



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

PH Echo



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.

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

COMMITTEE

Executive

Leigh Wren, President
Angela Smith, Vice President
Karen Davies, Secretary
Mark Dean, Treasurer

Ordinary

Silvija Footner, Membership Secretary

Contact us

Stay in touch

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President's

report



Greetings PHHWV Members.

Firstly, on behalf of the current PHHWV Committee, I would like to express our sincere apologies for the lack of recent quarterly newsletters.

Only days before Christmas 2025, the organisation was faced with a very dire situation, whereby several committee members resigned simultaneously, including some members who held the most senior positions within the committee. This event took place on the eve of the annual Christmas business closure period and was coupled with a looming fire danger period. The few remaining committee members sought advice from the association's governing bodies on how to best move forward and enable PHHWV's important works to continue uninterrupted.

I would personally like to take this opportunity to thank Angela, Vaso and Silvija for their unwavering resolve, strength and commitment to the organisation during this time. To enable ongoing work to be done, Mark Dean, Karen Davies and myself who are all experienced previous committee members, were asked to join the committee until the next scheduled Annual General Meeting is held.

During our appointment, the committee has been working tirelessly to finalise unresolved issues, re-establish relations with stakeholders, re-establish projects, such as fund-raising events and PHHWV Representative Training, tending to Horse Reports and assisting those in areas which have been affected by the recent fires, while continuing with our day-to-day running of the organisation.

It's also very important to mention that a number of non-committee members have offered their time and services and are currently performing many tasks behind the scenes. We are still faced with daily challenges brought about by a variety of reasons, however I am confident that we will overcome these issues with as little disruption as possible. On a brighter note, we have a number of events coming up that you may be interested in attending....

PHHWV Trivia Night. When? Friday, 27 February. Where: Vic Hotel, Woodend. Guaranteed to be a great night. We look forward to seeing you there.

PHHWV Horse Rep Training on 1 March. Interested? Please let us know to secure your spot.

Annual General Meeting. 29 March 2026. Watch out for details.

And more recently....

PHHWV was fortunate enough to be invited to a viewing of the documentary, "A Little Bit Mongolian". If you haven't seen it, and if given the opportunity, I strongly recommend you do. A huge "THANK YOU!" goes out to Michael Dillon and Robyn Leeder, (and Trish), for not only organising the event, but also donating half of the proceeds which raised \$667.50 for PHHWV.

Finally, I would like to **thank you**, the wonderful members of this very important and special organisation for your generous and continued support, providing time, effort and funds. As we begin to celebrate 50 years of continued service to equines, we look forward to seeing you at upcoming events to celebrate this incredible milestone.

Leigh Wren
President
Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc.

SUMMER
NEWSLETTER
2025

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MEET OUR MEMBERS

By Lee

For many years, I have had a fascination with and wanting to learn about Equine Biomechanics, horses' muscular systems and how they work, along with equine anatomy. This fascination came about after an old horse I had, developed arthritis in his shoulders.

In early 2025, I finally had the opportunity to indulge in my passion – Equine Sports Massage therapy, Red Light Therapy and a new technology, Medkey Therapy (Bioadaptive therapy) and finally become fully qualified in what I love doing. I undertook an internationally recognised Certificate in Equine Sports Massage. Initially, I was wary of the study commitment I had made, questioning myself if I could actually do this. But once I started, there was no stopping me, and it was a real eye opener to discover how much I already knew, and how much there was still to learn, and continue to learn.

If there is one thing I love to do, it is helping horses become the best horse they can be. I have been passionate about horses' physical health and mental health for most of my adult life, and what I can do to help horses overcome their physical and mental issues. The Equine Sports Therapies that I have learned to use and am qualified to apply, go a long way in helping some of the most troubled horses I have come across.

Sometimes, it's not just about physical issues. More often than not, they include mental issues as the horse adapts to his pain, changes his posture, and his mindset to cope with everyday life, whatever that may be.

To me, it is a sight for sore eyes to see the horse's improvement from his posture to his mental wellbeing, even after just one session, and know the horse appreciates what you have done for him. It is truly the best gift they can give me, seeing a transformation and knowing that I have helped him in some way.

If you can help a horse become a better version of himself, reduce his anxieties, help alleviate his physical pain, improve his posture and overall wellbeing, why would you not?

If you would like to organise a therapy session for your horse/s, or to find out more about the therapies I offer, please don't hesitate to contact me at lburridge@ymail.com to discuss your needs. This offer is open to Project Hope horses (at a discounted rate) and also member owned horses.

Servicing most Western and Northern areas in Victoria (based on location).

LS Equine Therapy



PH Echo enjoying his treatment





MEET OUR MEMBERS

By Kellie

PH Xena, an Appaloosa mare, came to live with me 12 years ago as a rescue through Project Hope. At the time she was a 23yo lovely but sensitive girl who I thought I may be able to ride gently in the surrounding bush. She didn't mind the walk through the forest even with a child riding bareback but was done with being saddled up. A saddle fitter said that she had wear on her body which indicated that she'd had many years under a western saddle. After hearing this, I felt she deserved a quiet life in the paddock.

Xena is now 35 and it's been an interesting relationship. She has had some health issues with arthritis and gut issues due to virtually no grind left in her teeth. Once I worked out that she couldn't digest hay and had trouble with grass and needed to be bucket fed morning and night, she improved considerably. She is still a sensitive mare and at times she can be challenging but she is an excellent communicator and a good teacher.

Luckily we have something in common, a love of herbs. I was already growing and using herbs personally and through navigating Xena's issues, started researching herbs for horses. I supplement her feed with dried herbs and treat her with bunches of fresh herbs from the garden. Her favourites are parsley, yarrow and mugwort, the slightly bitter herbs that calm her old liver.

Thanks to Project Hope for rescuing Xena and giving her an opportunity to live out her years in peace.



PH Xena





MEMBER NOTICES

Harcourt Bushfire Assistance

In early January, several bushfires swept through Victoria, causing widespread devastation. One of the core purposes of PHHWV is to provide emergency care, treatment and assistance to horses. Thanks to long-term member Susie Kosa and her husband, Steve, PHHWV were able to provide hay to affected horse owners in the Harcourt region. Leigh and Kathryn Wren, together with Susie and Steve, loaded the very generous donation of 125 small square bales of grass hay onto Leigh's truck. Of these, 25 were provided to PHHWV horses in care. After making enquiries with horse owners in the fire affected areas, PHHWV delivered 100 bales to the Harcourt Fire Relief Centre, which were gratefully accepted and appreciated. At this stage, reports are that horse owners affected by the bushfires have what they need, however PHHWV will continue to monitor the situation and respond if needed.



Are you interested in giving a Project Hope horse a long term care home? Please go to our website:

<https://www.phhwv.org.au/our-horses/>
or scan the QR Code

to find out more about our horses and our leasing arrangements.



Show your support by purchasing Project Hope Merchandise. Browse our collection by going to our online shop:

<https://www.phhwv.org.au/shop/>

Every purchase helps us raise money for our work.





BONEO PARK OTT CARNIVAL 13-14 SEPTEMBER

PHHWV was selected as the official charity at the Boneo Park OTT Carnival, held on 13 – 14 September 2025 on the Mornington Peninsula.

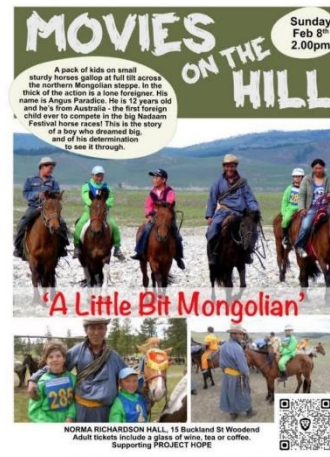
The OTT Carnival highlighted the athleticism, adaptability and potential of OTT thoroughbreds across multiple disciplines, from Dressage and Combined Training to Showjumping and Show Horse. This is a positive move to promote responsible rehoming of retired racehorses.

PHHWV was able to raise a total of \$3,925.20 and also gained three new members. Special thanks to our volunteers who brought energy and excitement to the event: Mandi, Tricia, Susan, Janina, Sarah, Renee, Monika, Andi and Alison.



MOVIE – A LITTLE BIT MONGOLIAN 8 FEBRUARY

Woodend in the Macedon Ranges is home to a superstar, Michael Dillon AM. Michael has won more awards in adventure and expedition documentaries than any other individual worldwide. His most recent accolade being the prestigious Lifetime of Adventure Award presented by the Australian Geographic Society. He is a pioneer of Australian adventure cinematography and was Sir Edmund Hillary's (of Mt Everest fame) long-term filmmaker.



Please do 'google' Michael for there is so much more to tell and I must confine this piece to the wonderful 'A little bit Mongolian'. Michael and his wife Robyn hold regular movie sessions featuring his films in the local church hall. Takings for the movies are split between their charity and a local charity of their choice. This month, Project Hope was the lucky recipient, as I know them both from singing with the Woodend Warblers. Proceeds of \$667.50 were donated to Project Hope from this event. We are so grateful to Michael and Robyn for their generosity.

A little bit Mongolian is a heart-warming and thought-provoking story about an annual rugged horse race for children in Mongolia and how Angus, an 11 year old lad from Australia decided he wanted to compete in it. Flashes of a young me flew through my mind as I watched these 'devil may care' kids, most of them riding bare-back, no riding hats (except for Angus) and in some cases, no shoes, galloping across the rugged land on their young steeds, yelping in delight. The training methods of the horses was a little different to ours but you know what, both horse and child were raised on tough love and they had an unshakeable bond. Horses were groomed and fodder selected from near and far depending upon individual needs. It didn't matter that Angus didn't speak Mongolian, or vice versa, they spoke the universal language of 'horse'. There were several trial races ahead of the main event and distances covered 15 or 25 kms. Angus had a fall during one of the races and sustained an injury to his wrist which required a 6 hour round trip to the 'local' hospital for x-ray and treatment. Despite this he got back in the saddle to finish the competition. Although Angus didn't win any of the main horse races he was in the top ten but more importantly achieved a significant feat by competing and won the respect of the local community. He was the first foreign child to compete in the traditional Naadam horse races.

By Trish Hartshorn



UPCOMING EVENTS



TRIVIA NIGHT FUNDRAISER	Date: Friday, 27 February 2026 Time: 6.30pm Venue: The Victoria Hotel 67 High Street, Woodend VIC 3442 Cost: \$30 per ticket – bookings essential Other details: Tables of 8 – book a table or join others Light snack provided Meals can be ordered at your own cost Drinks can be purchased at the bar RSVP: by 17 February 2026 to treasurer@phhvv.org.au Pay by credit card or EFT. Please note your place is not secured until payment is received.
HORSE REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING	Date: Sunday, 1 March 2026 Time: 10am – 2pm Venue: 224 Queen Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Cost: FREE Other details: This training provides PHHWV members with the knowledge and skills to attend reports of horse neglect. The presentation covers an overview of the role of horse representatives, assessment of cases and properties, body scoring and managing case outcomes. We share stories and experiences and address any queries that members may have. Once a member has completed the training, they have the option to become an active horse rep for PHHWV if they wish. Morning Tea and Lunch are provided RSVP: by 25 February 2026 to members@phhvv.org.au
PHHWV ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	Save the Date: Sunday, 29 March 2026 Watch out for your official invitation by email in due course.



horse reports



The following is a summary of welfare concerns received from members of the community about horses that PHHWV has investigated. If you would like further information about any of these reports, please email us at: info@phhvv.org.au

For the period 1 March 2025 to 31 January 2026

Number of Cases Reported = 110

Number of Horses Involved = 370

What types of outcomes are there from these cases?

No Action	109
Owners Declined Assistance	3
Owners given the "Rehome Responsibly Booklet"	4
Horses PTS	11
Horses Surrendered to Project Hope	22
Owners given Feed or Financial Assistance	8
Owners given Advice	26
Horses referred to RSPCA	102
Horses referred to Racing Victoria (RV)	8

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.phhvv.org.au/education-and-health/report-neglect-or-abuse/>

Where are these Horse Report cases located?

Shire	No. of Reports	No. of Horses
Ballarat	2	5
Bass Coast	1	6
Baw Baw	4	16
Benalla	3	4
Campaspe	1	1
Cardinia	4	12
Casey	1	3
Central Goldfields	4	5
East Gippsland	2	4
Golden Plains	1	2
Greater Bendigo	5	21
Greater Geelong	1	3
Greater Shepparton	2	3
Hepburn	1	2
Horsham Rural	1	3
Hume	7	21
Indigo	1	4
Latrobe	3	5
Loddon	3	3
Macedon Ranges	11	60
Maroondah	1	1
Melton	3	16
Mitchell	9	45
Moorabool	2	4
Mornington Peninsula	3	32
Mount Alexander	1	1
Moyne	1	3
Murrindindi	5	22
Nillumbik	5	9
North Grampians	1	2
Pyrenees	3	12
South Gippsland	2	2
Strathbogie	2	4
Wangaratta	1	1
Whittlesea	4	19
Wodonga	1	1
Yarra Ranges	4	6
Yarriambiack	2	5



horses farewelled



Since our last newsletter, we have said good-bye to the following Project Hope horses:
Pete, Tilly, Luna, Belgrave, Katie, Chad, Snag, Dynamite and DJ.
We send our heartfelt wishes to their rescuers and carers. RIP.



PH Pete



PH Tilly



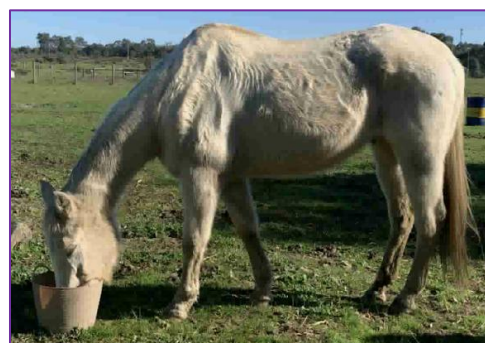
PH Luna



PH Belgrave



PH Katie



PH Chad



PH Snag



PH Dynamite



PH DJ





PH Frankie

