

Equestrian Queensland Member and Para-Equestrian Chantal Simpson travelled to Taiwan in mid-October 2012 to compete in the 2012 International Hope Cup run by the Therapeutic Riding Centre of Taiwan. Chantal competed as an individual rider and as a member of a 5 rider Australian squad.

The Australian contingent consisted of Para-Equestrians from Qld, NSW and Victoria. Chantal was “the senior rider” of the Australian Contingent as she had previously competed in the 2010 Hope Cup.

The International Hope Cup is a Dressage Event for Intellectually Impaired and or Physically Disabled Equestrians. The event this year attracted entries from 4 countries, namely Taiwan, Singapore, Japan and Australia. The judges for the event were the internationally known and respected Mr Nick Rodgers (FEI PE Judge) who had previously been the Chief Steward of the Para-Equestrian Events at the 2008 Para-Olympics and Mr Waldo Yeh (FEI International Level 2 Judge Jumping, CTEA A Judge Dressage/Jumping) of Taiwan.

Competitors included riders with a range of competition experience including a number who had successfully competed in International Para-Equestrian Events in such countries as the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Japan, China and Australia.

Chantal rode in two events, namely the FEI Para-Equestrian Grade 4 Novice Test (40 x 20mtr) and the FEI Para-Equestrian Grade 4 Freestyle Test (40 x 20mtr) on a borrowed horse, an imported 16.2 hands high Belgian Warm Blood gelding named “Nelson”. She had only about 2 hours practise time spread over two days in which to get to know the horse prior to the start of the competition.



Chantal’s results were:

- In the Individual Para-Equestrian Grade IV Novice Test, Chantal scored 59.40% and achieved a first placing.
- In the Team Event, Australia placed second to Taiwan with Chantal achieving the distinction and award for being the highest percentage scoring Australian Rider.
- In a combined Grade 3 / Grade 4 Freestyle Event where riders, although riding their applicable PE Grade tests, competed against each other, Chantal scored 55.63 % and achieved a 4<sup>th</sup> placing. This was her highest freestyle score and to score it in an international event, under high level judges and on a relatively unknown horse (to her) was an achievement in itself.



The event attracted wide spread media coverage in Taiwan with a number of television interviewers and cameras covering the event. Chantal took part in 2 interviews, the first while getting her horse prepared for the day in the stable block and the second while awaiting her first ride of the day. The television reporters took a great deal of interest in the “Australian Lady who returned to Taiwan to ride for a second time”.