**VICTORIAN ENDURANCE RIDERS’ ASSOCIATION INC.**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**2.00 PM SATURDAY 15 JANUARY 2022**

**KINGS PARK, SEYMOUR**

**MINUTES**

# WELCOME

The President and VERA SMC welcome all members and visitors to the VERA Annual General Meeting. Thank you for making the effort to travel to the meeting.

# Attendance

As per Appendix 1

# APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

* Susan Gill
* Lyn Taylor
* Michael Taylor
* Carol Laidlaw
* Peter Laidlaw
* Ellen Prestage
* Andrea Laws-King
* Tanya Beacham
* Russell Gillingham
* Jen Green
* Sallyann Bulk
* Janeen Smith
* Steve Edwards

# Proxy Votes

The following proxy votes were received:

* Steve Edwards – Proxy Sandy Little
* Janeen Smith – Proxy Sandy Little
* Lyn Taylor – Proxy Mezcal Manners

As there are no motions for voting these proxy votes are not required but are still noted.

# MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM – 16 JANUARY 2021

## Amendments to the Minutes

Amendment to the Minutes – Date of AGM should be 16 January 2021, not 2020.

## Adoption of the Minutes

That the minutes of the AGM meeting held on 16 January 2021 be accepted subject to the listed amendments.

**Moved:** Jo Francis

**Seconded:** Louise Mackey

**Carried**

# **PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Covid has, once again, given us all a year full of challenges, not the least of which was how to work our way through the maze and myriad rules associated with running events. A huge thanks to our wonderful Ride Organisers, some of whom had a few cracks at getting their rides run. We are so blessed in Victoria to have ROs who went out on a limb to give our riders the opportunity to compete.

Our commiserations to those ROs who tried their best but couldn’t get across the line due to the lockdowns.

Another big thanks to all our members who hung in there and kept their horses going so they could attend rides. It was tough for some who were forced to endure the lengthy periods when they couldn’t go far from home. The best part of attending the last 2 rides was being able to meet up with all our endurance family and renew those lovely friendships that we all have. Nothing better than being able to share an endurance weekend with all you wonderful folk.

I would also like to express thanks to the SMC members who have continued to soldier on under all the challenges that 2021 has brought. Over the past two years we have been in survival mode and focussed purely on what was needed to get through lockdowns, harsh movement restrictions, border restrictions and all the other curveballs that have been thrown our way.

Reading through all the material about covid regulations/restrictions was certainly enough to make anyone’s head spin, let alone trying to decipher all the variations of opinion from various bodies. Attending covid meetings got to be almost a weekly pleasure!

The SMC also worked hard at trying to find ways to support members and ROs in a variety of ways. Our increase in membership numbers this year was very heartening and, Australia wide, Victoria had the largest % increase.

Another huge thanks go to the VERA support personnel and volunteers who assist our members in various ways. Special thanks to:

* Jen Green – Facebook Moderator
* Mark Gabb – Webmaster
* Bronwyn Cuthbertson – Logbooks
* Sandra Feil – Memberships
* Bek Williamson – Pointscore
* Sioux Reid – Swabbing Steward
* Tanya Beacham – Grievance Officer

I would also like to recognise the contribution of all of our Chief Stewards and vets, without whom our rides would not proceed. And all the folk who help out at rides through a variety of roles.

At the first meeting of the new SMC this year we will be looking at what our plans are for the forthcoming year and what the focus will be for the Committee. On behalf of the SMC, I would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy year as we all look forward to a year of uninterrupted riding.

# **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Audited financials have been emailed/mailed for all members to look over.

Explanation of why there are difference in income, expenses and balance sheet items compared to last year. Please remember our financial years run from 1/10/xx to 30/9/xx, and not as per a calendar year like our memberships.

1. The main reason there are a lot of variances in the financials between this year and last is, is due to the fact that more rides were run this year and there were more members. The ones that fall under this category are:
* Aera personal liability insurance income
* Logbook fees income
* Membership fees income (as we offered the roll over for the 2021 membership, we moved ½ of the income for memberships from 2020 to 2021)
* Ride fees income
* All AERA fees
* Chief Steward fees
* Meals and entertainment as well as venue hire - only a few face-to-face meetings
* Logbook/membership refunds
1. AGM meals income – Decreased due to being style of meal between the 2 years
2. Bib income and expense – There are now fewer qualified members without bibs, as the membership register did a push for them to get bibs in 2019.
3. Swabbing income and expenses – No swabbing fines and the swabbing kits/testing were paid for after 30/09/2021.
4. Education days income – Not held in 2021.
5. Merchandise income & expenses – This will be constantly changing depending on the demand for merchandise
6. Less small items purchased
7. Insurance has gone up as we have now insured not just the trailers but the equipment as well
8. No VERA State Championships in 2021 – No fees levied
9. Vet reimbursements – This is an incentive provided for the ROs and was only for the 2021 riding year

With the last few years we had, we were happy we could help our members to roll their memberships for the 2020 riding year into the 2021 riding year. Also, for the ROs the were able to roll their ride application fees for rides that didn’t run in 2020 to 2021 and even 2022 for those that were cancelled in 2021. On top of that all ROs had the opportunity to apply for the vet reimbursement.

It should be noted that we made a small profit of $5,700 for the 2021 year – rather exceptional when considering all the financial challenges that we have faced. When this is compared to the loss of $11,000 the previous year the careful management of our funds has certainly paid off.

We are looking at purchasing new trailers to replace the existing ride trailers, which have been in service since just after the Myrtleford Quilty when that Quilty Committee donated the trailers to VERA. This is still being looked into as we research the type of trailer that best suits our needs. If any of our members have any suggestions, please feel free to contact our VERA Secretary.

Fingers crossed we can run a full riding calendar in 2022, so all members and ROs can enjoy the sport again.

**Motion:** That the Treasurer’s Report be adopted.

**Moved:** Kerrie Gabb

**Seconded:** Sandy Little

**Carried**

#  ELECTIONS

It was determined by the members that the vote would be conducted via a secret poll.

Both nominees for the Vice President role provided a short speech detailing their reasons for nominating.

## Appointment of Scrutineers

The following people were nominated as Scrutineers:

* Di Leehane
* Jo Francis

## Stand Down of 2021 SMC Members at end of Term

The following SMC Members have reached the end of their term and their positions are now declared vacant:

* Paul Nugent

## Vice President

Nominations were received from the following VERA members for the position of Vice President:

**Paul Nugent**

Nominated: Rebecca Williamson Seconded: Ken Bradley

**Paul Bryson**

Nominated: Martin Mizzi Seconded: Marty Bryson

**Result:** Paul Nugent was elected as Vice President

## Committee

A nomination was received from the following VERA member for the position of Committee Member.

**Lyn Taylor**

Nominated: Ellen Prestage Seconded: Mezcal Manners

**Result:** As the number of nominations received did not exceed the number of positions available all nominations were accepted.

The following nominations were received from the floor:

**Sandy Little**

Nominated: Rebecca Williamson Seconded: Digger Leehane

**Damien Little**

Nominated: Rebecca Williamson Seconded: Ken Bradley

**Sheree Bishop**

Nominated: Rebecca Williamson Seconded: Paul Bryson

**Paul Bryson**

Nominated: Paul Nugent Seconded: Martin Mizzi

## Disciplinary Panel

Thanks were given to the members who held positions on the Disciplinary Panel last year. Nominations were called from the floor to fill the 5 positions available, and the following people were elected to the Disciplinary Panel:

* Ken Bradley
* Rebecca Williamson
* Nicky Robinson
* Digger Leehane
* Louise Mackey

## Grievance Officer

The current incumbent, Tanya Beacham, had indicated her willingness to continue in the role and was duly declared elected.

# MOTIONS

No motions were received for discussion at the AGM.

# ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

## AERA Affiliation Agreement

Sandy Little commented that the agreement was a good idea. He felt that the document was poorly put together and need considerable re-work. Sandy proceeded to detail some of the areas that he felt needed to be amended before the Agreement should be adopted.

He indicated that he would review the document and send it to Kim Moir, AERA Secretary. It was pointed out that this would be a personal response and would not be considered as VERA’s response to the document. Sandy said he would send his review to the VERA SMC for consideration.

## New Rules for 2022

Some of the members present indicated that they felt the Social Ride rule did not provide the same level of safety and protection for our horses if these Social Rides were conducted without a vet. It was felt that we should always have vets present at any level of the sport.

The rule regarding riders with special needs was also discussed. It was pointed out that people prefer the terminology specific needs. It was raised that we need to have a framework around the approach to these riders participating in events that meets Government requirements. We should obtain advice from the appropriate Government Agency when developing this framework.

## Absence of Executive Position

The situation with the lapsed membership of Paul Nugent was discussed by those present at the AGM. It was contended that the SMC was acting outside the Constitution as the position of Vice President was not filled.

The President pointed out that the SMC took immediate action once the lapsed membership was identified. A request for a membership application form to be completed and submitted was done and steps were done to re-appoint Paul to the position of Vice-President and Calendar Coordinator. It was also noted that the SMC had acted in good faith in this matter.

Sandy Little stated that it was the President’s job to check the membership status of all members and that this had always been the case. This was refuted by the President as not being correct.

Questions were raised as to the lack of process around payment being made but not being reconciled against received memberships. The Treasurer explained how the issue was identified.

Some members indicated it was a personal responsibility to ensure your membership was in place. It was pointed out that decisions made during that time could not be re-visited as action had been taken based on those decisions and this couldn’t be undone or re-voted upon.

It was also suggested that VERA could look at a membership renewal process like SAERA has done this year and look at some form of automatic renewal process.

# MEETING CLOSURE

The meeting was declared closed at 3.25 pm.