

Dressage NSW Inc

2014 Annual General Meeting – Minutes

Held at Windsor Bowling Club

Tuesday, 9 December 2014

Meeting opened at 7.00pm

Welcome and Apologies

Present

Prue Spurrett	Toni Venhaus	Judy Wilson	Helen Lawson	Kathy Shelley
Jan Geary	Cathie Drury-Klein	Louise Cairns	Denise Rogan	Michelle Becchio
Elizabeth Englert	Tracey Lesslie	Petra Keranen	Kate Taylor-Wheat	Deborah Carr
Vicki Newham	Judy Dierks	Celeste Amezdroz	Sally Rizzuto	Nerida Downs
Moira Kelly	Dianne White	Beth Turner	Rebecca Coventry	
Fiona MacDonald	Dorothea			
Crowley	Lungershausen			

Apologies (*Proxies received)

Robyn Targa	Gail Benson*	Earle Olaisen*	Suzie Cunningham*	Rachael Downs
Franz Venhaus*	Helen Zimic	Suzanne Doyle	John Geary	

Confirmation of the Annual General Meeting Minutes, 10 December 2013

Motion: That the minutes be accepted as correct.

Moved: Prue Spurrett

Seconded: Michelle Becchio

Motion Carried

Business Arising from Previous Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

President's Report

Welcome to our 2014 DNSW AGM.

2014 has had special challenges and I wish to thank all on Committee for the way we have worked together when issues needed urgent consideration, even when many were overseas for WEG and we had to deal through email and different time zones.

Again our membership has well and truly had value for money out of their committee this year, we are all volunteers and many face a round trip of several hours to attend meetings. I know an hour later when I'm pulling into my garage, I'm thinking of those still on the road.

Our thanks also to Equestrian NSW, especially Chair Judy Fasher and CEO Bruce Farrar, for their support throughout the year, both financially but also when needed on National issues such as the Hendra ByLaw which directly impacted on the disciplines.

It was a busy year and Hendra was the dominant National issue, which impacted on our operations. As Discipline Council with strong membership, we continue to push for consultation between EA, State Branches and those on the ground running events when major issues such as this arise. The change regarding the conditions of entry for the Nationals impacted particularly on DNSW at a time when half our Committee and Exec were at WEG and in a different time zone.

Our biggest event is always the CDI3* and the excitement this year was palpable in the lead up to the GP Freestyle – Heath Ryan and Regardez-Moi had a title to defend and as we now know, they have gone on to take out the NSW Dressage Championships and the Saddleworld Australian Championships Grand Prix Freestyles on home ground at SIEC.

There will be a time when they do retire and when that comes, both Dressage NSW and Equestrian Australia owe them the acknowledgement they're due for simply being "Best In Show."

Our Congratulations to Toni Venhaus who deserves our recognition and respect for continuing to deliver the premier Dressage events in Australia- I for one am proud to be on her team for the Sydney CDI 3* and the Saddleworld Australian Dressage Championships. Along with all the planning for the major events is the day to day admin duties of a Hon. Sec. which this year also saw the introduction of the new website – the jury is still out on some areas - but Toni, our Admin Secretary Tracey Lesslie and Clarendon Grounds Secretary Karen Lever worked non-stop on the conversion.

As President, on behalf of the Committee, thank you Toni.

Congratulations to Kathy Shelley and the Clarendon Grounds Sub – Committee. Thanks to Kathy's commitment, Clarendon is now becoming a draw card for competition and the introduction of the Winter Festival is a great initiative and now a fixture on the calendar. It's a great success, Kathy.

Jan Geary had a particularly busy year with Judge Education - Judges Seminars held at Clarendon included: H, EF, CD and AB, all held in first half of the year at Clarendon

Plus Young Horse and Para-Equestrian. We welcomed 2 new Judge Educators in Nell Marshman and Peter Shaw, which was just as well, because seminars were also held at:

Taree – D/C level and E/F level; Narrabri – E/F/H levels; Young – H level; Bowral – H level

Likewise Under the guidance of Sue Cunningham and Jan Geary Para Dressage continues to evolve and in early 2014 we held our first Para Equestrian seminar with exams for judges. Thank you both on a job being well done.

NSW is the only state to have Regional Delegates and they are integral to Committee. We thank them for their time and commitment. It's their feedback, which keeps us up to date with the impact decisions made at national level are having on our club operations.

Helen Batson continues the tradition of Judy Wilson in keeping a tight rein on our finances – 'implacable' is the word that comes to mind, but thank you Helen, we must continue to build our financial base so as to best serve our members. A word of special recognition to those wonderful supporters who came on board as the 'Friends of Clarendon' – your support of Clarendon has been outstanding – and on behalf of Committee and members - Thank You.

Congratulations to Metropolitan delegate Sue Baker and her team for bringing us another successful NSW Dressage Championships - our own 'home show' with its own special atmosphere and the main goal for so many of our riders.

Likewise to Young Dressage Association for hosting the 2014 Young Rider and Pony Dressage Championships
Congratulations to all involved.

Thank you Jenny Carroll for her continued guidance of our squad programme throughout the year – we will be working more in line with the National programme in 2015.

Our Rider's representative Denise Rogan continues to be our 'go to' person for all levels of riders and Denise, you are doing the best job out there - it's a delight to work with you and for our riders to know you have the complete confidence of the Committee.

Our Administration Secretary Tracey Lesslie is the first contact for many members and Tracey's support is invaluable to the Committee and Executive and much appreciated.

All parties likewise value Karen Lever's expertise as Competition Secretary and we thank her for the assistance she gives to our riders, especially newcomers to Clarendon. Husband Graeme also figures in our thanks for the support and technical back up he provides to Karen.

We work well together as a Committee, always with good humour and respect for each other expertise. It is a pleasure to work with you all and an honour to represent NSW on your behalf at National level.

My final thanks to my husband John - he's the voice on the other end of the phone who's always happy to take a message – and then makes sure I remember to ring back!

We have some super horses competing across the board – the club scene is vital for the support of competition and the progress of our horses, but ultimately, it's a sport where time and patience pays the most dividends – Best Wishes for 2015 and a Merry Christmas to all.

Prue Spurrett
President

Honorary Secretary's Report

2014 - The Year of the Horse and the 2014 World Equestrian Games. With these two features, 2014 was set to be a significant year for the equestrian community.

The Committee has had a busy and productive year not only managing the day-to-day affairs of dressage in NSW on behalf of Equestrian NSW, but also the scope of our responsibilities and the issues we deal with each year is wide and worth highlighting.

As the administrators of dressage in NSW we:

- represent dressage in NSW at a national level;
- maintain a close working relationship with ENSW and the ADC;
- recommend rule changes and contribute to the formulation of rules through the ADC;
- represent and support Clubs in NSW;
- represent NSW riders at all levels
- support our dressage squads and provide training clinics for riders;
- maintain and approve the NSW dressage calendar;
- conduct educational seminars and workshops for judges as well as exams at all levels;
- provide Annual Awards and Performance medals for our members;
- produce a bi-monthly magazine;
- host an informative website and an active Facebook page.

In addition to the administration side of our duties, through Sub Committees, DNSW conducts regular dressage events at Clarendon, conducts or oversees State Championship and major events such as the Sydney CDI and National Championships.

In all, a pretty demanding workload for a Volunteer Committee.

Our Committee has remained the same since the 2013 AGM with two Co-opted members appointed in December 2013, Judy Wilson assisting our Treasurer with the accounts and Denise Rogan as the NSW Riders rep. Eleven Committee meetings were held in 2014 and a summary of attendance is attached for your reference. Distractions, namely the controversy surrounding the EA Hendra vaccination policy took up a lot of our meeting time as well as out of meeting time.

A draft Business Plan for 2014-2016 was prepared but unfortunately due to our busy workload, the Committee has not had an opportunity to review the plan in detail. A meeting will be held at the end of January to get us back on track with planning our priorities for the next three years.

In 2014 Clubs were starting to understand the new EA membership and event structure introduced in 2013. Many are still struggling to find a competition structure that suits their membership and some, especially the smaller Clubs, report a decline in event entries is attributed to the new structure.

The number of Official/Participation Dressage events (not days) including Championships held in NSW in 2014 was 185, a slight decrease on the previous year (198). In addition, Protocol, Training and restricted Member days were held by most Clubs. Most clubs have opted not to offer Official participation competitions and most events have a mixture of Official Competitive and restricted competitions.

DNSW scheduled 9 events at Clarendon in 2014 with a total of 21 days of competition (compared to 17 days in 2013). In addition to the regular Clarendon events, Training and Protocol days were held. The introduction of the Clarendon Amateur Owner division introduced this year resulted in many riders returning to compete at Clarendon. The riders have embraced the concept and we hope this will flow through to other events next year.

Clarendon events have been well supported this year. The introduction of the Amateur Owner division contributed to the success along with the upgrade of arenas and income raised through arena naming sponsorship and arena signage.

We are grateful for the support from the "Friends of Clarendon" who provided financial or in-kind support to allow us to improve the arena surfaces.

The Clarendon Sub-Committee and other Committee members along with Karen Lever, the Clarendon Events Secretary, should feel proud of what has been achieved this year.

Other events such as the Sydney CDI, the NSW State Championships and the Saddleworld Australian Dressage Championship were all held under the umbrella of DNSW. The Young Dressage Association hosted the 2014 NSW Young Rider and Pony Championships, and we appreciate the effort they put in to ensure all participants enjoyed a great event.

The DNSW Regional Dressage Festival series continued this year with six events being held throughout the regional areas. Financial support from Equestrian NSW combined with funding from

Dressage NSW allowed us to contribute \$1,000 to each event, and we provided other types of promotional support in Centreline, our website and Facebook. The feedback has been positive and we look forward to continuing the series next year.

Our membership numbers have remained stable in the last 12 months. With the introduction of the Amateur Owner rider division we had thought we would see an increase in numbers however the statistics paint another picture. On the other hand we have maintained our membership numbers, which is a good sign.

Our website changed over in August to align with the new Equestrian Australia format. The response to the new format and look has been mixed. From an administration point of view, the site is not as easy to maintain as the previous one and we hope that in time changes will be made to enable easier maintenance and better access for users to find the information they are looking for.

Unfortunately due to the changeover we are unable to provide statistics on the number of visitors this year.

The previous EA website structure provided Clubs with the option of being part of the EA website family. Unfortunately, this service was not an option under the new set up and Clubs that were part of the EA site had to create new websites for their Clubs.

The number of our followers on Facebook has increased by 847 (approx. 20%) to 5,350. Twitter has also increased by 14% to 1910 followers.

Centreline remains popular with members but pure subscriber levels continue to fall. I have mentioned in previous reports that many look to other types of communication to get the most up-to-date news. The Committee is aware of this and the need for a printed publication is something we will consider in 2015.

We currently have 169 EA accredited Dressage Judges in NSW compared to 166 at the same time last year.

DNSW conducted seven Seminars / Workshops across all levels in 2014. Seminars were also held in Young, Taree, Mittagong, Berry and Narrabri.

Two new Judge Educators were approved this year, Peter Shaw and Nell Marshman.

NSW riders continue to perform well at a State and National level. At the recent 2014 Saddleworld Australian Championships, NSW riders were dominant winning most of the Champion titles.

Our **Annual Awards and Performance Medals** continue to represent a significant achievement for our members.

105 performance medals were presented this year, compared to 138 in 2013. 9 Gold (9 awarded in 2013), 19 Silver (40 in 2013) and 77 Bronze (58 in 2013).

In addition, a Clarendon Amateur Owner/Rider leaderboard was created this year and the winners recognised at the Annual Awards night.

In line with our Constitution, four committee positions are declared vacant to be filled at the AGM. One nomination was received for the 2015-2017 term (Toni Venhaus) and as a result a vote was not required this year. This leaves three Committee vacancies and nominations will be called from the floor this evening.

Finally, I would like to thank Tracey Lesslie our Admin Secretary and Karen Lever our Clarendon Events Secretary for their assistance during the last 12 months and to the Executive, Committee and Delegates for your contribution and support during the year.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank the Clubs and the many Volunteers we all rely on to make this sport possible.

Toni Venhaus

Honorary Secretary, Dressage NSW

Attached to minutes:

- Summary of Committee members attendance at Committee meetings
- Summary of membership

Honorary Treasurer's Reports

The papers you have in front of you include the Financial Report for Dressage NSW for the year ended 30th June 2014. I will refer to various pages in this document throughout my report.

The first page is a snapshot of our activity in the financial year July 2013 to Jun 2014. It shows that DNSW incurred a loss of \$13,885 in the financial year 2013/14 against a loss of \$37,205 in the financial year 2012/2013 and a loss of \$57,697 in the 2011/2012 financial year. This ongoing deficit, an amount of over \$107,000 over the past three years, underlines the challenges that the DNSW Committee has faced and will continue to face in the coming years as a result of both declining revenues for many of our activities and steadily increasing costs. On a positive note, the committee has placed significant emphasis both on reducing expenses and increasing revenues for Dressage NSW over the past two years and the deficit has been steadily decreasing. This year's loss is due to depreciation and amortization rather than an operational deficit which is a testament to the committee's effort in this regard. This strong focus on fiscal responsibility will need to continue for Dressage NSW to remain a viable operation into the future.

To further explain, if you turn to the Balance Sheet on page 2, you will see that DNSW has total equity of \$296,948. This is comprised of a net current asset balance of \$213,952 and a non-current asset balance of \$82,996. The decrease in equity (profitability) is due to the reduced value of property, plant and equipment (\$99,963 in 2012/2013) as a result of depreciation of past expenditure on the Clarendon arenas. Excluding depreciation and amortisation, DNSW would have shown a small, approximately, \$3000 profit for the 2013/14 financial year. The Notes on page 4 show that there is \$78,636 of expenditure on the arenas still to be depreciated over the coming years.

Please turn to the Income and Expenditure Statement on pages 13 and 14 of the Annual Report. The introduction of the AOR classes, a renewed focus from the Clarendon sub-committee in finding sponsorship and a positive financial result from the 2014 Sydney CDI have all played a large part in helping stem the financial losses of the previous two years. Toni and the Clarendon sub-committee team are to be congratulated for this outcome. Income from our Clarendon competitions and large events such as the CDI and State and National Championships help to fund our non-income earning but none-the-less very important functions such as rider support and training clinics, judge education and repairs and capital improvements. These items are our main areas of non-income earning expenditure, along with the production of our Centreline magazine. Looking forward, it is these areas which need attention to try to improve the future financial performance of DNSW.

Of the major events held during this financial period, only the 2014 Sydney CDI made a significant profit (\$6248). The 2013 State Championships broke even and the 2013 National and Young Rider Championships both made small losses of \$1226 and \$1605 respectively. The impact of declining revenue from our major events is a significant challenge for our committee to address moving forward. A huge amount of committee time and effort goes into running these events, often at the expense of strategic priorities such as reviewing the Business Plan, searching and applying for grant funding outside our sport, etc. It is simply not sustainable for DNSW to continue to run these events at a loss.

Grants from Equestrian NSW and Equestrian Australia continue to support our various activities. In the 2013/14 financial year, we received \$59,800 from Equestrian NSW including \$8,800 of special project funding for the Regional Dressage Festival and judge education (with a further \$2,200 to be received in financial year 2014/15). The balance of these grants was used to support our state-wide administrative activities, and the various major events and championships. From Equestrian Australia we received \$13,500 in grants which was used to support the National Championships and Sydney CDI.

Looking forward, while there are signs that our financial situation is improving, there are still significant financial and strategic challenges for Dressage NSW on the horizon. We must be prepared to meet them by reducing costs wherever possible and looking for opportunities to increase revenue to ensure that our organization is sustainable in the long term.

I would also like to take this opportunity to advise that, after three years as the DNSW Honorary Treasurer, I will be stepping down after this year. I would like to make special mention of the invaluable advice, support and assistance provided to me by Judy Wilson throughout my time as Treasurer. Without her support, it would not have been possible for me to take on this role. I would also like to thank Toni Venhaus, who always makes herself available to provide guidance and encouragement and is an absolute walking encyclopaedia on anything Dressage NSW.

Appointment of Auditor

Motion: a) (page 10) that the committee resolves that financial report presents fairly the financial position of Dressage NSW Incorporated as at June 30 2014 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, mandatory professional reporting requirements and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board

b) at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Dressage NSW Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Motion: To use D. Scott and Associates as auditors for the 2014/15 financial year.

The meeting discussed the cost of the audit and its value comparative to other organisations of a similar size.

Moved: Helen Lawson

Seconded: Toni Venhaus

Motion Carried.

Committee Elections

One nomination for Toni Venhaus was received for the 2015-2017 term and as there were no other nominations was declared elected.

Three positions remained vacant and nominations from the floor were called for.

Sue Cunningham, Kathy Shelley and Vicki Newham were nominated and as no other nominations were received they were declared elected to the committee

The President thanked out-going committee member, Cathie Drury-Klein for her contribution to the sport over the past 20 years.

Confirmation of the 2015 Committee: Michelle Becchio, Gail Benson, Sue Cunningham, Suzanne Doyle, Jan Geary, Helen Lawson, Vicki Newham, Earle Olaisen, Kathy Shelley, Prue Spurrett, Beth Turner, Toni Venhaus.

General Business

There was no General Business.

Close of Meeting

The meeting was declared closed at 7.33 pm