

Presidents Report 2015

To Mel B, Bob Masters, Maggie Winn and Jess A continuing on committee, thank you also for staying the course.

I would like to say a few words as I step aside as SAERA President and I apologise it is not all peaches and cream, it is time for a few home truths.

I am not sure if many realise being on committee is not all beer and skittles and it is not just turning up at meetings. There is much to be done between meetings and it costs time and money and the recompense is successful rides, not personal wealth or it seems mental health.

I fell into president when our last president resigned part way through their term in 2010. I have felt like resigning many times this year but as many of you know, whatever I take on, be it committee, work or horses, to my own detriment I see it through to completion. I am a finisher and a stayer and take pride in doing things well. However it is important here to say that members need to think about the expectations they place on committee members who have jobs, families, farms and horses and think they are helping by being on committee only to find themselves the subject of senseless attack, now too easily accessible via social media. It does not bode well for the future of any sport when the last two presidents had pressures placed on them which lead to resignation in one case and the thought to in another. You may recall I did not want to be president again in 2014 and as it played out my instinct was correct.

In my case, I would like to thank the committee for their support in what has felt like a very personal attack during this year. The SAERA committee is made up of very different individuals with very different reasons for being involved in the sport and its administration and there are some very different views around the table. Regardless of personal differences thank you to committee for their support.

2015 has been a challenging year for SAERA with some extraordinary business distracting committee from their main task of promoting the sport and running rides. The extraordinary business has taken a personal toll on all members of the committee and resulted in one resignation during the year and many on committee not willing to stand again. It is a shame some personal issues got in the way of running the sport. Thank you Janne Harris for your short but powerful contribution. Janne was instrumental in the rider distance awards acknowledged at TQ15. Thank you Sam for your contribution as treasurer, Sam is an accountant and lives at Mt Compass so found it hard to come to meetings but has put in the hours witnessed by some reports she will present today, thank you Sam. Cherie has a young family and way too many horses and has at times found it hard to get to meetings but has always fulfilled her obligations, thank you Cherie. Deb Sheldon has been a fantastic contributor to committee and can be relied upon for a level head. It is hoped Deb might continue with vet bookings ex committee as she has built a good rapport with vets and it would be nice to have some continuity leading into TQ17. Stella Harbison has been responsible for pulling the ride calendar together for the last two years and we have had new rides, she has done a great job with Jess A often as her able side kick. It is a pity we will lose some Harbison rides along with Stella from committee. Thank you Stella.

There are some who do much work off committee, Faye Gallagher with horse rego, Lainie Ray with memberships and ride insurance and Shirley Ellis for her tireless work with our website, ride secretary and aeraspace ride verification. Thank you all.

That said...

SAERA put together a full calendar of rides and there were some new tracks and venues explored. SAERA had a good turnout at the 50th Quilty and Shazhada. We finished off the local season with the State Champs at Kuinto with some newly qualified 160km riders, Mel & Jayna Bright, Cherie Causby, Rachael Barnett & Mary Chirgwin. To me this represents things that are alive and good in endurance in SA. Congratulations to all competitors and commiserations especially to Wal (Karren Carman) who vetted out at the end.

The ride calendar for 2016. It is shaping to be one of the most interesting in years with many new courses, some fueled by Quilty dreams and others making a contribution to our sport. Thank you to all the individuals involved in putting a ride on.

And speaking of the Quilty for 2017. Reading the minutes of last years agm and I feel sure the previous 3, many have tried to get a Quilty off the ground for 2017, perhaps the most persistent being Jess Aistrope. Finally at pretty much past the last possible hour with an almost insurmountable task at hand given the time lines, it looks like we will have a Quilty in 2017 at either Jamestown, Wirrina or Kuinto. Thank you Jean Sims for stepping up to Event Director role, thank you Jess for sticking it out and to Paula and Tony for going with the flow. They along with the other committee members will ensure 2017 is a success.

Thank you SAERA for entrusting me as your president for the last five and a half years.

Melanie Scott