

PRESIDENTS REPORT – NORTH METRO ZONE 2008/9

The year 2008/9 has been a very busy year for the North Metro Zone as we recommenced the EFA Horse Trials in April after first having to cancel them in February due to the fires. This of course clashed with the running of the Games and Flat Zone Qualifiers which made for a very busy two week period. The numbers of competitors in the Games and flat were very disappointing with many clubs previously very active in the events not producing either a games or a flat team. The failure of clubs to give their young riders the chance to take part in the games, the fun events of Pony Club, is very worrying to the Zone Committee as that is the area where good teamwork is developed. Even for smaller clubs who can't produce a full team the Zone provided the opportunity for composite teams but were disappointed by the response. The fires also badly affected the Kinglake and Yarra Glen Pony Clubs and members from other clubs and I would like to thank all those in Zone, the Clubs and the DCI/ZA Panel who leant a helping hand to those affected. Support from the State Government and PCAV staff was also much appreciated.

The major focus of the Zone Committee was the EFA Horse Trials at Yeringberg which has been our traditional fund raiser over many years and also allows our Grades 1 and 2 riders gain qualification for State. We had to develop and flag seven Courses for the event which entailed building 12 new jumps designed by Ewen Kellet and built by the usual Yeringberg Team with tremendous help from clubs and volunteers. Work commenced in October and continued until a week before the event. Steven Coffey again assisted with his tractor and Bobcat, and we also had assistance from John Vergis in heavy duty tractor support at cost. The profits from the event, in excess of \$7000, has markedly improved our financial situation, which we will need to continue to allow future committees cope with running the State Horse Trials in 2018 which we estimate may cost \$80,000 as material and workforce costs rise.

The EFA Technical Delegates and competitors were very impressed with the standard of the cross country course and the conduct of the event which ran very smoothly. I must give a special thanks to our Event Secretary Lynne Brown who undertook an enormous workload in managing the event entries, Johanne and Eileen in the Secretary's caravan and Lynne, Jan and Brian in the scoring for their efforts which ensured everything ran smoothly. Lynne and Bill from Saddleup, despite losing most of their property during the fires, again came to the party as our major sponsor continuing their sponsorship tradition for Yeringberg. Finally thanks to the Executive Committee and our Zone Representative Linda who worked very hard over 12 months to manage all events, particularly our Event Secretary Lynne Brown. David de Pury again provided every assistance possible to ensure we could run a successful event. Our Teams Horse was also an outstanding event but again disappointed with numbers.

Competitor numbers at club events have also shown a marked decrease which with decreasing member numbers at some clubs is of concern to clubs' financial and organisational viability.

Thanks to our hardworking DCI/ZA panel and Zone Examining Secretary for their work in successfully managing our C and K Testing Program and Club visits. All members of State Teams conducted themselves very well and successfully and were a credit to the Zone and their clubs. Thanks to Brenda Mitten and her team for running

the very successful junior clinics again this year which were fully subscribed. The increased success being experienced by Zone Teams at State is due in no small measure to young rider development in these clinics which are enjoyed by all.

Due to the increased fire danger in the December to March periods the Zone has been successful in getting our EFA Event put back to the second weekend in April which should allow us plan without worrying about the fire danger. We will run four EFA and three Pony Club classes at the event and will have to do a minimal amount of fence building this year. We are liaising with David De Pury, at his request, to ensure that his plans to erect fences to better manage his paddocks causes minimal interference with the cross country course. We plan to start work in October and as usual all who would like to learn the art of cross country course building are most welcome to attend any building sessions. We are looking at options of addressing the EFA requirement for plastic dressage rings and will look at gaining grants if possible or options to borrow sets. We plan to roster clubs to assist with the clean up after the event similar to the Teams Horse Trials as the Zone Committee didn't finish the clean up after the last event until 10pm by which time the team was overtired. The April date while improving safety from fire regrettably clashes with the timescale for Zone Qualifiers so we need to look at other options to spread the workload.

I would appeal to clubs to start now at developing teams or even individual riders to take part in Zone Teams events in Games, Flat, Horse Trails and Showjumping. We will continue to allow composite teams of riders where clubs can't field a team to ensure all members have the advantage of teamwork, one of the major aims of the PCAV.

I will finish by thanking everyone for their help and patience during the year and assistance following the fires and look forward to an easier year next year.

Jim Page
Zone President