



PHHWV Midnight and Aster rearing with PHHWV Aztec in the foreground

<https://www.phhvw.org.au/>

Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc. (PHHWV) is a non-profit organisation committed to providing hope for equines through education, rehabilitation and advocacy.

## PHHWV PURPOSES

- To provide assistance to horse owners through education, advice and support to rehabilitate their own horses.
- To rescue and rehabilitate any horse found abandoned, sick, injured, mistreated or neglected or likely to become in such condition in the imminent future.
- To provide emergency care, treatment and assistance to horses.
- To educate the community on the plight of neglected horses; and
- To contribute to the development of improved government legislation and policy relating to the welfare of horses.

A very big thank you to all our volunteers who make this possible.

## Committee

### Executive

Elle Cooper, President  
Renee Neubauer, Vice President  
Cassandra Male, Secretary  
Shirley McPherson, Treasurer

### Ordinary

Silvija Footner  
Angela Smith  
Vaso Elefsiniotis  
Gina Harris  
Vikki Male  
Adele Cerasoli  
Sarah Corzelius  
Carolyn Cooper

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### Follow us



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# President's report



As we move into the heart of winter, I want to take a moment to reflect on the resilience and commitment that defines Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria. The colder months can be especially challenging for horses and those who care for them, but thanks to our incredible network of volunteers, members and supporters, we continue to provide much-needed assistance where it's most needed.

As our year ends on 28th February, we have spent the Autumn months collating our Annual Report and preparing for our AGM. I would particularly like to acknowledge Renee Neubauer for coordinating the Annual Report – we've already received great feedback, and it stands as a strong reflection of our work and impact over the past year.

The AGM was held in Wangaratta and also streamed on Zoom. This year marked a surge forward in our use of technology, which was reflected in the smooth and engaging presentation. A big thank you to Cassandra Male for her skills in making it all run seamlessly. Our guest presenter, Sabine Ware, was particularly insightful – I always love it when experienced horse owners leave with something new to consider. Her presentation reminded us all that learning never stops.

This year, we've already seen a 50% increase in the number of reports received and horses requiring support. Drought conditions across parts of Victoria and rising fodder costs have added pressure to horse owners and welfare services alike. Our volunteers have stepped up, responding to welfare concerns with compassion and practical support, embodying the very spirit of our organisation.

The committee, now supported by a broader team of 21 active volunteers and 55 horse representatives across the state, has been working hard behind the scenes. I want to particularly acknowledge our Events and Education Coordinator, Mandi Herauville, and the Horse Report coordination team – Jenni, Jennifer, Alan, and Vikki – for their tireless contributions.

Many of you may already know that I have stepped down from both the Committee and the Presidency. My partner was recently crushed under a round bale and is now patiently recovering from multiple fractures. This experience has been a stark reminder of how quickly life can change. I urge all of you—please take a moment to review and raise your Occupational Health and Safety standards. That one extra minute of care could prevent a lifetime of consequences.

Despite this personal turn, I am stepping down with full confidence in our team and in the future of Project Hope. We are handing over to a new committee and leadership team that is strong, capable, and deeply committed to the mission. Project Hope continues to be in excellent hands.

As we look towards our 50th anniversary in 2026, plans are already in motion to celebrate our rich history and those who have shaped it. Thank you for your continued support, in every season and through every challenge. Together, we continue to give hope where it's needed most.

Rhonda Petschel  
President (retired)  
Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc.

WINTER  
NEWSLETTER  
2025

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## MEET OUR MEMBERS



Anne with PHHWV Angel on the Bicentennial National Trail

### By Anne

#### On the Bicentennial National Trail

So proud of PHHWV Angel! The Victorian section of the BNT is said to be some of the hardest riding and Angel did four days of it wonderfully. We rode out from our base camp at Anderson's Mill with Di McIntosh, who helped start Angel a few years ago, and her young brumby Peekaboo. Di's husband Mark acted as support person.

The 19km climb to Mount Monda included the steepest terrain. Not that the ponies did all of it - we led them after Peekaboo fell sideways avoiding a puddle, narrowly missing crushing Di's leg as she whisked it out of the stirrup.

**"The morning ride back was beautiful, mist and sunlight streaming through the towering gums and fern trees."**

Camping at Monda Yards overnight proved eventful with the unwelcome arrival at dusk of a man in a van, bourbon and smokes in hand, who invited himself over for a chat. The spot is remote and it was unnerving, to say the least. We worried about a return visit.

Around 1am, we were woken by the glare of a shooter's spotlight as a vehicle paused at our campsite, then at the horses, but moved on. It was a sleepless night in the cold between the visits and me rustling my space blanket "all night", Di said!

The morning ride back was beautiful, mist and sunlight streaming through the towering gums and fern trees.



Another 10km ride through to Marysville the next day was gentler. During this, we located the start of the section of the trail to Keppel's Hut - our next BNT ride!







## MEET OUR COMMITTEE



**Vikki Male:** I am excited to be joining the General Committee for 2025-26. I joined PHHWV in March this year after attending a Welfare session in the Latrobe Valley. I was keen to help out and have taken on the role of Horse Rep Coordinator for Gippsland. I attended the RSPCA visit to Pearcedale, and the Vic Racing meeting in April. I have commenced a project to research where Local Government Areas classify horses as domestic animals/companions or as livestock. I am keen to promote Project Hope and advocate horse welfare in pony clubs and other groups in Victoria.



**Sarah Corzelius:** Hi I'm Sarah and I'm lucky enough to be on the General Committee for 2025-26. I was fortunate to have my first pony Magic, a Project Hope horse, back in 2004. Since then I have owned, ridden and trained multiple horses from breakers to happy and confident horses, as well as work in large studs. I've been privileged to work with some of the best professional riders in their disciplines, learn classical dressage and gain a lot of my knowledge from the Mclean family. I'm keen to bring my horse knowledge and my passion and knowledge for both human and animal mental health to Project Hope, as mental wellbeing of horses and the people involved is important to all's well being.



**Cassandra Male:** I am delighted to be returning as Committee Secretary for 2025-26. My first nine months have given me a deep understanding of our operations and this year, my goals include developing online learning modules for our Horse Reps and continuing to work with the communications and data team behind the scenes of PHHWV. I am a lifelong horse girl and am lucky enough to currently have a couple of PH equines in my care, as well as two non-PH mares



**Shirley McPherson:** Hello everyone. I am very excited to be back on the Committee in 2025-26. I have been Treasurer for seven years now and have seen some incredible changes over the last few years. I have many years experience in finance and with Adele also coming onto the Committee she will be able to help to streamline the accounting systems that are in place.



**Adele Cerasoli:** I'm pleased to be joining the committee at Project Hope and am looking forward to adding value to the organisation. I am an accountant with over 15 years of experience in various industries and roles. I have a Bachelor of Business and am a Certified Practising Accountant. I have a desire to give back to the community in a meaningful way and coupled with my business experience can ensure every dollar goes as far as possible so we can continue to provide assistance for horses well into the future.



**Carolyn Cooper:** My name is Carolyn and I'm pleased to join PHHWV as a general committee member. I've been involved for many years with equine committees and hold considerable experience with not-for-profit organisations, policies, and procedures. I have also bred, shown, and competed in many equine disciplines, and believe that the welfare of our beautiful horses is of utmost importance. We are blessed to have the opportunity to be touched by horses and with this connection comes the responsibility of providing adequate care, ensuring health, happiness and longevity. I am excited to be a part of this committee and to contribute to the welfare of horses through education rehabilitation and advocacy.





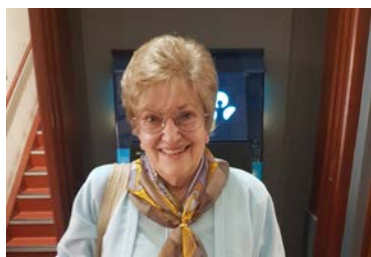
## MEET OUR COMMITTEE



**Gina Harris:** My passion for horse welfare led me to join Project Hope in 2019. Since then, I've volunteered my skills to develop a cloud-based admin and record-keeping system. I've also provided short-term care for PH horses Mickey, Midnight, and Scooby when I had the land to support them. These days, I stay hands-on through horse reports, transporting surrenders, and visiting long-term care horses as part of Operation Reconnect. I currently serve on the full committee, the horse welfare subcommittee, and manage our horse database. It's thanks to our incredible members—who open their homes and paddocks—that we can give these horses a second chance and find loving homes.



**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** Hi, my name is Vaso, and I became a Project Hope member just over three years ago and a general committee member soon after. One of my key responsibilities is laying out and editing our quarterly newsletter. I have always loved horses, and been an animal lover, but being with horses was a distant dream. The COVID pandemic made many of us re-examine our lives if we were lucky enough to escape the worst of it. In my case, I became a horse-carer, something I had always thought was out of reach for someone like me. I quickly fell in love, and it is truly life changing. I still have a lot to learn, but my passion for animal welfare is genuine and central to who I am. It is an honour to be part of Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria.



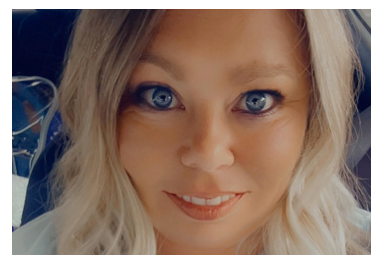
**Silvija Footner:** I have been aware of the great work PHHWV does, as my daughter has been involved for many years. Three years ago, PHHWV needed a Membership Secretary and I happened to be the lucky chosen one. Since then I have had the pleasure of getting to know many of our wonderful members. It has been a privilege to learn of their interest in and passion for supporting PHHWV. In 2025/2026 I hope to continue to get to know and interact with our growing membership.



**Angela Smith:** I am happy to be on the Committee for a twelfth year and to continue to be here for the Project Hope horses. At the moment I enjoy being active with the Horse Welfare Working Group and being the voice on the Project Hope phone, when you call 1300 881 606 or 0419 515 931. I answer, so many people will recognise my voice. I wish to thank all our members for caring about horses.



**Renee Neubauer:** After a career in fashion retail during the '80s and '90s, I left the corporate world to focus on family and launch my own equine business. Horses have always been my passion—I've owned, bred, and trained them throughout my life. For the past 23 years, I've volunteered with PHHWV, serving as a general committee member, President, and now Vice President. My focus has been on horse welfare, building strong community ties and sponsorships, and supporting animal welfare initiatives. Completing the 5 Domains Welfare Assessment of Horses course deepened my understanding of what contributes to a fulfilling life for horses, and I've applied this knowledge to improve welfare outcomes within PHHWV.



**Elle Cooper:** My name is Elle, and I'm a lifelong horse lover, farmer, and passionate advocate for animal welfare. As a business owner working on the land, I understand the challenges horse owners face. I'm committed to practical support, community engagement, and creating long-term change for animals. As President of PHHWV, I will continue to focus on strengthening our rescue and rehabilitation work, educating the public on responsible horse care, and advocating for stronger protections through policy and legislation. Horses have always been at the heart of my life. It's an honour to lead an organisation that stands up for horses in need, and works to ensure every horse has the opportunity for a safe, healthy, and hopeful future.



## MEMBER NOTICES



## PHWV AGM –CELEBRATING DEDICATION AND WELCOMING THE YEAR AHEAD

The PHHWV Annual General Meeting was held in Wangaratta on 25 May 2025, with members attending both in person and online via Zoom. It was a wonderful gathering of our passionate community, featuring the election of the 2025–26 committee, a heartfelt recognition of our Life Members, and a fascinating guest presentation by Dr. Sabine Ware from Equine HSD – Health, Spine and Dentistry. We extend our deepest thanks to our outgoing committee for their incredible work and unwavering commitment over the past year:

### Executive Committee:

Rhonda Petchel – President  
Renée Neubauer – Vice President  
Cassandra Male – Secretary  
Shirley McPherson – Treasurer

### Ordinary Committee Members:

Angela Smith, Vaso Elefsiniotis, Toni Harris, Tessa Reimers, Silvija Footner, Maria Auhl, Jenni Cooper, and Gina Harris

### Introducing our 2025–26 Committee

As we head into our 50th year of continuous work for horses in need, we are excited to welcome our new committee.

### Executive Committee:

Elle Cooper – President  
Renée Neubauer – Vice President  
Cassandra Male – Secretary  
Shirley McPherson – Treasurer  
Ordinary Committee Members:

Gina Harris, Angela Smith, Vaso Elefsiniotis, Vikki Male, Adele Cerasoli, Silvija Footner, Sarah Cornelius, and Carolyn Cooper.

We look forward to the year ahead and the impact this new team will make in advancing horse welfare across Victoria.

### Special Thanks

Thank you to everyone – individuals, sponsors, and organisations, who continue to support PHHWV and the vital work we do.

A special shout-out to Dr. Sabine Ware, who gave an engaging and informative presentation on Pain in Horses. Her expert insights filled in many knowledge gaps and left us all better equipped to support equine health and wellbeing.

Warm regards

Renée Neubauer  
Vice President



Dr. Sabine Ware and outgoing President Rhonda Petchel







## MEMBER NOTICES

Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria is proud to present the Lifetime Membership Award to two remarkable individuals, Kathryn Wren and Jane Duckworth, in recognition of their tireless dedication and outstanding contributions to equine welfare.

Kathryn Wren and Jane Duckworth have demonstrated exceptional commitment to improving the lives of horses through their work with Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria. Their selfless efforts, compassion, and expertise have made a lasting impact on the organization and the equine community.

This prestigious award acknowledges:

- Decades of service to equine welfare
- Unwavering passion for horse rescue and rehabilitation
- Significant contributions to education and advocacy
- Leadership and influence in shaping the organization's mission and values

By bestowing this Lifetime Membership Award, Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria honours Kathryn Wren and Jane Duckworth's legacy and expresses gratitude for their invaluable work. Their dedication serves as an inspiration to others, and their impact will continue to positively shape the lives of horses for generations to come.

Renée Neubauer  
Vice President



PHHWV Lifetime Member Kathryn Wren and incoming President Elle Cooper



PHHWV Lifetime Member Jane Duckworth with Rhonda Petchel and Shirley McPherson



**JOIN**  
**NOW**

**&**  
improve  
the lives  
of horses

Become a Member

Renew Membership

\$50  
per year

PH Jazz

[www.phhvv.org.au](http://www.phhvv.org.au)



# Events

## WHITTLESEA ARC DRESSAGE JACKPOT EVENT MAY 4

By Vaso Elefsiniotis

Tess Reimers and I volunteered to be gate-openers on a beautiful sunny day in May while raising awareness and funds for PHHWV at the Whittlesea ARC Dressage event - a great turnout with at least 30 horse floats.

Nearly everyone knew about PHHWV and many gave generously. These events are a great opportunity to interact with other horse lovers and promote the work of Project Hope.



## FEEDING HORSES IN DROUGHT AND AFTER THE RAINS COME JUNE 14

On Saturday, 14th June, PHHWV attended an informative talk by Dr. Lesley Dawson, hosted at The Barn Pet Stock and Feed in Heathcote. The session, titled "Feeding Horses in Drought and After the Rains Come," was packed with practical advice for horse owners navigating the challenges of changing environmental conditions. Dr. Dawson shared expert insights on:

- Feeding strategies during drought and post-rain recovery
- How to avoid both over- and underfeeding
- Adapting feeding routines to seasonal changes
- Recognising shifts in pasture quality and horse health
- Simple, effective feeding tips for everyday horse owners

With around 50 attendees, the event offered an invaluable opportunity for learning and community connection. Rhonda and Renee represented PHHWV, and we were warmly welcomed by proprietors who generously provided a delicious afternoon tea. Attendees gave generously, with many donating gold coins in support of our cause.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Sharon, owner of Barn Pet and Stock Feed, who made an incredibly generous \$1,000 donation through our GiveNow Drought to Hope EOFY fundraiser. Her support - and that of the local community—helps us continue our mission of improving horse welfare across Victoria.







## Gisborne Pony Club Show jumping Competition

A day dedicated to education and information around horses' behavioural issues with horses & their riders, 9am-3pm.

**Dates** 20 July, 2025

**Location** I. R. Robertson Reserve, 340 Couangalt Road, Gisborne South.



## Mirboo North Pony Club Rally & Speaking Engagement

**Dates** 20 July, 2025

**Location** Boolarra Park, 20 Park Road, Boolarra.



## 2025 Off The Track Carnival

**Dates** 13-14 September, 2025

**Location** 312 Boneo Road, Boneo.







# horse education

## WHEN ALL IS NOT STRAIGHT WITH THE TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT

By Tricia Hartshorn

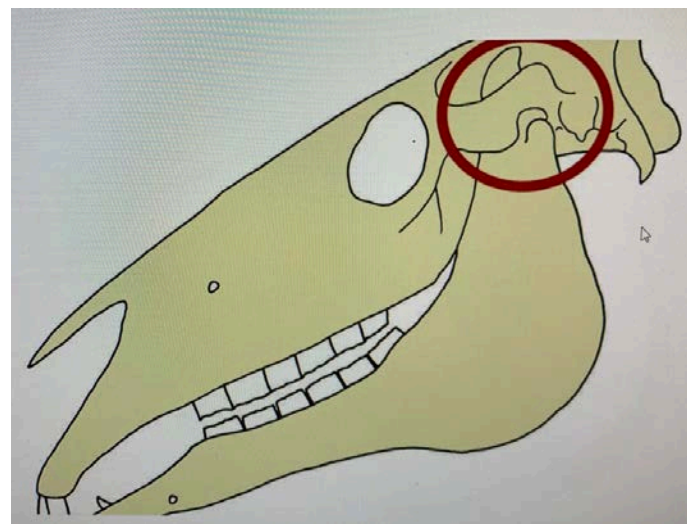
For all I know, poor Mimi might have been experiencing a really bad headache all this time, and was not just 'being a mare'!

As is my want, I was boasting about my beautiful girl PHHWV Mimi to a friend and showed her a photograph of Mimi taken a couple of years ago looking her magnificent best. Maxine is an integrated equine therapist and instead of heaping praise upon my magnificent girl, her only comment was 'I'd love to do some body work on her.' Not the reaction I expected but being a good mother, I agreed.

Maxine came to visit with a box full of goodies, selected one and dabbed it on Mimi's nose. Well! It worked like a charm, a couple more dabs and Mimi was 'putty in Maxine's hands.' Apparently, the powder, together with a couple of drops of some magic potion work like a sedative to calm the precious souls prior to treatment. Of course, the herd all had to try a sample - and off they all went looking remarkably docile. Then Maxine went to work. Isn't it interesting how you can look at your horse's face day in, day out and not notice that it is actually asymmetrical, or that there's a telltale crease around the nostril, indicating all is not well with the temporomandibular joint (TMJ).

Having worked at the Melbourne Dental School for years and having a partner who was a dentist, I at least knew what the TMJ was. For readers who do not know here is a brief summary:

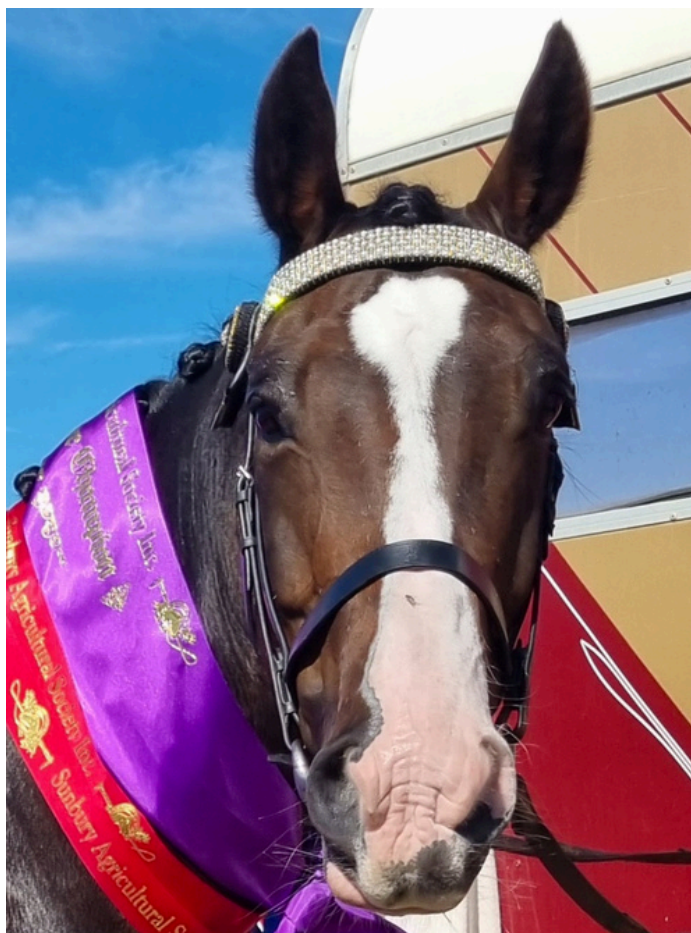
The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) is responsible for creating motion of the mandible (lower jaw) around the cranium. Together, these two structures form the skull. The TMJ moves the mandible, whilst the cranium is attached to the atlas (first bone of the spine), and therefore remains stable. By moving the lower jaw, the TMJ can open and close the mouth and provide the motion required to chew. It therefore works in multiple planes – up and down to open the mouth, and side to side whilst chewing. There are 2 TMJs, one on either side of the head. \*



# horse education

Mimi had been showing signs of a sore poll for a few weeks which I now know was caused in this case, by TMJ dysfunction - as the poll, the TMJ and the teeth influence each other in a big way. Also, as the TMJ is connected to the rest of the body via the superficial fascial lines, dysfunction here can cause tightness in the entire body all the way to the hind end. Very often horses with TMJ pain have serious tightness around the SI area and a limited range of motion in the hind legs. \*\*

For all I know, poor Mimi might have been experiencing a really bad headache all this time, and was not just 'being a mare'!



PHHWV Mimi with Trish

\* Edward Busuttil DVM, TED Equine Documentalist October 20 2022

\*\* The Functional Body, February 1 2025

For more info including common contributors of TMJ dysfunction:

<https://www.equinebalance.net/tmj-in-horses/>

<https://www.theequinedocumentalist.com/the-tmj-an-often-ignored-joint-with-jaw-dropping-implications/>

<https://www.polltopastern.com/post/understanding-tmj-in-horses-more-than-just-a-dental-problem>

<https://animalelement.com/blog/learn-how-the-horses-poll-functions/>



# horse reports

By Jennifer Burchart, Horse Report Coordinator (Northern Region)

The following is a summary of welfare concerns received from members of the community about a horse or horses that PHHWV has then investigated. This season has been particularly challenging.

## **Ballarat**

A PH member alerted us to a 20-year-old Shetland pony being held at the Golden Plains Council pound. After speaking with the council ranger, our horse representative confirmed the pony had been abandoned and met our criteria for assistance. A short-term home was quickly arranged, and one of our members transported the pony safely to its new location.

## **Bass Coast**

A report was received via info@ regarding six horses on a property with no visible feed, bad fencing and no house on-site. A young colt had escaped and was unable to return, but local residents stepped in to guide him back and temporarily secure the gate, which had fallen off its hinges. The incident was reported to the RSPCA by the caller, and we encouraged others in the community to do the same. A PH Horse Representative visited the site, was unable to closely assess the horses and confirmed lack of pasture and the poor state of the fencing. A follow-up report was made to the RSPCA.

## **Baw Baw**

We received a report via a Facebook post about a horse found down and in a critical condition on a local property. Unfortunately, no further details were available at the time. A PH member in the area confirmed that the RSPCA had attended. Sadly, the horse had ingested oxalis and was humanely euthanised.

## **Benalla**

One of our Horse Representatives has been monitoring a thin gelding in a local town. A concerned neighbour had begun feeding the horse due to its poor condition. Two ponies on the property appeared in good condition, although their hooves needed attention, with the smallest showing signs of chronic founder. Our Horse representative visited the property and spoke with the resident, who advised

the horses belonged to a relative and had only recently been moved there. A note outlining feeding and husbandry requirements was left to pass on to the horse's owner.

## **Campaspe**

We received a report via our website, including an image of an extremely emaciated horse who appeared near to death in a neglected paddock with very little grass and overgrown with blackberries and rushes. The owner had previously declined offers of help from local horse people and showed no interest in surrendering the horse or accepting assistance. He also admitted to having been reported before. Our reporter contacted the RSPCA, and we encouraged others to do the same. The case was also reported to Campaspe Shire Council by the reporter and Project Hope, but rangers advised they could not act without an RSPCA request. A PH Horse Representative later visited the property and was told by the tenant that the RSPCA had attended and the horse had since been euthanised.

## **Cardinia 1**

A caller reported concerns about a horse losing weight at an agistment property. On investigation, it was found that the horse owner owes money to the property owner and has since moved without leaving a forwarding address. A lien form was provided to the agistment owner, but without owner contact details, action is limited. In the meantime, the caller has chosen to continue feeding and caring for the horse in the hope of eventually taking ownership.

## **Cardinia 2**

A reporter is concerned about an aged pony that continues to lose condition. A horse representative will visit and try to view the horse.





# horse reports

## **Casey**

A website submission raised concerns about three horses behind an abandoned house with no visible water, feed, or shelter. The reporter was unsure whether these horses are abandoned or not. The paddock was in poor condition, although empty feed buckets were present. The reporter's partner discovered the water had been shut off by the local authority, unaware horses were on-site and arranged for it to be restored. A PH Horse Representative attended and identified it as a breeding property, with mares, foals at foot, weanlings, and a stallion. By then, water was available, and other paddocks had round bales and feed buckets. While the horses' feet needed attention, they were otherwise in good condition. The reporter's partner will continue monitoring the water supply.

## **East Gippsland**

An email to info@ requested help for an elderly person needing to rehome their horse so they could move off their property. The owner, who uses a walking frame, relies on their son - who has limited horse knowledge - to feed and rug the horse. The horse is aged but in good health. A short-term care placement was arranged while a long-term home is sought. He is now in safe temporary care (STC).

## **Greater Bendigo**

A friend reported to one of our Horse Reps a thin horse living near them. Our Horse Representative sent a letter to the property via the friend, and they are both continuing to monitor the horse.

## **Greater Geelong**

A report to our 1300 number raised concerns about two ponies and a horse on agistment, all reportedly underweight. Locals had been throwing hay over the fence, but one pony was unable to walk, likely due to a kick. Unable to contact the owner, the agistment manager called and paid for a vet, who diagnosed a broken shoulder but could not proceed without owner consent. We advised the caller to contact the RSPCA, who attended, had their vet euthanise the injured pony, and are now monitoring the remaining horses.

## **Horsham**

Three horses were abandoned on a caller's property, and despite having contact details for the owner, the caller was told the horses were now the caller's responsibility. With no feed and empty water sources, the situation was reported to the RSPCA by the property owner. We also contacted Hamilton Shire, and a ranger later confirmed the horses were in good condition, with hay and water now provided by the property owner. The ranger issued a lien form to the caller and advised this as the appropriate next step.

## **Hume 1**

A report was received via Facebook about two emaciated and unwell horses on a property. The reporter had contacted the RSPCA but was unsure if any action had been taken. A Project Hope representative visited and spoke with the landowner, who advised that the horses' owner was expected to arrive shortly to remove them. The representative later spoke directly with the owner and was satisfied that the horses would be well cared for in their ongoing care.

## **Hume 2**

A nearby resident reported five underweight horses on a local property, noting that the number of horses and ponies on-site seemed to change frequently. A Project Hope representative attended and recognised the case from a previous visit in January, when round bales had been supplied and the horses' feet were in good condition. After speaking with the owners again, the rep. was satisfied that the horses were being appropriately cared for.

## **LaTrobe 1**

A caller raised concerns about a Thoroughbred and a pony at an agistment property, noting that the owners may have limited experience with Thoroughbreds and therefore not be feeding adequately. A representative visited and found the Thoroughbred slightly underweight, but not in poor condition. A round bale has since been provided, and the horse appears to be in improved health.



# horse reports



## **LaTrobe 2**

A report came through our website about a thin horse in a bare paddock near the reporter's parents' property, where multiple animals are kept. Two Project Hope representatives visited and spoke with the property owner's son, offering support. Of the four horses present, two were on free lease. The family had been trying to return these horses to their owner, who had not responded. The owner later contacted Project Hope and agreed to surrender the two horses. Before the surrender could be completed, RSPCA visited and removed the lease horses from the property.

## **Macedon Ranges 1**

A report was received regarding a chronically laminitic pony whose owners were not following recommended management protocols. Unfortunately, no further details were available, and the case could not progress.

## **Macedon Ranges 2**

A caller expressed concern about approximately 20 horses on a property and identified the owners. As no further contact was received from the reporter, the case was closed.

## **Maroondah**

A website report alerted us to a very thin horse. The reporter had contacted the RSPCA but was unsure of the outcome. We were unable to make contact with the horse's owner, so the case was closed. Shortly after, the reporter updated us that the RSPCA vet team was now involved. Several weeks later, the reporter advised that RSPCA confirmed the horse was under veterinary care but sadly would not be with us much longer.

## **Mitchell 1**

The owner of two horses expressed interest in surrendering them. A Project Hope representative familiar with the horses visited the property and confirmed they were not being properly managed due to ongoing issues. Both horses were taken into Short Term Care.

## **Mitchell 2**

A website enquiry reported a very thin horse seen on a property with a house. A representative attended and found approximately 13 other horses in good condition. The horse in question had a body score of 2.5-3 and may be elderly. The representative will continue to monitor the situation.

## **Mitchell 3**

A report was received about a thin horse seen from the road in a country town. Upon inspection, our representative found the horse to be in poor condition, while a second horse in the same paddock appeared overweight. On a follow-up visit, the thin horse was observed eating from a feed bucket. It is likely an elderly horse struggling to maintain weight, and the reporter was advised accordingly.

## **Mitchell 4**

A Facebook report was received about three horses at an agistment property, with concerns that they were underfed and that one had a serious untreated leg injury. A Project Hope representative visited the property. Later that day, the property owner contacted our 1300 number and explained that the injured horse had arrived in that condition and was receiving treatment. She also noted that the horses' owner lacks horse knowledge and financial means, so she has been feeding and worming the horses herself. Our representative was satisfied with this response and left contact details for further support if needed.

## **Mitchell 5**

An elderly horse owner called our 1300 number seeking to surrender one of their three rescued horses, an approximately 18yo Thoroughbred gelding, due to difficulty managing them all. A Project Hope representative visited and arranged donated feed from the Tallarook Feed Store to help in the short term.

## **Mornington**

A report via our website raised concerns about approximately 30 malnourished and injured horses. The reporter noted the owner has been reported to the RSPCA multiple times and identified them as someone previously banned by Racing Victoria, but



# horse reports



still breeding. The reporter agreed to lodge another report with RSPCA and provide photos. Project Hope contacted Racing Victoria, who confirmed they could not enter the property due to legal restrictions but would follow up with RSPCA using the new evidence. Updated photos were received and forwarded to Racing Victoria and RSPCA. RSPCA confirmed it was an open case, which may explain the round bales seen on the property. This situation attracted significant attention on social media and in local media due to community concern.

## **Murrindindi**

A caller to our 1300 number reported a very thin horse in a paddock with cattle. A PH representative visited with the caller and spoke to the property owner. On inspection, the elderly horse appeared to be in very poor condition and may have had eye cancer. Euthanasia was recommended. The owner received a visit letter with a case number and later phoned to confirm that the horse had been euthanised and buried on the property. They expressed thanks for the support in making the difficult decision.

## **Nillumbik 1**

Five underweight horses were reported across two paddocks. The reporter had already spoken with the owner, who agreed to provide more hay. Two Project Hope representatives visited and learned the horses had recently been rescued. They provided the owner with a basic care plan, including feeding advice and a faecal egg count, to help the horses regain weight. The owner followed through with dental care, and the reps continue to monitor the situation.

## **Nillumbik 2**

A call to our 1300 number raised concerns about a very underweight young horse, along with other thin horses on a property owned by an elderly couple. The horses belong to their daughter, who reportedly lacks time and resources for their care. Our coordinator attempted to contact the caller twice but received no response and no follow-up report was submitted via the website. No further action taken.

## **Pyrenees 1**

A horse owner contacted us seeking to rehome 10 horses, admitting they hadn't realised how costly horses were to keep. The horses were in poor condition, and the owner was struggling to sell them. They also couldn't source hay or find a farrier. A Project Hope representative visited, helped locate hay and a trimmer, and suggested opening up more land for grazing. The owner later reported improved horse condition, sold their sheep to free up pasture, and used the funds to buy additional hay.

## **Pyrenees 2**

A website report was received about a horse owner known for ongoing neglect. One horse was in poor condition, and the reporter had been feeding it but could no longer afford to continue. A Project Hope representative visited and found the horse in moderate condition (body score 2), likely due to the reporter's efforts. The reporter has since informed the owner she will no longer be feeding the horse and will monitor its condition, updating Project Hope if it worsens.

## **Pyrenees 3**

While investigating another case, a Project Hope representative was alerted to a nearby horse in possible distress. Upon inspection, it was confirmed the horse had recently suffered from laminitis and was confined as part of its recovery. The owner was found to be managing the condition well, and no further action was required.

## **Whittlesea**

A property owner reported eight abandoned horses left without feed for two months. Despite several notices to the horse owner and taking out a legal lien over the horses, no action had been taken. RSPCA assessed the horses and rated their condition as below body score 1. A Project Hope representative visited, spoke with the owner about the horses' care needs, and offered legal advice to the property owner about enforcing the lien. RSPCA has since removed one horse and one pony. Project Hope has offered to take the remaining three ponies once the lien is executed. The property owner intends to keep the





# horse reports



rest. The situation is on hold pending legal resolution

## **Wodonga**

A caller was concerned about a friend who had purchased an ex-racehorse but was struggling to manage it. The horse was losing condition. A Project Hope representative contacted the owner, who was willing to do what was needed to help the horse recover and rehome it. The PH horse rep. recommended a dental check and a worm count, as the horse wasn't gaining weight despite being well fed. The owner has since engaged a vet to assist.

## **Yarra Ranges**

A call was received from a property owner seeking help to feed an elderly Thoroughbred left on their agistment property. Although she has no emotional attachment to the horse, she wants to do the right thing. The horse has good pasture and is being fed, but hasn't had a dental check in at least 12 years. She hasn't been able to contact the owner, who is now overseas, and a lien isn't applicable under the agistment agreement. The Project Hope committee approved funding for the dental work.

## **Yarriambiack**

A caller reported two horses and a pony in poor condition to the RSPCA. The pony was removed. The caller has continued feeding the two remaining horses with lucerne hay. The horses' owner is currently in hospital and recovering. A care plan was agreed on, with the caller continuing to monitor and feed the horses and to seek further assistance if needed.

Contact us with any concerns about the welfare of horses and ponies. Our trained members follow up the reports, visit the property to talk to the owners, look at the horses and check their surrounds.

PHHWV representatives look for signs of a horse not thriving including inspecting the paddock for safety, checking on a horse's condition, and ensuring there is access to water and shelter.

When a horse is at serious risk we ask for permission to rescue the horse on the spot. If surrender is refused, we contact RSPCA Vic. as it has the authority to remove a horse.

If you are concerned about a horse, contact us on 1300 881 606 or report online here: <https://www.phhwv.org.au/education-and-health/report-neglect-or-abuse/>

## **Becoming a Horse Reports Representative**

Project Hope representatives visit paddocks or properties when we receive a report of horse cruelty. We train members who would like to help with this important outreach. We explain Project Hope's role, what equine neglect, and abuse is, and the best way to speak with owners.

We run at least two training days a year and following the training, you decide if you wish to become a Project Hope representative. Representatives are provided great support from our horse report coordinator, who can be contacted at any time through the course of attending a report. Representatives can also access further information, support and advice through a private Facebook page.



# horse updates

## Operation Reconnect

by Kathryn Wren

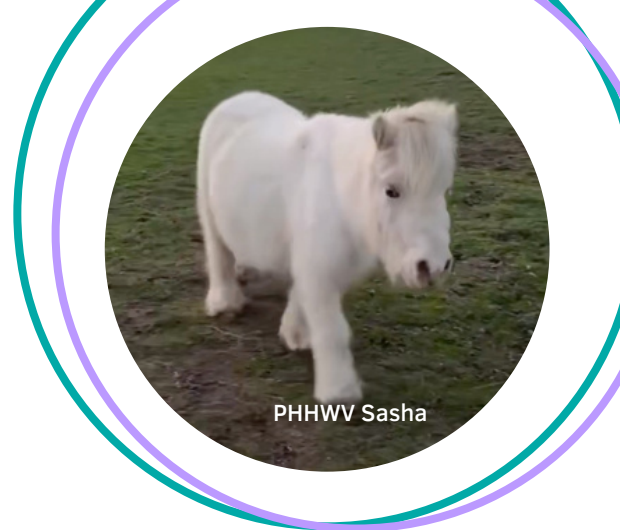
Operation Reconnect Project Coordinator

Operation Reconnect is a project to reconnect with PHHWV horse and their Long Term Carers. The purpose is to engage with members, obtain up to date photos and information about the horses, assist with any welfare queries and seek feedback. Without the assistance of members caring for horses, PHHWV could not operate as it does and we thank all members with horses for making this possible.

Following on from our successful start last year, we have this year visited members in the Shires of Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Golden Plains, Latrobe, Wellington, South Gippsland and Macedon Ranges. Massive thanks to Jennifer Grant who travelled far and wide to get though her five Shires! Thank you also to Alan Salter who is working through Golden Plains.

Gina Harris and I spilt up the Macedon Ranges between us as it is a Shire with the highest number of PHHWV horses and members. Overall, 30 horses and 21 long term carers were visited. I was in both camps - being visited by Gina and introducing her to our herd of five PHHWV horses - as well as conducting the visits to members and their PHHWV horses. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting members and reacquainting with others. Everyone was very welcoming and it was clear that all of the horses are very much loved and cared for. I especially enjoyed reuniting with some of the ponies that Leigh and I had in short time care from the Warrak seizure in 2016. Again, so wonderful to see them happy and healthy.

We are looking forward to continuing the visits to Long Term Carers and their PHHWV horses. If you would like to be part of the Operation Reconnect Team or visit PHHWV horses in a Shire, please get in touch.



PHHWV Sasha

## PHHWV Sasha and Huck

by Erica

Sasha and Huck are doing great! We've found the sweet spot with her food, thanks to Tracy and we've had no further problems. I'm glad Fiona has taken on another one - she is very knowledgeable and kind.

Here's something you can put in the newsletter: Sasha has been with us just over 3 months now and she's settled in beautifully as Huck's new best friend. She's been spoilt with a rug so she's been toasty and warm over these cold winter days, although I'm not sure she even knew what one was! We are greeted daily with a nice vocal welcome - but pretty sure she's just asking for her treats!

Thanks to everyone for their help, we are so glad she's been a great fit for our family.



PHHWV Sasha with Huck





# Operation Reconnect



Clockwise from top left: 1. PHHWV Hank & Kaylene, 2. PHHWV Celeste & Jane, 3. PHHWV Dock & Samone, 4. PHHWV Cleopatra, Sarah & Kathryn, 5. PHHWV Hank & Kaylene, 6. PHHWV Delight & Jane, 7. PHHWV Doc; Centre: PHHWV Cisco (aka Apollo) & Chryssa.



# Operation Reconnect



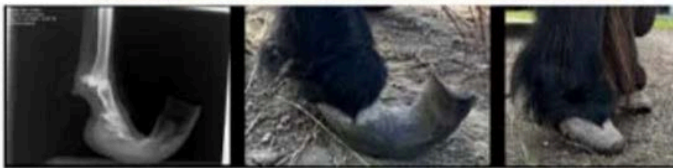
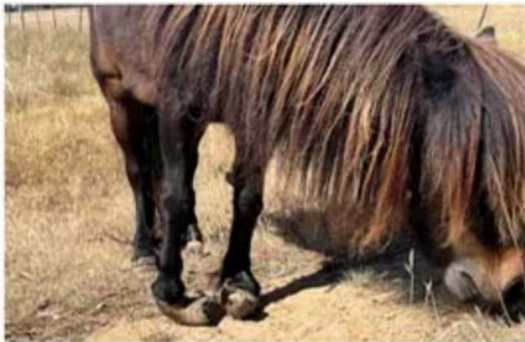
Clockwise from top left: 1. PHHWV Frankie & Melissa, 2. PHHWV Hunter & Mike, 3. Destiny & Sarah, 4. PHHWV Scarlett & Toni, 5. PHHWV Scamp & Leigh, 6. PHHWV Torry & James, 7. PHHWV Honey.



## HORSES FOR LEASE



At surrender



After 1st trim



### Magnum

Introducing Magnum a 7yo, 7hh, black/brown Mini Shetland gelding.

Failures to provide this dear little soul the correct care over an extended period of time, has resulted in his 'Slipper Hooves', poor condition along with a compromised state of not being valued as a sentient creature.

Under veterinary advice, skilled farrier and a very knowledgeable home, Magnum is receiving the best of care during his extensive rehabilitation. We expect that Magnum will make a remarkable recovery during his high intensive care, with one of our most experienced short term carers.

Located in the Golden Plains Shire.



### Norman

Meet Norman, a 13yo, 15.2hh Bay Thoroughbred gelding.

Norman made great progress in rehab - one of three horses rescued from the same property in January, along with Tilly and Winney featured in this newsletter. He is a gentle sweetheart but his riding days are over and he is looking for his long term care home where he can be loved and be a companion.

Why not fill in the EOI form on our website and start your journey to have Norman greeting you at the gate.

Norman is located in the Golden Plains Shire.





## HORSES FOR LEASE



### Thorfinn

Thorfinn is a 17yo Thoroughbred gelding, standing approximately 16hh, looking for a companion home.

While not suitable for riding, he has a heart of gold and fantastic social skills! He's gets along wonderfully with both mares and geldings and could make a wonderful nanny for young horses - patient, gentle and firm when needed.

He's a dream to handle: great to catch, rug, float, and a star for the vet. His only challenge? Insects! Thorfinn will need a home with solid insect management - fly masks, spray, and good routines, especially during farrier visits. Full of energy and love, Thorfinn is becoming a sweet, affectionate, "in-your-face" character who adores attention.

If you're looking for a companion horse to add joy and personality to your herd, Thorfinn could be the perfect addition to your family.

Located in the Wellington Shire.



### Winney

Presenting Winney, a 9yo, 15.2hh Bay Thoroughbred mare.

One of three horses taken in from the same property in January, Winney is doing well following rehab. She had a vet check in February, and is in great condition. Her hooves have been trimmed, and a dental visit is next. Winney is rideable and she has now progressed into being at a Racing Victoria approved re-trainer facility and going through the RESET program.

Check out her form on this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgMTETd94yU>

If you are interested in Winney as your next riding horse, please mail [info@phhvw.org.au](mailto:info@phhvw.org.au).





## HORSES FOR LEASE



### Ted E Bear

Introducing Ted E Bear an 11yo, 8hh black Shetland Gelding.

Ted E Bear is a larger-than-life Shetland pony with a personality that's bigger than his mane! This lovable Shetty has been bringing joy to his current carer for eight years, keeping her on her toes and smiling with his antics. Ted E Bear has he's been a loyal paddock companion - but sadly, his equine friend recently crossed the rainbow bridge. Now, this spirited little Shetty is ready to bring joy to a new home.

Ted E Bear thrives in an environment with space to move, friends to keep him company, and the right kind of pasture - native grasses or an established track system suit him best, as he cannot be on improved pastures. He mixes well with horses big and small, and truly comes to life when he's engaged and active.

If you're looking for a pony with loads of personality who'll keep you entertained and on your toes, Ted E Bear could be your perfect match. Could you be the one to offer him the loving, fun-filled home he deserves?

Previously located in the Bass Coast Shire Ted E Bear has recently moved to another short term care home in the Peninsula Shire unless we find a new LTC home.



### Kippa

Meet Kippa, a 16yo, 13hh chestnut mare with a beautiful nature and a big personality. A Welsh x Arab x Riding Pony, Kippa was broken in by her breeder but hasn't been ridden in over 11 years. Despite this, she's shown remarkable calmness and trust under light reintroduction.

Kippa is a people-focused, 'in-your-face' type who thrives on attention and connection. She's great to handle in all areas - leading, feeding, picking up her feet, rugging - and she'll happily follow you around like a shadow, always wanting to be involved in whatever you are doing. She's shown no undesirable behaviours and is respectful, even when being fed or rugged without a halter.

In the paddock, Kippa is confident and dominant, holding her own if challenged. She will need secure fencing (currently kept safely behind a single hot wire) and is settled. Kippa would shine as a companion or therapy pony - she has been exposed to lots here and is pretty unflappable.

She does have a retained wolf tooth, which would need to be removed if she were to take a bit, but otherwise, she's up to date with her feet, teeth, vaccinations, and worming.

Kippa is ready for a home where she can be loved and valued for her kind heart and steady presence.



## HORSES FOR LEASE



### Mia

Meet Mia, a 10yo, 15.1hh brown Thoroughbred mare with a gentle heart and a love for attention. Mia will greet you at the gate, always keen for a scratch and some affection. She's a gentle soul who will thrive with an experienced calm rider with a gentle approach. Out on the trail is where Mia shines—she's brave, steady, and more 'woah' than 'go', making her a lovely companion for quiet rides and relaxed adventures.

Mia has had some float training, but she can be unpredictable when loading. An angle loader or open-sided truck works best for her. Ideally, her new home would be close to riding trails so she can be enjoyed without the need for float-transport. On the ground, Mia is easy to handle, though she can sometimes struggle with being tied up. She's excellent with the farrier and is currently up to date with worming, dental care (March), and Tetanus/Strangles vaccinations (December, 2024). She was most recently ridden in June, and is currently enjoying a diet of lucerne hay and a balanced vitamin/mineral mix.

Mia is looking for a new home due to limited paddock options in her current situation - she shares the property with a stallion and two colts, which has brought out some 'mare-ish' behaviour that would likely reduce, away from the boys. If you're an experienced rider seeking a kind, trail-loving mare to care for and enjoy, Mia could be your perfect match.

Located in the East Gippsland Shire.



### Black Arazi

Introducing Black Arazi a 17yo, Brown Thoroughbred gelding. Sire My Patriarch (GB)1990, Dam Ciceray (NZ) 1998.

Arazi is ready for his new long term care home. His carer tells us that he is a sweet boy and would make a great companion. He is great to do anything with and below is a video of him after seeing the vet and getting back to his buddies.

Visit our website or select this video link to see Arazi on the move: <https://www.phhvw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/250611-Arazi-on-the-move.mp4>

If you're interested in providing a forever home for Arazi, fill in the EOI form on our website, or contact [info@phhvw.org.au](mailto:info@phhvw.org.au).





## HORSES IN REHABILITATION



### Yarra

Introducing Yarra – a 13yo, 14.2hh chestnut mare, believed to be of Kosciuszko Brumby heritage.

Yarra recently arrived as part of a two-horse Brumby surrender and, while no trapping papers are available, early assessments suggest she has been backed at some stage in her past. Further checks are underway, and we'll share more information as it becomes available.

Yarra's companion, Calypso, was joyfully reunited with his original mob through the Victorian Brumby Association (VBA), thanks to the generosity of supporters who helped cover the feeding and transport costs. We proudly support and follow the VBA's 'boomerang' policy, which ensures Brumbies always have a path back to their own.

Now, it's Yarra's turn to find her forever home. She's a lovely mare who deserves a chance to settle in with a caring and patient handler—could that be you?

If you're interested in learning more about Yarra or think she might be the right fit for your herd, we'd love to hear from you. Let's help this special girl find her perfect match.

Currently located in the South Gippsland Shire.



### Olivia

Meet Olivia – a sweet 22yo, 13.2hh white Welsh mare ready to enjoy a well-earned retirement. After years of dedicated service with Riding for the Disabled, Olivia is now looking for a loving forever home. She has a gentle nature, calm temperament, and has been a trusted companion to many.

Currently in care while undergoing assessment and hoof rehabilitation, Olivia will be ready for adoption once her recovery is complete. She'll thrive in a home with a track system and careful management of her grass intake to support her ongoing wellbeing. If you're looking for a kind, quiet pony to share your paddock and your heart, Olivia could be the perfect match.

Located in the Greater Dandenong Shire.

Find out more about each of our horses and leasing arrangements via our website:

<https://www.phhwv.org.au/our-horses/>

If you are interested in giving a Project Hope horse a long term care home, please get in touch with us by emailing [info@phhwv.org.au](mailto:info@phhwv.org.au)





# horses farewelled



It is never easy. This season we farewell PHHWV Frodo, PHHWV V8 and PHHWV Zara, and send our heartfelt wishes to their rescuers and carers. RIP.

**Frodo**



**Zara**



**V8**



# PHHWV Bulletin Board



## MOTHERS DAY RAFFLE RESULTS

Massive thank you to everyone who supported Project Hope Horse Welfare by buying raffle tickets and donating amazing prizes. Your generosity will make a huge difference in the lives of the horses. And a huge congratulations to our winners! Thanks again for your kindness and support. Thank you from your PHHWV Committee.

And the winners are:

Aleger Cashmere Blend Oversize ...	Price Info	(RRP: \$325)
Ticket 19	Winner	Michelle Welton
Winter Rug and Lunge Rope	Price Info	(RRP: \$250)
Ticket 189	Winner	Angelina Dagleish
Visa Gift Card	Price Info	(RRP: \$200)
Ticket 17	Winner	John Morgan
Visa Gift Card	Price Info	(RRP: \$200)
Ticket 38	Winner	Jane Duckworth
CEN Frisky Mare - Balanced Behav...	Price Info	(RRP: \$80)
Ticket 78	Winner	Anthea Phelps
Dents Leather Gloves	Price Info	(RRP: \$80)
Ticket 113	Winner	Rosemary Lornie

Labour of Love	Price Info	(RRP: \$1,100)
Ticket 88	Winner	jess johnston
Aleger Cashmere Knit	Price Info	(RRP: \$490)
Ticket 30	Winner	Joe Camilleri
Leader Equine Voucher	Price Info	(RRP: \$450)
Ticket 103	Winner	Kerryn Odea
Long Puffer Jacket by Second Fe...	Price Info	(RRP: \$449)
Ticket 34	Winner	shan shnookal
Aleger CASHMERE BLEND CHUNK...	Price Info	(RRP: \$369)
Ticket 177	Winner	kerry Buckley
Aleger CASHMERE BLEND OVERSI...	Price Info	(RRP: \$325)
Ticket 147	Winner	Pamela Randall
Dents Leather Gloves	Price Info	(RRP: \$80)
Ticket 46	Winner	Margaret Porritt
Dents Leather Gloves	Price Info	(RRP: \$80)
Ticket 37	Winner	shan shnookal
DKNY Orchard St Perfume and Po...	Price Info	(RRP: \$56)
Ticket 72	Winner	Kerry Buckley





8 – Thursday, May 29 2025 | The Koondrook-Barham Bridge

# Equine Welfare Under Pressure in Victoria

Lloyd Polkinghorne

Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria, a not-for-profit organisation committed to providing hope for equines through education, rehabilitation and advocacy, has echoed the concerns raised recently by RSPCA Victoria, highlighting the sharp rise in horse welfare reports.

The combination of current drought conditions and skyrocketing fodder costs is pushing many horse owners – and the horses they care for – to crisis point.

PHHWV has seen a 50% increase in reports and the number of horses requiring support.

RSPCA Victoria said the horse crisis facing the state has seen more than 8,100 horses involved in animal cruelty reports this financial year and is calling on horse owners to make sure they are prepared with enough feed and water for their animals.

RSPCA Victoria's Inspectorate has received nearly 800 animal cruelty reports specifically related to 8,100 horses this financial year, a 37% increase on the previous year, with more than 800 horses still involved in active investigations.

"This financial year alone we've seen a 53% increase in the number of horses involved in animal cruelty reports," RSPCA Victoria Chief Inspector Michelle Green said.

"This year we have already taken in 183 horses, with more than 60 horses still in our care, with the majority at various agistments across the state due to the limited capacity at our shelter.

"Caring for these horses comes at a cost with each horse estimated to remain under our care for an average of 120 days, costing nearly \$50 per day per horse."

With only 28 Inspectors on the road to investi-



gate more than 10,000 cruelty reports across the state, RSPCA Victoria CEO Dr Liz Walker reiterated the call for sufficient government funding for its Inspectorate division amid increasing safety concerns after years of supplementing its law enforcement arm with community donations.

"In addition to existing safety concerns for our Inspectors, without sufficient funding sadly we will likely need to restrict the species of animal we investigate, rehabilitate and rehome, removing horses, poultry, and livestock[i] from our scope of work," Dr Walker said.

"Our Inspectors are the only authorised officers

under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act who currently enforce and prosecute horse welfare in the state and with horses not currently covered by local laws, without other law enforcement agencies picking it up, neglect and cruelty towards horses will be left unchecked across the state."

RSPCA Victoria currently receives ongoing funding from the Victorian Government (\$2.3 million per year) only covering around 21% of its Inspectorate costs, forecast to be \$10.8 million this financial year.

"While we're incredibly grateful for the funding we receive annually, and the additional one-off

boost of \$2.5 million received this financial year, this barely makes a dent in the amount it costs to keep our inspectors on the road and to care and rehabilitate the animals coming in through the Inspectorate," Dr Walker said.

PHHWV explained they are calling on the Victorian Government to increase funding to RSPCA Victoria, review and expand council powers under the current Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (POCTA) Act, provide clear and consistent guidelines for the role of Agriculture Victoria in horse welfare and deliver targeted funding to equine welfare organisations.





# PHHWV Bulletin Board



## Play for Purpose

### Win a 250k Prize Pack!

Play For Purpose is an online charity raffle, conducted on our behalf by the 50-50 Foundation. The raffle is entirely not-for-profit and made possible by The Lott.

A minimum of 50% of your ticket contribution will directly support Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria. The other 50% from your ticket is used to fund prizes and help run the raffle. By buying a ticket, you're directly funding emergency care, rehabilitation, and education for horse welfare across Victoria. Especially now, with the drought, your support is more critical than ever.

<https://www.playforpurpose.com.au/project-hope-horse-welfare-vic>





PHHWV Midnight, Aster and Aztec

