



Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc. (PHHWV) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to providing hope for equines through education, rehabilitation and advocacy.



PHHWV PURPOSES

- Assist horse owners through education, advice and support to rehabilitate their own horses.
- Rescue and rehabilitate any horse found abandoned, sick, injured, mistreated or neglected or likely to become so in the imminent future.
- Provide emergency care, treatment and assistance to horses.
- Educate the community on the plight of neglected horses.
- Contribute to the development of improved government legislation and policy to the welfare of horses.

COMMITTEE

Executive

Leigh Wren, President
Silvija Footner, Vice President
Karen Davies, Secretary
Mark Dean, Treasurer

Ordinary

Kristen Brehaut
Toni Harris
Tricia Hartshorn
Mandi Herauville
Jen Kean
Lee Skiathitis
Angela Smith
Sandra Strongman

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President's report



Dear Members

The days are getting shorter and the temperatures dropping, signalling that Winter is upon us. Following the AGM in late March, we are pleased to announce that we have a full complement of 12 Committee members and details of your new Committee can be found in the following pages. We have begun to address both operational and governance matters, with our focus firmly on achieving PHHWV's goals of education, rehabilitation and advocacy in the horse welfare space.

There have been several large-scale surrenders of horses and ponies, which has weighed heavily on our capacity in regard to Short Term Care and administration. Our new Horse Reports Coordinator, Jen Kean, has had to deal with a number of difficult reports and has performed admirably. We have identified a need to secure more trained Horse Representatives to attend horse reports. To achieve this, we are in the midst of arranging training days on the Mornington Peninsula and in Ballarat and Warragul. More details to follow soon.

In order to support the costs of veterinary and farrier care and feed expenses for the horses currently in Short Term Care, we have arranged a Chinese Banquet Fundraiser on 19 June 2026. Please see our events section for further information. Additionally, we are excited to announce that our Silent Online Auction will be launched a week prior to the event and this will hopefully assist in raising funds.

We are keen to hear from our members and encourage you to make contact with us to share any ideas or feedback that you may have and we hope to see you at an event soon.

Leigh Wren
President

AUTUMN
NEWSLETTER
2026

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MEET OUR COMMITTEE

President – Leigh Wren

I have been a member of Project Hope since approx. 2010 and during my time I have been involved with emergency assistance (bushfires, floods, etc), retrained some of the horses taken into care by PHHWV and served on the PHHWV committee in past years.

I currently have three PHHWV horses in my care on LTL.

I'm looking forward to working with the members and the new committee to grow this organisation into a vibrant community, caring for horses in need.



Vice President – Silvija Footner

I have held the role of Membership Secretary since 2022 and thoroughly enjoy talking to and getting to know Project Hope members. I have assisted with the organisation of events for PHHWV including Equitana, Boneo Park fundraising dinner and the AGMs. My working life has been in the commercial world as an economist, accountant and tax agent and has involved financial reporting, governance and compliance responsibilities to name a few.

I look forward to continuing to use my skills in the role of Vice President.



Secretary – Karen Davies

I have been a member of Project Hope since 2022 and held the role of Secretary previously for approx. two years. I enjoy using my extensive admin skills to organise meetings, agendas, minutes and events.

I assist with compliance, governance procedures and also production of the PHHWV Newsletters and Annual Reports.

I'm looking forward to supporting our strategic goals to ensure that our PH members and horses are supported the best way possible.



Treasurer – Mark Dean

I joined PHHWV in 2004 when I took on the LTL for PHHWV Red. Since then, I have never been without a PHHWV horse in LTC. I have had at any one time up to five horses in my care and I currently have three.

In 2012 I took on the Treasurer's role in somewhat unsettled times and implemented a new financial package in 2013 to replace the Excel based system.

In 2016 I handed over the Treasurer's role and maintained my involvement through the horses and helped out occasionally when needed. I'm looking forward to taking on the role again and working with our new committee.





MEET OUR COMMITTEE

General Committee – Kristen Brehaut

I joined Project Hope more than 20 years ago to support horse welfare in Victoria and hoped it was a way to extend my love of horses by helping those who are vulnerable. I have been around horses all my life and I've been a PHHWV Horse Rep for about four years. I have two PHHWV ponies in my care.

Professionally my background includes communication, customer services, events management and administration in a career spanning more than 15 years across government and private sectors.

I'm looking forward to utilising my skills to assist the PH committee.



General Committee – Toni Harris

I have been a PHHWV member for more than 10 years and have taken a number of surrendered horses into STC for rehabilitation and training. I am passionate about horse nutrition and equine whole-body wellness and enjoy share my knowledge with others.

I am a trained PHHWV Horse Rep and attend horse reports on behalf of PHHWV and conduct property checks for prospective homes for our horses.

I enjoy attending events to share information about the work of PHHWV and look forward to supporting the committee wherever possible.



General Committee – Tricia Hartshorn

I have been a PHHWV member since 2017 and have two horses in LTC.

I have previously served two terms as Secretary of PHHWV and I'm also involved in the production of the quarterly newsletter. More recently I have contributed to writing chapters for the PHHWV 50th Anniversary publication and assisting a team with the application of grants.

My professional experience of almost 30 years at Melbourne University saw me hold various senior administrative roles.

I am looking forward to continuing to work on rebuilding members' confidence in our organisation.



General Committee – Mandi Herauville

I have a background as a vet nurse, nurse and holistic health provider and have a keen passion for animal advocacy, especially with horses. After completing the PHHWV Horse Rep training, I have visited horses to assess their welfare and liaise with stakeholders to assist in providing optimal outcomes for all involved.

I have previously been on the committee organising fundraising, events, merchandise and co-ordination of training days. I look forward to expanding these roles to bring further member engagement and better lives for horses.





MEET OUR COMMITTEE

General Committee – Jen Kean

I am a PHHWV member and I currently have one horse in STC. I have a passion for animal welfare and rescue and have held committee roles in several organisations. Some of my professional skills include 40+ years in hospitality and PR, nationally recognised and qualified dog trainer and behaviourist, finance company Fraud Investigator and I have a triple degree in Psychology including General, Child and Animal.

I'm looking forward to using my strong problem solving and decision-making skills to assist the committee in delivering good outcomes for horses in need and their carers. I am currently the Horse Reports Co-Ordinator for the team.



General Committee – Lee Skiathitis

I have been a PHHWV member for about 3.5 years and currently have a horse in LTC. I am passionate about horse welfare and wellbeing, and I am a qualified Horse Massage Therapist. I have owned, trained and helped horses with their mental and physical issues for over 20 years.

With my experience in horse husbandry, I can assist with feeding, groundwork training, rehabilitation and working alongside people to help them better understand their horses' needs.

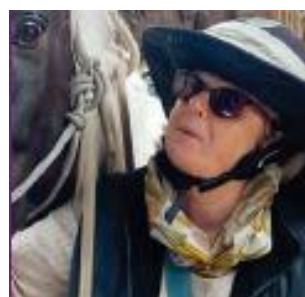
I also have strong administration, leadership and advocacy skills which I look forward to utilising to assist with committee tasks.



General Committee – Angela Smith

I have been passionate about horse welfare for a long time and joined PHHWV in the late 1970s when I saw an article in Rider Magazine. I loved and cared for my own horses who lived into their 30s.

For the past 15 years I have been an active member of the PHHWV committee, holding various positions which have included answering queries on our 1300 number, co-ordinating horse reports, assisting with placement of horses into STC and LTC, attending events, completing and maintaining records, etc. I look forward to continuing to support this wonderful organisation with its important work.



General Committee – Sandra Strongman

I have been a member of PHHWV for several years and I currently have a horse in LTC. I believe that PHHWV is an important organisation for the welfare of horses throughout our State.

Previously I have served on various committees as Treasurer, Secretary and general committee member, and so I have a good understanding of committee activities. With my professional administrative background I believe I can suitably assist PHHWV with my organisational skills and experience.

I look forward to helping the committee achieve its future goals.





MEET OUR MEMBERS

Cheryl and PHHWV Henry

I had the privilege of meeting PHHWV Henry when he was between homes over Christmas. A handsome Thoroughbred with beautiful manners and Chestnut in colour!

In a previous life, Henry was at a Thoroughbred stud where he was a star in their track training program. Unfortunately, the training centre closed and Henry had some trying times before being taken in by PHHWV.

Life's problems can get in the way of the best intentions of carers and Henry, although well looked after, ended up in need of another LTC home and that's where Cheryl comes into the picture.

Cheryl, was raised in the Western Suburbs but had a love of horses since she was 'knee high to a grasshopper'. Every December when asked by her parents what she wanted for Christmas she would say a horse. Like many of us, she remained disappointed! But she did get the opportunity to ride her Uncle's horse on the dairy farm he ran at Callignee South. The family often holidayed in the Dandenongs and had become friendly with the owner of the Gembrook Service Station. His daughter had a horse which Cheryl was allowed to ride. And like most of us horse-starved kids, Cheryl would hire a horse from a local riding school most weekends.

In 1981 Cheryl and her husband purchased a five acre property in Ballan and in 2012 moved to Durham Lead near Buninyong. Here she was able to indulge her lifelong love of horses and it is here that PHHWV Henry is now living along with three paddock mates. Cheryl is a very modest person and asked that I not make a big deal about her but I will tell you that she was born without a left hand and this presents some difficulties controlling a horse. However, this was never going to get in the way of her love of riding and she rides with adapted reins to assist with this impediment. She has ridden Henry around the property and, perfect gentleman that he is, all went well. Cheryl is friends with PHHWV member Alan Salter and they will both go on a trail ride together. No doubt both Cheryl and PHHWV Henry will shine. Tune in to the next newsletter for an update. In the meantime, I'm sure you will all join me in wishing Cheryl and PHHWV Henry a wonderful life together.

by Trish Hartshorn





MEMBER NOTICES

PHHWV Updated Rules

At our last Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Annual General Meeting held on 29 March 2026, a Special Resolution was put forward to make amendments to the following Rules: 17, 18, 25, 26, 34 and 41. This Special Resolution was voted on and passed at that meeting. Our updated Rules Document is available for viewing or downloading from the website via this link: <https://www.phhwv.org.au/about-us/#rules>

Animal Care and Protection Bill

Many of our members will be familiar with the proposed **Animal Care and Protection Bill**, which was intended to replace the existing and outdated **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA Act)**. It proposed modernising protections by recognising animal sentience (the capacity to feel pain and emotion) and shifting standards into enforceable regulations.

Members Rhonda Petschel and Kathryn Wren, together with several others, made submissions on behalf of Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc in relation to the proposed legislation, specifically addressing equine welfare matters and the inadequate legal protections in the current POCTA Act.

In a disappointing move, the Victorian Government has indefinitely shelved the bill, citing a crowded parliamentary agenda and a reduced number of sitting days ahead of the state election. The current PHHWV Committee will raise concerns about the delay in progressing the Bill with the Attorney-General and continue to advocate for improved legislation and policy for the welfare of horses.

Upcoming Events

Chinese Banquet Fundraising Dinner

Date: Friday, 19 June 2026
Time: 7.00pm – 10.30pm
Venue: Ming Dining
299 Queen Street
Melbourne

PROJECT HOPE
HORSE
WELFARE VICTORIA

CHINESE BANQUET FUNDRAISER CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

To celebrate Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria's **50th Anniversary and the Lunar Year of the Fire Horse**, we invite you to attend a Chinese Banquet Fundraiser at one of Melbourne's premium Asian fusion & Cantonese restaurants.

*Please refer to T&C's prior to ticket purchase as some restrictions apply.

MING DINING
299 QUEEN STREET, MELBOURNE
FRIDAY 19 JUNE 2026 7:00 PM - 10:30 PM
COST - \$120 PER PERSON OR \$960 FOR A TABLE OF 8
INCLUDES BANQUET & A SELECTION OF DRINKS
RSVP - BY 9 JUNE 2026

BOOK HERE

T&Cs:

- Limited dietary options available. Please advise before 5 June 2026.
- Venue accessibility: Stairs only, no lift access.
- Dress Code: Business attire or cocktail.



HORSES LOOKING FOR A HOME



PHHWV Jolly is a 15hh, 14yo bay Arab gelding, whose kind eyes tell a story of resilience and hope. Since coming into care, PHHWV Jolly has had dental work to address sharp edges and ulcers. He has been an absolute gentleman when being treated by the vet, farrier or dentist. His calm and willing nature is further exemplified under saddle.

This special boy is looking for a patient, loving home where he can continue his journey to full health and happiness. If you have room in your heart and pasture for PHHWV Jolly, he promises to fill your days with his gentle presence.

As PHHWV Jolly can be ridden, any potential carer must meet and ride him prior to any lease agreement being confirmed.

NB Expressions of Interest in leasing PHHWV Jolly have been received and are being reviewed.



PHHWV Jolly



PHHWV Mocca

PHHWV Mocca is a 15.3hh, 10yo brown Thoroughbred mare (never raced). She is a sweet, inquisitive girl who enjoys observing the world around her and thrives in a relaxed environment. She is excellent with other horses and integrates easily into a herd, showing a calm and settled nature in the paddock. She does not become anxious when companions are taken away, making her a reliable and low-stress addition to any property. She is also fantastic with dogs, taking everything in her stride.

This mare would make an exceptional companion horse thanks to her steady temperament and easygoing attitude. She takes a little time to warm up to new people, but once she trusts you, she forms a quiet and genuine bond. A true “good doer,” she holds her condition well now she has hit her healthy weight.

PHHWV Tapiki is a gentle 16.1hh, 18yo brown Thoroughbred mare. She has received all necessary veterinary treatment, dental care, and hoof work, and is now comfortable and healthy. PHHWV Tapiki gets on well with people and all her paddock friends both mares and geldings. A very gentle soul, following retirement from racing, PHHWV Tapiki had several foals. She is looking for a long-term home to settle into and will reward her carers with love and devotion.



PHHWV Spook

PHHWV Spook is a 20yo, grey Australian Pony with lots of charm. He is currently having his rehabilitation needs attended to under the guidance of his short-term carer. Once he gets a clean bill of health, we will be able to determine his future needs and start looking for an appropriate long-term home.



PHHWV Tapiki





HORSE REPORTS

The Lucky Sheep

There once was a sheep that lived in Lady's Pass in very dire circumstances. No food. No care. And a broken leg where a horse had kicked her.

Things were looking pretty bleak!

Then came along Super Leigh. With one mighty dive into a flock of 52 sheep, he had her and she was saved. She could only gaze upon her saviour.

Then a volunteer from Edgars Mission arrived in her trusty Toyota Corolla complete with a rooster she had just saved from Heathcote and a baby seat in the back. Whack the sheep in the back she said to Super Leigh. No problem, he said and shoved the ewe in there. After some waiting, we finally realized she was actually buckling up the sheep!

Within hours, the vets at Edgar's Mission were all over it.

A happy sheep story.

by Mark Dean



A good outcome for when a horse report doubles up as a sheep rescue.

"Little Wren" named by Edgars Mission is now living a good life in their care.



HORSES FAREWELLED

Since our last newsletter, we have said good-bye to the following Project Hope horses:

PHHWV Winney, PHHWV Squishy and PHHWV Xena.

We send our heartfelt wishes to their rescuers and carers. RIP.



PHHWV Winney



PHHWV Squishy



PHHWV Xena

Please contact us with any concerns that you discover 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.

We have no power to help unless owners are cooperative. Some horse owners lack the knowledge or means required to have a horse. When we look at the horse with them, we share our knowledge and experience to improve a horse's health.

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

If you are concerned about a horse, please contact us on 1300 881 606 or report online here:

<https://www.phhwv.org.au/education-and-health/report-neglect-or-abuse/>





STORY TIME

A Grave Tale from the Cemetery

This is a true story. Told to me by my cousin, Kevin, a retired gravedigger from West Sussex in England.

The Romani people, part of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community, have an historic presence in West Sussex. It is a widely recognized trend within their culture that they have a preference for large, luxury cars. So, with this in mind I ask you to imagine the following; Lancing and Sompington Cemetery, situated on elevated ground with, on a clear day, a view to the English Channel. Peaceful and serene. On this particular day, a notable soul from the Romani community was being laid to rest. His friends, and in some cases his enemies, had driven to the cemetery in their luxury cars which were parked on the roadside that provides access in and out of the cemetery, as far as the eye could see. As is often the case with Romani funerals by way of honoring the deceased, the dearly departed is conveyed to the cemetery in a highly decorated, horse-drawn hearse. The magnificent horses are also adorned with plumes attached to their heads. All would have been well had it not been for the stallion just metres away from the graveside in his paddock. With or without plumes, the mere aroma of the mares would have been enough to excite the stallion and excite him they did.

Throughout the ceremony the stallion was rushing at the fenceline and the mares were cheering him on with their tantalizing nickering, whinnying and head shaking. The mourners and cousin Kev were getting a little nervous at what was playing out before them. Disaster struck when the hearse, owing to the cars blocking its access route to the gate, had to go right past the stallion's paddock on its way out of the cemetery. This was too much for the love starved boy's testosterone levels and, as the hearse went past, he broke through the fence and chased after the mares. Cousin Kev knew disaster was but a moment away and waved frantically for someone to head off the stallion and close the cemetery gates once the hearse had passed through. Miraculously, the luck of the Gypsies played out that day and a catastrophe too awful to imagine was averted. The gates shut just as the luckless stallion arrived at them, snorting and prancing, the mares still whinnying but safely on the other side. Now Kev would not by any stretch of the imagination consider himself a horse wrangler, but what he did next was truly awe-inspiring. Realising that the stallion was not a happy chap but could not be left to run wild around the cemetery, Kev directed the mourners to form a wide semi-circle around the horse and they gradually, one step at a time, herded him back to his paddock and secured the fence. A grave disaster was avoided!

by Trish Hartshorn





PHHWV Midnight, PHHWV Aster and PHHWV Aztec

