

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At last we are back into it again, it has been great to have a few runs and catch up with people again. Some of the jobs should have been caught up with at home and all the wires are tight again except some along the Belyando. Some campdrafters have taken advantage of the generally good wet season and gained new skills due to EI boredom one being waterskiing there are reports of varying degrees of success however nearly every campdrafter in the eastern states went to see Brooks & Dunn which seemed to be enjoyed by all who went. The break from campdrafting may have done a lot good for the riders as well as the horses.

Post EI activities are keeping me very busy defending the ACA against a campaign by the leaders of the horse industry pursuing a fully regulated horse industry for all horse owners in Australia i.e. NLIS Horse. These creative and inventive people with very little practical experience who are answerable to no one (such as a membership base) are a powerful force to deal with as governments like to support and embrace people who like to tax themselves. The Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC) is a board that consists of predominantly Veterinarians and CEO'S of various persuasions who are trying to broker a deal with the federal government with an Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) and self regulation. The AHIC is not a body representing the actual mum and dad horse owners, but their own agendas.

In a nutshell the AHIC is proposing a system of mandatory micro chipping of all horses, passports for each horse, mandatory horse registration on a central data base and each movement recorded. Then of course this needs to be funded, guess who pays, the horse owner. The most disturbing aspect to the whole scenario is many within the horse industry are willing to bring this upon themselves because they are being lead blindly by bureaucrats who think we have to fall into line with other livestock industries that have electronic identification and matching recording systems. I strongly urge our members who may be members of another equine association to strongly question that association's intentions for the future with regards to regulation. It appears that the ACA and other campdraft associations are the only opponents to a fully regulated horse industry.

We are NOT in any way obliged to sign EADRA despite blackmail and fear tactics being used to force us into signing what appears to be a harmless and justified agreement which is in fact the first step towards a fully regulated Horse Industry.

We continually ask the question and it is never answered with any degree of substance backed by practical knowledge, is what are the benefits besides costing horse owners a lot of money and how will it help with disease control. Their answer is, we will know how many horses exist, where they are and other countries have similar systems. They are sadly mistaken on both accounts as we know within the beef industry all the pit falls of NLIS Cattle on both of these topics.

The ACA along with other associations have been directed to 'sell' this concept to horse owners, this is simply not possible as our members/horse owners are Australia wide and the logistics and costs are prohibitive. The concept is not supported by any documentation such as valid facts as in, necessary reasons or figures from the AHIC or any other body. I have been pursuing this matter since February with little success in gaining any meaningful information on the subject; it has been so neatly disguised by the people trying to perfect a system before dropping it in our collective laps. The deceit is hard to accept especially from people within the horse industry, but I guess should be expected when greed and self interest take precedence over the best interests of the horse industry.

To help members understand what we are facing I have included a letter addressed to Dr Barry Smyth, Chairman of the Australian Horse Industry Council. I have written this letter after attending a Industry Advisory Committee meeting in Sydney on 4th of April. The challenge we face now is greater than any I have faced in my time as President which includes Public Liability Insurance, NLIS Cattle – campdrafts etc, it is so important that we (ACA council) and individual members take every step possible to see that we as genuine horse owners are not railroaded on this issue.

The ACA is actively involved with the Qld Horse Council as well, I am a member of both the Industry Advisory Committee and the Legislative Response Committee terms of reference for this sub-committee of the revamped QHC is to deal with the Callinan Inquiry, Horse Vaccinations and Levies. At this time the QHC is taking a pragmatic approach to these issues especially the levy issue.

I would especially like to thank many councillors for their support in this Post EI dilemma as they have really stepped up to the mark by offering to undertake and accepting more responsibility within ACA management which has given me more time to focus on broader issues within the horse industry that need our attention. There have been numerous meetings at Gatton, Tamworth, Brisbane and Sydney to attend which have been shared between those on the Emergency sub-committee who are available to attend.

The ladies at the office have been busy as ever and now it is membership renewal and National Finals time which is always hectic. I would like to commend all the ladies at the office on their commitment and dedication especially at this very busy time of year.

Happy Campdrafting,

Noel Chiconi

ACA President.