | Box Hill "Tall Timbers" | Metropolitan |
| Eva Wellen | Wagga | Riverina |

Rider / Driver of the Year

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Cody Sneesby | Box Hill "Tall Timbers" | Metropolitan |
| Jacob Gordon | Wagga | Riverina |
| Belinda Jones | Central Coast | Hunter |

Shush Memorial Award

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| "Nugget" | Box Hill "Tall Timbers" | Metropolitan |
| "Chaffie" | Wagga | Riverina |
| "Freddy" | Kempsey/Macleay | Mid North Coast |
| "Theo" | Mudgee | Central West |

Rider / Driver Encouragement Award

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Paige Robinson | Box Hill "Tall Timbers" | Metropolitan |
| Noah Dogao | Box Hill "Tall Timbers" | Metropolitan |



Winners Of AGM Awards 2023



Pearl Batchelor Medal

| | |
|------|----------------------|
| 2010 | Margaret Randall |
| 2012 | Wendy Torr OAM |
| 2014 | Jan Sharp OAM (dec.) |
| 2016 | Margaret Norman OAM |
| 2020 | Jan Pike OAM |
| 2023 | Jenny Cameron |

Pearl Batchelor Medal – Jenny Cameron



Jenny Cameron joined RDA more than 25 years ago at the Central Coast Centre. As a loving wife and mother she was also looking to contribute to the Central Coast area and use the skills that she had learned as a farmer in the UK.

Jenny is the heart of the Central Coast Centre and the person who is across everything that is required and occurring to ensure the smooth and efficient management of the horses, paddocks, centre operations and coordination of the new and existing volunteers. This selfless dedication has continued for over 25 years even after the recent loss of her beloved husband Bill.

Whilst being a very knowledgeable coach and patient instructor, she is also a wonderful mentor to our volunteers. Jenny is always happy to receive suggestions for improvements and relates well with everyone she deals with to ensure the excellent horse riding opportunities for our riders. Jenny's personality and confidence to achieve whatever is required from local government representatives and business leaders has resulted in much improved facilities for the Centre over the years and in future planning.

Jenny has held every committee position and is a natural leader who inspires and leads with a positive attitude to achieve whatever financial or other challenges the Centre faces. This generosity of spirit and intent has extended to also cover dedication to her recent role as the Hunter and Central Coast Region Representative; as well as serving as an honorary director on the RDA (NSW) Board Until 2023.

NSW Employee Volunteer of the Year Nominee – Lucy Petony



Many of you know that Lucy Petony has been a very important person in our RDA family. In November, we celebrated with Lucy as she received recognition for nomination as a finalist in NSW Employee Volunteer of the Year Awards.

Lucy has worked with RDA (NSW) for over 18 years and has in that time become an integral part of our Association. Lucy has maintained a calm and professional demeanour whilst having to deal with many frontline enquires from both within and outside the organisation. Lucy provides a pivotal role within RDA and is always supportive of volunteers, directors and riders alike.

Lucy's personality and experience have helped keep RDA's administration side of our business in order. All of our centres know of Lucy with most having had regular contact.

Congratulations on your award Lucy and we hope you realise how appreciated you are!

North Coast

Tweed Valley • Ballina & District • Coffs Harbour



Coffs Harbour

Coffs Harbour & District

This year we have been settling into our new home and enjoying its beautiful location. The weather has been dry with few lessons washed out, but this has meant that feed growth has been reduced. We have welcomed some new clients and keen volunteers to our dedicated team and hope to expand further next year.

Centre Developments

Following the receipt of a government grant we were able to complete our arena fencing and put down a sand base. The remaining funds will go towards an awning and deck area outside our office to provide shade and cover. As we have settled into our new home we have appreciated the garden areas that the owners have worked hard on to make our area welcoming.

Riders

It's been a delight to see our clients have fun whilst improving their riding skills and benefit from just being around our horses. Currently our client numbers are down but have been putting a lot of effort into growing our client base with hopes for next year.

We welcomed two new clients, both non riders in wheelchairs, who loved to spend time with our horses in a shady, tranquil spot grooming, patting, and feeding.

Over the winter two of our clients undertook to learn new skills and compete in their first ever video dressage competition. All the volunteers and clients were thrilled to learn they had both achieved joint first place.



Horse Stories

Three of our fabulous horses, Real Deal, Choco and Chappy, have had the opportunity to showcase their skills in working with wheelchair clients this year which has taught everyone involved many valuable lessons about horse handling and the benefits of non-ridden connections with these wonderful animals.

Amarula surprised many of us with her beautiful form and movement in dressage lessons and competitions igniting a new passion in one of her enamoured riders.

Coaches

Currently we have two coaches, two assistant coaches, one of which is now a trainee coach, and a new trainee assistant coach. Our new trainee has benefited from attending the workshop in Sydney.

Community Events and Fundraising

In October we attended a Bunnings community event to promote RDA in the Coffs area and held a raffle to fundraise. A Bunnings BBQ was held in December to raise funds for our deck and awning. This also proved an invaluable opportunity to promote RDA within our community with some hopeful new clients in the New year.

Volunteers

Over the year we have gained some keen volunteers joining our devoted team that bring joy to our clients. We continue to benefit from a high volunteer retention rate with three of our team receiving ten- and fifteen-year service pins at our end of year celebrations. We currently have a core team of twelve volunteers which we will need to expand as our clientele base grows.





Ballina & District

2023 has been a challenging year for Ballina RDA. However, despite the difficulties and restrictions placed on the centre our volunteers and coaches have managed to keep our sessions running and our beautiful centre and herd in tip top condition. The committee would like to thank each and every person who has helped us achieve our purpose this year.

There were 18 registered riders in 2023, attending over two mornings. We continued to receive riders from Biala Special School, many returning from the previous year. In term 4 we sponsored Samantha, whose family were experiencing hardship. She particularly loved the interaction with the horses over the fence, despite being reluctant to actually ride.

Several children trotted for the first time and enjoyed paddock rides.

We had 9 horses at the end of 2023. Sadly we lost Elvis this year due to health issues. We recently acquired Dylan through a donation. He is a TB and former racehorse, has a lovely quiet nature and is adjusting well to life at RDA.

In 2023 we had 2 coaches, 1 assistant and 3 trainees. Our Tuesday coach Lorraine retired at the end of the year, and we wish her well and thank her for her many years at Ballina Centre. We hope to nominate her for Life Membership of Ballina Centre.

Visitors to the centre included a group from the Baptist Care home at Coraki who enjoyed the opportunity for a pat and carrot feed.

We were also visited by the owner of Japanoz racing stables in Ballina who is a local connection to the horse who won the Golden Eagle in 2023. He enjoyed seeing lessons in progress and was keen to continue his relationship with us.

In 2023 we received donations from CWA Ballina, Lions Club, RSL Staff Fund, Rabbit Trappers Social Bowlers, and Steve Woodfield and we thank all of them for their generosity.

Fundraising included a Bunnings BBQ and bucket shaking at Lennox market. We also held a tack/garage sale at the centre which was very successful.

Volunteer numbers fluctuate over time, but averaged 40 for the year. Each riding day has a core group of regulars who we are most grateful to for their dedication and commitment.

We hope 2024 will be a successful year for all centres, and that we can continue to provide our services well into the future.

Mid North Coast

Manning Great Lakes • Kempsey-Macleay
Wauchope/Port Macquarie



Kempsey-Macleay

Manning Great Lakes

The Centre celebrates its 25th Anniversary on 19 November 2023 with an informal gathering of past and present riders and volunteers to be held at a luncheon at the Centre.

2023 started out smoothly and then turned into what can only be described as a tumultuous year that has really tested the dedication and perseverance of our volunteers.

With just a handful of riding days under our belt our head Coach Sue Hardinge-White had to take an extensive leave of absence at the end of Term 1. Whilst Sue is not present at the Centre very often, she remains our Head Coach and Regional Representative, and consults with the Centre regularly.

Fortunately, we were able to attract one of our former Coaches Amber Hargreaves back to the Centre, who took us through Terms 2 and 3 of the riding year. Then in Term 4 Kempsey's Coach Wendy Dunbar offered to act as a visiting Coach after Amber took leave and then resigned.

We are deepening our Coaching pool and have developed plans to accelerate trainees to the Assistant Coach level over the Xmas recess period. We will also be conducting mock riding sessions to broaden the practical experience of trainees. We are also encouraging some of our Assistant Coaches and our Whip to acquire the Coaching qualifications.

Our volunteer base has been slowly building up and we have another 5 regulars taking us from 23 volunteers in 2022 to 28 as we close 2023. MGL is in a holiday area of the Mid-North Coast and during the COVID period, a two or three riding schools popped up and are using NDIS funds to offer one-on-one riding for people with disabilities who are high functioning. These riding schools tap into the same volunteer resource base making it very challenging to attract volunteers. They also have taken some of our riders who are funded by NDIS.

Rider numbers started the year at 13, but fell away in terms 2 and 3 to just 7 regular riders. I think the change in coaching styles between term 1 and terms 2 and 3 had an impact. However, the biggest impact has been a lack of suitable horses. Over the last year we lost two of our best riding horses; Scarlet was retired in late 2022 with chronic back problems, and at the end of term 1 Goldie was retired to a therapy centre due to an eye illness similar to macular degeneration.

Cinnabar who had been a very good riding horse during 2022, started to loose condition earlier in the year which turned out to be a teeth problem which caused feeding issues and pain. After the Centre invested nearly \$4,000 fixing Cinnabar's teeth, she started to put on weight again. However, her back legs appeared weak and the Vet diagnosed back issues that were confirmed by a horse chiropractor who said Cinnabar has had a big fall, probably when she was a racehorse and her back would likely never improve. Consequently, Cinnabar has been barely ridden this year and the Committee and Horse Management Team have decided to move her on.

In term 3 our two petting minis; Tullah and Missy were retired to pasture in Wingham. During term 4, Dolly has been the only



horse rideable and has some behavioural problems that we are working through. Pax our beautiful, 15.2 hh, 7 year old Chesnut Gelding, is not suitable for RDA riding at the moment. He simply has too much energy and is too strong and needs much more work than we can possibly give him.

We received a \$10,000 donation from the Nabyac Neighbourhood Centre and Op Shop earlier in the year and used half of that money to open up our pleasure park area and make it more accessible for riding and carriage driving.

Manning Valley Cruzers gave a generous \$4,500 donation they raised in their annual Mountain to Ocean car rally.

The Forster Tuncurry Jockey Club asked us to recommence doing their food preparation and shop outlet at each race day. Whilst a lot of work for \$500, the donations we receive from the punters makes this fundraiser worthwhile, often doubling and sometimes trebling our takings.

Our \$50,000 grant to buy two new horses, build three new horse shelters, and replace our aging tractor, was unsuccessful. So we will try again next year, and probably split the requirement into three grants.

Our search for new horses has intensified, we will use some of our reserves to acquire two or possible three new horses.



Wauchope / Port Macquarie

We have 9 horses for our 27 riders.

Not having a horse that can carry the heavier riders has meant no riding for these heavier riders this year. We have 1-2 new horses being assessed and are hopeful when we return next year the full contingent of groups can resume riding. Plus 5 riders from a local school will begin in the New Year. Mainly the horses have been well. Ongoing training with the horses is keeping them responsive and appropriate for the riders. We trialled a few horses that were deemed too forward moving and not suitable at this time. Lovely temperaments but needing a fair amount of work under saddle before possibly being suitable.



Bluey is a favorite and his temperament suits his riders well.

Riki continues to be steady with his sometimes-over-active riders. Being an ex-pacer, he listens sharply to the bell that indicates the last 5 minutes of the lesson.

Ellie, our oldest, has happy riders. She has been a stock farm horse, she learnt to enjoy troop line, but it took her a while to happily stand still. When she is returned to the paddock, if there are cows, Ellie still works them.

Bari is the most sturdy and steady little pony. He puts up with some hard riders, some who want him to go faster by their enthusiastic urges.



Clipper is a steady favorite that many of our beginners started on and as they grew bigger, they were moved onto other horses. However they would all love to ride him even now.

Nightmare our pony who provides great rides, carrying an energetic and active rider, also other mobility challenged riders, needing side walkers. She is always ready on Tuesdays to come in to the riding day.

Jaffa and Jinks are both such well-loved and special ponies. Their riders have fun and continue learning to ride well.

Lex's riders have progressed well, he doesn't mind his rider pretending to be a cowboy. He is a favourite with many now riding off the lead.

We have a most improved rider award trophy for the first time – The Kevin Waldron Memorial Trophy. With 6 contenders seriously considered, the inaugural most improved rider was Samantha (Sammy) Johnston. The award was presented by Mrs. Colleen Waldron and Mr. John Smith, Centre President.



We have 3 coaches, 2 assistant coaches, and 1 trainee assistant coach. We had 2 assistant coaches pass their assessments this year.



April 2023, we received a donation of an old tractor and small slasher. It was transported from Sydney to Wauchope, where the restoration took place, the tractor was mechanically checked, registered and now ready to work slashing the three paddocks for our horses. A shed for the tractor was erected by our maintenance crew at the Wauchope Showground next to the feed container, material and gates were donated by the Wauchope Show society. We have a very enthusiastic maintenance crew always willing to help, Greg, Tony, John, Ross and Lyndsay, between these fellows They can fix most things requiring repair. We received a very generous donation of 50 bales of hay from the "hay runners" greatly appreciated.



The Volunteers continue to attend training days, alternate weeks at the show ground and at Robyn's. All our volunteers continue to provide a great service to our riders. We enjoy our team and look forward to the start of the day – grooming, saddling, and setting up for the day's program.

With local Racehorse trainer support, we were able to have a truly colorful Melbourne Cup riding day. Our riders wear the "colours" and are keen to show off their riding capabilities.

Our thanks go to Blaze Aid for assisting with our fence around the horse paddock. The last few floods opened up some exits. But now we have a secure paddock again.

Also, a special thanks to our tireless maintenance and general committee. Without our great supportive Volunteers, we would not be able to provide our riders with their riding experience in such a friendly and caring way.



Kempsey-Macleay

Executive summary – Highlights and Achievements

The weather played havoc once again this year. In March the Macleay experienced yet another flood and then dangerous fires later in the year saw yet again another stressful time for people of the valley. Our Centre encountered a few disruptions to our riding days due to these events.

We have had 19 new volunteer registrations this year. Their commitment is very much appreciated on riding days also days helping out with desensitizing the horses and cleaning paddocks and sheds etc.

Our highlights have been minimal but we have had a safe and enjoyable time throughout the year 2023.

Centre Developments

Crowd control fencing was purchased and erected to allow safe riding outside the enclosed arena. This was erected by volunteers with some help from Showground maintenance staff.

Much needed internal lining and dust proofing of the RDA Shed and installation of a fixed cupboard for storing kitchen items was undertaken earlier this year.

Riders/Rides

We had a total of 19 rider registrations of varying ages.

Two younger riders from two different schools enrolled this year and are thoroughly enjoying their riding experiences.

We have also enjoyed watching the progression of a Year 11 rider in Terms 3 and 4. This young man liked the idea of horse riding and being around horses but did not have the confidence to actually mount a horse. With lots of encouragement from our volunteers, he has progressed to riding off lead in the arena. It has been amazing for all RDA volunteers to watch how his anxiety decreased and his confidence grow in such a short time.

This bright young man also took one of the lead roles in a play performed in the local area last month and at our Presentation Day on the last day of riding he confidently spoke and thanked all volunteers for their help and encouragement.



Horse stories

We have had 5 horses in work for most of the year, along with our two Shetlands.

Our horses have performed well and look great. Unfortunately, we lost one of our reliable horses in November when she was hit by a lightning strike. "Lady" was unable to be saved.

We have purchased a 15year 13.3 Pinto pony who is working very well and will be an asset to our Centre

The Shetlands have proven to be a great asset for our Centre this year. Their temperament has allowed us to take them to a number of events during the year at the showground for petting and grooming which has been well received by those present.

We have non-riders who attend a weekly session for petting and grooming of the Shetlands.



Coaching

We currently have two coaches and one trainee assistant coach who has applied to be assessed in the new year

We were extremely lucky to also have had a newer volunteer accept our invitation to start her trainee coach course in late December this year

All coaching personnel have reported a huge improvement from all participants during sessions and feel this has come from having stability and support provided by our team of dedicated volunteers.

Community Events and Fundraising

Shetlands (Tia and Dunny) are proving to be great little ambassadors for our RDA Centre.

Our Centre was invited to participate at the Macleay Options Workshop – Healthy Minds Youth Fun Day in May. Tia and Dunny were taken along for petting and grooming. They were on their best behavior throughout the day and were well received by all in attendance. They were also very popular and a big hit with the kids when we took them to the Kempsey Motor Show held in November. The Shetlands also brought home some ribbons when competing in the led class at the local Kempsey Show.

These events were so very well supported by our loyal volunteers and this enabled us to get our organisation out and about in the community to demonstrate what a wonderful service we provide and what we have to offer the community.

We also received an invitation earlier this year from Coastline Credit Union to showcase Kempsey-Macleay RDA in the form of a display of saddles/videos/information leaflets etc in the foyer of the West Kempsey branch for two weeks.

We have received monetary support from many local organisations this year which were so greatly appreciated.

Volunteers

Our volunteer numbers have now started to increase from the after effects of COVID. We currently have 19 dedicated volunteers attending regularly and all proudly wearing the Centre purple and white uniform which is a positive thing to see when the participants arrive for their sessions.



Hunter

Central Coast • Upper Hunter • Kendall
Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter



Central Coast

A Year of Achievements!!

2023 saw some great achievements for our Centre and volunteers.

Thanks to Treasurer Greg Gibson's hard work we received \$58,460 in grants – including a \$50,500 State Government Grant which enabled the building of a large shed to house our hay and workshop, replacing the existing 20-year-old smaller version. Outdoor operations are now much more efficient, and the better availability of space has enabled our machinery and vehicle to be housed separately in our other shed.

A generous grant of \$4,000 from the RDA State Office has also contributed to the replacement of the first of 7 old horse shelters that need replacing; with work to proceed shortly.

Our 61 riders have enjoyed their classes this year and have all progressed well; including our independent class who are also becoming competent in more advanced horsemanship.

Of our 10 horses, we now have two previous paddock mates from a private owner – Buddy and Zip. They both have delightful characteristics and are becoming fast favorites amongst our riders and volunteers.

We have 55 regular volunteers and are very honoured to have the newest Pearl Batchelor Medal winner at our Centre. Jenny Cameron was awarded this with her family and Centre members watching this year. It was also a delightful surprise for Jenny who did not know that we had planned to gather in celebration of her amazing achievement.



Our Centre is also fortunate to have a high calibre of trainee coaches this year under President Gaynor's excellent mentoring; including Merelynn Southall and Sally Carey who recently qualified as Assistant Coaches. We are very thankful that these generous volunteers stepped up to provide us with new coaches to ensure a fabulous succession plan for our Centre.



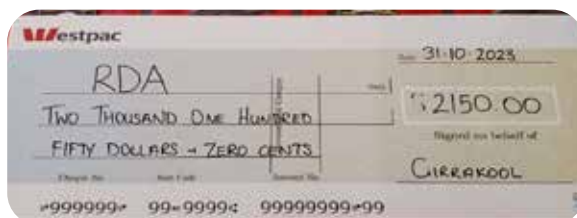
We are fortunate to have strong community support from our horse sponsors and community organisations and were thrilled this year when one of our independent rider's sisters – Courtney Cottle (who is only 15) - offered to hold an exhibition of her art and donate a percentage to our Centre. Courtney is so grateful for the benefits that she has seen her sister Harmoni receive whilst horse-riding at RDA and was very happy for her \$3,000 donation to be used to sponsor (horse) Duke.



In November our volunteer Melissa Jones (also a Lions Club President and one of our horse sponsors) organised a World Festival of Magic Show with Magician Jonas Jost for local disabled children and named our Centre as the beneficiary of funds from this show – an amazing gesture with an excellent outcome.



Closer to home, the students from Girrakool School (part of the Juvenile Justice Centre on whose lands we operate) raffled a guitar that they had made and donated \$2,150 to our Centre when they visited us. We have assigned sponsorship of horse Zip with this money and look forward to an ongoing association with this school.





Kendall

Highlights and Achievements

Over the last 12 months we have had to overcome of a substantial amount of obstacles, as we have had to meet the criteria set by the council because we are a New Centre, all of this has been a massive drain on our finances. We have taken all the tasks onboard and achieved everything that has been required.

We are certainly hoping that next year will be a whole lot easier!

Riders

Currently we have 3 classes on both of our riding days Tuesday and Wednesday. It was a gradual increase from the start of the year with our riders. We welcomed some of our long term riders back, as well as the local school children coming along and filling 2 of our 3 classes on the Tuesday.

Volunteers

Our Volunteer Orientation Day in February was very successful, but over the past 12 months it has been difficult to maintain our numbers, with volunteers coming and going, due to holidaying and work commitments. But, thank goodness we have a great core group of very reliable and capable volunteers who have stuck with us through this difficult year. We are constantly advertising on our local radio or any advertising seeking new volunteers who would be able to come and assist on our riding days.

Community Events and Fundraising

Every year we hold 4 raffles, Mother's Day, Winter Warmers, Father's Day and Christmas Raffle. All of this helps to keep us out there in front of the Community who are always very supportive of our Centre, as well as assisting with our feed costs.

The Kew Golf Club hold the Bato Memorial



Fundraiser for us every year in November, this is always good fun, as well as being an extremely good fundraiser for us, so we are very thankful to everyone involved.

We have been successful with a few grants this year, this has given us the opportunity to purchase another water tank, thank goodness, we knew there would be a drought eventually. We were also able to purchase a round yard and to have a concrete driveway from entry to exit completed in the September school holidays.

Horses

We have managed most of the year with our 4 wonderful horses, of which 3 are sponsored. But, recently we purchased Finn, an retired race horse, who has a wonderful nature and is quickly becoming one of the favourites for volunteers and our riders.

Coaching

At present we have 1 coach and 1 supervising coach, with Nic now doing the AC course.

This has been difficult for our current coach, because if she is sick or unavailable, we have had to cancel classes or call upon our wonderful Regional Rep Jenny to supervise the AC, especially if our supervising coach is also away. We have been extremely lucky with Nic, being one of new volunteers that started very early in the year to put her hand up to do the Assistant Trainee Coaching course. We are extremely lucky to have Nic on board, she is doing an amazing job.

Hopefully, 2024 will be a lot smoother for everyone.

Wishing everyone all the best for the coming year from everyone at RDA Kendall Centre.



Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter

It has been an amazing year with many Highlights and Achievements:

- Mounted Games competition enjoyed by all who attended – congratulations to all to who were involved
- Theme days – Easter, and Ride-a-thon
- Stroud Carriage Driving won several of our Centre awards – Volunteer of the Year, Cherie Mason, Rider/Driver of the Year, Tim Henson, and Horse of the Year – Tinker
- New horses joined our herd – welcome to Banjo and Ava
- Trainee coaches started their journey – congratulations to Cheryl Gander of Monday group and Cheryl Cooper and Lesley Anne Clifton of Tuesday group
- Grants received to help with skip hire, purchase of new brush cutter, horse feed, concrete parking area and pathways
- Donations and support received from Benedict, Bunnings Heatherbrae, Busy B's of Port Stephens, Maitland Toyota, Hansons, de Prinzio, ReoWorld, Murphy Plumbing, Kevin Martin Signs, Mens' Shed Salamander Bay, Tamburlaine Wines, Imperial Hotel Maitland and many others
- Updated Sensory Garden for our riders – thanks to the donations of labour and materials as well as the hard work of volunteers over three working bees
- Fund raising efforts include but not limited to: Mother's Day Raffle (donated goods), Bunnings BBQ's, wine drive in conjunction with Tamburlaine Wines, Hunter Valley, Melbourne Cup Day in conjunction with Imperial Hotel Maitland
- Volunteer Morning Tea held in October to present our Volunteer Awards

We currently offer two weekly programs, Mondays and Tuesdays to our riders at the Raymond Terrace Centre.

We also offer two fortnightly programs, Tuesdays at our Stroud Annexe for Carriage Driving and Saturday at our Raymond Terrace Centre.

Our volunteer numbers fluctuate from time to time but generally we have around 80 active volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure the Centre is available to those who need it.



Metropolitan

Ryde • Blue Mountains • Box Hill “Tall Timbers” • Richmond



Ryde

Ryde

We greeted the start of 2023 with growing optimism and confidence after the Covid years and other challenges. What eventuated exceeded expectations. We have increased the number of horses, classes, Coaches, volunteers and community supporters. As a result, we have been able to increase our rides, riders and smiles.

Riding

This year we had over 1400 rides which is up 28% on last year. Two days a week the bus arrives and the children from local primary schools hurry out. While some are full of enthusiasm from the start, others take a while to settle in. However, in the end, they all gain new abilities and the confidence to enjoy the classes and they, their teachers and families are justly proud. We also had about 50 new individual riders attend over four working mornings. The riders learn basic riding skills, gain self-confidence and pride, build strength and better balance, and have wonderful stories to share with family and friends.



While our Centre may not generally offer a pathway to independent riding, four of our riders joined our pilot short course of Skills Development which we may offer again in the future. One rider attended SIEC using a horse, kindly lent by Tall Timbers. We graduated one new Coach and have a new AC in training. We were pleased to host the RDA (NSW) Coaches' Workshop in June. While the teaching and learning was invaluable, the feast provided by our volunteers was also one of the highlights.

Horses

For two years now, we have had a service agreement with a local horse owner, for the supply and training of suitable horses for our classes. We now have 6 horses and many of our classes have six riders so the horses too are working hard to bring smiles to those less fortunate.

Volunteers

This year we have over 50 new volunteers becoming regulars along with our Duke of Edinburgh students and University placements. We have introduced "Volunteer Impact" software. Our amazing "gardening gang" keeps our grounds and our arena neat, tidy and safe. Others also cheerfully continue the inevitable cleaning, repairs and maintenance.

Our community

As a volunteer organisation we find ourselves drawn to like-minded people and have made good friends in governments at all levels, local Clubs, businesses, Rotary, Apex and other groups who are often moved to donate. Their personal support also encourages us in the pursuit of our vital mission. Our community events team once again created two marvellous events during the year being "Christmas in July" and "Halloween with the Horses". Hundreds of local families, riders and volunteers attended these fully accessible events which create new community friendships and assist with fundraising.





Grants, finance and governance

Our Committee meets monthly and on alternate months meets with our Centre's Members. We have had a successful year financially and expect to reverse the decline induced by Covid. Successful grant applications have yielded upgrades to our IT, CCTV, helmets stocks and LED lighting. Bendigo Community Bank at Epping funded our new solar system and will also fund a new horse for 2 years. City of Ryde has installed 10 new car park spaces to cater for our growing supporters.

The future

Located in the Centre of Sydney, demand is almost infinite. Hence our resolve to expand the numbers of volunteers, Coaches, horses, facilities and finances to enable us to bring "more smiles for more riders at Ryde".

Box Hill "Tall Timbers"

Some key points from our year at RDA (NSW) Box Hill:

- More than 2100 Equine program sessions completed with 134 Participants and more than 4,000 hours of Volunteer contribution. This is an average of 52 sessions a week during school terms, these programs ranged from individual to group sessions, from riding to groundwork, life skills and mechanical horse to Connections programs.
- Volunteer of the Year – Florian Weiser
- Volunteer Appreciation Award – Kate and Jared Guild
- Most Improved Rider of the Year – Paige Robinson
- Rider Encouragement Awards – Noah Dogao
- Horse of the Year – Nugget





We were pleased to be able to install Bird netting into the area as part of the Community Building Partnership Grant program along with upgrading the arena lights.

Our Volunteers were amazing at keeping the property work under control with weekly gardening and property maintenance crew regularly keeping the property looking good and safe.

Karoo, Mouse and Archie headed over the rainbow bridge and we farewelled Dapper into a new home all leaving their mark on the programs and holes to fill. The rest of the Horse Team stepped up and were kept busy with programs right up until mid-December. The horses also participated in Equine Pathways Australia clinics and SES and Ambulance NSW Large Animal Rescue training courses. It was great to see that we were also able to support Briar and Cody to attend an EPA clinic in December. Shiraz celebrated her 10 years of service to RDA Box Hill "Tall Timbers" Centre.

It was exciting to have Mounted Games back in a new format alongside the Dressage Championships. We were pleased to be able to take Bailey and Pablo and support Briar, Cody, Sarah, Layla to attend as well as support Alisha from Ryde Centre riding Pablo and Mikayla from MGL Centre to participate in the weekends events.

The Mounted Games day held at the Centre was a great opportunity for riders and their families to come together and participate many for the first time and others stepping up a level. We also held our Horsemanship classes for the participants from our Groundwork and Life Skills programs.

Our Committee and Volunteers were busy with our Fundraising events; Bunnings BBQs, Model Railways Canteen, Bingo Afternoon, Plant Fair, Play for Purpose Raffles, Return and Earn, Horses' Birthday Lunch and RDA Golf Day. We continue to offer Allied Health services and whilst our OT programs are currently searching for a new OT our Speech Pathology services have continued to grow and we are also supporting the local area through our connection to North West Community Services.

Once again, we presented our Volunteers with Service awards including Robyn Given for 45 years, Pip Lovely for 20 years, Robyn Scott and Sophie Scarlett for 15 years, Florian Wieser for 10 years in addition to other awards for 5, 3 and 1 years of service.





We are committed to continuing to engage with the community and assure them that the Centre is here to stay despite the rumours! The team at Tall Timbers work hard to innovate and create experiences for the Participants to learn and develop skills for their future!

Volunteer condolences: Doug Denby OAM and Kath Smith OAM

Horse condolences: Karoo, Mouse and Archie

Richmond

Highlights and Achievements

Over 2023, the commitment of our amazing team of volunteer workers on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday managed to get riders in the saddle for around 95% of scheduled riding days. The horse management team also have done an amazing job keeping the herd fit and healthy. The team at Richmond were all invited to Godolphin Race Horse facility for a Tour and Breakfast, participated in an RDA dedicated fundraiser at Sciberras Feed Supplies. The Crowne Plaza Hospitality team gave up days in September to volunteer at Richmond and then invited us all to a Christmas buffet at the Hotel. We benefited from working with Sky TV on the Golden eagle, and the follow up at the Centre for Sky TV "Thoroughbreds Are Go", we made an advert for the Shed Company to show off the Shed they built for us and have our centre on their adverts.

Centre developments

Grants secured to complete recycled rainwater systems and sprinklers for arena, correct the drainage, construct a purpose-built horse wash stand, erect a cover over the ramp and fit guttering, repair all damaged fences and gates. Install new water pump.

Riders

- We have 20 regular riders on a Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- Five riders who have completed their first year with us who have now progressed to riding independently and trotting.
- Gretta, who has been riding with us for 3 years now has been appointed as an ambassador for people with disabilities and has recently attended a government conference in Canberra.
- Two new riders who have been assessed, one has commenced riding with us and the other will commence at the beginning of next year's sessions.



Horse stories

- Number of horses on site is currently five the favourites amongst riders seem to still be Burger and Gibson
- Unique characteristics of existing horses are an ex-racehorse, two eventers and two ex-pacers.
- The two new horses are Monty and Randy, both ex-pacers.
- In December the horses normally go on holiday until early Feb in Kurrajong.

Coaching

We have three full coaches Wendy , Ian, Mal , one assistant coach Bruce and one trainee coach Clare.

Community events and fundraising

The team were involved in the RDA dedicated fundraising day at Sciberras Feed Supplies, Volunteers took part in the Annual Hawkesbury Show by working at the show and the money going to Richmond Centre. The centre helped organise the RDA NSW Raceday at Hawkesbury Race ground proceeds going to local centres, Presentation of thanks was done to the Rotary Club for their support of RDA, The Centre was registered on the Earn and Return system locally.

We received some great Media coverage by working with one of our supporters who are Sky TV Thoroughbreds are Go creating a lot of interest and got us involved with the Golden Eagle Day at Rosehill which hopefully will benefit all RDA NSW Centres with their share of \$525,000

Support also this year also came from Godolphin Racing, Fairview Stud, Windsor RSL, Endeavour Power, The Shed Company, Bendigo Bank,

Volunteers

- 22 volunteers attend over the 3 days on a Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday, including coaches.
- Clare a long-time regular volunteer has commenced training as an assistant coach.
- Volunteers attended the fundraiser at Hawkesbury Show and at the Sciberras fundraiser



Southern Highlands

Wollondilly • Moss Vale • Cowra • Illawarra
Goulburn • Young



Wollondilly

Wollondilly

In January the fence between our block and pony club was finished. This was funded with a grant from the Black Summer Bushfire funding round. We were thrilled to hear that Aileen Davis a much loved and well respected rider and friend had received an OAM in the January awards.

During 2023 three of our members Allan, Jill and Rosie were thrilled and honoured to receive a Centre Lifetime Membership badge. One of our riders Tracy was nominated for an award.

During the latter part of 2022 Picton Rotary together with local tradesmen upgraded the kitchen in pony club and our building. The work done was amazing. It made things so much easier to find and safer to operate from on riding days. In February Rotary visited and presented us with a sign – "Kids Kitchen" which was proudly hung on the wall. So we started the new year with a lovely new kitchen to show our riders and volunteers.

We welcomed back riders from Aspec and Beverley Park schools and two individual riders.

We were thrilled to learn that army personnel from the rehabilitation unit at Holsworthy barracks would again be coming along to assist on riding days. This year saw four new volunteers come along – Jen, Joan, James and Thomas.

Our four legged members were also welcomed back. Hummer, Sarge, Chris, Willow and Bella. Unfortunately, Bella contracted peritonitis and was on medication for quite awhile but happily it wasn't long before she was back to her old self. We are still looking for two more horses.

In March workers from the Department of Community Justice started voluntary work on pony club grounds and after some discussion agreed to take on our RDA grounds. On a regular basis during the year they maintained our grounds mowing, raking and tidying up. This was very much appreciated.

Rosie, Kelly, William, Allan and Jill attended the State AGM in May to see Tracy receive her Rider of the Year Award. She attended with her Mum and Dad and it was a very special time for all. On the next riding day after the AGM we held a morning tea for Tracy and Aileen, who had received her OAM in January.

Also in May we received information that Simec-Tahmoor Mines were looking for community projects for their apprentices to be involved in. Allan and Rosie met with the engineers from the mines and a few "bucket list" jobs were agreed to: putting power to our shed, stalls moved and replaced, water was connected to the stalls for a future wash bay to be built. They also installed sensor lights into the toilets and renewed lighting on the verandah. If all that wasn't enough they did some clearing and levelled out in front of our building and seeded it, also providing a sprinkler so we could keep it watered. All this work was done in July and before they left they removed the old bath tub and replaced it with a new water trough which they purchased for us. They have indicated that they would like to come back in February 2024



to start on a few more projects. We so appreciate the work these young people do and can never thank them enough!

Rosie held Training days throughout the year which were well attended by the volunteers, the army personnel particularly enjoyed them.

Rosie also held Coaching and Training days with James and Thomas as they had indicated that they would like to start the coaching journey. Thomas very much enjoyed receiving riding lessons from Rosie on Chris. James and Thomas were also introduced them to the paperwork involved in coaching.

We were very fortunate to have been supported through the year by the following wonderful people. Coles at Picton, House Tahmoor, Matthew & Elizabeth Raad, Picton Social Tennis, Picton Medical Centre, B.P. Picton, Camden Lioness Club, Picton CWA. The local RFS also helped us out by doing pile burns as their training days.

During the year one of our long time supporters and husband of our Treasurer Evelyn passed away. Our rider of the year Tracy also sadly lost her Dad. He was very proud of Tracy and how she'd come on so much since starting at RDA. Ray, a local man who let us use his paddocks for our horses also sadly passed away.

Bonnie, our brumby spent time with a wonderful local horse trainer came back ready to start RDA specific training with Rosie. She is such a sweet, gentle girl and Jason did absolutely amazing work with her. She has certainly become a favourite with everyone, especially Freya a teenage girl who hopes to be part of our riding program in the future. Freya enjoys grooming Bonnie and spending time with her.

2023 finished on our last riding day on a very happy, positive note. Rosie, Kelly and Thomas spent a lot of time organising Christmas themed riding activities. These included a wonderful felt Christmas tree on a board which the riders decorated with decorations taken from volunteers. They took the decoration then rode up to the tree and placed it on the tree. They also rode weaving in and out of decorated poles after which they placed Christmas hats on candy cane poles.

All the riders received a Certificate and two riders Aayushi and Jayden received the Coaches Encouragement Award. Everyone agreed a good day was had by all and were already looking forward to returning in 2024.



Rosemary (Rosie) MacAllister was born and bred in Wollondilly and has lived here all her life.

From an early age she was involved with Wollondilly Pony Club and went on to become an Instructor.

During 1988 she also joined Wollondilly RDA as a volunteer and was asked by the then Head Coach Mrs Betty Wallace to consider becoming a coach for RDA.

Rosie took on the training and became a Coach, a position she still holds today.

Rosie received Wollondilly Citizen of the Year 2024 for her contribution to the community in her commitment and dedication to Riding for the Disabled and Pony Club.



Moss Vale

Another wonderful year for our centre in 2023! We have welcomed back some riders who have had a break for various reasons, which brings our numbers back to 13. We hope to continue to build up over the coming year. We are very happy to see some of our riders now progressing to riding off the lead for the first time- always challenging but also so satisfying.

We have sadly lost some ponies this year. Mostly noticeable has been Gem. What a Gem she was- 15 hands, leg at each corner, great weight carrier and very quiet. These ponies are getting harder to find these days and we will miss her! Gladly, we have a new horse on loan from Neil Hughes. Bubba is proving to be a real asset to us- a very solid citizen with a heart of gold. Ex-pacers are so good for RDA!



Our 3 coaches have been out to clinics and other centres this year. It's always great to swap ideas with others and there's always something new going on. We were delighted to see that our coach Neil Hughes was nominated for Citizen of the Year in our area for his volunteer work with RDA. Neil is a fabulous ambassador for our centre and RDA in general and we congratulate him for his recognition.

Here's to another good year in 2024!

Cowra

Volunteers and participants had another busy and amazing year in 2023. 6 schools attended and 44 participants were registered.

The school year was divided into 2 semesters to accommodate the number of schools and riders wishing to participate in the program. Six sessions are held on Wednesdays with up to 6 riders in every session. Semester 1 programs ran in school terms 1 and 2, and involved Mulyan (1 session), Canowindra High School (1 session), Holman Place (3 sessions) and Out of School Riders (1 session). Semester 2 program ran in Terms 3 and 4, and involved Cowra Public School (2 sessions), Cowra High School (1 session), Mulyan, Canowindra High and Out of School Riders (1 session each). Some schools were able to attend in both Semesters as they were only attending for one session and a larger school reduced the number of sessions required.

This year there were few interruptions due to weather and sessions were held at the centre on 28 days.

The horse team for 2023 was made up of 2 RDA owned horses – Rocket and Fayme, 2 leased horses – Barney and Sabira, and 4 loaned horses – Goldie, Clydie, George and Moo. The loaned horses are transported to the centre on Wednesdays by their owners who are volunteers. We greatly appreciate their generosity. Our program can only operate with our beautiful equine friends. We are very grateful to the generous supporters of RDA who donated named sparkly headbands for the horses bridles. The riders love looking for the bling.

Our RDA owned and leased horses require paddocks. We sincerely thank those volunteers that provide paddocks and care for our equine friends during the week.

In 2024 we are hoping the arena will be constructed. This has been an enormous project and the centre is very grateful to the showground trust for the support and time that has gone into making this dream a reality. Once it is built there will be a lot of preparation needed to make it suitable for our program such as fencing, holding yards, mounting ramp and arena surface. These preparations will be expensive. We are

very grateful to RDA Opportunity shop volunteers and the barbecue team who have been working many and long days to raise the funds to meet these and other expenses.

In Term 4 the centre was visited by an RDA (NSW) representative for an administrative audit. The centre passed this audit. Also on this day Jenny Wright was assessed for coaching qualification and was successful. Congratulations Jenny! The Coach training certificate course requires a lot of effort. It will be very beneficial to the centre to have another coach to maintain delivery and consistency of the program.

Two volunteer and horse training days were held. Coaches attended a 2-day training workshop at the Young Centre.

Many businesses support the program and we are grateful for their support. Pepper Tree Equine Vet Clinic very generously provide a general health and dental check service for all the horses involved in the program. Teff & Lucerne, Hay & Chaff provided by Delayney, Bryant, Fagan & Webster Family Enterprises. Donations from Midstate Electrical, Aspara Café, Flemmings, Toyota, Balance Accounting, Thompson Transport&. RDA Cowra Centre received donations from Rotary to purchase equipment. New boots, helmets and games equipment have been purchased. The adjustable helmets and zip up boots make it easier for correct fitting and comfort. Donations were received from the Cowra Garden Club, Men's Shed, Morongla CWA and Cowra Lions Club.

The RDA days are very busy and there are many tasks. Our days are usually smooth because our volunteers are enthusiastic and dedicated. We get the pleasure of seeing new riders overcome fears, learn routines, gain new skills and activities – equestrian and social. Volunteers are delighted when a rider who rarely speaks is chatting to their leader several weeks later. We are proud when continuing riders improve their riding skills and spend much of the session off lead in the small arena and learn to rise to the trot. Our centre provides an equine experience but more importantly it is a community embracing citizens in a meaningful and caring way.



Illawarra

Centre Developments

The highlights for 2023 we started running mock classes owing to the length of time since classes were held and also we had a couple of new horses and several new Volunteers. Classes commencement of Tuesday the 17th July 2023 with 6 Riders and a further Rider starting a bit later.

We have received a further horse and a 9.2hh pony broken to saddle and harness has been promised to us in the near future. Sadly we lost two of our beautiful horses owing to illness.

We have not had any new developments at our Centre.

We had a serious accident on the last day of class with one of our Riders launching himself off the horse during mounting, which resulted in our Coach being seriously hurt where he sustained a broken back, fortunately he will recover in 4 – 6 weeks. This has resulted in the Rider concerned not being allowed to return to riding next year owing to him being too unpredictable and is considered too risky.

We have received several Grants: Windang Bowling Club \$9,000, Dapto Rugby Leagues Club \$1,000, Catering for the SES Large Animal Rescue Training weekend \$1,600. Our Horse Gear Sale made \$3,597.

Riders

We completed the year with 7 riders, two of our riders progressed to being off lead for most of the class.

Horses

We have 9 horses with the little pony expected any day now. We retired two of our horses owing to their age and we feel they have earned their retirement and will enjoy the rest of their time just being horses.

Coaching

At the present time we have 4 Coaches, 1 Assistant Coach and 1 Trainee Assistant Coach. Next year we are planning to start classes on Saturdays as well as Tuesday classes. The Coaches are planning to get together in the new year to start lesson planning with input from a questionnaire that went to Parents/ Carers for input to planning lessons tailored to our Riders so this will be a very exciting year for us.

Volunteers

We have about 20 Volunteers at this stage, with some involved in the Feeding Roster, Grounds and Surrounds, Coaching and helping out in Class.

One of our previous Riders has joined us this year as Young Volunteer and it has been exciting to watch her progression over the weeks to becoming a valuable help and has built up a rapport with one of our Riders and has been very helpful interpreting the wants of the Rider therefore aiding the Coaches during class and she has been nominated as Young Volunteer at our Centre for this year.

All of our Volunteers get a lot of satisfaction watching how the Riders get such great enjoyment each week riding our wonderful horses, the Volunteers are very enthusiastic and are very supportive.

Young

The highlight of our year has been finally getting back to normal operation of the Centre with regular sessions for our riders and carriage drivers.

Young Centre successfully obtained a GrainCorp grant to build a secure storage shed for outdoor equipment, chemicals etc. We hope one day it will be the home of a side-by-side utility vehicle for paddock work and shifting hay while feeding our horses. We have purchased a portable stable to erect next to the round yard, giving us a warm dry place for any horse with an injury or illness.

65 riders and drivers have attended this year. One of our schools was unable to take part due to staff shortages in the school. Riders have increased their confidence during the year with most now able to mount and dismount with little or no assistance. Our high school riders have become competitive when taking part in the activities.

Carriage driving remains a very important part of our programme with all participants joining in with everyone attempting the cone courses and steering the horse through the numbered cones.

Our long-time carriage horse Rumpy featured in an article in the "Off the Track Magazine". Snoz with his famous Roman nose, has joined the carriage team. The new horse Bobby is being readied for 2024. All are retired rehomed Harness Racing horses as are two of our saddle horses, Baz and Franco. Our grey stockhorse, Chuck is a favourite with riders along with our lovely gentle mare Scout. Black and white J.D is very popular along with pony Bugs. Our three Shetlands Toby, Tilly and Pirate Pete, the one eyed

elder statesman, still believe they are the most important "people" in the herd! Next year beautiful grey pony, Diamond will join the group along with Bonnie – a pretty Arab Chesnut. Carriage horse Sally and pony Darcy have both been retired with ongoing fitness problems.

Young has two Coaches, one Coach/Whip, two Whips, a trainee Coach and two trainee Whips, all of whom took part in the workshop held in the Centre in October.

A special programme developed for one of our high needs riders has seen her make great progress in confidence and ability riding Scout. Several of our young riders have graduated from Shetlands to ponies and horses much to their excitement.

The Centre continues to have great support from local businesses and people of the town and district. We are regulars at Bunnings BBQs. Facebook is well supported. Our riders photos are featured from time to time in the local paper.

Volunteer numbers remain constant, and we have welcomed some new younger volunteers this year. All volunteers take great pleasure in watching the riders and drivers grow in confidence and ability and sharing their special moments.

A successful 2023 ended with family and friends joining us for Presentation Day with trophies and certificates presented by Coaches followed by Santa's visit with a gift for all participants. Everyone then enjoyed a BBQ lunch and lots of treats provided by our volunteers.

Goulburn

RDA G has had a brilliant year during 2023 starting off with welcoming community support from the Goulburn Rodeo Club Inc, Luke Geddes Equine Dentistry, First Rail, Michael Berg Fabrications, Culley Vet Services, Ross Griggs, Goulburn Produce, Kate Stewart Dutailis Saddlery, Rudes Custom Cages, Bateman Foundation, Fifes Stock Feeds and the Goulburn Workers Club. The support from these people/businesses is crucial to the survival of any Centre – THANK YOU!

RDA G participated (for the first time) in the RDA (NSW) Musical Ride competition and we are very proud to announce that we were the Winners of the Musical Drill Ride Led Section, we would like to thank each and everyone that helped make this achievement so enjoyable and a special thanks to Kath Cole and Coach Jo Grove for the choreography, Grant McClory for filming and all of our very talented leaders Kim Mahoney, Richard Irvine, Mel Cobban, Lyn Whittaker, Robynne Cardwine, Mon, Anne Muir, Steph Ovington and all of our well behaved horses. It really was a lot of fun and best of all our riders and horses loved the experience.

In August RDA G attended the Regional RDA (NSW) Mounted Games at SIEC – Sydney International Equestrian Centre. Goulburn had 6 riders and 4 horses competing on the day, we were ecstatic when our wonderful Centre Won Champion Rider, Best Presented Horse and overall Best Performing Horse of the Day. A special thanks again goes out to Coach Jo Grove, Mel Cobban, Richard Irvine, Anne Muir, Terri Sparrow, Grant McClory and Steph Ovington; without your support and hard work none of this would have been achievable. A special thanks to all of our wonderful riders who made us all extremely proud, you all worked very hard for your place ribbons. Congratulations! 2023 has been our most successful year to date.

Kim Mahoney passed her RDA (NSW) Assistant Coach, we love what Kim brings to the arena. Congratulations Kim!

RDA G has 11 horses and 16 dedicated volunteers – we cannot wait to see what we achieve in 2024!





Riverina

Cootamundra • Wagga Wagga • Griffith-Leeton
Albury-Wodonga • Tumut



Griffith-Leeton

Cootamundra

Riders: We have had a few new riders this year and some that have returned. We welcomed back Emma who was a very helpful volunteer in the past but has returned as a rider.

Our centre suffered a lot of water damage in our driveway over the last summer making it impossible for small cars to navigate into our carpark. There were some very kind gentlemen who repaired the driveway with large gravel. They only wanted to be known as the "Water Boys" and we all at Cootamundra RDA appreciated their efforts.

Our Coach Bev had an unfortunate mishap at her home where she injured her knee. As she was unable to perform her coaching duties, we were very lucky enough to borrow a coach from the Young RDA Centre. Karen Harrington brought along some new games that our riders thoroughly enjoyed. This was an excellent solution and hopefully we can convince Karen to continue as our riding Coach. When Bev was able to return to duties, she took on the driving side of our activities while Karen supervised the riding sessions.

Fundraising this year at the annual Swapmeet was not as good as other years due to catering competition from another charity organisation.

We also hold a BBQ stall at the Cootamundra Sunday market every second month which results in a small income, while the "Bingo Nights" at the Ex- Services Club which averages about \$1000 while our cakes and Raffles can double the amount.

Another fundraiser was manning a BBQ for the Webb family for their camp drafting weekend on their property at Illabo. This was a financial success which was greatly appreciated due to the many donations as well as the BBQ proceeds.

We all missed our horse Jack this last year he was much loved. We now have Trevor, a red and white pinto who is proving that he is very capable and proving he can do the work carrying the heavier riders.

I give thanks to all our wonderful volunteers at Cootamundra RDA as you are the mainstay of the centre and without you, we would not be able to provide our service to our riders with disabilities living in the Cootamundra community and surrounds.





Tumut

This year started slowly for riders, but 3rd and 4th Terms were well attended. We only lost one Thursday due to wet weather which was very welcomed. Sundays remained small this year but the Riders who attended achieved well and enjoyed the riding. We have a new group of Riders from Tumbarumba who are enjoying riding but also the social aspect. Two of the carers from this group undertook the volunteer training so as to relieve our helpers after morning tea.

Volunteers were very constant this year with quiet a few new regular helpers. We have some teenagers who attend Thursday and Sunday as helpers, they are homed schooled so can attend during school hours. We had one term with Students from Gundagai attending as volunteers and they are keen to attend again next year.

Horses have done well this year, we have one new horse who moved into class and finish the year trialling a horse that came from Cootamundra Centre, hopefully he will work out for us. Access feed has been a problem again this year and paddocks have remained locked. We are very fortunate to still have good grass moving into the break.

Centre improvements this year: we installed a reversed cycle air conditioner to make the place more comfortable for everyone also allowing us to hold meetings on winter evenings. Our maintenance has been kept up this year with the help of our volunteers.

Financially we find ourselves in the position of not having to chase funds. Our horse sponsorship did not decrease despite the financial downturn.

Griffith Leeton

Centre Developments

Shelter was built in one of our paddocks for protection from the elements for the horses and a shed built for our equipment to be stored, plus a carport for carer's cottage.

The rain has kept our grounds and lawn lovely and green, but that also included catheads – so it was a big job to kill them.

Riders/rides

This year we said goodbye to students we have had for many years and welcomed some who had never had any understanding/connection with horses. One of our students went from not even wishing to go near a horse, due to fear to actually riding. A great milestone for everyone!

Melbourne Cup this year was a great day as we had students wear race colours of the jockeys. Of all our lessons our trail rides still seem to be the favourite.

Horse stories

Barney joined our stables this year, to bring our horse numbers to 16.

London our 36 year old retired horse made an appearance this year for a lesson with a special little boy, who is blind.

It has been 2 years since two of our horses were stolen. We miss them!

Coaching

We have a new coach on our team – Karen completed her coaching manuals and passed her assessment day at the beginning of 2023. Karen was straight into it and had her own day and did an amazing job. Joining Denise and Julie our other coaches, together they work very hard all year.

Lisa, a long-time volunteer, we hope, will be an Assistant Coach very soon and then shall progress

to Coach at the end of 2024 – which will boost our centre. We also have a new Trainee Coach – Crystal and she is going great.

The workshop attended at Young was informative for all those who attended.

Community events and fundraising

Bunnings BBQ are always a great fundraiser.

Asked to help our Local Quilters sell tickets and man the canteen at their Quilt Fair.

Raffles were organised and run at the Memorial Bowls Tournament Griffith

RDA Raffle conducted with 1st Prize a Sydney Roosters signed Jersey

Helped man the gates at our Local show.

Volunteers

In 2023 our volunteer numbers were about 50. Most attend and help conduct lessons. Others are dedicated to the fundraising, administrative duties and care for the facilities and horses.

We continued our student volunteer program from 2 of our local high schools. Students are a valued asset for coaches. Some have continued from previous years and their skills and confidence has improved in a caring supported environment.

New volunteers have come onboard forming friendships which extend beyond RDA, bringing together a diverse group of people.

Hugely appreciated are the Coaches, Julie, Karen, Cherie, Denise, Lisa in training and Crystal our trainee.

Karen is our Groundsperson and she does a fantastic job. Our Committee who coordinate and make decisions to keep our facility running are extraordinary.





Albury Wodonga

The start of the year did not start out well, at the Annual General Meeting, It was with great sadness that we had two of our longest serving and greatest volunteers resign from their positions within the Albury committee and group of coaches and volunteers. Both of these retirements were due to ill health and we wish both Gwen and Faye all the best for their future.

Gwenny Abikhair had been president for over 40 years as well as volunteer and coach. Faye Hodson had also been volunteering and coaching for a similar amount of time as well as serving on the committee.

Both of these ladies are greatly missed and loved.

During the year we have also lost 4 horses for one reason or another. So, this left us limited to the number and size of riders that we could put through for a while.

During the year we also lost one of our longest riders, Robbie. Robbie sadly left us after riding with us since she was approximately 8 years of age. Robbie died in her mid 50's. She always had a smile on her face, would not say much but look out if the horse did not do what it was supposed to do, then Robbie would let it know.

Hopefully that is all of the bad news for the year, outside of other illnesses etc.

We have at the end of the year now been lucky enough to locate 3 new horses. These will hopefully commence with us in the new year.

We will then be able to get back a couple of riders that had to stop due to no suitable horses and maybe even take on some new ones.

Our local council whom we lease the property from has just given us permission to do some more upgrades to the property so this will be worked upon in the coming months as well. We are hoping to do another set of yards and a lean to near the club rooms, maybe a picnic table with a cover in the club rooms yard, that way we can sit outside for meetings some time. Will have to see what the new year brings.

The riders, volunteers, horses and whomever may attend are holding a Christmas break up on the last day of riding. Everybody dresses up even the horses. There will be games and barbeque, So if able to will be getting permission to send through some photos to state office after the event.

This year we also received a visit from our Regional Rep (Heather) albeit for the annual audit. But it was still good to be able to sit down one on one and ask some questions and have a general chat. Sometimes the smaller sites can feel as though we are just jumping through the hoops and can be forgotten. It is hard for Albury to attend other sites and functions due to the demographic of our committee and volunteers.

I as secretary would like to make particular mention of our current President and his family if it were not for them at the moment the club would not be able to continue. Carl and his family are always at the centre every day, feeding and maintaining horses, organizing and carrying out working bees, even with their own issues they are still thinking of the centre, horses and clients first and foremost. So to Carl Iverson and his entire family a huge shout out for all that you do.

Central West

Bathurst • Orange • Mudgee • Forbes (Steering Committee)



Bathurst

Bathurst

Our Major Highlight for 2023 was the invitation from The Office of the Children's Guardian to participate in a video promoting 'Diversity and Inclusion in Sport'

The video showcases Bathurst RDA as part of their promotion to endorse and encourage clients and the public to participate in a variety of sports and recreational activities. See link below to access them, if interested: <https://www.youtube.com/@nswofficeofthechildrensgua8567/videos>

The Producer commented on the day that they were blown away by the enthusiasm of both our riders and volunteers.

Another highlight was our President and head Coach, Melinda Gavin who has racked up 23 years of service for our centre, working hard towards making Bathurst RDA a very successful and viable centre.

We had 24 riders participating in our program in 2023 and one of our good news stories was a young severely Autistic boy who is non verbal. He found it very difficult to remain on a horse for one lap of our arena, without having a meltdown, but with persistence each week, we worked out his needs and by the end of the year he learned to relax and complete 3-4 laps.



We had 7 beautiful horses working with us this year and our riders all had their favourites, depending on their abilities.

2 coaches worked hard each week to ensure the classes ran smoothly and the riders thoroughly enjoyed the games and activities that they provided. One of their favourites was the "Grandma" game. Grandma was very "cranky" and did not like it when the riders went past her as she walked. These games always put a smile on everyone's face – young and old.

2 volunteers attended a Rotary Dinner and spoke of our classes and how we were able to use their generous donation to help our animals at RDA.

Finally, as well as our horse activities, Mrs Gavin also runs a Pet Therapy/Work Experience Program for students from the school (for students with special needs) which borders our centre. The Pet Therapy program is also used by Adult Disability groups throughout Bathurst district. Mrs G brings in her treasured dog, Shadow, a clear favourite with the clients who are waiting for classes, as he is very placid and loves people. The work experience students are able to come down and learn a little bit more about following direction, working alongside Melinda to help with her farming chores and learning lots of new skills each week.

Orange

Executive Summary – Highlights and Achievements

Highlights are: the work the volunteers have put into improving many areas; the money our Centre has received through various means; the awards our volunteers won; the consistency we experience from our coaches, children, and volunteers; the satisfaction gained from seeing improvements in children; the connections many volunteers have with the horses to ensure their health and wellbeing; and the willingness of our fantastic team to do what needs to be done and support each other.

Centre developments

Orange Centre received a grant from the NSW Office of Sports for \$10,000 to upgrade our equipment for keeping our grounds safe for horses, children and volunteers. We were thrilled to get this to go towards big ticket items. Volunteers have worked hard improving our centre facilities by installing new water troughs, replacing and adding fences, installing gates, painting outdoor items, replacing heating in our tearoom, re-tiling and painting the bathroom and adding some mirrors to the arena.

Participation in the Kinross Wolaroi TREES program has had one year 10 student attending each Wednesday and 4 others coming for the afternoons. They will be helping to run our final Christmas party program too.

Riders / Rides

We have had a total of 53 riders this year holding five classes each Wednesday. We had a greater demand from schools this year so we had two schools share and do two terms each. We have had success with children – Bella got over her anxiety and can now hold just the reins and mount with confidence; Josh who is non-verbal now tries to express himself to us; Kane is much more receptive and tries hard; Daisy, who is in a wheelchair, has achieved muscle relaxation and some core strength and loves her time on a horse.

Horse stories

- Orange Centre has 14 horses. Bluey has been on loan to us and is still inquisitive; Rusty has just come off his L plates and is proving to be fantastic for us; Ned is recovering after being massaged a lot and receiving medication and TLC; PJ will be back next year after treatment after a fall; Johnny, Dusty, Nugget and Chook (who had just got the regional SHUSH) all sadly passed away this year.
- We had a wonderful Horses' Birthday celebration this year with many parents coming out to our Open Day as well as people interested in volunteering due to local publicity.



Coaching

We currently have one coach and two assistant coaches. One of those is awaiting final assessment for coach. Our coach attended the Ryde workshop, and we had two attendees at the Administration workshop.

Community Events and Fundraising

We are very well supported by our community receiving great coverage by our local paper, Orange City Life. We have received two bequests from estates totalling \$6000 and an anonymous \$10,000 donation. Orange Centre volunteers help out at Millamalong Polo days and the Carcoar Show for a share of entry takings as well as collecting donations. We do BBQs at IGA and held a raffle at the National Field Day.



Volunteers

We have about 45 active volunteers. Abby won the Volunteer Encouragement Award and Ayanna won the Young Volunteer Award as well as regional winner for Albert Duff at the 2022 AGM. We all work very well together and our committee received praise for the organisation of all the administration for the audit. Our volunteers love our amenities (now we have heating!) and our mostly weatherproof arena. They love seeing the children smile and giggle and have a great time with us. There is great satisfaction in seeing the children develop their confidence in all areas of growth. The friendships and companionship we have gained by being together each week is immense.



Mudgee

What a year – A few new volunteers and some very dedicated volunteers.

Without our horses and riders Mudgee would be lost. Three horses Theo, Toby and Chicquita have never failed and provide many rides that have provided many smiles, a few tears and lots of laughter. Our 3 beautiful steeds have been welcomed by 2 beautiful boys Sunny and Sparky – 2 lovely bay standardbreds.

Mudgee is now blessed with five regular beauties.

On the back of these amazing animals are our amazing riders and participants. We are indeed blessed to have two schools and one adult disability service, and 2 individual riders attend each Wednesday. Twenty-nine participants and riders in total.

Celebrating our Rideability hub, which is what we call home, has been very well supported within the community. The CWA day/night branch, Rotary, Community shop, Wollar Solar, Peabody mining, Petries MITRE 10, Nick Pearce and the general public has allowed us to have some creature comforts like air conditioning, a fully functioning kitchen and white goods for those rainy days when we hold Joy's cooking classes.

What is a highlight each year is all our volunteers pulling together and getting our musical together to enter – Everyday heroes was our theme this year, we asked our riders to choose who their heroes were. We had nurses, fire brigade, police, and the local council as just a few selected – it's not about the placing in this competition but involvement from all and the good time had putting it all together and seeing the final results.

We honoured one of our stalwarts with Life Membership this year – Bob (Robert) Colley – a true gentleman who helps Tracy and Diane in all aspects with the horses and the lesson planning and a real asset when it comes to introducing dressage into our center.

How to select one or two riders is tough – but one little boy stands out – Phoenix.

This little boy took many months to get near or on a horse and that meant he had to hold part of a tree (stick, leaves, or small branch). A special lady, one of his teachers Belle painted his own riding helmet into a dinosaur. Phoenix is now first on and sits so straight and confidently and has had several rides on his own and has now progressed to a led trot. This little boy has reaped the benefits in so many ways.

Ryan is another little boy who would never leave his mum or nan or get on the horse without a phone. Ryan is now happy to get on, holds the reins, participates in games and too has been on a lead trot.

We are super keen to see how we can support and help our riders and their families achieve in our next riding season – Our riders are the bomb digity.



Our arena is large, it is either hot, wet, or very dusty – We are on crown land at The Mudgee showground – we have recently received news that our arena is in the throes of being in the budget to become a covered arena. To say we are excited is an understatement.

Thank you to all our riders, supporters, and volunteers for keeping the dream alive.





North West

Gunnedah • Narrabri • Coonabarabran
Tamworth • Armidale & New England



Tamworth

Gunnedah

The last year of our operation has been both successful and frustrating. Although the weather has been relatively kind to us to carry out our riding days we have had a real problem actually attracting clients. I don't know if the cost of living pressures plus the ongoing effects of the Covid pandemic are to blame, but we have had serious problems attracting needy clients from the community. The main problem is that we have trouble receiving the appropriate paper work and medical requirements from parents of children that would benefit from some horse therapy. The schools do their best to encourage the parents and we hope that next year may see an improvement. The centre's normal roll call is usually around 12 to 14 for each riding day.

The renovated shed that the RDA members converted has been a great success. Not only does it keep everyone out of the weather but keeps the children securely contained while they wait their turn to ride a horse or to ride in the carriage. Over the last year we lost one of our greatest supporters with the death of Bruce Hill who will always be remembered as Mr Carriage Driver. His devotion to the Gunnedah RDA centre has prompted the committee to approach the Gunnedah Shire Council to rename the refurbished shed in his and his wife's honour.

Currently the centre has 5 approved riding horses as well as 2 carriage horses. The horses are a bit like the volunteers as they all seem to get old. It is always a battle to obtain suitable mounts. On the fact of ageing volunteers, we do find it extremely difficult to attract anyone any younger than 65. Those we do have do a great job helping.

The Gunnedah community recognises RDA as a worthwhile organisation and as such we do receive generous donations both money and produce, especially hay. Our greatest threat is the diminishing pool of people willing to assist with our operations. We are of the opinion that if the volunteer section of the community fades away, who is there to carry out the beneficial work that all volunteer organisations carry out. However, the joy evident on the faces of those who partake of RDA's services make it all worthwhile.

Coonabarabran



Tamworth

The Tamworth Centre operated every Thursday during school terms two, three and four in 2023, when weather permitted. Our participants ranged in age from primary school students to adults, who were involved in various riding and carriage driving activities. During the year we had 31 riders and 26 carriage riders.

Hillvue Public School and Tamworth South Public school participated in the morning sessions and a large group attended from Challenge Quirindi. We also had a group of independent riders of various abilities and disabilities attend in the afternoons. Most of the groups enjoyed learning the various mounted games and practicing to improve their times. Our final riding day saw the horses and the grounds decorated with Christmas theme and Christmas morning tea was enjoyed by volunteers and participants alike. Followed by a special Christmas lunch for our volunteers.

We received two grants during the year, one being from the Crosby Foundation towards the veterinary expenses of our 9 horses and the other from the Tamworth Regional Council for the replacement of our defibrillator battery and pads. We received many other generous donations from the Tamworth and District community.

There were substantial upgrades to fencing and general ground maintenance during the year. Our special volunteers give invaluable maintenance work and attention to keeping our grounds in excellent condition. Our 9 horses and ponies are also in good condition, in both the riding and carriage driving sections, and have been supplementary fed with high quality feed and supplements during the drier times. We have had 31 volunteers attend on and off during the year and a core of 15 regular volunteers, who allow us to run our program.

Our coaches have attended all the coaching workshops offered by RDA (NSW) and continue to learn from the programs put forward by CASP.

This year we have participated in the Interschools Horse Extravaganza (ISHE). We acted as volunteers for penciling for the dressage and for marshaling. All proceeds from the four-day event went to volunteer organisations and from our presence there we were very generously supported.

We look forward to another progressive year at the RDA Tamworth Centre.





Carriage Driving



Dressage



Disciplines of RDA (NSW)



Mounted Games



Connections EFMH&L
(Equine Facilitated Mental Health & Learning)



Volunteer Vale

Our volunteers have a deep, spiritual connection with RDA and we'd like to pay our respects and acknowledge those volunteers who have contributed many years of service and are no longer with us:

Joe Sullivan – Bathurst

Bill Cameron – Central Coast

Frank Huckle – Griffith/Leeton

Doug Denby OAM – Box Hill "Tall Timbers"

Kath Smith OAM – Box Hill "Tall Timbers"

Bruce Hill – Gunnedah

Robbie Arden (Rider for 40 years) – Albury/Wodonga

Horse Vale

Echo – Illawarra

Achilles – Illawarra

Karoo – Box Hill "Tall Timbers"

Mouse – Box Hill "Tall Timbers"

Archie – Box Hill "Tall Timbers"

Elvis – Ballina

Lady – Kempsey/Macleay

Sassie – Upper Hunter

Doud – Upper Hunter

Dreamy – Wagga Wagga

BP – Wagga Wagga

Charffie – Wagga Wagga

Johnny – Orange

Dusty – Orange

Nugget – Orange

Chook – Orange

RDA (NSW) Team

Patrons



Patron

Her Excellency General
The Honorable Margaret Beazley
AC KC Governor of New South
Wales & Dennis Wilson



Life Patron

Pearl Batchelor OAM (dec.)



Vice Patron

Don Eyb

Staff



Office Co-Ordinator

Lucy Pentony



RTO & Coaching Administrator

Nicole King



RTO Administrative Assistant

Kristy Ford

Support Staff



CASP Chairman

Jenny Wilkinson



Centre Audit Officer

Judy Edwards



RTO CEO

Wendy Torr OAM

Directors & Portfolios



**Chairperson/Grants
Officer**
Tracy Lucas



**Finance Officer/
Executive Officer**
Joe Orland



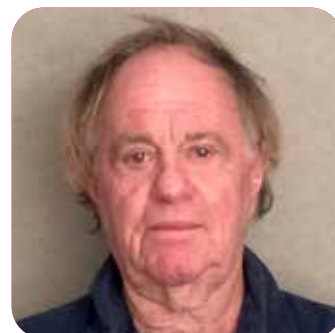
**Company Secretary
/ Assistant EO**
Jan Pike OAM



MPIO
Olwen Smith



Riders Representative
Allan Burton

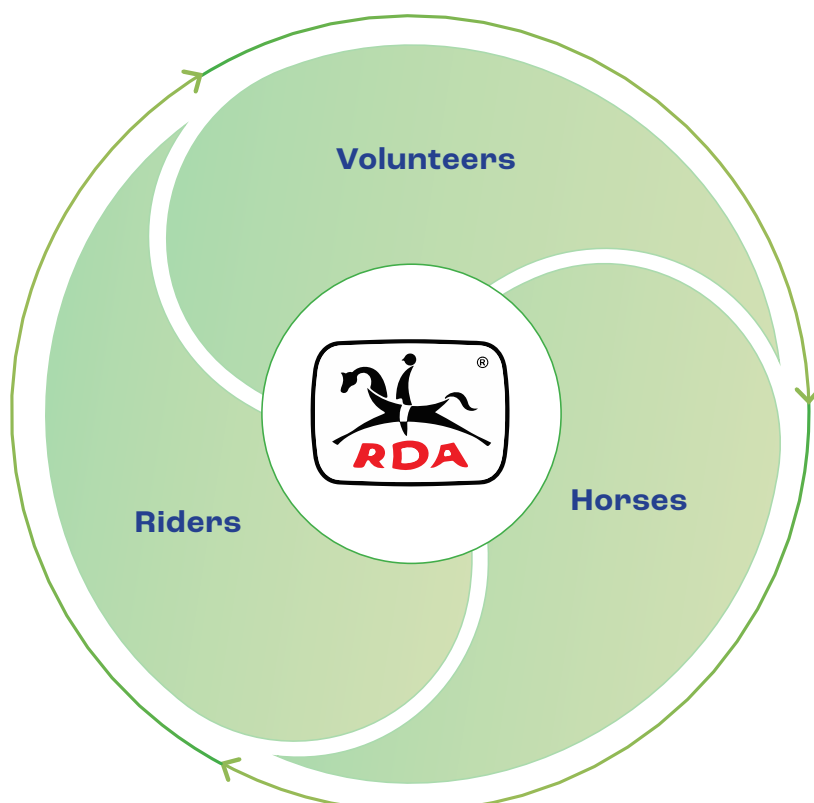


Development Officer
Clarry Quirk

Board Consultant



Margaret Norman OAM



Thank-You

to all our volunteers & supporters



Without your assistance RDA (NSW) could not service
the 1042 riders who were able to ride during 2023



Riding For The Disabled Association (NSW)

Postal Address: P.O. Box 710 SYDNEY MARKETS NSW 2129

Office Address: Quad 1, Level 2, 8 Parkview Drive, Sydney Olympic Park, NSW 2127

Phone: (02) 8736 1256

Email: stateoffice@rdansw.org.au

www.rdansw.org.au