

Darling Downs Residents Association

Minutes from the AGM

Conducted on 16 September 2026

1 Introduction

1.1 DDRA Annual General Meeting

The Darling Downs Residents Association (DDRA) Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in the Oakford Community Centre at 57 Foxton Drive in Oakford on 16 September 2026.

1.2 Meeting Opened

As a quorum was present, the meeting opened at 7.06 pm.

1.3 Present

The following people attended the AGM:

Present: Bruce Hilliard, Pam Hilliard, David Ransom, Sharon Arena, Charlotte Boyes, Peter Cappendale, Emily Dagnall, John Dawkins, Tricia Duggin, Chris Eden-Street, Dave Emery, Carol Fawcett, Sue Gilbert, Jane London, Victoria Lynn, Karen Nelson, Niall Redgeway, Andrew Smith, Corine Smith, Ian Stanley, Wendy Stanley, Mark Stott, Pixie Stott, Bria Vale, Robin Vale, and Neil Waterhouse.

In addition to these members, the following special guests were present: Cr. Rob Coales (President of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale), Cr. Joel Chan, and Cr. Nathan Bishop (the sitting Councillors for the NW Ward).

1.4 AGM Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation was utilised to explain key points during the meeting. This AGM Presentation (AGMP) is available at the following link: [DDRA-AGM 2026 F.pptx](#), and specific slides outlining the information discussed are referenced in these minutes.

2 Item 2 - Apologies

The following apologies were received:

Mr Hugh Jones, MLA (Member for Darling Range – who was tied up due to parliamentary commitments), Kevin Brimblecombe, Tracy Brimblecombe, Matt Emery, Mal Fawcett, Jerome Donders, Shirly Donders, Gordon Scotchford, Tina Scotchford, Graeme Wakefield, and Tricia Wakefield.

3 Item 3 – Acceptance of the Previous AGM Minutes

The previous AGM Minutes are available online at [this link](#). The participants were reminded that in these minutes, drainage and flooding, Lot 9005 (now Lot 9013), and a safety wall for the Comic Loop South trail were key issues discussed during the meeting. Additionally, the 2025 AGM Minutes outlined the various workstreams, provided a progress update, and identified new tasks to be included in the [Strategic Development Plan](#).

Resolution. The following resolution was voted on during the meeting: ‘To accept the Minutes of the AGM dated 25 September 2025, and information provided on the outcomes of any matters arising from the Minutes.’

The vote was conducted as follows:

Accepted by:	Carol Fawcett
Seconded by:	Dave Emery
Vote outcome:	<i>Carried unanimously</i>

4 Item 4 – Key Challenges

Four key challenges in the area are discussed in the following subsections.

4.1 Shothole Borer – Update

As outlined on Slides 8 to 11 of the AGMP, the shothole borers are infesting areas just to the east of the Darling Downs Equestrian Estate (DDEE). There is a likelihood that the shothole borers will continue moving towards and into the Darling Downs Equestrian Park (DDEP) along the Birrega Drain as the temperatures warm. Should the infestation move into the area, key restrictions will be imposed, which include those listed on Slide 10 of the AGMP.

To help ascertain the movement of the shothole borers, Landcare SJ will place traps at the locations indicated by the stars on Slide 9 of the AGMP. The attendees at the meeting were also reminded that further information on these issues can be obtained from Landcare SJ, which is also monitoring and managing this infestation and its implications.

4.2 Drainage and Flooding – Update

An update on the drainage and flooding issues discussed at the last AGM was provided using Slides 12 to 18 of the AGMP. The pertinent points raised in these slides were:

- The DDRA conducted an analysis of the problems and has provided this to the Shire, who are using the information to initiate various actions.
- The key problem stems from the substantial increase in water flowing from the rail line into the drains within Kentucky Fields.
- The designs for the swale to the north of Kentucky Fields and the associated sump in the southwestern corner of Lot 9013 are still not finalised. The Shire is currently in discussion with the organisation implementing the subdivision to identify an appropriate solution.

- The swale to the east of the Thomas Access trail is being significantly expanded, and the Shire has already commenced important works in this area. However, the design and implementation will be finalised once the plan for the Lot 9013 sump and associated drainage is completed.
- Discussions between the Shire and the Tonkin Extension Alliance (TEA) concerning the drainage to the north of Thomas Road are still ongoing. The Shire is pushing to ensure that the swales being implemented by the TEA will successfully carry the much larger volumes of water that can be expected.
- The DDRA thanked the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale for their efforts to address the flooding problems that had been exacerbated by the changes in flow coming from the rail line.

4.3 Lot 9013 Subdivision – Update

The subdivision of Lot 9013 is moving forward, and as outlined on Slides 19 to 23 of the AGMP, this will have some implications for DDEP users. The key points raised in these slides were:

- It was noted that there will be 33 additional One Acre (~4,000m²) blocks and four One Hectare (~10,000m²) blocks, just on the eastern boundary of the 70 Acres.
- There have been delays in finalising the plan, whilst the drainage changes are agreed and implemented.
- The current plan now includes the accessway to the 70 Acres from the trails to the north. This had been left out of the plan discussed at the last AGM.
- Access gates have already been installed in appropriate locations in the eastern boundary of the 70 Acres, as shown on Slide 21 of the AGMP.
- Over 800 native trees and bushes have been planted on the boundary between the 70 Acres and Lot 9013. However, about 40% of these have died, and many are taking a long time to grow to an appropriate size to serve as a vegetation barrier between the private properties in Lot 9013 and the eastern side of the slow track. If the growth will not provide adequate protection for users of the slow track (e.g. from barking dogs, etc.), then another form of barrier will need to be implemented.

Emily Dagnell proposed that similar access and information signage, as provided in the vicinity of the Evening Peal carpark, needs to be fitted near the two gates on the eastern side of the 70 Acres once these can be opened. The DDRA President committed to looking into this matter in due course and including this requirement within Workstream 12 as necessary.

4.4 Safety Wall – Update

An update on the Safety Wall (as discussed at the last AGM) was provided using Slides 24 to 36 of the AGMP. The key points covered using these slides were:

- There are significant dangers being created by the changes being implemented to Thomas Road, as these will expose horses and riders using the Comic Loop South trail to vehicle noises and large truck movements that can lead to spooking events. Such horse spooking events can cause terrible accidents where people and horses are seriously injured or killed. These risks are outlined in more detail in a [Safety Report](#) developed by the DDRA.
- On behalf of the community, the DDRA has been providing advice on the risks to Main Roads. Additionally, Mr Michael Dagostino, LLB, forwarded two legal letters on behalf of the community, asking that they take appropriate steps to protect trail users. The DDRA also took this opportunity to thank Mr Dagostino for his support.

- Main Roads sent a response to the preceding correspondence from the DDRA and the lawyer on 9 September 2026. In this letter:
 - Main Roads rejected the need for a safety wall, without them even attempting to address the clear safety problems outlined in the Safety Report.
 - In this letter, Main Roads predominantly based their rejection on a narrow and inflexible reading of State Planning Policy 5.4. It is noteworthy that legal advice to the DDRA provided by another source disputes the Main Roads' justification.
 - Main Roads also failed to provide the multiple safety assessments that they claimed also supported their rejection. The DDRA was promised these reports by 30 May, but their latest letter effectively indicated that they were unlikely to keep their promise and may not even provide all of them, so the community can assess the validity of their decision not to protect people and horses using the Comic Loop South trail.
- It was noted that the Shire's Equine Advisory Group (EAG) had passed a resolution on 20 August 2026, asking the Shire to send a formal letter to the Minister for Transport stating that a safety wall is essential along this stretch of the Comic Loop South trail.

In the following discussion, members expressed their indignation at the Main Roads department's disdainful disregard for community safety. The following strategies were mandated:

- More people will get involved in engaging pro bono legal support so that this matter can be pursued.
- Where necessary, this should include sourcing funds through a GoFundMe page. Wendy Stanley offered to look into this if required.
- The DDRA will provide a deputation presentation in support of the EAG's resolution to the Shire at the next Council meeting on 21 September 2026, and to work with the Shire to facilitate the development of this correspondence.
- The DDRA Committee and other volunteers are to work with other stakeholders and organisations to get Main Roads and the Minister to understand the imperatives for a safety wall and implement this project as a critical priority.

5 Item 5A – DDRA Volunteer Effort

5.1 Volunteer Effort for the 2025/26 FY

As shown on Slide 38 of the AGMP, over the last Financial Year, DDRA volunteers completed more than 2,554 hours of effort to meet the objectives. If this effort were implemented using Shire resources, it would have cost the community around \$201,766. This work effort exceeded the minimum agreed with the Shire (2200 hours) by around 354 hours.

5.2 Volunteer Effort already provided for the 2026/27 FY

From 1 July 26 to 15 September 26, DDRA volunteers had already provided more than 487 hours of effort.

6 Item 5B – DDRA Strategic Development Plan and Workstreams Update

Updates were provided on pertinent workstreams, and the attending community members were asked for insights on other required work. This workstream-focused information is covered in the following subsections and will be appropriately reflected in the DDRA Strategic Development Plan.

6.1 WS 1 – Trails

Workstream 1 issues were discussed using Slides 42 to 54 of the AGMP. The key issues covered during these discussions were:

- The trail problems in the 70 Acres that were reported at the last AGM were addressed by a contractor between 27 November and 3 December 2025. The engaged contractor did a very good job. The DDRA particularly thanked the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale for providing the funding for this important trail refurbishment.
- The erosion problem at the Birrega East Crossover has been addressed by installing horse-friendly steps. The DDRA thanked the contractor engaged to carry out the earthworks and the DDRA volunteers who successfully implemented this project. To complete the project, guard posts will be added on either side of the crossover steps to prevent further erosion.
- DDRA volunteers have conducted many trail repairs over the course of the last year. The map on Slide 48 of the AGMP identifies other chicanes, crossovers, and trail surfaces that are planned for refurbishment.
- Community members requested that safety posts be included at crossover points shown in Slide 49 of the AGMP, so that people can see and avoid the drains even when the grass is higher. Fortuitously, some suitable poles were donated by the 10th Light Horse Memorial Battalion. The DDRA thanked the 10th Light Horse Memorial Battalion for their donation. The high-priority crossovers have already been addressed, and the remaining crossover installations will be implemented in order of priority.
- As shown on Slide 52 of the AGMP, numerous significant ant colonies are now reaching the size where horses are being attacked and bitten as they move through the trails. The DDRA is investigating and implementing steps to remove these nests and make the trails safe from the ants again. This project will be undertaken over the next few months.
- The slow track will be refurbished in the area highlighted in red on Slide 53.

The attendees were asked if any other trail-related tasks needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified.

6.2 WS 2 – Rest Areas

Two new rest areas have been established by the DDRA in the northern part of the DDEP, at the locations shown on Slide 55 of the AGMP. Two additional tables will be purchased this Financial Year for installation near the northern and southern arenas at 70 Acres. The DDRA thanked the Shire for providing the funding so that DDRA volunteers can install these.

The attendees were asked if any other rest-area-related tasks needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified.

6.3 WS 4 – Vegetation Management

Slides 58 to 65 of the AGMP were used to provide an update on the vegetation management issues. In particular, the following key points were covered:

- A lot of mowing has been conducted over the last year to keep the grass in the DDEP under control. Further volunteer mowing will be conducted, with the pace of this work increasing during spring and early summer to keep the area safe.
- Many branches and trees have fallen over the year, and DDRA volunteers have done a great job of addressing these quickly, so the trails and open areas remain clear. These operations will continue.
- An important change for dead vegetation removal was successfully initiated in the second half of 2025. Under the previous procedure, the DDRA collected the material and asked the Shire Arbour team to mulch it. Unfortunately, so much large material was being collected that it was very difficult for the Shire team to manage the mulching. Therefore, in some cases, the Shire had to engage expensive contractors. Under this new system, a DDRA volunteer drives the tractor and loads the material into the mulcher. This approach has been very successful, making the operation faster, safer, and cheaper. Consequently, this mulching strategy will be continued in future.
- For the last four years, there has been a moratorium on burning vegetation in the DDEP. This meant that very large materials could not be removed effectively because they could not fit into the mulcher. After discussions with the Shire and local Fire Brigades earlier in the year, an agreement has been reached to address this problem. The DDRA will collect the large, unmulchable material and mix it with smaller dead wood so that a bonfire can be used to burn it. This approach was successfully trialled on 13 August 2026. As shown on Slides 61 and 62, this bonfire was highly effective at removing material that could not be mulched. The DDRA thanked the Shire and the Byford Bushfire Brigade for their assistance.
- Identified spraying, mowing and clearance areas are shown on Slide 64 of the AGMP. These works are being conducted as resources and weather allow.
- The dangerous overhanging tree at the northern end of the Masters Access trail (see Slide 64 in the AGMP) has been reported to Western Power so that they can remove it.

The attendees were asked if any other vegetation-management-related tasks needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified.

6.4 WS 5 – New Vegetation

In July 2025, DDRA volunteers planted 1164 new native bushes and trees in the 70 Acres. This brought the total planting to about 3,500 plants over three years. For this Financial Year, it was decided that no additional plants will be added while we determine how well the previous plants are growing. A survey will be conducted later in the year, and this will inform a decision on future planting.

The mulching discussed earlier has provided a great deal of mulch. This mulch is being distributed by the DDRA tractor and volunteers. However, the DDRA tractor cannot properly fit between the trees/bushes in many mulched areas, and hand-raking the mulch is very arduous. Consequently, the DDRA is engaging a contractor to distribute the mulch in tight areas between the trees and bushes. This will reduce the

workload for volunteers but ensure that the mulch is properly distributed to control weeds and give the new plants the best chance of success. A clear implementation plan for this mulch distribution is provided on Slide 69 of the AGMP.

The attendees were asked if any other new vegetation-management-related tasks needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified.

6.5 WS 6 – Fences, Gates, etc.

New hitching rails will soon be fitted in the vicinity of the southern and northern arenas. The locations are shown on Slide 71 of the AGMP.

The manure bin near the day yards in the Evening Peal Court carpark has been extremely successful. An image of this is shown on Slide 72 of the AGMP. The Shire has agreed to fund the construction of another manure bin in the vicinity of the southern arena. The DDRA will source quotes and provide these to the Shire for funds allocation. The intent is to construct this additional facility over the forthcoming summer.

The attendees were asked if any other Workstream 6-related tasks needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified.

6.6 WS 7 – Road safety controls

Slides 74 to 80 of the AGMP cover the key issues discussed in relation to this workstream. The key points were:

- The DDRA thanked the Shire for installing the speed and equine reminder signs on Evening Peal Court and Rain Lover Court (see Slide 74 for the locations). Since this signage was installed, reports of speeding on these roads have diminished substantially.
- Since the last AGM, the speed limit on Masters Road was reduced from 70 kph to 60 kph to make the horse movement in the area safer. The DDRA thanked Mr Hugh Jones, MLA, for his support, which helped to facilitate this important safety initiative.
- The Shire has received a \$5 Million grant from the State Government to address the road surface problems on Masters Road. As part of this project, a Pegasus Crossing will be installed to connect the Rain Lover and Gurners East trails, allowing riders to cross Masters Road more safely. Slide 76 shows the preliminary design for this Pegasus Crossing and a possible design for blister islands intended to slow traffic. However, this design has not been finalised. The planned timeline for implementing this project is outlined on Slide 77 of the AGMP.
- The DDRA will once again support the Shire's implementation of the Pass Wide and Slow event. This event is planned for 18 October 2026, and it should follow the route illustrated on Slide 79 of the AGMP.

Concerns were raised about the presence of e-bikes in the DDEP. It was noted that they are very quiet and can come up on horses with little warning, which can spook a horse and cause an accident. The DDRA committed to looking into signage and other issues related to e-bikes in the area.

The attendees were asked if there were any other road safety issues that needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified.

6.7 WS 8 – Maintenance

The DDRA has conducted/managed the implementation of extensive maintenance on the mower, tractor, and ancillary equipment to ensure they can be used to support operations. The DDRA thanked all of the volunteers who conducted this maintenance.

As shown on Slides 82 to 84, substantial work was carried out to improve the surfaces and layouts of the northern and southern arenas at the 70 Acres. In particular, more sand was added to the southern arena, the base was skimmed to improve drainage, and the sand was then replaced, Harley raked, and levelled. These tasks have made the two arenas much more usable, and the flooding problems in the southern arena now appear to have been resolved.

Landcare SJ was having trouble storing its water trailer under cover. As a part of the collaboration between the DDRA and Landcare SJ, the water trailer is now being stored at the DDRA shed. This also means that when a Landcare SJ stakeholder does not need the trailer, the DDRA can use it for fire control and watering tasks. As an example, it was located on site during the bonfire as a backup in case the fire started to escape while the fire truck was not on site. The DDRA is conducting some maintenance on this equipment as an additional service. For example, DDRA volunteers recently installed the new pump to replace the failed old fire pump.

The attendees were asked if any other maintenance issues needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified.

6.8 WS 10 – Jumps

The cross-country jump refurbishment project is ongoing. The largest restoration conducted over the last year was on the tyre jump near the eastern side of the 70 Acres. Volunteers built this new jump to provide a highly effective, flexible facility for horse-jumping training. For instance, riders can take various paths through the Figure-Eight construction used for this jump (see Slide 87 in the AGMP), to provide a varied experience for their horse. Because of this flexibility, it is widely used by riders.

The remaining jumps in the 70 Acres are being replaced methodically in compliance with the plan outlined at [this link](#). This plan has been developed with the kind guidance of Mr Shaun Lowry and will cover all existing jumps. For example, many of the old/rotten jumps have already been removed so that the wood could be burnt on the bonfire in August. These jumps will be replaced with treated power poles over the next year as volunteer resources are available.

The attendees were asked if any other jump-related issues needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified.

6.9 WS 12 – Signage

As outlined on Slides 91 and 92 of the AGMP, 38 signs were installed on the trails through the first two phases of the project defined in [this project plan](#). There is still a holdup on resolving the provision of pertinent location categories in Google Maps to support the creation of the QR codes. This aspect is still under investigation; to finalise the first two phases no later than November 2026.

Once the first two phases are finalised, further grant funding will be sought to implement Phase 3 of the project plan, which aims to install the additional signs in the locations shown on Slide 92 of the AGMP.

The attendees were asked if there were any other signage-related issues that needed to be addressed. No additional requirements were identified beyond those already discussed.

6.10 Resolution

The following resolution was proposed in relation to the points raised in the preceding sections.

Resolution. ‘To accept the updated report on the implementation of the DDRA Strategic Development Plan and the new works discussed and agreed during this AGM.’

The vote was conducted as follows:

Accepted by: Wendy Stanley
Seconded by: Emily Dagnall
Vote outcome: ***Carried unanimously***

7 Item 6 – Committee’s Annual Report

Most of the issues covered within the DDRA Committee’s Annual Report had already been discussed within the points detailed in Section 6 (above). However, the President highlighted one important issue raised in the Annual Report that had not been addressed in the preceding discussion. As outlined on Slide 96 of the AGMP, the President thanked all the volunteers who had generously given their time to ensure that DDEP could be well maintained and developed. He also called on more participants to join the team.

To confirm the acceptance of the Committee’s Annual Report, a vote was taken as follows:

Resolution. ‘To accept the DDRA Committee’s Report.’

The vote was conducted as follows:

Accepted by: Sharon Arena
Seconded by: Ian Stanley
Vote outcome: ***Carried unanimously***

8 Item 7 – Financial Report

The Annual Financial Report was outlined on Slides 98 to 100 of the AGMP. In particular, the report for the last Financial Year is provided on Slides 98 and 99, and more detailed information is available at [this link](#). As explained on Slide 100, at the time of the AGM, the DDRA had received its annual stipend from the Shire, and there was approximately \$18,474.82 available to conduct projects to enhance the DDEP.

A vote was taken on accepting the Treasurer’s report as follows:

Resolution. ‘To accept the DDRA Financial Report.’

The vote was conducted as follows:

Accepted by: Robyn Vale
Seconded by: Charlotte Boyes
Vote outcome: ***Carried unanimously***

9 Item 9 – Charity Status and Changes to the RoA

As a part of the process for the DDRA seeking charity status through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), some changes are being implemented to the Rules of Association (RoA). Additionally, this opportunity is being taken to better align the RoA with recent changes to the Associations Incorporation Act and to reflect other evolving procedural issues. The initial draft changes have been developed and will be distributed for community review by mid-October.

A Special General Meeting is scheduled for 7:00PM on Wednesday, 25 November 2026, to allow members to vote on the changes.

10 Item 11- Meeting Closed

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8:54 pm.

To the best of my recollection, I attest that these Minutes accurately reflect the proceedings during and outcomes of this AGM. However, in accordance with the DDRA Rules of Association, these minutes must still be accepted at a following Annual General Meeting as part of the ratification process.

Signed as an attestation by the Chairperson for the meeting.

Name: Bruce Hilliard Role: Chairperson & President