

RPSBS LTD NATIONAL CHAIR REPORT 2016- 2017

During the 2016 – 17 year, the RPSBS Board has seen only one change of Directors. Liz Francis (South Australia) resigned in August 2016 and was replaced by Alyson Emery as the South Australian Director. Alyson has proved to be a valued addition to the new Board. The Company Secretary's role has been passed over to our Company Treasurer, Christine Gibbons who has made an outstanding contribution to the Board this year. Thank you Christine.

This year it is important that we acknowledge the work of past Board members Liz Francis, Eleanor Gerry, Dalveen Gregory and Robyn Vale. Liz retired from the Board in August last year and continued to act as our Publicity officer until the end of the year. As she has done for many years she has acted as Eleanor's assistant editor in the production of our annual. . After producing 7 RPSBS annuals, Eleanor and Liz have amassed a wealth of knowledge that is irreplaceable. Eleanor's knowledge, passion and attention to detail are greatly appreciated by all RPSBS directors and members. Dalveen chaired the Editing Committee for many years and together with her husband's support was the mainstay of the NSW committee. Robyn, our past chair was responsible for the Judges Panel. All have served our society for many years.

I am extremely honoured to present the Chair Report for 2016 – 17. The year began with the resignation of our registry and secretariat service provider. Tenders were called for a new provider resulting in the Arabian Horse Society taking over from October 3, 2016 as the provider of our registry and secretariat services with considerable cost savings to our Society. The Board of Directors could not be happier with the services being provided by Helen Dohan and her office staff and we have been more than impressed with the support provided by members of the Arabian Horse Society Board.

With Helen's expert advice the Board has reviewed our Rules and Regulations to ensure that there is consistency and no contradictions. Particular emphasis has been placed on the restructuring of the membership categories and addressing irregularities within the studbook database so that the ownership of animals reflects the true intention of the members. A simple example is the Family membership where, on reaching 18 years of age the children were no longer eligible to be part of that family membership and hence no longer were registered as part owners of the animals. An audit of registrations and memberships has exposed issues in the way bulk transfers of animals such as in the case of deceased estates have been processed in the past. There have even been cases in which membership numbers and even Life Memberships have been transferred. An unfortunate outcome of this process has been the loss of invaluable information on the original breeders of many of our animals.

Animal registration rules have also been reviewed. Hackneys have been removed from the list of recognized stud books and Welsh D has been added. Colts 2 years and over must be adult registered before they can be shown or used for breeding purposes. Fees have been reviewed and the fees for registering geldings have been reduced. An investigation into providing a separate registry to owners of German Riding Ponies is being undertaken in a similar way that the APSBS provides a registry for Gypsy Cobs. The Board is hopeful that we will soon be able to provide a mobile phone app whereby animals may be registered online. Members would be able to draw their animal's markings using the app and have them appear on the papers exactly as marked.

Showing Rules have also been reviewed. At the request of the Victorian state committee Amateur Produced classes have now been introduced. Many states have now been able to run Overheight Newcomer classes.

State committees now organize at least 2 RPSBS based shows per year with some states running many more than this. A show qualifies if it is run under RPSBS rules and has RPSBS panel judges. A judges' seminar is to be held at or about the time of the states' annual meeting each year. State directors submit a report from the state at each Board meeting. This ensures that all states are fully informed of what is happening elsewhere across the nation.

Policies introduced included a Conflict of Interest Policy for Board Directors. This policy formalizes the process whereby Directors examine all items on a Board meeting agenda for possible conflict of interest and a written record is maintained of any declared interests.

A Judge's Policy has been produced outlining procedures for the selection of judges and maintenance of the Judges' panel. This Policy details the judge application procedures, and the processes for the application assessment, probation, appeals, upgradings and audit. This together with the development of the associated forms has involved many months of intensive work. A National Judge Committee has been formed to ensure there is consistency across all states in the judge assessment process and to take responsibility for the maintenance of the National Judge Panel list.

The production of the Judges' Handbook, initiated by the previous Board, was finally completed. It was a huge task over a 9 month period involving a re-examination of the Standards of Excellence, Class Descriptions, all Rules and Regulations and even the workouts. Many thanks must go to Despina Mitrakas of Show Pony Graphics not only for the professional presentation of the Judges' Handbook, but the production design of the Riding Pony Annual and for her mammoth effort in designing the new RPSBS web site to which I will refer in more detail later.

The Board had flagged at the end of the previous financial year that membership rebates to states might have to be suspended in September due to the increased costs of administration. At the 2016 September Board meeting with the knowledge of the new registry and secretariat costings the decision was made to continue the payment of membership rebates to the states albeit at a reduced rate. A sliding payment scale was introduced to ensure the smaller state rebates were not reduced. States with fewer than 200 members receive \$16.50 per member, between 200 and 400 members, \$12.50 and over 400, \$10 per member.

It has been an extremely positive year for our Riding Pony Society and our successes are entirely due to the work of the state committees in providing the opportunities for our members to exhibit their beautiful animals

Many thanks must go to Eleanor Gerry and members of the Queensland State Committee for the development of a RPSBS Young Judges' Competition. Eleanor and her team have worked tirelessly to develop the concept and organize a complete Championship with corporate sponsorship. At this point it is important that I acknowledge the work of all our state committee members. Without their dedication and hard work there is no way our Society will survive. The Young Judges' competition is a good example of a state initiative that hopefully will be taken up by other states at the end of the trial..

I must also acknowledge and give special congratulations to the Victorian Riding Pony committee chaired by Robert Cockram for their outstanding achievements during this last showing season hosting 6 shows; the Youngstock, the Pageant, the Masters, the Riding Pony of the Year Show, the Summer Festival and the Foal show. Sally Morphy and Robyn Cuzens must be congratulated on their Victorian Riding Pony newsletter, "The Rosette"; an outstanding production.

The Riding Pony annual production team of Eleanor Gerry, Editor, Liz Francis, assistant editor and Despina Mitrakas, design and production editor have again produced a quality, professional 2016 Riding Pony annual, highly prized by our members, particularly those with photos included. Eleanor and Liz's dedication to the annual and RPSBS Ltd must be acknowledged. Their ability to ensure that all animals worthy of inclusion are there even if it means personal phone calls and ensuring that the owners are financial members of the society. It would be interesting to document how many RPSBS memberships have been saved through their dedication.

Despina Mitrakas of Show Pony Graphics has been working for nearly twelve months on a new national Riding Pony web site which will link to all the individual state web sites. States will retain the ability to update their own sites. We are extremely confident that all members will be impressed by the new site and be able to easily locate forms and any information they require.

The RPSBS Board is pleased to announce that the theme for the 2017-18 year is Youngstock. We will be looking for initiatives that encourage the breeding of Riding Ponies and asking our state committees to investigate further opportunities to showcase our youngstock.

Mike Smith
National Chair