

# Dressage NSW Inc Annual General Meeting

## Minutes

Held via Zoom

**Tuesday, 6 December 2022**

Meeting opened at 7.01pm

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

#### Present

Mandy Jones	Julie Jones	Kay Barney
Jo Gunn	Kirsteen Dixon	Gail Benson
Kathy Shelley	Dee Vodden	Suzanne Cunningham
Toni Venhaus	Kaye Spence	Bruce McVey
Nadya Marshall	Mary Houghton	
Angela Dalby	Kyli Bullock	Steve Lancaster
Cathie Drurie-Klein	Petra Keranen	Sue Birch
Denise Fox	Prue Spurrett	Sue Scaysbrook
Helen Batson	Rachael Downs	Suzanne Doyle
Jenny Flint	Sarah Hanslow	Vireena Peacock

#### Proxies

Christina Tesoriero	Franz Venhaus
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### 2. Apologies

Anne Barnes	Krystina Burdekin	Nicole Moxey
Cathy Cupit	Louse Clarke	Pamela Bice
Irene Bakels-Noreen	Marjolyn Thomas	Zanna Northam

The Chair (Mandy Jones) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 3. Confirmation of the Annual General Meeting Minutes, 7 December 2021

**Motion:** That the minutes be accepted as correct.

**Moved:** Jo Gunn **Seconded:** Toni Venhaus

**Motion Carried**

### 4. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

### 5. President's Report

While our sport began its recovery from the covid pandemic in 2022, the Weather Gods picked up the baton and delivered rain and flooding that decimated regions and tried to decimate our sport. It is testament to the resilience of our clubs, officials, riders and volunteers that we continue to bounce back from setback after setback!

The 2022 AGM will see four vacant committee positions: Earle Olaisen will step down after serving the maximum number of 3 year terms permitted under the Constitution, Jo Gunn and myself have both served a term of 3 years and are eligible to stand for a 2nd term. The 4th position is vacant after Michelle Becchio's resignation in August. Four nominees for the four vacant positions will be elected unopposed: Kylie Bullock, Sue Birch, Jo Gunn and myself. We welcome Kylie and Sue to the committee and look forward to working alongside them.

With Earle's departure from the Committee, we thank him for his contribution to DNSW, and to the sport as an FEI Steward. Earle was honoured with an invitation to steward at the Tokyo Olympics and also the World Equestrian Games. It was terrific to have Earle's 'behind the scenes' reports, and we thank him for his support for dressage, and Dressage NSW. Thank you to Michelle Becchio for her contribution to Dressage NSW, and to the sport as a judge and coach.

We farewelled Vireena Peacock as the Clarendon Event Secretary, who resigned in August due to increasing commitments of her role with Equestrian NSW.

We welcomed Krystina Burdekin as the Riders Representative, replacing Alycia Targa, and thank them both for their valuable contribution to the committee.

The dedication and commitment of all committee members is tireless, and I personally would like to thank each of them for their contribution to the organisation, and to the sport.

The highlights for 2022 were undoubtedly the major events. Dressage NSW ran a most successful 2022 Sydney CDI, and DNSW acknowledges the generous financial support of ENSW to assist DNSW to deliver a terrific event. Entry numbers were greater than 2021, but not as high as 2019. Thank you to outstanding event director Toni Venhaus and her team of volunteers, many of whom are committee members. The Katrina Wuest workshop held at the conclusion of the CDLite was very popular and informative.

The 2022 NSW Youth Dressage Championships saw lower entries due to the lack of qualifying competitions, due mainly to the significant flooding in the first half of the year and in the several weeks leading up to the competition. A number of competitors were unable to attend as they remained flooded in on the date of the event. Despite these challenges, overall the event was a success both from a competition and financial perspective.

The 2022 NSW State Dressage Championships ran in late Aug/Sept with exceptional numbers, especially in light of the lack of qualifying and lead up events. There were strong entries in all divisions of Open, AOR, Ponies and Para. For the first time Equibilty competitions were included in the program. The competitors, sponsors and volunteers were delighted to be involved in such a successful event, and our thanks go to Karen Lever for taking on this huge event with such skill.

DNSW hosted the Australian AOR Championships in October, the first time this event was held in NSW. With Toni Venhaus at the helm the event was always destined to be a stunning success, and Toni again did not disappoint! The AOR riders very much appreciated the opportunity to compete at 'their own' Championship event. The 2023 Australian AOR Championships will be held in Tamworth under the stewardship of Marjolyn Thomas.

A huge vote of thanks goes to Jo Gunn, who in addition to her enormous workload as Honorary Secretary, has taken on the role of Volunteer Coordinator for major events. Jo has an enviable stable of volunteers who regularly pitch in to make our events possible. Thank you to Jo and each of the volunteers. Events simply could not run without you!

On that note, I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Equestrian NSW, whose financial contribution has allowed us to further increase our support and recognition of volunteers.

DNSW is increasingly embracing virtual technology, regularly holding virtual judge education online. Kay Barney and Julie Jones have invested an enormous amount of time and expertise to develop the Officials LMS, due for launch in the near future.

Pamela Bice has continued leading a working group to review electronic platforms, liaising on behalf of clubs and riders for improvements to the Nominate system, and creating resources to help Clubs, who are often infrequent users of electronic platforms, make the most of this technology, including using online scoring suites.

One of the priorities for DNSW in 2023 is to expand activities in all regions of NSW and we are planning a Club Forum in early 2023. We will investigate educational opportunities, try to better understand the challenges faced by riders throughout NSW, and offer a greater understanding of DNSW and its roles. In consultation with Area Delegates, we hope to expand the role of the Riders Representative.

During a recent High Performance session the riders and HP Co-ordinator, Zanna Northam, discussed the importance of setting a strong policy of cohesiveness and authenticity for all High Performance riders. To better reflect this focus, the DNSW committee in consultation with Zanna, has re-named the group the High Performance Team. There will be changes to the selection criteria with an emphasis on positive behaviour. As the High Performance riders are also role models for our sport these changes are not only welcome but enormously important. Details are available on the DNSW website.

Kathy Shelley and her team on the Clarendon sub-committee have worked tirelessly to manage the Clarendon grounds and facilities, and Gail Benson has continued to provide high standard catering for the Clarendon events.

Mary Houghton goes above and beyond to serve Dressage NSW and 'thank you' seems inadequate to express our sincere gratitude. Mary supports the members, the committee and sub-committees with true dedication and professionalism.

In addition to the day to day work for Committee members, who already dedicate an enormous amount of time to the sport, the Committee has been faced with an enormous issue – the future of Clarendon. As members will be aware, DNSW undertook a Strategic Planning Review earlier in the year. Following the planning meetings, DNSW formed a Focus Group to consider the future of 'local' club events at Clarendon. In hindsight this was both necessary and timely, as it appears we are now to lose the Clarendon grounds, after the Licensor informed us they do not intend to renew the Licence Agreement at its termination in June 2025, and will enforce the terms of the Licence Agreement, requiring the area to be returned to flat ground. This comes with enormous financial liabilities. The Licensor has offered a significant financial incentive to terminate the Licence at the end of 2022. Due to the amount of work required to remediate the grounds, we have requested an extension of this offer to June 2023 and at the time of writing we are awaiting a reply from the Licensor.

As the year draws to a close the DNSW Committee would usually enjoy a well earned break, returning with renewed vigour in the New Year, however this year we must prioritise the Clarendon Licence Agreement and seriously evaluate the implications of committing Dressage NSW to an eye watering amount of money should we continue to June 2025. Estimates to remediate the grounds in June 2025 are in the vicinity of \$180k. Whilst some argue that DNSW has amassed funds 'from Clarendon for Clarendon', the financial incentive to terminate early cannot be disregarded, and how these funds could alternatively be used for a Whole of Sport, Whole of State benefit, will make for some very difficult Committee discussions and decisions about the future of Clarendon. The Clarendon issue, and especially the animated and passionate social media commentary from not only members with a vested interest, but from some members of the public who have no relationship to Clarendon, has taken its toll on committee members, and I thank the Committee for their resilience while we work through an incredibly difficult decision making process.

I wish you all a happy and safe Christmas and New Year period and look forward to seeing you all out competing in 2023.

*Mandy Jones  
President  
Dressage NSW*

## **6. Honorary Secretary's Report**

Yet again we have experienced difficult conditions for our sport over the last twelve months. This year we swapped Covid restrictions for extreme weather events resulting in many cancellations at Clarendon and state-wide.

As the SDA (State Dressage Authority) we manage the day-to-day administration of the sport throughout NSW. Our responsibilities include:

- representing dressage in NSW with the EADC (Equestrian Australia Dressage Council)
- working with ENSW
- liaising with the EADC with regards to formulation of the rules of the sport
- supporting our dressage teams – both High Performance and Young Rider, as well as supporting the Young Rider Development Programme
- maintaining and approving the NSW dressage event calendar
- conducting seminars and workshops for judges by way of the Judges Sub-Committee
- facilitating and supporting judge's exams by way of the Judges Sub-Committee
- providing annual awards and performance medals for our members

DNSW and the Clarendon Sub-Committee managed to conduct four club level competitions between January and November this year. Three were held at Clarendon and one was held at SIEC. There were many competitions cancelled across NSW throughout the year because of the extremely wet weather and flooded grounds. We ran a successful CDI in April which was very well attended and a great success thanks to the efforts of Toni Venhaus and her team. Unfortunately, it too was impacted by the weather but with some last minute rearranging of classes everything was able to run with minimal disruption. The NSW Young Rider Championships ran smoothly in July with Mandy Jones and her capable team running another successful event. This was followed by the NSW Dressage Championships in early September with Karen Lever as Event Director. Karen did a wonderful job with this event and the feedback from everyone involved was excellent. Our last major event for the year was the Australian Amateur Owner Rider Dressage Championships again with Toni Venhaus at the helm. This was another successful event enjoying good weather throughout the three days of competition. This event moves to Tamworth in 2023 and I am sure it will be very well supported.

We are looking forward to much better weather in 2023. Planning is well underway for the 2023 Sydney CDI in April, Australian Young Rider Championships in July, and the NSW Dressage Championships in September. All these events will be held at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre.

Eleven committee meetings have been held since the last AGM. An EGM was held on November 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss the decision to cease running club level events at Clarendon and the early termination of the licence with HDAA. A summary of committee member attendance is attached to the Annual Report. All meetings were conducted electronically via Zoom.

The Committee would like to thank Earle Olaisen for his long-standing dedication to Dressage NSW. Earle leaves the committee after almost 10 years as a committee member. Earle has also represented Australia as an FEI Steward at major international events which is an outstanding achievement. We are pleased to be able to benefit from the knowledge and experience he has gained.

Clubs are continually struggling to secure judges especially in the regional areas. Our judge numbers are growing thanks to the hard work of Sue Cunningham, Julie Jones and Kay Barney. Judge education is a major focus of the DNSW Committee and we will do all we can to support this, state-wide for the benefit of everyone.

DNSW membership numbers have increased slightly this year to 548 from 540 in 2021. A handout of the member statistics is attached for your reference.

Our Annual Awards and Performance Medals qualifying period for 2022 was from the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021 to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 . The qualifying period in 2023 will be 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

168 Performance Medals were won this year, compared to 169 in 2021. 21Gold (21 in 2021), 51 Silver (53 in 2021) and 96 Bronze (95 in 2021).

***In accordance with the DNSW constitution four (4) committee positions become vacant each year (1 was a mid-term resignation) We have received four (4) nominations, Mandy Jones, Jo Gunn, Sue Birch and Kyli Bullock***

There being no other nominations a vote is not required, and the listed candidates will be elected to the Committee for the coming term.

In closing, thank you to all Committee members and Delegates for your assistance and support during the past year which has been a period of change and of progress.

*Jo Gunn  
Honorary Secretary  
Dressage NSW*

**Motion:** That the Honorary Secretary's Report be accepted

**Moved:** Julie Jones      **Seconded:** Jo Gunn

**Motion Carried**

#### **7. Honorary Treasurer's Report**

Included in this report are the audited accounts for Dressage NSW for the 2021/22 Financial Year (FY22). These accounts were prepared by the appointed auditor, Rod Laws of Tinworth & Co.

The 2022 Financial Year recorded a small loss of \$797.

This result is in line with FY21 and is not unexpected, given that the Association faced the ongoing challenges of the COVID19 pandemic and extreme weather events during this period. These have significantly affected the operations of the Association causing cancellation and disruption to many activities.

Once again, financial support was provided by Equestrian NSW who supported various activities including administrative and officials training expenses and volunteer initiatives. We thank ENSW for their continuing support.

This report also includes detailed Profit and Loss reports for the two main competition activities undertaken in FY22 – Clarendon and the CDI.

I would like to thank the Committee of DNSW for their support and assistance during the 2021/22 Financial Year and to date.

*Kirsteen Dixon  
Hon. Treasurer  
Dressage NSW*

**Motion:** That the Honorary Treasurer's Report be accepted

**Moved:** Julie Jones      **Seconded:** Jo Gunn

**Motion Carried**

**Questions to the Treasurer from the Floor**  
(Questions from Sue Scaysbrook and Suzanne Doyle)

Q1: What is the variance in venue hire between FY22 (\$186,243) and FY21 (\$120,088)?

Response: The following table provides a summary of the key items driving the difference in venue hire and maintenance charges. Detail of all transactions allocated to the account in both years is attached.

Item	FY22 cf FY21
Mis-posted Hospitality Expense for CDI (Pages)	9,321.14
Mis-posted Trade Stand Expense for CDI (Pages)	23,213.07
Mis-posted Equipment Hire Expense for CDI (Pages)	4,103.18
SIEC hire for CDI	17,434.19
DNSW event Feb 2022 SIEC	17,206.59

Although there has been an increase in the total venue hire and maintenance costs in comparison with FY21, venue hire cost on its own is only half the picture – the other side of the equation is the income generated. In the case of CDI in FY22, the total income for the event increased by \$67,000 or 25% as compared with FY21 and made a profit – and in the case of the DNSW SIEC Event in February 2022, this event generated \$36,000 in income and made a small profit.

Q2: What is the source of the funds in the capital reserves (cash)?

Response: The cash at bank as of 30 June 2022 was \$553,296. Included in that amount is \$68,048 of deferred revenue (ENSW funding allocated to FY23 activities) and \$16,044 for the June 2022 BAS liability (payable to the ATO August 2022). Thus, the 'available' cash reserve at 30 June 2022 was \$469,204.

In terms of the 'source' of the \$469,204 it is the cumulative profit/loss from all operating activities of DNSW since inception. The breakdown of excess funds at the end of each financial year and the ensuing cumulative balance for specific activities has not been recorded. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the excess cash has been viewed as an asset of the organisation as a whole, rather than accruing to a specific activity.

It would be a significant amount of work to recreate the historical breakdown of the surplus. However, the data available in MYOB goes back to 2016 so it can provide some insight into the balance accruing from that date. The following table is a summary of the 'contribution' of the key competition activities over the period FY17 to FY22. The cash at bank for FY16 was \$266,000 so this table relates only to the increase in cash reserves after FY16, and accounts for 80% of that increase.

This data has been sourced from the attached Job P&L for the period FY17 to FY22.

Job P&L FY17 to FY22		
CDI	64,365.34	40%
State Champs	13,091.65	8%
YR Champs	32,368.61	20%
Nationals	20,982.04	13%
Clarendon	30,263.71	19%

Q3: Does the treasurer have an opinion on the minimum level of capital reserves for a Not for Profit organisation such as DNSW?

Response: Determining an appropriate level of reserves requires an assessment of various matters. It is recognised that as a not for profit association, excess funds are to be utilised for the objectives of the association, that is, the advancement of the sport of Dressage in NSW. Any reserve should be set at a level that provides DNSW with an amount of sustainability and ongoing viability. At the same time, the reserve should not be set too high, as this could mean that funds are being accumulated rather than being utilised as required by the objects of the association.

The following is a high level consideration of what may be appropriate for DNSW but note this is not a formal reserve policy at this stage.

Factors impacting reserve	Application to DNSW
Current and future liabilities	Minimal – but noting that for major events there could be significant expenses contracted for prior to the event eg plant and equipment hire, venue hire which may give rise to a liability in the event of a cancellation or other disruption
Operating costs	Administration costs (incl insurance) c \$40,000 per year
Staff entitlements	No employees.
Changes in funding or political landscape	One main source of funding (ENSW) – if this reduces or is discontinued this will have a significant impact
Volunteers	Finding sufficient volunteers continues to be an issue. Cost of volunteer expenses is rising. Some event volunteer positions supplemented with paid positions.
External events	Where an external event results in cancellation of an event at short notice there may still be a requirement for suppliers to be paid even if no income is received.
Potential legal claims (not covered by insurance)	None known
Upcoming repairs or asset replacement	Minimal

In my view there are two key potential emergency scenarios where DNSW would need to have recourse to cash reserves:

1. In the event that DNSW was required to operate for a year without current ENSW funding (and wished to undertake the same level of activity) it would need to cover administration costs and that part of ENSW funding which is not allocated to major events (on the basis that the scope of major events could be reduced to try and ensure a break-even outcome). This is approx. \$80,000.
2. Where the CDI (the largest event run by DNSW) is subject to cancellation or disruption at short notice and contracted payments to suppliers are still required even if the event will not generate any income. Based on the expenses for the CDI in 2022, an estimate of \$160,000 would be reasonable. This includes venue and equipment hire and non-refundable travel and accommodation costs, but does not include officials expenses, prizes and hospitality.

On this basis the minimum level of reserve for DNSW would be in the region of \$240,000.

**Motion:**

a) That the committee resolves that financial report presents fairly the financial position of Dressage NSW Incorporated as of 30 June 2021 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 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.

**Moved:** Julie Jones

**Seconded:** Jo Gunn

**Motion Carried**

**8. Proposed Changes to the Constitution**

Steven Lancaster moved a motion to include AND between clause 34 (a) and 34 (b) in addition to the proposed changes as advised in the meeting papers

To make the following changes to clause 33 and 34 of the DNSW Constitution:

33(a) A general meeting of the Association may be held at two or more venues using technology approved by the Committee that gives each of the Association's members a reasonable opportunity to participate.

(b) A member who participates in a meeting using that technology is taken to be present at the meeting and, if the member votes at the meeting, is taken to have voted in person.

34 (a) A notice shall be deemed to be duly given if addressed and posted to the Member's address recorded in the books of the Association or addressed and posted to the Member's last known address, or if published in the official magazine of the Association, and any such notice shall be deemed to have been received by the Member five working days after post or publication.

AND

(b) A notice shall also be deemed to be duly given if emailed to the Member's last known email address (as recorded by the Secretary) and shall be deemed to have been received by the member on the next working day after the date on which the email was sent.

**Moved** Steven Lancaster

**Seconded** Julie Jones

**Unanimous Agreement**

**Motion Carried**

**9. Appointment of Auditor**

**Motion:** That DNSW appoint "Tinworth & Co" as auditor for the 2022/2023 financial year.

**Moved:** Jo Gunn

**Seconded:** Sue Cunningham

**Motion Carried.**

**10. Committee Elections**

In accordance with the DNSW constitution four (4) committee positions become vacant each year.

Earle Olaisen stepped down after 10 years on the DNSW committee. The president thanked Earle for his contribution to DNSW and to the sport of dressage and acknowledged his recent international stewarding.

Michelle Becchio resigned after 9 years on the committee.

Four (4) nominations were received being from Jo Gunn, Kyli Bullock, Mandy Jones and Sue Birch.

There being no other nominations a vote is not required, and the listed candidates are elected to the Committee for the coming term.

**11. General Business**

Mandy Jones advised the meeting of the recent resignation of Bruce Farrar from his role as CEO of ENSW, and thanked him for his support of dressage, and DNSW.

Jenny Merity has recently passed away after many years of tireless contributions to many equestrian disciplines, including dressage.

**12. Close of Meeting** The President declared the meeting closed at 7.48pm