

PROJECT HOPE

HORSE

WELFARE VICTORIA



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023



PHHWV OVERVIEW

Since 1976 we have:

- provided advice, assistance and support to horse owners
- investigated reports of horse neglect and abuse
- rescued and rehabilitated horses in need
- offered education regarding horse welfare
- raised community awareness about the plight of neglected horses
- advocated for improved legislation and policy regarding equine welfare
- existed because of volunteers - thank you.

* AGRICULTURE VICTORIA SUDDEN MULTIPLE HORSE DEATHS *

The investigation into the spate of sudden multiple horse deaths in July has concluded. Agriculture Victoria confirmed that the deaths were not linked, or the result of an infectious disease.

Sample testing and necropsies were conducted where possible on deceased animals and found nothing unusual or unexpected as contributing causes. A number of separate diagnoses were made including intestinal issues in one instance, while there was the possibility of toxic plants present in another. In some instances it was not possible to determine a clear cause due to a lack of available suitable samples. The investigation involved a total of 17 horses that died on six separate properties where multiple deaths were reported. Negative tests were returned for a wide variety of transmissible diseases such as Hendra virus and equine influenza.

All horse owners should take regular steps towards ensuring the best health of their horses and tailored to the season, including good parasite management and weed control, and providing quality feed and water.

CONTENTS

PHHWV Overview	2
President's Report	3
New Committee Members	4
PHHWV Health	5
PHHWV Education	6—7
Horse Reports	8
Event Coordinator's Report	9
Report on Events	10
PHHWV Gallery	11
The Warrak Case Outcome	12—13
Horse Updates	14—15
Horses Farewelled	16—17
CEN Ambassadorship	18
Acknowledgements	19
And finally.....	20

Executive Committee

Rhonda Petschel —President
 Renee Neubauer —Vice President
 Karen Davies—Secretary
 Shirley McPherson—Treasurer

Ordinary Committee

Vaso Elefsiniotis
 Silvija Footner
 Toni Harris
 Tricia Hartshorn
 Mandi Herauville
 Tessa Reimers
 Angela Smith
 Noelle Vine

Contact PHHWV

Phone: 1300 881 606

Email: info@phhvw.org.au

GPO BOX 1991



P resident's Report



As the grey shrike thrush is calling we can be sure Spring is on its way. It is a little too cool for the spring growth but at least we are filling the hay nets in daylight. Project Hope has continued to be busy through our AGM and the voting of a new committee members with a wonderful mix of experience. We decided to start the year with a strategic planning day. It was exciting to meet face to face, introducing ourselves, acknowledging the volunteering efforts of the outgoing committee and discussing plans for the year. Most importantly we committed to a vision to ensure everything we do works towards having a sustainable organisation long into the future.

We have been so very busy with the daily operations over the winter with 26 horses in short term care. Our data shows over the years that we have had an average of ten. The Horse Welfare Working Group has met the challenge and we cannot thank them enough for their volunteer time required to finding short term homes, organise transport, rehabilitation and coordinating expressions of interest to match the horses well with their long time homes. We must also thank our wonderful short term carers and Horse Representatives that are involved with every horse. I know we have had members going above and beyond on short notice and we thank you.

The horse reports continue to come in. Noelle is coordinating a great team of Horse Representatives. There is no doubt much of our work is allowing people to discuss their problems and find solutions. We are very proud of the respectful approach our Horse Representatives and members take. I received feedback from a community member who thanked us for taking the time to listen and provide practical support.

Mandi Herauville is leading a new Events Committee and it is exciting to see the enthusiasm and planning activities already in place. For the first time Project Hope will be represented at the Elmore Field Day Event, October 3rd—5th. It is a wonderful time to get together, so please come and join us. A few of us are planning to stay over, so I am sure we will have some fun.

Lucy Fairs continues to coordinate our projects supported by the Animal Welfare Grant which we received from the Victorian Government. We have had two great days at Clarendon with the Ballarat Social Trail Horse Riding Club. Ian Shaw presenting a training day and Peter Borgdorf, Equine Dentist, and his student who provided a very interesting presentation and also a day of dentistry for the horses. I am sure there are many horses happier with a bit in their mouth after his visit! We are planning to offer another two events in the next few months, so keep an eye out.

We have a team of members who manage our website. Kathryn Wren, our recent Past President and Gina Harris are upskilling Vice-President Renee to ensure we have a robust team. One of the many reasons we volunteer is to keep busy and to keep learning, I suspect Renee was already very busy but learning she is!

Finally, an organisation that works in the welfare arena must be aware of vicarious trauma and provide a culture of support to all. Take care, spend time on things that bring you joy and reach out. Remember we are all here to provide support. We thank you for your commitment and support to our worthy cause.

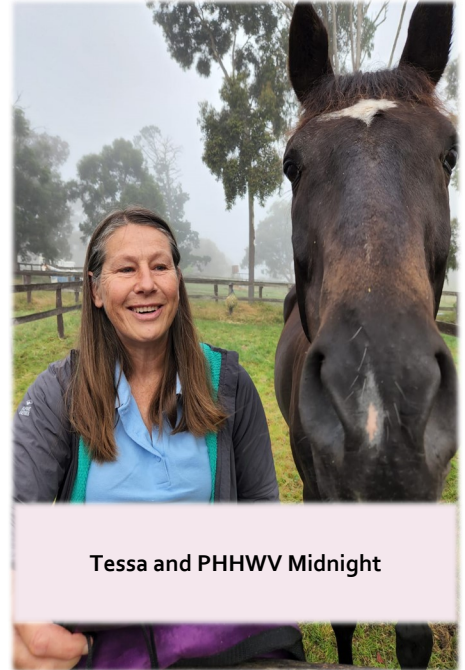
Rhonda Petschel
President
Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc.
M: 0419 194 818
E: rhonda@phhvv.org.au



P HHWV—new committee members

TESSA

Hi everyone, my name is Tessa and I joined Project Hope in 2022 after becoming semi-retired from a career in psychiatry and mental health, mainly focused on recovery and psychotherapy. For the last three years I volunteered as a Seeing Eye Dog puppy carer but have moved on to helping horses. As a young kid I loved hanging out with horses and at riding schools and was lucky to be able to look after other people's horses. Then aged 12 I got my own horse. Unfortunately, I haven't had much involvement with horses since my teens but now I am returning to this passion with gusto. I am particularly interested in the horse's well-being (physical, psychological and social) and look forward to learning from the Rep Training and experiences. I wanted to rescue brumbies before getting in touch with PHHWV. Then around Christmas the beautiful PHHWV Midnight (LTC) came into my life and in June 2023 a companion PHHWV Aster (STC) joined us. It has been an exciting journey! I knew from the start, and especially volunteering at Equitana in 2022 and meeting PHHWV members in person, that there was much to learn in this wonderfully supportive community.



Tessa and PHHWV Midnight

VASO

My name is Vaso, and I became a Project Hope member just over a year ago. I have always loved horses and been an animal lover but being with horses was a distant dream. The COVID pandemic made many of us re-examine our lives if we were lucky enough to escape the worst of it. In my case, I became a horse-carer, something I had always thought was out of reach for someone like me. I quickly fell in love and it is truly life changing. I still have a lot to learn about horses but my passion for animal welfare is genuine and central to who I am. It is an honour to be part of Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria.



With my darling Malibu who can't be ridden due to a hip injury and who had five owners in two years before coming into our lives 12 months ago.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PHOTOSENSITIVITY IN HORSES

by Dr Melanie Archer

Your horse has white socks on her hind legs and she suddenly develops blisters and crusted scabs there, that quickly turn into weeping sores. The scabs are painful to peel off and they don't quite seem like the crumbly and easy to soak scabs you've encountered previously with mud fever. Besides, it's the middle of summer and it's dry...It doesn't seem to be going away and is getting worse. By the time you call a vet, she has long fissure like wounds over the canon bone and some surrounding peeling skin. This is photosensitivity.

Sun exposure on pink skin

With the summer coming, horse owners should be aware of sun related problems. Photosensitivity reactions are driven by UV light exposure from sunlight, and therefore usually affect pink skinned white parts of the horse on the legs or face where there is no natural sunblock in the form of the dark skin pigment melanin. Photosensitivity is not the same as sunburn, which also affects pink skinned areas. This condition may also be called 'photosensitisation' or 'photodermatitis'.

It is a confusing problem to understand because there are some different types with different causes, which can be hard to tell apart. There are also some scientific gaps in what is known about the conditions under this umbrella, which can make diagnosis and prevention a frustrating experience in certain cases. To add to the difficulty, it has mimics. For example, another condition called leukocytoclastic vasculitis can look like photosensitivity, and in some cases, may also involve sensitivity to the sun.

The difference between primary and secondary photosensitivity

Primary photosensitivity occurs when the horse is either exposed to or eats a chemical (a 'photodynamic' or 'phototoxic' substance) that causes its skin to become abnormally sensitive to the sun. Examples of chemicals include some antibiotics, shampoos, fly sprays or even mouldy food. Plants that can cause primary photosensitivity include some clover species and St John's wort. Secondary photosensitivity occurs when the liver is damaged, and is unable to break down certain plant toxins that then enter the blood stream and cause the skin to be sensitised to UV. This is especially important for rescue horses, who can sustain liver damage from eating toxic plants in neglected situations. Liver damage can also result from chemical or drug ingestion or from natural diseases such as cancer.

Diagnosis

This condition requires veterinary input to diagnose and treat it. The vet will take a history and perform an examination. They may want to know information such as when the problem started, whether it has become worse, whether it has

happened before, whether other horses on the property are affected, what treatment may already have been provided, how much sun exposure the horse has daily, and what the horse has been eating (especially pasture and hay). They will look at the affected area, taking note of whether it appears characteristic of photosensitivity and whether it is in the expected place.

The vet may want to test the horse's blood, especially to look for signs of infection, or evidence of liver dysfunction. Samples from the wound itself can give some of the most important diagnostic information. A biopsy (tissue sample, often only a few millimetres wide and deep) can be taken for histopathology examination, which means making a microscope slide of a thin slice of tissue that is then treated with special stains so that the cellular structure of the inflamed skin can be examined by a veterinary pathologist. Skin biopsies are often important in dermatitis investigations in general because skin diseases may look similar to the naked eye, but the microscope can reveal the pattern of the underlying disease and help the vet to understand what is going on.

The vet may also want to perform a wound culture and sensitivity test, which means sending a sample (either a swab or tiny tissue piece) to a pathology laboratory for microbiology testing. Any bacteria or fungi secondarily infecting the wound are identified, and the laboratory reports which antibiotics can be used to treat them.

Treatment

The horse may initially be removed from the sunlight and also taken away from any agent identified as causative. Prevention is better than cure, and if the horse has eaten a toxic plant or been exposed to a triggering chemical, then this should obviously be prevented from recurring. The legs can also be protected with a product that acts like a sock to keep the sun off, but be cautious of leaving these on in wet weather unless water proof, and check underneath frequently to make sure the skin is healthy. Healing of a damaged liver in secondary photosensitivity cases will also be important if the cause is reversible (i.e. is something that will get better). Antibiotics will be needed if there is an infection in the wound. Steroids may also be enlisted in persistent cases to reduce inflammation and allow healing to take place.



P HHWV—education

Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria (PHHWV) understands the importance of making meaningful changes to equine welfare and being able to recognise those horses 'at risk' within the community. To do this better, we need to have a clear understanding of world's best practices and how to apply them to achieve this goal. PHHWV is proud to announce that our Executive Committee has endorsed the new course available through the



University of New England (UNE) – Applying the Five Domains Model to the Welfare Assessment of Sport and Recreation Horses. To support our dedicated volunteer committee, we have been able to provide all committee members with access to this newly launched course. The framework of the course was developed by UNE alumnus Professor David Mellor and created by Cristina Wilkins, Director of the One Welfare Academy, and Editor in Chief Horses and People Magazine.

The course will cover areas such as:

- ◆ Understanding contemporary animal welfare
- ◆ Recognising optimal conditions for horses
- ◆ Classifying all areas of horse management into the Five Domains
- ◆ Applying a Five Domains based welfare assessment checklist using reliable and feasible indicators
- ◆ Identifying specific aspects of a horses existence that compromise welfare
- ◆ Reflecting on opportunities to make incremental improvements in a horses lived experience

The committee would like to thank Cristina Wilkins for making it possible for us to be able to access this course - <https://www.openlearning.com/une/courses/une-equine-course/?cl=1>

Renée Neubauer

Vice President PHHWV

Education – Rehabilitation – Advocacy



P HHWV—education

ELEPHANTS, ORANGUTANS AND HORSES

By Shan Shnookal, Carer of Looli, Tilly and PHHWV Cressy

In May, my passion for horses and training took me to the Gold Coast for a conference of the Australasian Society of Zoo Keepers. Four days of seeing, among other things, that elephants can be taught (from a distance, so that they are not habituated to humans) to change ancient migration routes to avoid an area of poachers; tigers can be trained to present their tails under a grille and accept blood being drawn from a vein; and orangutans can learn to present an open mouth to the edge of their cage to have their teeth cleaned. And it's all relevant to horses! In addition, it was wonderful to share the conference with Rhonda Petschel, PHHWV's new President. There was so much information to absorb, and it was fabulous to chew it over with someone so knowledgeable and empathetic. For so long places of cruel cages full of miserable, stressed creatures, zoos are now very visibly accountable for their animals. With greater public acknowledgement of the sentience of animals, many zoos have been quick to embrace better methods of husbandry and training. Numerous zoos are now leading the world in using a more up to date training method – 'Positive Reinforcement' – to give animals in their care a more stress-free and 'enriched' life. With this technique, animals can be taught to willingly cooperate in their management and medical monitoring, getting cognitive challenges and valuable physical exercise at the same time. And we learned that the principles of Positive Reinforcement training are the same, no matter the species. (Of course, different creatures have different senses, perceptions and mental ability, and need different cues and 'rewards' for the desired behaviour.) Positive Reinforcement training uses a 'bridge', or marker (often a clicker) when the desired response occurs, paired with a 'treat' ('reward' or 'reinforcer') which is usually food. Animals are happy to take part in a learning session because it becomes a 'game', with predictable rules and regular rewards. The skills they learn enable them to voluntarily participate in their own care and necessary medical procedures, without the stress of chasing, darting and risky sedation or anaesthesia. Animals can be taught to follow a target to move to a different enclosure, getting 'rewarded' all the way – much nicer than being pursued and having

gates slammed behind! Or tigers, hippos or giraffe can learn to press a particular body part to the target—for a blood draw, x-ray or medication. Or lemurs or penguins can be taught to stand on a scale to check their weight – much more fun than being manhandled into a bag! Training sessions also have the huge bonus of being 'enriching' to an animal's life. The challenges, (always kept within comfortable limits) are stimulating both physically and mentally. I have been using positive reinforcement for some years with my horses, with the outstanding coach Georgia Bruce. Georgia has trained and ridden Grand Prix Dressage, horses, as well as proven her abilities with wonderful Liberty demonstrations with her horses; she has also worked with wild species in a zoo. I have got my Looli to Level 1 dressage, and we are working on getting the flying changes more on stimulus control! But more importantly, each session with Looli is an exploration of our joyful partnership. It was very 'reinforcing' to me to see that the best trainers in the world are promoting R+ to zookeepers, who are having great success with their animals. If wild species in captivity can participate in such varied procedures so willingly, I think we can prepare our horses much better for farriers and vets, not to mention going under saddle or loading into little metal boxes on wheels! The conference also caused me to reflect on the ethics of riding, training and competing horses. I am aware of a movement to take equestrian events out of the Olympic Games, and have some sympathy with this view. I think that the welfare of animals is often compromised when money and human egos are involved. Management and training can become cruel and forceful when an animal is treated as a piece of sporting equipment or entertainment. However, I believe it is possible to keep and ride horses without compromising their welfare. In fact, I believe correct, ethical training is beneficial for the mental and physical health of horses, as it is for zoo animals but I consider we must use the 'Most Positive, Least Intrusive, Effective' methods with our horses! For all routine care and schooling, I believe we should train with the most positive methods and least aversive pressure. Force should never be necessary, except possibly in a medical emergency when we might use a nose twitch on a horse as a last desperate resort. It's painful and stressful but effective to get a life-saving procedure done. It was interesting and exciting for me to learn so much over those few days and to see that the best elephant, orangutan, tiger and dog trainers in the world are using Positive Reinforcement. I believe this technique is the most ethical and effective to improve the lives of all the animals we love and care for.



Horse Reports June-Sept

◆ La Trobe area

We received a call from a friend of someone who had recently passed away leaving behind a pony. He is suffering from Cushings and was on his own. He was surrendered to us and is now in short term care. He is a happy little pony with company and going through his rehabilitation. Update: He has now moved into long term care.

◆ Gippsland 1

A report was received from a lady who was concerned that a horse on an agistment property was wearing only a summer rug even after all the wet weather. She removed the rug as it was causing a fungal infection and took photographs of the horse's feet as well. She was concerned that there were large holes in the front. I forwarded the photographs to Andrew Bowe who agreed it looked like seedy toe. I have asked the lady to monitor this horse.

◆ Gippsland 2

I received photographs and had conversations with a person concerned about a pony on the neighbouring property. It has one exceptionally long foot. Definitely slipper foot but only one. The caller has reported it to the RSPCA twice. She also reported it last year. She does not see the pony all the time but sent me more photographs recently, at least two weeks after her report. I contacted the RSPCA and was told it would be looked into. Fortunately the caller had kept a very good record of when she made the reports along with photographs which I sent in with my request. RSPCA did attend.

◆ Gippsland 3

A person made a report to the RSPCA about two horses on a property which had no water supply. The call centre operator checked Google Earth and stated that there was a dam on the property. A PHHWV representative went to investigate the report and walked the entire fence line but could not see a dam. After repeated calls to RSPCA she got on to someone who also looked at Google Earth and told her there was a dam. She asked if there were shops in the image, which there weren't, proving that it was an old image. To be investigated.

◆ Murrundindi

We received a call from a lady who had veterinary problems with a mare that had aborted a foal and was still leaking urine. Numerous attempts made to contact the caller but proving very difficult. On hold at present.

◆ Nillimbik

A report came in from an estate agent regarding a horse which had been left on a property. He is trying to contact the owner but was seeking advice on feeding the horse in the meantime. A local PHHWV representative is keeping an eye on the horse.

◆ Campaspe

We are assisting a lady with five horses on a property that she is having trouble providing sufficient care for. After visiting with her she had an old horse PTS and we have helped with veterinary care for another that is lame. She has two old horses and two that have had little handling. One is seven the other 10. We are keeping in touch with her to assist if needed. Ongoing.

◆ Yarra Ranges

We received a call from a former PHHWV member who knew of two horses that had not been fed for 12 months and just been left in a paddock. They had dropped a lot of weight and were in very poor condition. The owner was willing to surrender the horses to PHHWV. Our former member rejoined and did a wonderful job in the initial rehabilitation with both horses. One is a grey Standardbred gelding and the other a Stock Horse/Thoroughbred X mare. Both horses have moved to new short term care homes where they are continuing to improve.

◆ Ballarat area

We had an enquiry from a person wanting to rehome their Thoroughbred gelding as they did not have enough knowledge to adequately care for him. They were put in contact with the welfare officer at Racing Victoria.

◆ Mitchell Shire

A PHHWV member was concerned about the condition of a grey Arab mare in her area. She spoke to the owners and asked if they needed assistance. They agreed to surrender the 25 year old horse to PHHWV where she is now being provided with good feed and care.

◆ Cranbourne area

Call received from a distress family member asking for assistance with a horse following a severe accident to the its owner. They had no idea how to look after the horse and agreed to surrender the Clydesdale X gelding to PHHWV. A short term care home had been found for him.

Noelle Vine



Event Coordinator's Report

Upcoming events:

2023

October 3 – 5 Elmore Field Day

October 15—Lancefield Agricultural Show

2024

March 21—25 Lardner Park Farmworld

April 12 – 14 Seymour Alternative Farming Expo

Thank you for offering to help us at Victoria's largest field days. We appreciate your help to promote the great work we do for PHHWV.

Elmore Field Days will be held Tuesday, 3 October to Thursday, 5 October 2023.

We will have a marquee and stall providing education and information to the public, encouraging membership and selling merchandise to help us with our fundraising.

All Volunteers will receive a roster, appropriate training and information plus access to the Site Safety Plan before the event and will be offered an entry pass* for the day/s of their volunteering which will be available for collection at the event.

We look forward to you joining us to help promote PHHWV and to

HAVE FUN!

Mandi Herauville

*Please note. The entry pass needs to be returned to the event co-ordinator as soon as you arrive at the PHHWV marquee for other volunteers please.



P HHWV—Events

Woodend Community Farmers' Market

On Saturday August 5th, three intrepid volunteers braved the elements to bring Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria to the good folk of Woodend. The fabulous Phil (a local lad who is always willing to lend a hand) had timepiece malfunction (he overslept), so Toni and I were left to erect the marquee by ourselves. Note: I am going to insist that all new members of Project Hope who put their hands up for volunteering with events have to pass a height test and be at least 185 centimetres tall. Renee was on the later shift as she had trouble catching the ghost horse who came along to entice people to our marquee! No amount of coaxing would get him onto the float!!! With the help of a very kind passer-by we managed to get the beastly marquee up and its cover on just as the rain and wind began. Our flyers did exactly that—flew away—and got extremely wet in the unrelenting drizzle that Woodend is well known for, so our presentation was not altogether inspiring but after the initial logistical problems, the day got better and better. Renee is a whizz at engaging folk and first up we met Siggy. Siggy was once a member and came over to speak to us from his very fancy Tea Emporium tent. Wow! Does he know his horses. He was very charming and I think we would probably have made him an honorary member had he not got in first! The PHHWV marquee was positioned at the intersection of two busy footpaths, so even though some marketeers didn't stop we looked very busy! The main aim of the day was to get out there and familiarise the locals with our work, not a fundraising event, but fundraise we did as generous people put money in the donation box as they passed by. A few members came to the market especially to say hello; Maria, Susie, Maja, Kerryn and a couple from Gisborne Adult Riding Club. We had four new member enquiries. Toni, despite still struggling in the aftermath of her chewed thumb experience, engaged with many whilst



minding dogs who had been left briefly by their owners. The weather demanded coffee and lots of it and that was my job—to queue for 10 minutes at a time in the quagmire outside the coffee truck. We also gorged on the most superb Portuguese tarts (thank you Renee). Seriously though. This was a very rewarding day and all three of us enjoyed the camaraderie. We will need to discuss with our Events Coordinator, Mandi, and the WCFM Committee but the plan is to attend this market twice a year and, if allowed, take along a couple of minis.



Sharing is Caring



Dex & Billy



Midnight & Aster



Eddie & Hank



Molly & Missy



Lulu & Caviar



Little Rescal & Megatron



Betty & Poppy



Mystic Park Boss & Mystic Park Sonata

The Warrak Case—outcome

In January 2016, a meeting was held at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) which marked the beginning of a very significant chapter in equine welfare, with the Court delivering its judgment in one of the RSPCA's biggest cases in July 2023.

Sue Kirkegard, then President of Project Hope Horse Welfare Victoria Inc (PHHWV) had received a request from the RSPCA for PHHWV to attend the Burwood Head Office to discuss the planned seizure of over 100 horses from a single property in Western Victoria. As then Vice President, I attended this meeting on behalf of PHHWV, together with fellow committee member Leigh Wren. Also present were representatives from Horse Shepherd Equine Sanctuary, Horses at Auction Preview and Winged Horse Equine Welfare. The RSPCA stated that this seizure would be the largest ever rescue mission in their 150-year history and they could not do it without assistance from registered equine welfare groups. Of significance is that this seizure marked the first (and only) time a Ministerial Order under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA) has been exercised in Victoria. Sections 24E and 24F provide that the Minister may authorise a specialist inspector to seize an animal if the Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the animal is in such condition, or in such circumstances, that the animal is likely to become distressed or disabled. The words 'likely to become' are important, as of the 100 or so horses on this property, not all were distressed or disabled. The dominant horses in the herds were able to source enough food for example, however over time, their condition was likely to deteriorate as food became increasingly scarce and lack of other welfare needs, such as hoof and dental care and parasite control took effect.

Following our report back to the Committee, it was agreed that PHHWV would commit to providing help to the RSPCA by taking a number of the horses and ponies into care. Whilst conscious of our limitations, such as not having a property and therefore being 100% reliant on members for paddocks, we felt that as the largest and longest running equine welfare organisation in the State of Victoria, PHHWV had to make every effort to assist these horses.

As can be imagined, the time spent planning the rescue and rehabilitation of the horses took many, many hours. We were involved in daily briefings with RSPCA. The logistics of transport and initial care were discussed at length. Much time was spent negotiating the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding with the RSPCA, which recorded the legal agreement between our two organisations.

The day the horses were finally seized and arrived is clear in my memory. As the truck ramps were lowered, out came an assortment of horses and ponies of varying ages and breeds including stallions, colts, fillies, foals and pregnant mares. Many of them were very underweight, exhibiting signs of malnutrition including muscle wasting, protruding hip bones and visible ribs and spines. The majority appeared to be

burdened by worms and parasites. Many had long hooves and several with slipper feet. From here, the hands-on work intensified for all involved. The RSPCA attended to immediate welfare needs including gelding, worming, teeth and hoof care. The horses were then categorised by the RSPCA as follows:

- A. those suitable for immediate rehoming;
- B. those suitable for immediate rehoming with an experienced person willing to do some further training;
- C. those who may be suitable for rehoming but require a lot more training, and
- D. those who are dangerous.

PHHWV was about to start putting calls out to the membership for assistance with re-homing when an unexpected turn of events occurred. The owner of the horses, by a writ filed 23 February 2016 in the Supreme Court, sought a declaration that the authorisation by the Minister for the seizure of the horses was invalid and that their seizure by the RSPCA officers was unlawful. She sought an order for the return of all of the horses and an interlocutory injunction seeking to restrain from destroying or otherwise disposing of any of the 104 horses seized on 18 February 2016.

Having become aware that the owner was actively trying to recover the horses, PHHWV suddenly had to deal with matters such as censorship of social media to remove information about the location of the horses and monitoring enquiries coming through to the PHHWV 1300 number and general email address that could be the owner or owner's associates covertly trying to ascertain details of the horses' whereabouts. The RSPCA issued a Media Release stating that it would strenuously defend the Supreme Court proceedings. Fortunately, Justice John Dixon, after a full day hearing, made orders dismissing the plaintiff's application. See *Weisheit v State of Victoria & Anor* [2016] VSC 64 (2 March 2016). Following Justice Dixon's decision, PHHWV was now able to start finding Short Term Care homes for the 41 horses and ponies it had accepted. Experienced carers were required as the vast majority were unhandled. Thanks to the Herculean efforts of Sue Kirkegard, we managed to source carers and properties. Sue tirelessly contacted PHHWV members and asked if they could help or if they knew someone who could. Through this, PHHWV gained new members who were willing to take some of the horses into care.

It was a difficult brief as most of the horses could not be safely handled, having had limited or no exposure to any sort of human interaction yet alone training. Sadly, many of the pregnant mares either had stillborn foals or the foals failed to survive 48 hours. This was put down to inadequate nutrition during pregnancy.

Continued.....



Also noted was an element of conformational issues attributed to in-breeding within the herds. The stories about our members and these horses could fill many pages and will need to be left for another time.

The RSPCA prosecution case was first listed before the Magistrates Court in April 2018 and the Court heard that inspectors found up to 30 dead horses and many others in poor health at the Warrak property in January 2016. The lack of feed had led to some eating their own faecal matter.

Christine Weisheit pleaded not guilty to 65 animal cruelty charges. She asserted that she did feed the horses and disagreed with allegations of neglect. When questioned about the lack of water, Ms Weisheit said that the horses might have drunk it or “the RSPCA could’ve knocked it over, because they do that”. There were 39 mentions before the case was listed for a four-day hearing in September 2021. Evidence was called from numerous veterinary experts about appropriate equine care and whether Ms Weisheit demonstrated responsible horse ownership. Following several further adjournments, the case finally concluded in June 2023 with Magistrate Rodney Crisp delivering his decision on 19 July 2023.

Ms Weisheit’s conduct and her vehement defence of the case, together with the refusal to make any concessions is given as the main reason for the longevity of the proceeding. Mr Luke Howson, Counsel for the Defendant, applied for a permanent stay based on the complexity and fragmentation of the case, which Magistrate Crisp refused, citing the reasons enunciated in the High Court decision of Jago and public interest in the outcome. RSPCA Prosecutor Ms Amelia Beech referred the Court to Ms Weisheit’s prior convictions including 12 counts of failing to provide proper and sufficient food and two counts of aggravated cruelty to an animal in New South Wales, and in Victoria conducting an unregistered domestic animal business and failing to register cats, as well as 33 counts of animal cruelty, including one count of aggravated cruelty.

Magistrate Crisp found Christine Weisheit guilty of 54 offences of animal cruelty pursuant to Sections 9(1)(b), (c), (f) and (i) of POCTA, which involves the failure to provide proper and sufficient food and drink, omitting to provide particularised care including parasite, dental, hoof and population control likely to cause or causing unreasonable pain and suffering, failure to provide veterinary or other appropriate attention to a sick or injured animal and improper confinement likely to cause unreasonable pain or suffering. The judgment contains disturbing details of cruelty and neglect which I have chosen not to repeat here, but invite those interested to read the decision for themselves.

A lifetime ban was imposed on Ms Weisheit from owning or being the person in charge of any horses and ponies. She was ordered to pay the RSPCA’s legal costs in the sum of \$80,000 and an aggregate fine of \$20,000. RSPCA Chief Inspector Michael Stagg told the writer that it is “a great result indeed and we are really pleased”.

At the time of publication, the writer understands that Ms Weisheit has lodged an appeal seeking to overturn the decision as well as an application for a permanent stay to be placed on the lifetime ban order.

Kathryn Wren

“It was originally through a passer-by raising concerns with local council these animals were discovered living in these conditions and we were able to get them the care they needed.”

“Every incident of animal cruelty is serious and the Victorian public is the RSPCA’s eyes and ears when it comes to these matters.”

Michael Stagg, Chief Inspector RSPCA Victoria

Link for further reading:

<https://meltonmoorabool.starweekly.com.au/news/moorabool-residents-rehabilitate-horses-seized-by-rspca-from-ararat-property/>

P

HHWV— horse updates

CEDRIC (CEDRICK)

If I was asked to describe Cedric, I'd instantly say 'Old Man'. Funnily enough, he is only 15 but acts like he's 100! He is like a fluffy old teddy bear with the most calm and placid nature. Cedric arrived at our property three weeks ago. He was found emaciated on a property in Kinglake with his sidekick Petal by the lovely Maree roughly three weeks prior. They were both in terrible condition but Cedric was definitely the worst body-score wise. Every bone in his big body protruded. The day Maree and members from PHHWV picked him up became the first day of the rest of his life. He had now become one of the 'lucky ones'. Although unable to stand on the float, Cedric laid down and happily ate hay as he travelled. Maree worked really hard to start refeeding the two horses and did an amazing job. From the first day he was surrendered until he came to me, I could already see a big difference. But the big fella still had a huge way to go. He has had a diet specifically designed for him using only whole foods and CEN CF50 vitamin and mineral pellets and is fed up to five times a day. He's an absolute eating machine and the condition he's already putting on is amazing. He is still super fluffy and I cannot wait until he drops his coat, he will look like a new horse! Every hoof has multiple old abscesses on them too, he would have been in so much pain—one of the blow outs is so big, it takes up nearly half his sole.

My daughter has fallen in love with this old man, just as my whole family has. She loves spoiling him and pouring in the love he so desperately needs. He brings forth such a calm presence which has been so good for my other Standy who is highly anxious. He doesn't really give the minis too much air time, he's usually too busy eating to notice them—lol!

We all look forward to the day all of his bones are covered and his body has recovered. We will be there for him every step of the way and feel so blessed to be on this journey with him. Hopefully we fill his heart as much as he fills ours. Watching him transform is so rewarding. Time for big Mr Cedric to learn that the world can be a kind place and that he has definitely landed on his hooves being with PHHWV. Cedric is one of the lucky ones.

Onwards and upwards big fella—we've got you!

Jodie Blythman



P HHWV— horse updates

PETAL

Ms Petal has now been with me for three weeks. She is so sensitive, so reactive, so needy. What a learning time it has been. I am certain that anyone from PHHWV who had contact with this mare before she was separated from her mate Cedrick experienced a very different horse. After that first week of constant pacing, racing, sweating, calling and high-headed anxiety, I put her in with my two calm Arabs. Instantly.....well it did take overnight.....Petal's extreme anxiety was reduced but not resolved. She was calmer. She stopped pacing, stopped calling and actually rested. She would lie down. She was no longer sweating in anxiety. Instead you could almost hear her sighing with contentment, as long as she was within metres of the others. I sensed that what I fed her in the first week went straight into her nervous and worried state, not into fleshing up those bones. Now I get her out of the paddock and give her the essential big meals, twice or thrice daily, just on the other side of the fence from my two. They are a bonded herd of three. She has fallen in love with my 23 year old Caz, and who wouldn't? A gorgeous Arab who should not have been gelded given his breeding and looks. Petal has been in season! As she relaxes more and more I shall be able to do more with her.

With Petal I wrongly assumed that horses in sight, just over the fence, almost in every direction would satisfy her. But it did not provide her with the opportunity to be up close and personal. She has been seriously traumatised by the separation from her mate Cedric. Petal can quickly return to hyper-anxious mode and I think it will take many months of social readjustment for her. It will also take much time for her body condition to reach ideal. I am humbled by the reminder that a simple, universal formula does not cover all horses' needs. They are definitely individuals. Petal needs emotional/social recovery as much as physical recovery. My goal is to heal her mind not just her bony body. She is a loving, affectionate girl who loves a good groom. She loves nuzzling the others and lying peacefully with them, close together in the morning sun. My journey with Petal has reminded me that you cannot apply any formula to a given horse and to allow more time and never underestimate the herd needs of some horses. Not all are this companion-bound, but this little girl certainly is. She is getting high kilojoule nutritious meals, lots of attention from me and support from her mates who have been jealous of her fine dining! Petal is reminding us that horses are individuals, just as we are. It takes the time it takes—horsemanship wisdom frequently quoted, attributed originally to Tom Dorrance.

Await another report in a few months.

Mary Hughes



What a difference a fortnight makes !

P

roject hope horses farewelled

Good Boy (aka Perry)



Good Boy aka Perry, came into Project Hope's care in 2016 at the age of 16. After a short stay in Melbourne he came to Edenhope where it was reported by his carer that they were experiencing behavioural difficulties which they could not manage. My role

for Project Hope was to provide additional education for a horse including float training. This is how we met. I really didn't know what I was going to encounter when I arrive at the paddock, however at one point I bent down to examine a lump of ironstone and when I turned I looked up and found a pair of soft brown eyes peering over my shoulder, as if to say, 'what are you looking at?'. As we worked together, I found that he was so obliging, inquisitive and keen to learn. I didn't know his name but I found myself congratulating him and confirming with him that he was a Good Boy. So evolved his name.

Working consistently and without pressure, Good Boy finally accepted the idea of floating and soon seemed to enjoy our trips out and about as he became more confident with the whole process. With this growing confidence his positive character emerged to the point where I felt that he would fit into a Safe Horse Handling program I was running at the local secondary college. So began his long term stay at Edenhope. In these last seven years, he spent two years teaching beginners how to ride and proved to be a popular stopping point for students whose sole reason for visiting the school farm was to see Good Boy feed him a carrot, or give him a pat. His stay at the farm really was an important one for many children. His influence grew as he went on to mentor a young filly on how to be caught and enjoy the company of humans. Over Covid he nurtured a young man returning to riding and together they enjoyed long rides through the scrub in a period of isolating lockdowns. His final days were spent with a young family where the children just adored him. And where parents would often find that the kids had snuck off to just pat or sit in the paddock with Good Boy. For so many it was a pleasure to interact with Good Boy. His legacy was to help people on their journey with horses. And for that we are grateful for Good Boy and his gifts.

Ian Shaw

Goodbye Mr Lucky Mouse

Lucky Mouse was a bit of a larrikin. He loved a big roll in the mud and a zoom around the paddock with his mate PHHWV Ally.

He would pull at your jumper or take the beanie off your head just for a bit of fun. When getting his teeth done, he would lead the dentist on a waltz by walking backwards around the paddock the entire time. He loved his tucker and, like clockwork, was always waiting at the gate at feed time. If we were late with his breakfast or dinner he would tell us to hurry up with a long loud neigh. Mouse had distinct moods. He loved a cuddle but sometimes he would flatten his ears and swish his tail to tell me he just wanted to be left alone to get on with the serious business of eating. He was strong-willed but so gentle with our granddaughters, who loved feeding him carrots and would squeal with delight when he licked their hands or nuzzled their cheeks.



Mouse was rescued by Project Hope in 2015. Emaciated, he was living with 11 other horses in a tin and barbed wire strewn paddock in the western suburbs of Melbourne. He was named Lucky because he was lucky to have been found and Mouse because he was quiet and shy like a mouse (a trait that quickly disappeared let me tell you!). After being nursed back to health by Kerryn and short term carer Teresa, he came to live with us in February 2019. He gave us such joy and I know we gave him a good life but his big heart wore out in the end. We will be forever grateful to Project Hope for entrusting him into our care. He was a lovely boy and much loved. The paddock seems so empty without him.

Vale Mr Mouse.

Cate and Evelyn

Project hope horses farewelled

Shadow

Shadow joined our family in December 2018 as a young timid girl. She was part of the Warrak herd of around 100 horses rescued by the RSPCA in February 2016 from a property in western Victoria. During the first couple of weeks and after lots of interaction, Shadow grew in confidence as she came to know and trust her two and four legged family, picking up the message from her equine companions that she was in a safe and happy place.

From this point Shadow quickly developed confidence, learning to relax during grooming, feet trimming, drenching, teeth work etc. Shadow was the perfect mix of a lovely quiet horse to handle, whether in hand or in the paddock, while always bright and looking for fun with her zest for life. Relentlessly curious and always wanting to know what you were doing, where the action was and are there any carrots.

We lost Shadow suddenly after unknown severe



Shadow (right)

paddock trauma to an old hip injury, which the equine vet suggested may have been a greenstick fracture as a foal, for which there was no veterinary resolution. Shadow lived life at 120% and treated life as one big adventure – why walk when you can run? There was a running joke that Shadow thought she was a captivating yet undiscovered movie star.

Shadow is buried on our property so we always say hello to her when walking past. She leaves behind a family which misses her greatly, especially her long term and best equine friend who still looks for her.

Vale Shadow.

Teresa Hendy

Starlight,
Starbright,
with the first star
I see tonight.
I wish I may,
I wish I might,
hug your neck
just one more night,
feed you a treat,
hold you tight.....
I will forever love you
with all my might.
Rest in Peace

PHHWV— ambassadorship

Our Ambassadorship with CEN Horse Nutrition is going great guns. Remember all members of PHHWV are able to receive a 10% discount at the CEN Nutrition Online Shop. Not only do you get a discount but PHHWV now get a wonderful kickback by a 5% commission from all sales generated by you. How it works. ENTER Discount Coupon Code Hope 10 at the <https://cennutrition.com.au/horses/shop/> when at checkout. OR Scan the QR Code on the below image—it will take you directly to the shop and will automatically add your discount code. All activity on the CEN Ambassador program is fully trackable through an app that PHHWV has entire access too. Every purchase is identified either by the Hope 10 Code or through the QR Code.



Poster boy PHHWV Ollie

PROUD SUPPORTER OF

VISIT SHOP FOR 10% OFF

SCAN ME

CEN GRAIN FREE
5 IN 1 COMPLETE FEED, ONLY 2.9% SUGAR & STARCH, HIGH FIBRE, GRAIN FREE PELLET + VITAMINS & MINERALS + LIVE PROBIOTICS & PREBIOTICS

CEN LUPIN PELLET
HIGH FIBRE LUPIN PELLET, LOW STARCH & SUGAR, QUALITY PROTEIN, LOW IRON, BETTER TRACE MINERAL PROFILE, LAMINITIS & ULCER SAFE

CEN CF50
6 IN 1 GRAIN FREE VITAMIN & MINERAL PELLET, LOW FEED RATE, LIVE PROBIOTICS & PREBIOTICS, HIGH FIBRE, LOW SUGAR & STARCH.

CEN OIL
HIGHEST OMEGA 3 OIL ON THE MARKET, COOL ENERGY, HEALTHY SKIN & COAT, AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORY PROPERTIES.

#CEN_HORSE
WWW.CENNUTRITION.COM.AU

PROUD SUPPORTER OF

TESTIMONY

"This little guy Ollie was under my care. Being a **new CEN user** for our other horses I thought here is one pony that will really test its ability to correct the many nutritional shortfalls.

CEN Oil | CEN Lupin Pellet | CEN CF50 | CEN XtraBalance

The results speak for themselves!"

— Renee N.

CEN GOLD
JOINT MOBILITY & FLEXIBILITY, ASSIST IN ITCH & ALLERGIES, NATURAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY.

CEN XTRABALANCE
LIVE PROBIOTICS, MULTI-STRAIN PREBIOTICS, MYCOTOXIN BINDER, NUTRIENT ABSORPTION.

CEN ULCER PROTECT
SUPPORTS HEALTHY GUT LINING, MAY ASSIST IN HEALING & ELIMINATION OF ULCERS.

CEN ELECTROLYTE
ZERO SUGAR & NO FILLERS, LOW FEED RATE, RAPID RE-HYDRATION, HIGHLY PALATABLE.

CEN NO3 BOOST
BLOOD FLOW, RESPIRATORY CONDITIONS, LAMENESS CONDITIONS, PERFORMANCE/TAKING CONCERN, HOOF HEALTH.

CEN OMEGA FORMULA
ASSIST WITH APPETITE, TOXINE BUILDER, POWERFUL ANTIOXIDANT.

OLLIE

October 21st 2022

October 26th 2022

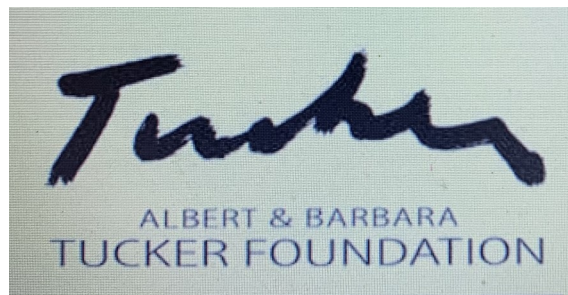
October 29th 2022

November 16th 2022

December 1st 2022

January 7th 2023

Acknowledgements



PHHWV Social Media
Don't forget to follow us on social media, we are on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.



Newsletter printing kindly donated by Mary-Anne Thomas MP Member for Macedon and Victorian State Minister for Health . Thanks to Kate-Ida Lee for photocopying.

A nd finally.....

Moviestar, Moviestar—I wanna be a movie star!!!



PHHWV Redmond (right), who is enjoying life as a therapy horse, being filmed at his home in the Macedon Ranges for a TV production about the Love of Horses

Apologies but owing to time constraints horses seeking LTC is not available in this edition. This information is available on the PHHWV website.

www.phhvw.org.au/horses-available/ready-for-a-home/