

# Darling Downs Residents Association (DDRA) Committee's Report



A great deal has been achieved over the last year by the Darling Downs Residents Association volunteers.

For example, we have forged a new agreement with the Shire covering the next five years. This agreement helps to ensure that we can collaborate with the Shire more effectively to support the local residents and everyone who uses the facilities in the Darling Downs Equestrian Park (DDEP).

Our team has also done a great deal of work. During the last Financial Year our volunteers did more than 2,271 hours of work to help improve the DDEP and we are on track to achieve even more this year. Key achievements over the last year include:

- ✓ **Day Yards.** We completed the Day Yards, which have been a great success in helping riders stay safe with their horses when using the area. The Committee would like to thank the users of these facilities who have generally kept them very clean and tidy.
- ✓ **Manure Bin.** A bin was established so that people can dispose of their horse manure easily when they are in the Evening Peel Court car park. Our volunteers have been clearing the bin regularly and disposing of the manure appropriately.
- ✓ **Gates & Fencing.** Three more gates and fences were established around the 70 Acres area to help stop loose horses from getting out onto the Wungong South Road or Thomas road.
- ✓ **Significant Clearance.** Over the course of the year we have brought the entire 76 hectares of the DDEP under proactive management. This means that we are identifying problem areas that create fire or safety risks and we are working to fix all of these through a consolidated plan. You have probably noticed the differences already and we are committed to enhancing the remaining areas as well.
- ✓ **Better Relationship with the Shire.** The DDRA and the Shire have put a series of systems in place so that works that are too big for our volunteers are now directly communicated to the Shire's Works Department. This better communication means that works are being achieved much more quickly now.
- ✓ **Responding quickly to problems.** The DDRA has implemented a process for quickly responding to problems like fallen trees/branches which block trails. Over the last year, our volunteers have responded to numerous problems and quickly cleared the tracks so that everyone can use them effectively.
- ✓ **Grass Trial.** A grass trial has been commenced, so we can determine if the area can be cleared of veldt grass (*veldt grass is a weed species that is becoming more prevalent in the open areas*). By replacing this and other weed species we hope to reduce fire risks in summer as well as provide a better surface for equine activities. The committee would particularly like to thank the organisations who have volunteered their time and products to help achieve the objective. These organisations include Farm and Turf Equipment (WA), Mineral Magic and Green Acres Turf Group.

Lots of other projects have also been started and should be completed in due course. These include implementing enhancements to the cross country jumps, demarcating the Rain Lover Court carpark to help reduce damage to vegetation, providing a rest area under the trees near the Evening Peel and Rain Lover court car parks, and improving the tyre jumps.

All of this work would not be achievable without the help of our numerous volunteers. In particular, the Committee would like to thank stalwarts such as Peter Benson, Brian Schupp, Pip Schupp, Pam Hilliard, Terry Mateljan, Pam Mateljan, Adam Kestel, Peter Cappendell, Rodney Eden-Street, Carol Fawcett, Mal Fawcett, and Eric Chabros.

The DDRA has also been gaining sponsorship from various equine and local businesses, who are advertising on the DDRA web page. Their sponsorship is providing extra funds that are being used for improvements and developments in the DDEP. The Committee would like to thank all our sponsors for their support.

Just as importantly, by giving local businesses a venue to market their capabilities, the web page is providing a service that is useful to all of our residents and users of the DDEP. The DDRA is aiming to make the Business Directory page (<https://www.ddra.org.au/business-directories>) a one stop shop for finding local businesses, so that people can quickly find the services that they need. We hope that our members will show them the same support that they have given to our community.

*Bruce Hilliard*

President, DDRA