

TERM 1 2023

RDA NEWSLETTER

Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW) Raymond Terrace and Lower Hunter Connections



Presidents report

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the first Newsletter for 2023. The first few months of every year at RDA is busy and begins with bringing our wonderful horses home from their summer holidays to start their training ready for programs to start. This year we began riding in early March – with program on Mondays, Tuesdays every 2 and Saturday and carriage driving at Stroud. It's a wonderful time of year with everyone returning to the Centre and reconnecting with friends, riders, parents and especially our horses.

As we are now well into our second term of riding, the weather has begun to get a lot colder. Well done to the riders for rugging up and coming along for your regular programs. A big thanks to Phil our Caretaker for feeding the horses in the cooler early mornings and evenings, and ensuring that we have enough hard feed and hay coming into winter – those horses certainly love feeding time. Thanks also to all volunteers that are on the feeding roster on Mondays. As you may be aware, after four years on the Committee – two as vice-president and two as president, I decided not to stand again at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 30th March. I will always value and be grateful for the generosity of the wider RDA 'family' who provided advice and encouragement to make some of the decisions needed to keep the Centre focused on providing a fun, rich, rewarding and beneficial experience for our riders and a welcoming place for parents, carers and volunteers.

I thank everyone I've worked with on the Management Committee over the past four years for your incredible commitment, robust debates and hard work, and to all volunteers and coaches who keep the many parts of our Centre functioning, including those working behind the scenes donating their time and providing support in so many ways. Our Centre is only here because of you.

While I won't continue as President, I will remain on the Committee for a year (ex-officio), will help out where and whenever I can and remain a committed volunteer on a Monday.

Cheers – Alison

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Outgoing President
RDA (NSW)

A BIG SHOUT OUT TO THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, MAITLAND; MAITLAND AND PORT STEPHENS TOYOTA; BENEDICT; BEYOND BANK FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP.



**Maitland &
Port Stephens Toyota**



BENEDICT
BENEDICT

**Beyond
Bank**
AUSTRALIA

MEET THE NEW GUYS

Two new horses are being welcomed to the RDA community!



Koko

Oh, is Koko the boss or what?! This beautiful new horse is very intelligent and knows her stuff. Koko may be new to the herd, but she has quickly moved to top of the pecking order. She keeps her good mate Banjo in check. Despite her assertive ways, Koko is very affectionate and loves learning new things.



Banjo

Poor Banjo, he is a little down trodden being bossed around by his girlfriend Koko. But, he is such a kind-hearted, gentle boy. He has settled in well in the RDA herd and like Koko, has started his training. Like Koko, Banjo is a taller horse, with thoroughbred blood, so both friends will be great for the taller riders.

MONDAY GROUP

Monday group update

Term 1 is always busy, and it was no different this year. We started training our volunteers and getting horses back into training four weeks before we saw our riders. We welcomed our seasoned volunteers back as well as a couple of newbies who have settled in well. Getting our new horses into work is always a challenge time wise however we have had some opportunities for the new horses to be ridden and do some groundwork to settle them in. The 5 weeks of riding disappeared quickly with our riders very keen to get back onto their horses. As usual they have grown so we had some horse reorganization to do. We have been able to use the sensory garden and horse's playground due to good weather. Our riders delight in being in these fun spaces outdoors. At the end of Term 1 we said goodbye to Miriam who has been riding on Monday for many years. We are pleased to say that Miriam's riding went from strength to strength over the last couple of years. She has "graduated" from our group enjoying more one on one advanced riding lessons. We are lucky though, that Miriam has signed up as a volunteer, so will still be with us, putting her skills to use grooming and helping saddle the horses as well as the obligatory poo scooping!

We have just welcomed two new riders to our group. One who previously rode with Janet's group who is keen to get back into riding. We are also delighted to have her little sister join us as it is a while since we have had a "little" on a Monday. We hope as the year progresses we will have more to report on our enthusiastic riders.



Miriam when she first started at RDA

Miriam now, an experienced rider.



MONDAY GROUP

More Monday photos!



TUESDAY GROUP

Tuesday Easter themed riding day

Most of Tuesday Program riders returned in March after a long break. There were a couple of riders who came down with COVID in the last week or so of the holidays, having to wait an extra week before joining their fellow riders. Another broke her wrist, returning on the last Tuesday of the riding term. Unfortunately, one of our long-term Tuesday riders is still recovering from complications of a viral infection and won't be returning for some time yet. All coaches and volunteers miss their riders when they are unable to come to RDA, especially when due to illness or accidents.

Riding sessions were changed around a bit for the 2023 season, having to rearrange riders due to horses' injuries and retirement. Two new riders commenced, bringing our Tuesday's rider numbers reaching 16. Jenny, the Centre's Volunteer coordinator, is doing her best to keep up with our request for more volunteers. Five new volunteers came into the program and are proving to be excellent and dedicated to their riders – Welcome aboard!! Those riders who were able to come to riding for the whole term or just once showed us that they are up to the task of riding and learning new skills. Jack, though losing his riding buddy, Ebony, who has now retired, did not miss a beat and continued riding off-lead on his new horse, Supa. Well done Jack! His brother, Sam, also on a new horse, warmed to Flame after a few small hiccups, and is progressing well.

Scarlette who only rode on the last day of Tuesday riding Term 1, showed her riding ability, again on a new horse. She and Tiger we believe will be an awesome duo. Due to a shortage of coaches over the last few years, the Centre's programs have been severely reduced. Tuesday is blessed to have two new trainee Assistant Coaches this year which is fantastic. Many thanks to Cheryl and Lesley Anne, who are both lovely ladies, dedicated to their riders and have been such a support for Hayley and myself since starting at RDA. First term is always a great time to "get back into the saddle" after a long holiday. It is generally a shorter term and April is the time for eggs of course, that is EASTER eggs; CHOCOLATE eggs!! As normal Team Tuesday put on a fabulous last day with lots of Easter bunnies (though we could have done with a few more) different games to enjoy and the very best Easter Egg Hunt.

Riders were soooo happy, and Yes coaches and helpers as well!!!



TUESDAY GROUP

More Tuesday Easter themed riding day photos!



SATURDAY GROUP

Super Saturday stars

Our riders and helpers have had a great start to the year. Our younger riders have both started on different ponies, using Spirit and Ladybird. Spirit is a sweet pony who has fitted in well with the Saturday crew. These two riders are gaining confidence, riding off the lead and taking more initiative. We have even started practicing on small 'jumps'! It's been great to see other riders return this year, starting on Schooner and Supa. These large, gentle horses are so patient with any nerves, or over exuberance, as the case sometimes is! Flame is still patient with her rider, putting aside her angst to take special care to assure her rider enjoys her morning. Our Easter ride was lots of fun with all sorts of creative activities, ending with a chocolate fueled feast. Thank you so much Judy for building and creating the fun activities!



SATURDAY GROUP

More Super Saturday stars Photos



SENSORY GARDEN

Sensory garden facelift

It was decided that it was high time we changed the look of our Sensory Garden so a Working Bee was organised for 4 February. Along with our volunteers - Anita, Susan, Tom, Richard, Peter, Michelle, Judy, Jeff, Anne, Martin and Lesley Anne, we were lucky enough to get assistance from a local gardener, Rod Waite, who assisted us with some re-design work. We decided to remove all the old tyres and replace with the timber sleepers we got donated from Bunnings during the summer holidays – an amount of work I seriously underestimated! We weeded and mulched (mulch donated by Lesley Anne), disposed of old and broken toys and ornaments and made much head way to a new looking garden.

A second Working Bee was organised for 25 March where the middle section of the garden was completed. Rod once again joined the volunteers Lesley Anne, Martin, Kieran, Anne, Jeff, Polly, Alison and Jason. Mulch was kindly donated by Toboggan Hill Park plus Lesley Anne. There is only one more section to go and planning is underway for the next Sensory Garden Working Bee. Watch this space

At the Working Bees, we took advantage of the grant we won last year and hired a skip to remove a lot of rubbish from behind the arena. We also took some time to clean up the old sand pit in the horse play area and fill with new sand which had been donated by Benedict.

Many thanks to all those who assisted at either or both Working Bees.



FUNDRAISER NEWS

Generous Donation - Heatherbrae Bunnings

With all our horses returning from their holidays, RDA needed new water and feed buckets.

Many of the existing buckets had broken handles, splits (from being dropped, kicked or general wear and tear). Each horse requires at least two buckets – one for water and one for feed.

I approached Bev at Bunnings Heatherbrae who kindly donated 20 new flexi tubs.

A huge thank you to Bev and Heatherbrae Bunnings

Pictured: Bev and Lesley Anne with the flexi-tubs.



Bunnings Sausage Sizzle

On Sunday 2nd April we held our first Bunnings Sausage sizzle for 2023. We were very fortunate to have most of the food and drink donated and made just over \$2000 which included donations – “keep the change”. Lots of fun was had during the day and we got to meet a celebrity – Kurt Fearnley who supported our fund raising and informed us that he used to also ride at RDA.

Many thanks to our major sponsor, The Imperial Hotel Maitland and to all the volunteers that assisted on the day.



BBQ02

BBQ03



BBQ01

Photos:

BBQ01 – Volunteers:
Lesley Anne, Leonie, Jenny,
Radz, Alison, Margaret

BBQ02 – A couple of very
happy customers

BBQ3 – Lesley Anne, Kurt
& Harry

Our sponsors, Benedict Recycling, share these tips on reducing waste and making a positive impact on the environment. It's important to take small steps towards sustainability, and these tips can help you get started.

First, pack a waste-free lunch with reusable containers. Leftover dinners are your best friend! Not only will this reduce plastic waste, but you can also show off your cooking skills to your friends!

Second, donate old clothes to local charities instead of throwing them away. This not only helps those in need but also reduces textile waste in landfills.

Third, always be mindful when recycling. Make sure to remove any food or liquid from containers before throwing them in the yellow bin to prevent contamination and increase the chances of proper recycling.

Finally, if you are completing a DIY home renovation and have a large amount of demolition waste you want to dispose of responsibly, Benedict Recycling Newcastle can help. Not only are they committed to leading the way in resource recovery, they offer incentives to help local communities clean up, such as free trailer hire, 10% off tipping rates and no minimum charge.

Visit <https://www.benedict.com.au/news/newcastle-tip-and-save> to learn more about their services.

Leftovers in reusable containers	Clothes ready for donation	Washing jars for recycling
		