



Newsletter - July 2021

Dear Judges,

As some of you may be aware the Chairman of the Board has recently written to all AHSA members about some posts on social media that have covered a range of topics about the Society including issues around ongoing judges training and education.

The purpose of the Chairman's response was in part to explain the operating environment the Board and sub-committees find themselves under when dealing with Covid-19. The subsequent impacts for the AHSA on the way they can or cannot conduct normal business is frustrating for all. The Board remains acutely aware of its financial and business risks in this environment and while the JOC is aware of these Board pressures we are focussed on developing and providing a wide range of services to all our judges that fit within the current operating environment and are realistic for our circumstances.

I wanted to reassure Judges that in the case of the JOC we are acting in good faith with both the Board and your interests. The current JOC has been operating for just over seven months and has been working closely with the Board to implement strategies that are relevant to our current circumstances.

Many of you will know through reading your Newsletters that we have provided mentoring, sideline critiquing, judges upgrades and scorecard training for any judge that required this training at over 12 shows. Apart from the Northern Territory we have provided this opportunity in every State of Australia. We have organised and conducted open judges meetings at the Australian Championships and East Coast Championships. We have been active in producing regular and informative newsletters for you all – listing training opportunities and also trying to introduce judges to the broader judging community through the introduction of judges biographies.

The judges website has been updated (and this always seems to remain an ongoing process) but we have included a Judges Education page where we hope over time to populate it with informative articles, videos and reference materials. Currently we have conducted 3 interviews with internationally renowned judges specifically asking questions that may benefit our existing Australian or newer judges as they progress their judging careers. We hope to add to these videos with other interviews in the coming months.

The JOC meets regularly every 6 weeks and during these meetings we deal with any of the training and education matters mentioned previously, as well as rule book amendments/suggestions, issues raised by show committees or individual judges and many other administrative matters. I can however assure you that this work continues for us on a daily basis not just when we meet—we are committed to doing our best for you. We are all volunteers and we are committed to the AHSA and to you our fellow judges.

It has been very frustrating that many shows and events throughout the horse community have been cancelled but we remain vigilant in that we are looking for opportunities to provide training for all levels of judges. As an example the postponement of Equitana in Melbourne due to a Covid-19 outbreak was very disappointing. We had planned on conducting a Judges conference/training day in conjunction with

Equitana, opportunities in other State locations have also been postponed because of lockdowns etc.

Rest assured, the JOC is committed to trying to provide a wide range of training, seminar and conference opportunities for all levels of judges and if it can be accommodated to a wider audience not just judges. Currently we remain restricted by Covid-19 in regard to travel and numbers of individuals in meeting rooms etc – it is very difficult to program seminars and training days with a constantly changing domestic environment. As an alternative we are looking at providing some Zoom training opportunities where it is practical.

The clear feedback we (and the Board) have received from judges is that they want the opportunity to have regional and State based training that is cost effective and to get back to critiquing real horses rather than a classroom approach. The impacts of droughts, bushfires and now Covid has meant that attending some larger seminars were totally out of reach for them both financially and practically due to time away from farms and families etc.

Some of you will know that I attended two of the past Congress seminars, I certainly learnt from both opportunities and I too valued the social interactions and the opportunities that were offered to just socialise and mingle. I am supportive of these types of events but under present circumstances and as the Chairman has previously indicated we need to balance all financial and business requirements with the needs of judges and all members. All of these types of training and education remain on our radar – we would dearly love to provide all types and options to you including opportunities along the same lines as a Congress or Conference. Our aim is to be able to provide you with a mix of opportunities as and when circumstances permit.

I know most AHSA judges personally and that also applies to our JOC State representatives, so could I please ask that you contact either me directly or one of your JOC members if you have any questions or concerns in the future. We are open to any positive suggestions or comments and we will consider them all. The JOC can either try to resolve any issues you may have or agree to raise them with the Board for consideration.

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