



**Horse Safety Australia**

*Hi Everyone!*

### **A newsletter at last**

It has been so long since the last newsletter! Sorry, everyone, but I have been flat out! Maybe 2010 will be slower?!

### **Bushfires and Horses**

Probably the most topical issue for us at the moment is the question of what should we do if a bushfire is in our area. For many of us this is a serious question. Many Horse Safety Australia members have multiple horses, and often they are located near good riding areas, which, in many cases, translates to bushland! We have produced a flyer with some points you may like to consider. The full document is on our website, but I have summarized the main points here, for those of you who do not hop on the internet easily or just can't find the time!

The key things you need to think about are listed below:

- Make sure you understand the new fire danger ratings (these have been widely publicised and are available through your fire services).
- Design a bushfire plan for your house, family, pets, site and horses.
- Register your Property Identification Code (PIC) with the Department of Primary Industries in your state and include your horses (then they will know your needs).
- Prepare an emergency pack for people and horses. There are many bushfire survival kits designed for people, available from the fire authority in your state.
- Consider: could you move your horses? If so: which ones would you take? Do they load on transport easily?

This year our AGM (15 December in the evening) will be run through a phone link up. If you want to join in please let Mina know and she will give you the codes to ring and other details.

The AGM agenda and Notice of Meeting are in with this newsletter, also a nomination/proxy form for the Executive. With this, you will also receive your re-certification paperwork, if your membership is due for renewal.

For most of us, our horses will need to stay behind. If this is your case:

- Take off halters, rugs or anything which might burn
- Put the horses in areas with minimal vegetation, with access to dam(s)
- Leave internal gates open
- Do not confine horses in small areas
- Do NOT release them onto roads

If you can move some (or all) remember:

- You will need to do this before the fire is in your area (you are likely to be stopped by road blocks in and out of the area once there is a fire there).
- Consider where will you go? Don't depend on the authorities to find you a place. Remember, it may be months before you can return if your fences and paddocks are burnt out.
- Are your vehicles up to the job? Are they in good repair, full of fuel, and ready to go?

If you plan to leave:

When will you leave? What will be the trigger? Will all the family/staff leave? Who will stay behind?

There is much to consider, and as members of Horse Safety Australia, who have discussed risk management at clinics, all of you will be aware of the importance of thinking these things through BEFORE the event.

The flyer on the website has a little more detail, and can be printed off and used as a prompt for thinking this issue through.

### Clinic in WA

At last we have had a clinic in WA! It had 8 participants and was held in Margaret River, which was a lovely location, but a long way from Perth! The clinic went well and we had a good response from the participants. It is likely that there will be more in WA in the future.

Other clinics coming up for the rest of this year include one in the Glasshouse Mountains near Brisbane next week, and another in the high country of Victoria near Mansfield on 7-11 December. This one will be an exclusively trail riding clinic.

We have continued to attract interest in the general horse community with many on waiting lists for clinics in the future. The only one definitely planned for 2010 at this stage will be in Strathalbyn, SA over the June long weekend (11-15<sup>th</sup> June). More will be organised from February onwards and will be announced on the website. If you know of anyone interested to attend, please get them to go online, have a look at the site to find out who we are, and send the office an Expression of Interest form (found in the 'clinics' section) so we can let them know when the next clinic is planned for their area.

A few things have changed at clinics, e.g. more information is sent to people before they come, explaining the process of assessment, and providing all the paperwork in advance. We hope that this now helps them have a better idea of what to expect.

### Site Accreditation

Other news includes more sites either accredited or on the way:

Bindoon Catholic Agricultural College (north of Perth) recently underwent an audit which is close to completion.

Montserrat School of Dressage in SA passed with flying colours.

Teen Ranch in NSW, and Crystal Cascades Horse Park in Cairns are well on the way, and others have completed part of the process and are finishing off details.

We are now publishing sites which are either completely or partly accredited on our website. These days, we often have groups (especially schools) ask us where they should go, or request information on sites they are considering for horse programs for their students, so site accreditation is becoming more relevant.

### Endorsements

The executive of Horse Safety Australia has looked into and has been happy to endorse "Breakaway Stirrups" and that business has been generous to supply samples which we take to clinics for people to look at. These products prevent dragging in the event of a fall, by coming apart when there is downwards pressure on the stirrup.



Contact Nicole from Smart Riders if you are interested to follow up on these, there is a special price for Horse Safety Australia members. Phone (07) 5446 5068 or check out the website: [www.smartrider.net](http://www.smartrider.net).

We will be endorsing other products that we consider enhance the safety of horse activities in the future.

### EN Helmets

We have investigated these further, and found that EN helmets **with the additional code BS** i.e. 'BS EN 1384' have been approved by the British Horse Society. They have had extra testing which covers the problems raised in our previous newsletters so we believe they should be safe to use.

*Hoping you all have a happy and busy Christmas period...best wishes ....Mina Arnott*