

President Update – February 2019



Dear Members

With another year gone and onto another one I wanted to continue to share some information with you all .

The members of the Board keep amazing me with the efforts they put in, driven by passion for the sport. I have worked with some of them until after midnight some weeks three times per week going over finances and ideas of how to improve your Association. Thank you for your passion, expertise and knowledge.

The Board early in the year formed a Finance Committee to solely research, develop and implement Financial Control. This Finance Committee has gone back as far as our history will allow us to determine the financial and membership trends of the Association, from this information collected, have developed what we believe is pathway ahead to allow for the Association's growth rate that is manageable for a volunteer Board.

By that I mean if we double our numbers immediately we would not have the ability to manage running a National show, let alone the increase in administration, so we need to progress and grow at a rate that is manageable.

Over the past three years we have growth in membership well over 10 %, which has been the aim, and we are just scraping by at the moment with all the work that is required to be done. Looking into the future we need to implement how we can grow with the increase and put in place in place now in readiness and be able to give more back to the Membership as they ask for.

Thank you to the members who took the time to complete the survey, the objective of one of our goals is to listen to the membership, this survey which will be one of many gave the membership an opportunity to voice their opinions, thoughts, suggestions, solutions, hopefully we can get the information set out to be able to let members know the full results at the AGM.

There were a few surprises in the survey responses but nothing that cannot be addressed, one was a priority members would like more information shared down from the Board, second, there was no surprise that the main thing that the membership considered first and foremost at the National show is the surface to show on, this has been the case ever since I can remember, and K Ranch venue has certainly been able to deliver that surface, thirdly, was the least important to the members with regards to the National show was Camping and Facilities, the remainder of priority came in as covered warm up area, distance , program and costs all in-between all reasonably equal.

The debate of K Ranch vs AELEC venue is ongoing and I hope this information will dispel some of the myths that are presently going around. If you compare apples with apples AELEC is \$10k more expensive than K Ranch for Reining Australia to hire, on top of that the additional cost to fly International Judges into Tamworth with the extra flights and accommodation incurred .

The previous 5 years has shown that when we have been at AELEC it has cost RA an average of \$4500 per year to prepare and maintain the surface in readiness for competition. That is a conservative figure given that we have had an enormous amount of volunteer labour available to assist us with that task, which we are very thankful.

In a nut shell if you add the two figures together the sum is a significant saving for us as an Association. I believe when you hire an item what ever it maybe you should not have to work on it to be able to use it. One other issue that needs to be considered with our Venue is being central to membership and also Geographically central to be fair to all competitors. Google maps tell us that the distance between Melbourne and Brisbane is approx. 1744 k depending on which way you go, half way would be about 870 k roughly now Melbourne to K Ranch is 835k and Brisbane to K Ranch is 974k so all up the difference is about 140 k , in reality the Queensland members would travel 140 k extra. If we look at it from the other end Melbourne to AELEC is 1172k and Brisbane to AELEC is 572k so the Victoria members have been travelling the extra k's for some time now.

Geographically AELEC is not central on the map as all is perceived. If we look at the current membership base we find that things have changed dramatically in the past couple of years with the Vic clubs doubling in their numbers which is encouraging for our sport. There is 38% of RA membership reside north of Sydney and the other 62% reside south of that same area so by majority of membership we should move our National show to somewhere just south of Canberra if we were to put the show central to the membership. Unfortunately there is no Venue suitable there for us AT THE MOMENT. Yes we do have a list of improvements we have asked

K Ranch to achieve for us and have only positives in the replies, there has never been a reply of no we can't do that.

The team at K Ranch have always been a pleasure to work with. The dates are a priority to factor in making the decision as we need to consider the school holidays to hold our National show. We have had a 34% drop in youth numbers over the last two years which is alarming. The ability to hold our National show within the school holidays is paramount so as to give our youth membership every opportunity to attend. At this stage K Ranch has been able to give us the dates that we require and unfortunately AELEC haven't been able to fit us in in the school holidays.

The Board currently are in damage control with the loss of Sponsorship for us as an Association due to the recent negative comments displayed on social media with regard to the 2019 National Show. These concerns have been relayed to us in writing to the Board from major sponsors and has had a direct impact on our sport.

There are many ways available to everyone to communicate to the Board, to ask a question or put your point of view across. Social Media is not the avenue and we encourage emails where the membership can put suggestions and also solutions to the issue that is to be discussed. I firmly believe that if someone has a problem with something that they most likely will have some sort of solution. Having said that there will always be a difference of opinion and we must all respect others opinions and be open to a democratic approach to our decision making process.

Congratulations to one of our Affiliates, the VRHA, this club has doubled its membership within the last two years, that is incredible results. We need to find out what they are doing in regards to come and try days or what their introduction to Reining is because nowhere else in the country can come close to those results, Well done. Our RA memberships are increasing. I had a plan to increase our membership by 10% per year which I think is manageable but 2016 to 2017 was an increase of 13% and 2017 to 2018 has seen an increase of 23% for our full adult memberships. Great Results. The Green rider membership 2016 to 2017 increased 8% and 2017 to 2018 increased by 28%. Another great result. The youth has unfortunately gone the other way 2016 to 2017 seen a reduction of 30% and 2017 to 2018 a further 7% fall, as a nation, we need to see what can be done to hold our numbers of youth. They are our future.

I hope this message has answered some of the questions that you may have had or at were thinking of asking or even just to enlighten on new updates for some, If it hasn't please don't hesitate to send an email for clarification, solutions are always welcome as well as concerns.

Thanks for your time and I look forward catching up at the AGM or at a show across the country .

Paul Sharp
Reining Australia
President

