

## **MRDC President's Report 2021/22**

This year saw the welcome and gradual return to unrestricted club rallies, competitions, and face-to-face events and meetings. Certainly the last few years of the pandemic has meant that we won't take getting together for granted and I hope this can continue.

Early in the year, the committee introduced new initiatives to recognise members' success and contribution to the club through 3 new member award categories. The Member of the Month award recognises members doing things to promote the good reputation of our club and supporting our members in a positive way. During the year, we have been pleased to present this award to Fiona Cooper, Sue Van Eyle, Evelyn Fletcher and Lee Towell. All worthy recipients.

The inaugural Patron's prize was presented at our EA Club Championships in April to Karen Blythe and her Sonic K for her highest % score of the day. We look forward to presenting the President's Prize at our HRC AV championships this Sunday.

We used our Sports Victoria Grant, to purchase a first aid kit and to train additional members in first aid to strengthen our safety preparedness at rallies and competitions. Lee Towell secured the grant on the club's behalf last year. Thank you Evelyn, Carrin Romais and Lee Howells for undertaking this full day course and making yourselves available to provide first aid as needed. It was also lovely to hear from several members with existing first aid qualifications that are willing to provide their support at our events.

Over the year, our members have been active in competitions as a full event calendar returned. In December, we saw many Club members competing at the 2021 Dressage Festival. Significantly, our club coordinated the pencilers for the DF and there were many members volunteering in those roles, highlighting our involvement in the sport and making an important contribution to the success of that event. This was greatly appreciated by the organisers and Dressage Victoria committee. It also fits with our Club purpose of supporting our sport.

We also supported further judge development by enabling EA and HRC AV judge upgrades and accreditation at our events.

After two years' break due to COVID we were pleased to once again to have a super team represent MRDC at the Victorian Dressage Club Annual Teams Challenge. We enjoyed a great day of competition and socialising with our team finishing 5<sup>th</sup> and the Club taking out the best-decorated table, creatively designed by Fiona Cooper.

The Club was also well represented by members competing and volunteering at Dressage and Jumping with the Stars, the AOR Victorian Championships in September, and the Nationals just two weeks ago at Boneo.

Congratulations to Emma Long and Bubbles for being awarded the AOR Victorian Champion of the year for 2021/22. And to Carrin Romais with her new mare Jazzy for becoming Preliminary champion at the AOR Victorian State Championships held in September. Congratulations also to several members who impressively placed and had personal best scores at the Nationals two weeks ago.

In April, our EA Club Championships were held at Werribee Park where competitors and officials enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and generous prizes. A huge thank you to the many members who supported this day and especially Fiona Cooper who was there from dawn to dusk, to Bryony Giusti, Annie Gray, and Evelyn Fletcher for their support in the office as well as the many who pencilled throughout the day in particular, Malcolm Park, Sue Van Eyle and Annemarie King who committed many hours.

Our Club continues to meet its aims to provide and develop good dressage training and education and competitions for riders of all levels but equally to build support and friendships among our members and Committee.

For the first time we held an education seminar in October with speakers Lee Howells and Justine Greer. Both freely shared their extensive knowledge and experience as judge and trainer to improve our competition readiness. Feedback was enthusiastic and we will certainly consider planning another seminar in the future.

We were hoping to have a TTT dressage team in November but sadly flooding in the north has seen this event postponed. Thank you Gina Farrugia for organizing our club team MacArenas consisting of Gina, Evelyn Fletcher, Rhonda Thompson and Abbey Martin. We hope this

event can go ahead in March as scheduled with a support base there to cheer our team on.

As you know, our HRC AV competition initially planned for 22 October had to be postponed to this Sunday. Our wonderful coordinator Tash Dillon, has had to work even harder to reorganize our event. On top of her paid workload this is a huge contribution and enormous thanks goes to her for a tireless and cheerful effort in planning for this event.

We have once again had fabulous support from Bryony Giusti as volunteer coordinator who also took on this role for our April championships and does so in such a professional manner. It is so reassuring as an event coordinator to have Bryony in that role. Thank you Bryony.

Thank you also to all of our members and friends who volunteer in support of our events throughout the year. This support from members not only helps raise funds for our rallies but also makes the entire organizing and planning feel like a shared success for the Club.

Thanks too for those who have provided lunch for coaches and riders, which encourages socialising, and builds friendships at each rally.

Our club sponsors have again been extremely supportive of our club in the last year. We received a cash donation from Gisborne Veterinary Clinic, who has been supporters of our club for the last 25 years. This is a very generous gesture for which we are extremely grateful. On top of this Rohan Luxmoore from Gisborne Vets kindly gave up his time to speak to us tonight as he has done in the past.

Perry's Stockfeeds have also continued to make a cash reward to us as a beneficiary of their loyalty program. This too has been a long-term partnership that is greatly appreciated. Juravon Equestrian Centre continues to give us discounted rates for our monthly rallies and other events. Renee and Sandra are always helpful and supportive of our club. Nothing is too much trouble.

Melton Saddlery and *EV Off The Track* supported us with prizes for our EA Club Championships, while Leader Equine have once again donated lovely products for our HRC AV competition jackpot prizes.

We rely on all of this support to continue to provide the events and services to our members and the broader sport. We are extremely grateful to these wonderful local businesses. I encourage you to return their support when you can and acknowledge their generosity.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the many volunteers on broader sport management committees including Dressage Victoria, the EV Judges and Officials Education Committee, HRC AV and their sub-committees who do enormous hours of work to manage our sport and ensure we have the opportunity to do what we love. Our own members, Lee Howells and Jen Mainland in particular have significant roles.

Thank you to our entire club Committee members for participating in our monthly meetings and making such a fabulous contribution throughout the year. Special recognition goes to Malcolm Park for his wise counsel on meeting our obligations to hold COVID Safe events.

To Sue Van Eyle for maintaining our annual Leaderboard and organising the much-prized embroidered dress rug award that will be presented at our Christmas rally.

And to our Minute Secretary, Evelyn, who records the minutes with ease and accuracy.

And to those who undertake the day-to-day tasks of managing the club and ensuring we function effectively. I especially acknowledge and thank Annie Gray, Lee Towell and Fiona Cooper for their enormous contributions throughout the year.

Fiona Cooper who in addition to being the Vice President has ably maintained our website and coordinated the rallies. Fiona has brought us a fabulous list of coaches this year and helped us achieve our goal to expose members to coaching they might not otherwise have the opportunity to enjoy. Thanks to Fiona and through our fund raising, our members have experienced some valuable lessons and memorable moments throughout the year.

Annie Gray has undertaken yet another year of important work as Treasurer. Annie has carried out this role with the upmost integrity,

is conscientious and does the work with the minimum fanfare. It is a very much behind the scenes role that most members don't have any visibility of and yet is integral to our existence. Thank you Annie. Annie was also our Child Protection Officer this year.

To Lee Towell as Secretary, who has ensured we met our Club's administrative obligations to EA, HRCV, Corporations Vic and to our members. Lee is diligent in her role and has a wonderful friendly manner that we all enjoy. Lee also keeps members up to date with club news and HRCV and EA announcements as well as regularly boosting our Facebook group and page with training tips and humor.

We know that without Club members like Evelyn, Lee, Annie and Fiona our Club would simply not function. On behalf of the committee thank you all. We have all enjoyed the confidence that comes with you in these roles.

I am proud that our Club has so many wonderful members who help at key times and help to build the social adhesion in our club. Personally, I always feel surrounded and supported by a big group of friends throughout the year, especially at our meetings and events. I am confident the next year will be equally rewarding.

Thank you.

Joan O'Reilly  
President

26/10/22