

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello members, I would especially like to welcome our many new members to the ACA, it really underpins the fact that campdrafting is a great and popular sport as is one of the few horse sports with increasing numbers of new members in the hangover of EI. I would also like to thank our Major Sponsors and committed members especially for having faith during and after EI and participating in and supporting a great rural sport which in turn is an integral part of the social and economic circle.

The National Finals at Capella were a resounding success, the Capella committee can be very proud of their hard work, organization and efforts leading up to and during the event. Everyone was very appreciative of the no stress factor to the weekend which was entirely due to precision planning and organization with the help of resources from neighbouring committees as well. A big thank you to the event sponsors and cattle donors without their generosity we don't have a sport at all. The consistent number of high scoring runs was a reflection of the good cattle and was the basis for a great weekend even though we all couldn't take the ribbons home, everyone though had an even chance at the money. Major Sponsors Terry Donohue, Just Country and Ross Dolan, Dolan Enterprises set out from Brisbane in Terry's plane for Capella but unfortunately had to return due to engine trouble, after some tense moments they were able to return safely.

Congratulations to all the ACA Champions and placegetters, the championship positions are hotly contested each year and many people go to enormous efforts to prepare their horses and commit to travel in an endeavour to achieve their goals. It is wonderful to see this desire which adds another dimension to the sport. This year quite a number of the Championship titles and placings were decided at the National Finals, this of course is what the Finals are about and the spirit of the Finals is continued. It is great to see new faces in the Championship line-ups.

We have received a terrific response to our invitation to ABCRA judges who wish to duplicate their judging entitlement to the ACA judges' panel. Thank you to all those people who have responded and taken the opportunity to help alleviate pressure on fellow judges and committees.

On a slightly negative note some competitors need to be reminded of their unacceptable actions, unfortunately some think they have the right to manipulate committees for their own convenience and on occasion there are a small minority who become abusive towards secretaries when they miss out on nominating for a campdraft or have issue with a committee. Some committees have lost these special volunteers who are already under a lot of stress and pressure. Doubling up on nominations at different venues with the intention of only attending one venue is creeping in as well then scratching at the last minute or not at all is very frustrating for committees. These inconsiderate people should note that there are a lot more competitors than secretaries and we need the secretaries

first and foremost. If these same people have ever been on a committee they will quickly realise that very few people are willing to put their hand up for these positions of hard work and they don't need the added pressure of having to put up with ill mannered people. I would encourage anyone who isn't on a committee who continually has problems with how committees function to become involved, usually committees are a small group of people struggling to organize and run an event and would welcome help at any time.

Please read carefully - Again I would like to alert and update members to the most important issue confronting the Horse Industry as a whole and therefore our association and members who are everyday Australian Mum and Dad horse owners. That is the Federal Ministers' (minister for DPI, Tony Burke) push to have the Horse Industry sign the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) which in its present form and in simple terms means they are wanting all horse owners to sign up for a levy (tax) which we will have little or no control over. However it doesn't stop there, micro chipping of all horses in Australia is the mechanism which they want to employ as a means to monitor the collection of the tax. This concept is still being promoted as a good idea by some sectors of the horse industry.

The EADRA is a concept of protection or insurance for horse owners should an exotic disease come to Australia again. If the horse industry were to sign then the government undertakes to combat the disease on behalf of the horse industry however the cost recovery system when the costs blow out as happened with EI which we have no control of the amount charged in a levy situation. It has been suggested that if the horse industry is to repay the costs of EI, the levy to horse owners would be in the vicinity of \$100 plus per registered horse paid once only that is registered with any equine organisation. What people who are making these decisions have difficulty understanding is the **sting is in the tail** of this concept because it needs a mechanism to collect a levy which the AHIC and associated parties are not exposing, is electronic identification of all horses in Australia. The AHIC and associated parties who are promoting EADRA are quite prepared to have every horse owner undertake the expense of micro chipping all their horses at a major cost for a 'what if situation', what if there is another disease outbreak. How much have cattle producers spent on NLIS tags since it was introduced, I encourage every cattle producer to do the sum? The cost per horse to have it micro chipped will be considerable especially since a veterinarian has to administer the chip.

The point that these learned people are missing is rather than trying to fix a problem after it has escaped at the farm gate it should be the front door of Australia they should be concentrating their efforts of disease prevention towards, AQIS.

I have recently attended an Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) meeting on behalf of the ACA in Sydney on the 13th of May which is a committee comprised of State Horse Council representatives, Breed Society's, Sporting Associations, and Corporate members that makes recommendations to the Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC) board that is recognized

by government as peak body representing horse owners. The main role of the IAC is to provide input to the AHIC about any matters of national importance that affect the horse industry. In the previous magazine I have outlined and exposed issues of grave concern that arose that would impact on all horse owners in Australia from the previous IAC meeting that Harvey Walters and I attended at Sydney in February.

The most recent meeting was conducted in a much more acceptable manner and now members of the IAC are starting to realise the extent and consequences of their proposals in regard to the signing of EADRA which includes an attached levy plus a mechanism to collect it which incorporates a concept of micro chipping of all horses in Australia.

The position the ACA has taken since early this year on these issues is

NO to the signing of EADRA,

NO to levies on horse owners and,

NO to compulsory micro chipping of all horses in Australia,

At the IAC meeting members were able to vote (problems with this were exposed and explained in the last ACA magazine) and the majority of members are now in favour of the position the ACA has taken on the above issues. Just to remind people of the costs we are talking about is EI cost over \$100 million to eradicate not counting CHAPS payments plus other funding the government handed out. This equates to \$1250 per infected horse, without a doubt the levy system will quickly get out of hand in order to recoup such costs and there is no guarantee the levy wouldn't be triggered before a disease incursion in order to build a fund for the future. This thought has been proven to be correct by Federal Minister Tony Burke who introduced then withdrew 3 levy collection bills to parliament long before the Callinan Enquiry findings were handed down.

I make no apology for alerting ACA members to the potential dangers we face with current proposals from the Federal Minister as they stand. There is very little public knowledge on what the implications are and what is actually involved if the Horse Industry is to sign EADRA in its present form. A levy collection mechanism can only mean regulation though electronic identification of horses. The ACA is not against the concept of protecting the Horse Industry from the costs of future disease incursions however the structure of the current EADRA and proposed levy collection mechanism upon individual horse owners is unacceptable. The AHIC website www.horsecouncil.org.au is available for people to see the rhetoric that is being pedalled by Government, Animal Health Aust etc via the AHIC.

The bi-annual Major Sponsors Dinner will be held in Brisbane at Brisbane Exhibition time, Robyn has the details included elsewhere. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend and the timing is intended for convenience for those who may also be attending the Ekka.

The dinner is to honour and acknowledge the Major Sponsors contribution to the ACA at a formal function.

Happy Campdrafting,

Noel Chiconi

ACA President.