

# Riding for the Disabled Association (N.S.W) Illawarra Centre



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Summer Newsletter 2015

## Decommissioning of Jerrara Dam

### Decommissioning

Since May of this year, Kiama council have been in the process of decommissioning Jerrara dam. The dam has never been able to be used as a water source and was becoming far too expensive for the council to maintain. To keep the dam, more safety measures needed to be installed and the dam wall needed to be raised, so decommissioning was a much cheaper and practical option. Unfortunately, as our RDA centre backs onto the dam, the decommissioning work has affected the operation of our centre's riding classes. With the constant work taking place, and lots of heavy machinery on the property, it has been an unsafe environment to continue to run classes in, and we had to regrettably finish up riding classes for the year at the end of May.

During these past months, several changes have been made to parts of the centre's grounds and paddocks close to the dam. Every time the volunteers came down to feed the horses on their weekly roster, it looked different! Check out the photos below of the changes to the saddle yards.



July



August



October

Although this has been a difficult period regarding the operating of the centre, we are extremely grateful to Kiama council for considering the preservation of our centre in this process by going to the extra trouble and expense to build the concrete wall necessary to protect our centre.

So, Jerrara Dam has now been successfully decommissioned; however, there is still some work to be finished off (such as fences to be fixed and/or replaced, and new saddle yards to be erected) which is scheduled to be completed early in the new year.

### Flooding!

The heavy rains we received in the Illawarra area in late August brought a lot of attention to Jerrara dam. In the past, heavy rains have often sent the dam on amber alert and there was quite a lot of concern of its stability on this occasion, as the dam was in the process of being decommissioned.

On the morning of August 25th, Jerrara dam was issued a red alert and the SES issued an urgent evacuation notice for the residents downstream of the dam.

RDA volunteers were strongly advised against attempting to get to the centre so as not to put anybody in any unnecessary danger. Thanks to the assistance of Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopters, who helped

with the reconnaissance flight, the SES were able to assess the dam and determine that our horses were in no immediate danger.

After the waters had subsided and the RDA volunteers were able to get to the centre again within the next few days, we were amazed to find that, apart from the ground being a bit soggy, there was no water damage at all!

This bit of excitement in late August created a bit of drama and suspense for all who were concerned about the RDA centre, but we are pleased to be able to inform that no damage was done to the property and all our horses and volunteers stayed safe.

You can read more about the flooding of Jerrara Dam in the [Illawarra Mercury](#), [Kiama Independent](#) and [Sky News](#). It even made it to the front page of the Newspaper in the Solomon Islands!

Check out these awesome photos!

Flooded  
causeway  
on Mt  
Brandon  
Rd —>



<— Water  
rushing through  
hole cut in dam  
wall behind  
concrete wall  
built to protect  
the Centre



## Classes 2016

Despite the challenges of the past few months, we're really looking forward to starting classes up again in 2016. We still have three eager Trainee Coaches raring to go and, as they've been able to use much of this time over the last few months to complete their workbooks, we will hopefully have three new Assistant Coaches in no time!

We'd like to thank all the riders and parents/carers for their patience and understanding throughout this year, and we're looking forward to seeing you again in the New Year.

We'd also like to say an enormous thank you to our small but dedicated cluster of volunteers who continue to keep up all the behind-the-scenes work to keep this centre running. Even while classes have not been on, they've been dedicated to keeping the grounds maintained, horses fed and looked after, and many other necessary jobs that need to be done. Thank you to you all!

Unfortunately, because of all the work on the property, we weren't able to hold a Christmas party for the end of 2015, but please keep an eye out for further information regarding a Welcome Back Party at the beginning of 2016!

## Special Visit from Gareth Ward

### VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS FROM GARETH WARD MP

On May 19th we were visited once again by Gareth Ward MP.

Most of the volunteers awaiting his arrival were under the impression that Gareth was coming to the centre to photograph the centre's new tractor of which his most recent donation went towards, but Carmen and Mr Ward had a surprise up their sleeves.

Instead of the photography session that we were all anticipating, Gareth came with a surprise presentation for our four long-time serving volunteers.

The four OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS went to:



L to R: Linda Pullen, Norm Power, Gareth Ward MP, Denise Tozer, Kay Wye.

**Linda Pullen:** for her service as President and over 15 years of volunteering at Illawarra Riding for the Disabled;

**Denise Tozer:** for her service as Vice-President and over 15 years of volunteering at Illawarra Riding for the Disabled;

**Norm Power:** for his service as Vice-President and over 22 years of volunteering at Illawarra Riding for the Disabled; and

**Kay Wye:** for her dedicated service as a Foundation Member and over 30 years of volunteering at Illawarra Riding for the Disabled.

"All four of these volunteers are tireless, selfless workers in our community who are extremely worthy of this prestigious recognition," Gareth Ward said.

You can read Gareth Ward's full article [here](#).

An enormous, heartfelt CONGRATULATIONS to each of you from every volunteer, rider and parent/carer that you have been of service to throughout your many, many dedicated years of service at RDA Illawarra. You are each a priceless part of our centre and extremely deserving of these awards.

*Norm Power and Kay Wye shared their stories of their experience at RDA Illawarra in the Illawarra Mercury, 8th August 2015*

## Volunteers Needed!

**Do you want to make a difference in someone's life?**

**Are you willing to give a helping hand?**

Here at RDA Illawarra, we are currently in need for more volunteers.

RDA Illawarra is a non-profit organisation run completely by volunteers. There are no paid staff at our centre whatsoever.

Each and every volunteer is here because of their willingness and desire to help the community and make a difference in the lives of others.

**What are the prerequisites? NONE!**

The only requirement is that you must be a minimum of 12 years of age. Our small team of dedicated volunteers will teach you anything and everything else you need to know.

**What is involved?** There is a huge variety of jobs to be done at RDA! Many people think that volunteering

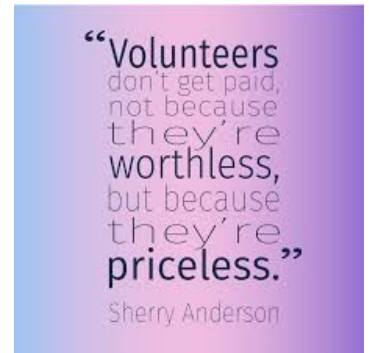


at RDA is all about horses related jobs, but, although that is a vital part of the role of many of our volunteers, there are always many other jobs for people who are not so keen on working with horses.

Here are just some of the jobs that we're always in need of people to help with:

- Ground Maintenance
- Fundraising
- Cleaning
- Committee roles
- Help on class days

It's never hard to find a job for our volunteers to do!



In addition to these non-horse-related jobs, there is also lots to do where horses are involved.

Some of these jobs include:

- Preparing horses for class
- Leading horses in class
- Horse feeding
- Horse Care

And if you are not qualified or even experienced in any of these areas, but are keen to help and willing to learn, that's all you need!

#### **Here's why we do it:**



*We do it for the smile that splits a child's face the first time they trot down the trotting lane.*

*We do it for the tears that run down a mother's cheek as her child achieves something she never thought they would.*

*We do it for the unrestrained gleeful squeal of the little girl when you throw the lead rope away and send her off on her own for the first time.*

*We do it for the strength and balance and freedom a child in a wheelchair gains when riding a horse.*

*We do it for the child who never used to speak, and now tells us what to do, and what we're doing wrong!*

*We do it for the cheers, hugs, smiles, laughter, tears, and shared achievements.*

*We don't get paid in money, but in far more valuable things!*

If you would like to become a volunteer at RDA Illawarra, please don't hesitate to contact:

Linda Pullen (President/Coach): 0421 304 485

Carmen Netherclift: (Secretary/Coach): 0435 824 776

Or Email us at: [illawarra@rdansw.org.au](mailto:illawarra@rdansw.org.au)

And **Please Spread the Word!** If you know of anybody who may be interested in becoming a volunteer, please let them know.



We will be running a volunteer training day in the beginning months of 2016 and will be able to inform you with further information once a date has been confirmed.

**We look forward to seeing many new faces in 2016!**



## Featured Volunteer

This issue's featured volunteer is: **Norm Power**

Norm Power has been working as a volunteer at RDA Illawarra since 1991, when his daughter Rita left North Rocks School and came back home to live. Rita had been attending RDA lessons whilst at North Rocks and both Norm and his wife Dawn wished her to keep up with her riding. Norm came along to RDA with Rita as her helper. It wasn't long before Norm became "one of the crew". He was nominated as a Vice President at the following Centre AGM and held that title until March 2007, when he decided that someone else, in Norm's words, "Should be in charge of Vice for a while", and happily took up a position as an "ordinary" committee member. Norm has since been re-elected to "Vice" and is now a life-member of the committee.



Norm has helped at the Centre in many ways. He was always in attendance at working bees, and soon became the resident BBQ expert at all fundraisers, cooking up a storm at every catering event that was held. Norm's bacon and egg rolls were to die for, and the hamburgers he made were huge.



In his time at Illawarra Centre, Norm has worked as a leader and side-walker during lessons, assisting with saddling and all general care to both the horses and equipment. He has attended the training sessions for new volunteers, helping them to settle in and explain how things are carried out, gently pointing out any mistakes he sees someone make. Norm happily attends fundraising days and is always one of the first to arrive and usually one of the last to leave. At committee meetings Norm always puts his point of view forward in his quiet unassuming manner and everyone always listens carefully to him.



Since his retirement in 2007 Norm now attends the Centre 2-3 days per week. He rapidly became an indispensable member of our Grounds and Surrounds crew and can turn his hand to anything. He mows the grass, mends the fences, faithfully attends to the upkeep of the property, feeds the horses, keeps the recreation shed tidy and washes up any dirty dishes and cups he sees lying around. No job is too difficult or too small for him to tackle. Quite often before someone realises that something needs doing Norm has already done it.

In his quiet unassuming way, Norm can always be relied upon to get the job done to the very best of his ability. His wicked sense of humour often makes a dull day bright. He is very gentle with all the riders but can be firm when needed and is well respected by all who know him. His gentle, caring nature makes him a firm favourite with all the riders, volunteers and committee members. Norm is an absolute treasure to have around and we wish we could clone him and have another twenty volunteers just like him.

In May 2015, Norm was one of the four RDA Volunteer recipients of the Outstanding Community Service Award presented by Gareth Ward, local MP for Kiama, for his dedicated service as Vice-President and over 22 years of volunteering at Illawarra Riding for the Disabled.

From all the riders, parents/carers and volunteers at RDA Illawarra:

**"Thank you Norm for your selfless dedication to this centre for over 20 years. You are such a valuable part of our team and we are extremely grateful for every single bit of hard work and commitment that you put into everything you have done and continue to do for our centre. We hope you stick around for many years to come!"**

## Attention: Change of Postal Address

We would like to notify all of whom it may concern that we have recently had a change of postage address. Our new postal address is:

**PO Box 39,  
Jamberoo NSW 2533**

Please send any future mail to the above address.



**Merry Christmas and Happy  
2016!**

From all the horses and  
volunteers at RDA Illawarra.



We look forward to seeing you  
all again in the New Year!

### Retired Trade's People

On occasions we require trades people to do small jobs around the Centre. If you are a tradesperson or know someone (retirees most welcome) who would be willing to give a hand, please contact Carmen on 0435 824 776.



### WISH LIST

**Do you know anyone who could donate any of the following items?**

Horse feed, Portable PA system,  
Water tanks, Horse float

### DONATIONS

**A huge thank you to the following for their generous donations/grants, donations in kind and product:**

Carl Winkler Farrier,  
Dapto Leagues Club,  
Windang Bowling Club

**Sincere apologies to those whose names may have not been mentioned, your donations are very much appreciated**



### Help us Build our Sponsor a Horse Program

This program is a fantastic way for people to get involved, especially those who do not have a lot of time on their hands. If you can help by distributing some of our Sponsor a Horse Program forms amongst your friends and colleagues, please contact the Centre. Sponsorship starts from as little as \$10 a month and makes a great present.

**Mini and her friends would like to thank their present sponsors for their continuing support!**