

July 2012

Dear Adam,

So glad that you have a receptive forum to air opinions and that you are seeking input. I've attached 2 correspondences - Sep 2011 and recently, that I have sent to EA/ EV. Please put my thoughts forward. I have had no acknowledgement (not even an out of office reply) from Grant Baldocks office re the latest e mail so I intend following the course of - registered snail mail to him , e mail to Vic branch to pursue these Q's stating my intention to raise them at the EV AGM. I will also be putting forward a range of motions to the AGM regarding seeking EV pursuing dismissal of the EA board and various other constitutional changes just as I did when I put forward the hack sub committee over 20 years ago.

I've done your questionnaire but feel that my letters cover it better.

I believe that EA is in crisis and will continue to lose members (n VIC at least) to HRCAV unless they take prompt measures. I attended the fiasco of the EV AGM last year where the AGM was closed before the contentious issue of the ICT project was addressed by Grant Baldock . What a great tactic to ensure that these questions and answers were not recorded officially as part of the AGM minutes! Nothing was clarified by Mr Baldock and I have strong suspicions that his answers were not always truthful! ('the cash cow' comments). The ICT project debacle, lack of financial accountability and transparency , critical judges shortages, the quad annual (4 yearly) drama of Olympic selection and the outrageous officials and hangers-on travel bill, the ever expanding focus on high performance and juniors has disenfranchised the majority of non elite riders and is leading to loss of members in droves. I've combed the EA & EV financial reports and I get the distinct impression that they may actually be pleased to lose the non high performance members so that they can concentrate on elite riders.

The 'new' corporate structure has created a monster that seems to be a law unto themselves. The renaming to Equestrian Australia along with the new constitution has removed the management from any real close contact or responsibility to members as the branches insulate them from the general membership. Thank goodness for the small core of volunteers who are actually doing the work and still keeping things going at largely club levels and the few remaining long term stalwarts on the EV committee.

Some other suggestions for you to consider:

Dressage judges are largely sick of the big draw on their time to re accredit and undertake the "minimum" judging requirements to stay accredited along with the number of desperate calls for their judging services.

Use the new (ha) ICT platform on line for judges to nominate themselves to clubs for various judging positions for the year . (with perhaps a proviso that you can't judge the same level twice in succession, or nominate only for one level) This way judges would know that they could meet their minimum judging requirements at their top level of judging (I couldn't, they only want elementary and below judges mostly) and organise their diary and life outside horses. Alternatively, there could

be a facility where judges mark on a calendar dates they would be available and a maximum travel distance, this could be available on-line to club secretaries.

Increase the pay for judges. With the increase in petrol and toll roads the pittance judges get barely covers this, let alone the time taken to retain accreditation.

Subsidize judges rewards by providing free spectating at events such as dressage with the stars, melb 3DE etc.

Provide competitor guidelines in the dressage rules so that competitors follow polite protocols with judges at competitions. e.g. sitting in a car in 40 degree heat waiting for a competitor who insists on riding at the scheduled time rather than 10 min early! There should be some education for competitors so that they understand what a difficult job judging is.

Why has EV made judging at non official events part of minimum judging requirements? This just increases the pressure on EA judges. Do these non affiliated organisations pay anything to EA/ EV for the privilege of using EA trained judges. This is also counter productive , one of the few reasons I compete at EA events is because the judges are trained and largely know what they are doing. If you can get judged by an EA judge without being a member , why bother becoming a member? HRCAV here I come!

As a matter of urgency EA/EV needs to formulate OHS policies regarding dressage judges, pretty soon you are likely to have judges /and/or riders suffering from heat exhaustion! There should be mandatory breaks in certain climatic conditions and for toilet breaks, minimum hydration and shade for judges. The concentration required for judging is intense, to maintain focus and accuracy there should be a maximum number of classes/competitors per day and mandated breaks. Most judges put up with what I can only call miss-treatment to assist the organisers putting through the numbers because of late competitors, late inclusions, poor scheduling and clashes and long distances back to the pavilion.

So Adam, hope you enjoyed my deluge of thoughts. Good luck with it.

Sincerely

Sue Inness

Yet another chapter in the squad annual Olympic selection fiasco. Equestrian Australia is in crisis, and not just because of this, they just won't acknowledge it yet. What will we be left with when they finally listen to their members?