

EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND

VOLUME 2



MAY 2026

Beyond the Bridle

FOR EQ MEMBERS, BY EQ MEMBERS



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EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND



Welcome to our second edition of **Beyond the Bridle!**

Beyond the Bridle was created to provide a dedicated space for EQ members to collaborate, inspire, and connect!

We all know that being an equestrian is about so much more than just competing, so we wanted to create a platform to highlight the other aspects of equestrian life that don't often receive the attention they deserve.

Equestrian Queensland



BEYOND THE BRIDLE
VOLUME 2

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EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND

International Athlete Feature

Andrew Cooper

From riding borrowed horses to pony club in regional New South Wales to representing Australia on one of the sport's biggest stages at CHIO Aachen, Andrew Cooper's journey has been shaped by determination, and an unwavering willingness to keep fronting up. Raised in Wagga Wagga with predominately non-horsey parents, who had initially envisioned Andrew's sport of choice being soccer instead of horses, his path into the equestrian world was forged by his own personal passion and persistence. His grandfather's involvement in trotters and local friend's horses kick started his fascination, and it only grew from there.

By the age of five he was riding, and by nine he had finally convinced his parents to let him join Pony Club after years of begging. Andrew recounted weekends spent riding around the lake to get to Pony Club while his father drove ahead and dropped off hay and water for him at the grounds. Long before professional riding entered the picture, Andrew Cooper was self-motivated to see his dream of riding become realised.

"It was definitely something I did myself," he reflects. "I was always pretty independent."

While school never felt like his natural environment, horses did. By Year 11, he made the difficult decision to leave school and pursue a Stud and Performance Management course in Wangaratta, and initially focused more on the racing industry. From there, opportunities began to emerge organically. A job at a stud led to people sending him horses to ride and retrain — and eventually, a business.

"The money side of it really came from being able to ride the harder horses," he says.

Like many professional riders, Andrew quickly realised that passion alone does not sustain a career in equestrian sport. Eventing, while deeply rewarding, is financially challenging to rely on exclusively, therefore, practicality became just as important as ambition. This also shaped one of Andrew's key pieces of advice for aspiring professional riders in Australia - have reliable, but varied streams of business within the equine industry to be able to supplement riding at an elite level.



A business-minded move to Queensland with his partner Maddy proved pivotal. Maddy and Andrew established their own Winjara Park 6 years ago, and took over the neighbouring Washpool Lodge from Maddy's family 4 years ago, which had allowed the pair to build a large-scale operation balancing racehorse pre-training, breakers, spelling, and re-training with elite eventing horses. Today, between Washpool Lodge and Winjara Park, they manage as many as 200 horses at a time while also raising three children, and competing in 5* competitions in Australia and in Europe.

The pair live a demanding life, and are grateful to have the strong support of their parents and family to assist them in following their dreams, and being wonderful grandparents to their children whilst doing so. Despite a busy lifestyle, they continue to prioritise supporting the sport through sponsorship across multiple clubs and events across a variety of disciplines.

"It's important to give back," Andrew says. "Clubs work incredibly hard to keep events running."

EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND

International Athlete Feature

Andrew Cooper



Andrew Cooper's rise onto the international stage was a product of disciplined training, competition success in Australia, and a quick, bold decision to back himself and horse Sharvalley Thunder in the face of adversity.

After a disappointing fall in April last year at the Adelaide International CCI5* after a promising season, Andrew made the decision within a matter of hours to head overseas, unwilling to wait another year for another elite level opportunity. Andrew set his sights on Longines Luhmühlen Horse Trials CCI4*-S, where the pair finished in an outstanding third place amongst world-class riders. By May, Andrew Cooper and Sharvalley Thunder had been selected to represent the Australian Eventing Team at CHIO Aachen for the CCIO4* class, alongside Sammi Birch, Kevin McNab, and Shane Rose - and successfully competed amongst the sport's best.

What followed was a whirlwind experience competing among the world's best riders. "You go from doing well in Australia to suddenly being a smaller fish in a much bigger sea," he says.

Rather than being intimidated, he embraced it. Despite lacking international experience, he relied on instinct, confidence, and the fundamentals that matter most in modern eventing: speed and composure across country, and a genuinely talented jumping horse.

"I didn't have international experience, so I just went and did it."

The experience also reinforced his belief that Australian riders need to earn their stripes at home before making the leap overseas.

"You have to be performing well here first," he explains. "You need confidence in your abilities."

Looking ahead, the World Equestrian Games remains a major goal for the duo, alongside another trip to Aachen. He believes his horse's strengths suit championship formats and is excited to continue realising his gelding's potential on a larger stage. Andrew Cooper also celebrated success last month at this year's 2026 Adelaide International CCI5* and CCI4*-S, placing 3rd in both classes on Sharvalley Thunder and Ocean's Eight respectively.

Andrew Cooper has garnered strong support from the Queensland equestrian community due to his and Maddy's humble, authentic, and dedicated passion and support for the sport, which was displayed at the announcement of Andrew Cooper as Athlete of the Year at the 2025 Equestrian Queensland Annual Awards which evoked a standing ovation from attendees.





EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND

International Athlete Feature

Andrew Cooper

For all the highlights however, Andrew is quick to point out that elite sport is built far more on setbacks than success. "There are definitely more lows than highs," he says. "But the highs keep you pursuing it."

The Adelaide fall remains one of the defining low points of his career. The disappointment was magnified by the pressure he placed on himself ahead of championship ambitions. Yet within 24 hours, he had already redirected his focus and committed to heading overseas instead. That ability to reset mentally has become one of his greatest strengths.

"You've got to come out of those moments with resilience," he says.

Watching riders like Australian born and raised Boyd Martin rise to the top has only reinforced that mindset.

"You look around and realise everyone is going through the same thing. You can't become great without difficult moments."

For younger riders dreaming of a professional career, his advice is practical and refreshingly honest. In Australia, he believes financial sustainability matters just as much as riding ability.

"Supplement your riding with another income stream," he advises. "Or if you're good at school, go into a career that can help pay for your horses." Above all, success requires work ethic. "You've got to do the hard slog. Get up every day and grind. It's doable, but you have to commit fully."

He also stresses the importance of staying open-minded — a philosophy that continues to shape him as both a rider and horseman. "You can learn something from anyone," he says. "It might be another rider, or someone who's never even ridden a horse. If you get tunnel vision, you stop learning." His guiding principle is equally simple: keep showing up.

"No matter who you talk to, it never just gets handed to you," he says. "You've just got to keep fronting up." In a sport where long-term resilience often matters more than short-term success, that mindset may be the most valuable lesson of all.

The Equestrian Queensland community is excited to continue cheering on and watching the success of our EQ 2025 Athlete of the Year in his pursuits both on home soil and overseas.



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



Equestrian Queensland would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank everyone that has volunteered throughout the year.

Beyond the Bridle celebrates the everyday actions and lifestyles of Equestrian Queensland members. This section recognises individuals nominated by members for their consistent and meaningful contributions to the Equestrian Queensland community.

Guardian, Parent & Partner Appreciation Volunteer Shout Out Riders with Outstanding Commitment

If you know an individual that deserves recognition, please be sure to submit them with a description of their contributions to the next Beyond the Bridle nomination link that will be released shortly.



EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



GUARDIAN, PARTNER, & PARENT APPRECIATION

**IT TRULY TAKES A VILLAGE, AND WE WANTED
TO SHOW OUR COLLECTIVE APPRECIATION
FOR THE PARENTS, GUARDIANS & PARTNERS
THAT ALWAYS SHOW UP**



Craig Cochran:

Craig is a dedicated and supportive parent who consistently volunteers time, encourages young riders, and goes above and beyond to support riders and families

Kym Witt:

Kym is a person who goes above and beyond by always helping set up and pack up equipment before and after a show. She gives the best advice. The best strapper, driver and always does it with a smile. She always has a bounce in her stride and never gives up. She is the BEST.

David Witt:

David goes above and beyond by always helping with picking up rails, holding horses and giving the best advice.

Louise Mitchell:

Louise supports her daughter Lilly to the moon and back. She never hesitates to extend that support to anyone needing a hand-up, including my daughter. We are so grateful for her support.

Ariarna Sauverain:

Ariarna is the best big sister who travels all over. She's always happy to help any child, hold horses and encourage all. She takes time off work so her little sister Bella can chase her dreams.

EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



GUARDIAN, PARTNER, & PARENT APPRECIATION

Nicky Boersma:

My mum Nicky Boersma, comes to every comp with me, warms me up, videos my rounds and encourages me always, I wouldn't be riding without her and am so grateful for her support.

Juliette Newton:

Dedicated, knowledgeable, enthusiastic, kind and committed, Juliette cares for the horses and the children in every way. She is fun, hard working, humble, and teaches, guides, and assists with passion.

Tracey Horsley:

Tracey Horsley is my mum (Heidi Horsley) and she continues to fully support me in my riding career and throughout both the highs and lows she never gives up on me.

Robert Hegarty:

Robert is Che Gaddes partner and RARELY misses an event! Forever supporting her, helping her and cheering her on! His commitment is beyond sweet!

Jason L'Estrange:

Jason L'Estrange was a complete novice 10 years ago. He has learned to tow, travel and rules, and is one of the best supports available.

Clayton Wall:

At any event we attend Clayton Wall is the first to help out with rails, if he is in the practice ring he will help out any rider, always smiling, and happy to help the organisers of the event.



EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



GUARDIAN, PARTNER, & PARENT APPRECIATION

Janet Willis:

My mum Janet Willis was my biggest supporter. She always went above and beyond to not only ensure I never knew life without horses, but she always helped feed up, rug, and look after my horses if I was unable to. She is no longer with me and besides missing my mum like crazy, not having her has really shown me how much she did for me. Never take them (your support) for granted.

Haley McKenzie:

Haley McKenzie is a dedicated equestrian parent, travelling thousands of kilometres to support Madison's participation, demonstrating unwavering commitment, sacrifice, and encouragement in her daughter's riding journey.

The BEST parent supporter I've ever known Haley McKenzie.

Haley McKenzie is mother of Madisen McKenzie a junior rider that spends countless hours of training and support and travels most weekends to events to Toowoomba and Southern Queensland due to limited events and weather in north Queensland she has driven a lot of kilometres each week finding great coaches and giving Madisen the best opportunity to be the best she can be The time on the road booking flight organising training coaches and dedication is admirable for this is why I have nominated her.

Stephen Lamb:

Always goes above and beyond, and supportive. So grateful.

Tim Steward:

My husband has been at every comp, every clinic, every ride with my young horse and supported me by saddling my pony throughout my cancer treatment. Not horsey, but has learned and is priceless!!!!



EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



GUARDIAN, PARTNER, & PARENT APPRECIATION

Jason & Cheryl Greer:

Jason & Cheryl Greer are always the first to put their hand up to help set up, pack up, move jumps and pick up rails. Always with smile on their face. They would drop anything to help anyone. Extremely deserving of this nomination.

Jason and Cheryl Greer go above and beyond to always help out at shows, set up, pack up, nothing is too much trouble. They are also both incredibly supportive of all riders and always have an encouraging word to say.

A Brilliant Pair- Jason and Cheryl Greer, always helping, picking up poles, moving jumps, assisting beyond the standard person- and with a smile and brilliant cheery smile that improves everyone's day.

Polly Oliver:

She may not be a parent to junior members (parent to 2 adult members) but she continues to help multiple junior riders. We wouldn't be able to do it without her!

Polly Oliver consistently goes above and beyond at show horse competitions for everyone. Not only does she have two of her own children actively competing, she acts as 'show mum' for many others in the community. Organising entries for large groups of horses, coordinating bump ins, class time tables, and all the while being the most supportive person always videoing and helping everyone strive to improve.

Emily Rhule:

Emily is one of my best friends who does ride however isn't competing currently due to medical reasons, but she is always there to support me with whatever I need, wherever I am, and is extremely tough with everything she is going through right now.



**VOLUNTEER
SHOUT OUT**



VOLUNTEERS MAKE LOCAL COMPETITIONS POSSIBLE. WE WANT TO THANK PERSON WHO PUTS A HAND UP TO HELP, AND RECOGNISE VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE BEEN NOMINATED BY FELLOW EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBERS



Robyn Berman:

Robyn Berman has a heart of gold, and always goes above and beyond to help us riders out, regardless if we are top level or low level riders. She is a genuinely good person doing so much for the riders to no gain of her own. Thank you Robyn!

Robyn puts in an extraordinary amount of hours to help run several shows. Robyn goes above and beyond to try and cater for the needs of all riders, no matter who they are, whether that be trying to fit them in to a full class or last minute changes, the amount of hours and hard work she puts in as a volunteer should be celebrated. Robyn will always volunteer to offer a hand no matter what.

Robyn Berman is an absolutely amazing and friendly who will go out of her way move heaven and earth to help riders and horses happily.

Che Gaddes:

Che is someone who is always happy to get in and have a go, pencil, gate steward and course change or pack up.

EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

VOLUNTEER SHOUT OUT



Craig Cochran:

Craig Cochran is a reliable and hardworking volunteer who is quick to offer a hand, contributes consistently throughout the day, and supports everyone without expecting recognition.

Ken Jensen:

Ken - dedicated Queensland Showjumping Club volunteer, tirelessly supports every competition from setup to pack-down, inspiring the next generation through his commitment, visibility, and passion at every event.

Jordan Priest McAlpine:

Jordan from Edwards Saddleworld - as she takes the time out of her weekend to come and support the event and supply everyone with what they might be needing.

Sarah Rodgers:

Sarah Rodgers helps every event. Even 3 weeks post spinal surgery she was a penciller.

Clayton Wall:

Clayton is always helping in and out of the ring with poles or anyone that needs a hand.

Bree Wilson:

Bree is so dedicated to what she does, and always makes time to volunteer.





RIDER WITH OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT

COMPETITIONS ONLY SHOW 5% OF THE REALITY OF EQUESTRIANS, AND WE WANT TO CELEBRATE THE OTHER 95% - THE TIMES THAT REQUIRE EXTREME DEDICATION, CARE, SACRIFICE, & LOVE FOR THE HORSE AND SPORT. WE WANTED TO SHOW APPRECIATION FOR EQ MEMBERS WHO SHOW UP EVERY DAY, AND COMMIT TO THEIR HORSES AND SPORT, WHILST STILL JUGGLING MANY LIFE RESPONSIBILITIES OUTSIDE OF HORSES.



Bree Wiblen:

Bree rides 15 horses at trackwork 4am starts plus the 2 horses she had in training , gets home rides her 5-6 horses and manages her spelling/training property with 11 horses every day, no days off and still makes it out most weekends to compete, all by herself.

Grace de la Croix:

Both of Grace's parents work full time so she does the majority of her riding, training, grooming, mucking out on her own, and always does it with a smile. Her achievements in the ring are attributed to her commitment and hard work.

Hayley Wall:

Haley trains at home with her 2 horses 5 days a week. Tries her best but has fun. Always cheering on her friends.

EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



RIDER WITH OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT

Madisen McKenzie:

Madisen McKenzie is 14yr old rider who spends countless hours training and spends all her weekends travelling to competitions to improve her skills we are base in Townsville and constantly travelling to southeast Queensland for competitions and training and Madisen puts all her efforts and energy to her horse and training she is a hard working rider that is always up early morning and late nights practicing and training and has become a confident and professional young lady due to her hard work and dedication to the sport and she has always been a great supporter of other riders and shows great work ethic helping out at every competition I feel she has decades all her abilities and time to the sport in which she loves and it has made her the beautiful young woman she is today

Madisen lives in Townsville and travels to Toowoomba regularly to compete. Extremely dedicated young rider. A genuine good kid with genuine love for the sport.

Horses are Madisen McKenzie's life she puts her heart & soul into everything she does, always willing to give anything ago....keep following your dreams beautiful girl.

Madison McKenzie is a dedicated junior equestrian, passionately caring for her horses Dante and Ronaldo while balancing studies and training, she demonstrates outstanding commitment, discipline, and sportsmanship.

Madisen has really embraced the equestrian life, as a young teenager she goes away from home and family to partake in training schools , travelling with her mum all over Queensland to compete and improve her riding skills.

Madisen is a dedicated, passionate equestrian who goes above and beyond in training and competition preparation. Balancing travel around QLD and beyond, looking after her two horses and other animals, and strong school performance, she is truly inspiring.



EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



RIDER WITH OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT

Hayley Richter:

Very dedicated and has come so far with both her horses, puts so much time and effort into them, and loves riding and the sport.

Sarah Weiss:

Weiss Performance Horses, gives kids/ people an opportunity to ride and compete at EA competitions around the country on her riding school horses. A lot of these kids are not from Equestrian backgrounds and probably would never have gotten the opportunity in an average riding school. Her riding school horses are competitive and are a big part of Equestrian Queensland. Sarah brings a lot of new people to the sport and gives her students amazing opportunities while also competing herself.

Ayshia Noy:

Ayshia is freshly 21 and works full time as vet nurse and still rides every day - juggling her main competition horse, and also retraining 3 OTTBs. She displays extreme commitment and, love for sport and for her horses. She is one of the most dedicated riders I know, and still always offers to help others in the sport wherever she can - whether that be in the warm up ring, riding their horses, feeding up, helping with entries, and even floating others to events.

Caitlin Downes-Saxby:

Caitlin is a woman who works hard and is exceptionally good at her trade and runs her own business as a farrier. She volunteers as event coordinator at our local club and still finds the time to compete at a 95cm level at numerous events over QLD. She is always kind, encouraging and supportive. Juggles work and horse commitments alongside her volunteer roles.

Ariana Sing:

Ariana always puts in the effort the work and dedication to the sport and her horses, even when it is not always easy, and continues to show up.



EQUESTRIAN QLD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



RIDER WITH OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT

Further nominations:

Sage Sharpe and Lauren Sharpe
Nicole Tough
Olivia Hammond
Abbie Hunt
Sandi-Leigh Norris
Hannah Lewindon
Bibble Jone
Bella Witt
Zara Harris
Sharron V Marshall
Anika Green
Shane Angie Nicholls
Zoe Nicholls
Cassie Hoskins



*Beyond the
Bridle VI*

To nominate someone for recognition and appreciation in Equestrian Queensland's next edition of Beyond the Bridle - keep an eye on EQ social media for nomination links!

But in the mean time, be sure to celebrate and acknowledge the support, and dedication of others in our sport!



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



Beyond the Bridle is a platform for connection between Equestrian Queensland members, through discussing shared experiences, or opening the conversation on under-discussed topics in our equestrian community.

Beyond the Bridle features 'blog style' submissions, written by our Equestrian Queensland members to open dialogue, inspire, and collaborate. If you have a topic you would like to submit a written piece on, keep an eye out for the next Beyond the Bridle submissions link. We want to hear from you!

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'11 years: Through every step from Green to Grand Prix'
Danielle McMahon



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



Balancing Medicine and Dressage

Kimberley Webb

For as long as I can remember, horses have been a big part of my life. I grew up in the show horse world and was lucky enough to compete and win at a national level. Those experiences gave me a really strong foundation as a rider and taught me the value of preparation, patience, and partnership. But about five years ago, I felt ready for something different. That's when I found dressage.

My first dressage horse, Dicavalli Decadance, was the one who brought me into this new world. I had no idea how much I still had to learn, but he taught me that progress comes from persistence and trust. Together we worked our way from preliminary level up through the grades to medium level, and it was incredibly rewarding to feel that improvement ride by ride. These days, I'm training and competing at Small Tour level with my beautiful boy, Versace I, who has and continues to teach me the complexities of the higher level work. The dream of riding Grand Prix one day is still ahead of me, but every training session feels like one small step closer.



For the past three years, I've also been part of the Queensland Young Rider Squad, which has been such a big influence on both my riding and my mindset. Through the program, I've had the chance to learn from some of Australia's most experienced riders and coaches, take part in clinics, and connect with other young riders who share the same goals and challenges. It's created a really supportive community that keeps all of us motivated to keep learning and improving.

EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



Balancing Medicine and Dressage

Kimberley Webb

Balancing competitive riding with a Bachelor of Medical Studies and Doctor of Medicine at Bond University has been one of the biggest challenges of my life, but also one of the most rewarding. Medical school is intense and demanding, with long hours of study, placements, and exams. Dressage, on the other hand, requires consistency, time in the saddle, and complete focus. At times, it feels like the two worlds couldn't be further apart, but I've found that they actually complement each other in surprising ways. Riding gives me an outlet from study, while medicine teaches me to manage my time, stay present, and think critically even under pressure.

The balance isn't always neat. There are plenty of early mornings in the dark before uni, and late nights finishing assignments after a ride. There are days where something has to give, and that's okay too. What's made the difference is support - from my coaches, fellow competitors, family, and the people around me who understand both passions. They remind me that balance doesn't mean doing everything perfectly; it means staying grounded in why you're doing it in the first place.

I also think the conversation around balancing study and sport, especially in equestrian disciplines, doesn't happen enough. It's easy to look at riders or students who seem to do it all and assume it must come naturally, but there's a lot of effort, structure, and sacrifice behind the scenes. Talking more about the reality of that balance can make the sport more accessible to young riders who are trying to find their own path. University, work, or other goals don't have to mean stepping away from horses, they can coexist with the right mindset and support network.



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



Interschool Queensland - a catalyst for opportunity

Ashlee Lowe

Hi I'm Ashlee Lowe, I'm freshly graduated and 18 years old. I have successfully competed 3* eventing, and now, I'm living and working in England.

My journey with Interschool Queensland started when I was in my early years of primary school — honestly not really knowing what to expect — and continued all the way until graduating year 12 in 2025. But I honestly loved every single minute of interschool — the atmosphere, the people, and the memories. I will always be grateful for it.

It wasn't just about competing or being the 'best' at something; it was about the connections I made. Some of my closest friends to this day are the ones I met through Interschool. Even when being at EA competitions, I found myself surrounded by those specific people.

Now, working for an Olympian in England, it feels crazy to look back and see where it all started. Even though I'm not competing in the same way for now, that love for riding and that drive to compete is still there. Watching others ride at such a high level just reminds me why I started in the first place.

I'll always be grateful for everything Interschool Queensland gave me — the opportunities, the friendships, and the experiences that shaped who I am today. It's something that will always be a part of me, no matter where I am in the world.



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



11 years: Through every step from Green to Grand Prix

Danielle McMahon

Remi Lauries Joy has been such a special horse to me, not just for the results, but for the journey we've shared.

I've had the privilege of producing Joy through the levels myself, which has been incredibly rewarding. I got her as a just broken in 3-year-old when I was only 10 years old, and now Joy is 14 and we're competing at Grand Prix level in dressage. She's always been a horse that gives everything, and while there have definitely been plenty of "oh Joy..." moments along the way — from bolting and bucking at home and competitions — she has always shown so much talent and potential.

I've taken my time bringing her up through the levels, as she was my first young horse to train from the beginning, and we've truly learned together every step of the way.

As a typical chestnut mare, she's spicy and has an opinion about almost everything, but that's also one of the things I love most about her. She has a genuine willingness to learn, and as we've progressed, she's developed strength and grown more confident and expressive in the Grand Prix work. There's still plenty to improve, but that's what makes the process so rewarding.



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



11 years: Through every step from Green to Grand Prix Danielle McMahon

This year marks our second season in the U25 Grand Prix, and it's been exciting to see our scores gradually improving. All our hard work was rewarded at Willinga Park DBTS 2026, where we were fortunate to win the CDI U25 Grand Prix Freestyle.

Looking back at the journey, it has been anything but smooth. There were times I questioned if we'd ever make it or if I should continue trying — like scoring 43% in a Novice test, or getting bucked off around the outside of the arena at a State Championship... only to somehow get back on and still win it.

But it's all part of the process, and a reminder to never give up. Joy has taught me so much as a rider, and I'm incredibly grateful for everything she's given me. I hope to carry those lessons forward as I start producing my next young horses.



LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT



Support from local businesses is integral to the running of equestrian events of all scales, including club, regional, state, and national. To show recognition to local businesses involved in the Equestrian Queensland community (through riders, events, products, services etc.), Beyond the Bridle has launched a new section to highlight the symbiotic relationship between the sport and business, and provide an opportunity to showcase local supporters. To nominate your business to be considered, please enter through BTB links provided on social media.

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'Edwards Saddleworld: Giving Back to the Equestrian Queensland Community'

Jordan Priest McAlpine

'The Fika Effect'

Abbey Conlan



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT



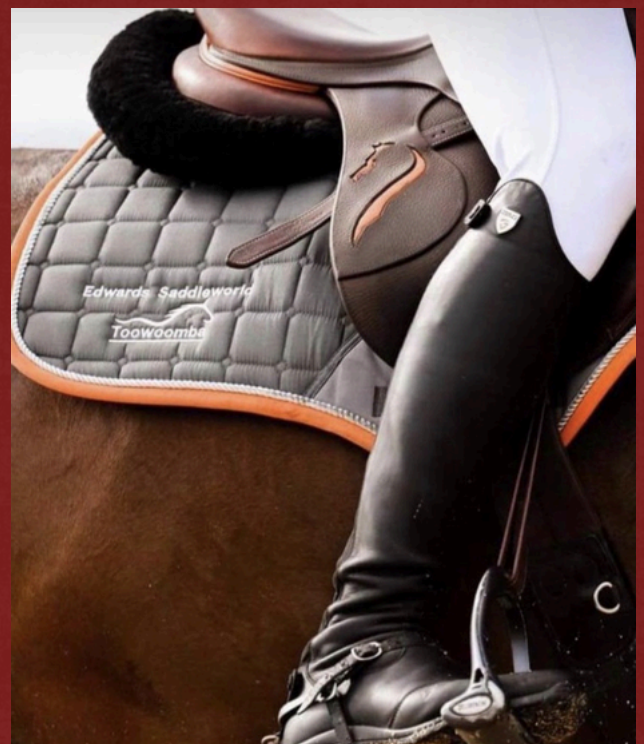
Edwards Saddleworld: Giving Back to the Equestrian Queensland Community

Jordan Priest McAlpine

At Edwards Saddleworld, our business has always been built on more than just retail, it's about being an active, invested part of the equestrian community across Queensland. Giving back is something we prioritise. We are proud to support riders and clubs statewide through a wide range of initiatives, including sponsorship of local competitions, regional and state championships, and our role as a major sponsor of Interschool Queensland State and Regional Championships. Alongside this, we sponsor individual Queensland riders and junior teams, helping support the next generation of talent as they progress through the sport.

One initiative especially close to our hearts is the Edwards Saddleworld Leg Up Bursary, designed to create real opportunities for Queensland Interschool riders, to take the next step in their journey. Started in 2025 and valued close to \$30,000 the standard of applications were incredible; we will continue to grow this bursary annually and feel so grateful to have so many of our suppliers come on board to make this bursary what it is. The applicants showed real grit and determination, Edwards Saddleworld fit and donate a saddle of the winner's choosing as part of our contribution. We also run a bi-monthly \$500 club gift voucher, where our customers nominate and vote for clubs they feel deserve support- ensuring the wider community directly benefits from the success of our store.

A key part of what makes this possible is the Saddleworld model itself. Saddleworld stores are owner-operated franchises, which means when customers walk through our doors, they are often working directly with the owner and the team that aligns with them. That creates a level of accountability, care, and personal investment that is hard to replicate. It also allows us to offer a far more personalised experience. We have the flexibility to listen closely to our customers, respond to what they genuinely need, and curate our product range accordingly. We can explore new brands, adapt to trends, and ensure our store reflects the real, evolving needs of our local equestrian community. That freedom flows directly into our customer service. As a team, we pride ourselves on going above and beyond- not as a tagline, but as a standard.



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT



Edwards Saddleworld: Giving Back to the Equestrian Queensland Community

Jordan Priest McAlpine

There is a genuine sense of excitement in the store when we know we've been able to truly help someone, whether that's finding the right fit, solving a problem, or supporting a rider through a key moment in their journey. The shop team, our customers, our sponsored riders we all really enjoy what we do, we always try make sure we have a laugh, I am so grateful to be surrounded by such an incredible group of people. As well as offering a 'travel to you' saddle fitting service, something you might not know about Edwards is that we have an onsite workshop that manufactures our own products. It allows us to offer bespoke repairs and custom solutions, and importantly, it means we see our customers regularly. We're able to stay part of their journey- from racing, to trail riding- to competition, it's about the long-term relationships rather than one-off transactions for us.

What makes this involvement particularly meaningful is the personal connection behind it. As a qualified EA coach and competitor in eventing, dressage and showjumping, I've been fortunate to experience the sport from multiple perspectives. From teaching riders their very first jump to later watching those same riders become Interschool Queensland State Champions, it's incredibly rewarding to see their progression. Now, those relationships often continue in new ways- whether it's through saddle fitting, equipment advice, or supporting them at competitions. It's a full-circle moment that highlights how interconnected our industry truly is.



EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT



Edwards Saddleworld: Giving Back to the Equestrian Queensland Community

Jordan Priest McAlpine

Beyond the store, I've also been fortunate to contribute at a broader level as a member of the Saddleworld Head Office Board of Directors and Product Committee. This role allows me to take direct feedback from our local and state equestrian community- what riders genuinely need, what horses respond best to, and what gaps exist in the market and be part of shaping products that serve those needs. Being both "on the ground" at competitions and in-store, while also contributing to product development, is a unique position that ensures our community's voice is heard.

At its core, Edwards Saddleworld exists to support riders at every stage. To continue strengthening the equestrian community across Queensland. Being able to give back to a sport that has given us so much is something we are incredibly proud of, this isn't just a job for us, it's our lifestyle.





EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Fika Effect Abbey Conlan

For me, horses have always felt like home. From finally convincing my parents that I absolutely needed a horse, to competing in Interschool competitions in Year 10 with my Glennie team the equestrian world quickly became a defining part of my life. Alongside riding, I also discovered a love for content creation. I was always the person taking photos, filming little videos, and wanting to capture the moments happening around me at competitions, not just the rounds in the ring. Eventually I picked up a camera properly, and without really realising it at the time, it completely changed the direction of my life.

One of the things I'll always be most grateful for is how supportive the Interschool community was from the very beginning. Before I ever viewed photography as something serious, people within the community trusted me, encouraged me, and gave me opportunities to photograph local events and riders. That support gave me so much confidence creatively and made me feel like there really was a place for me within the equestrian industry professionally.

I think coming from an Interschool background myself helped shape the way I approached photography. I understood the emotions behind the sport because I had experienced them too. The nerves before entering the ring, the excitement of achieving a goal you have worked towards for months, the disappointment when things do not go to plan, and the small moments in between that often end up meaning the most.





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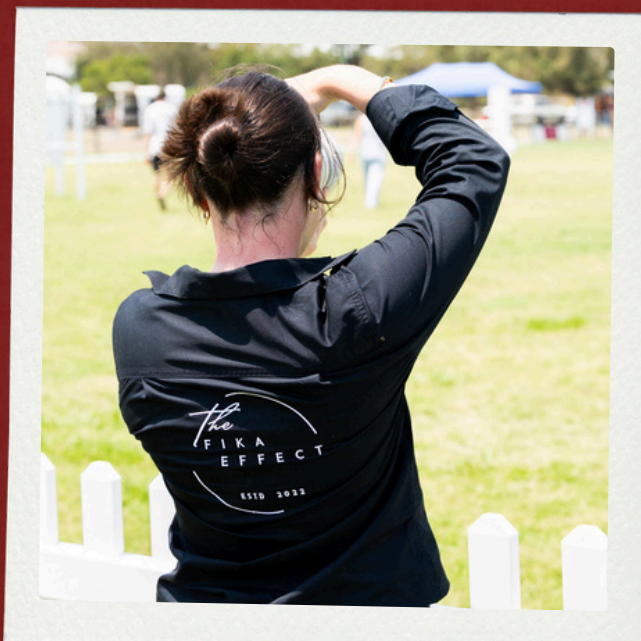
Abbey Conlan

Through Fika Media Co, I now work across photography, videography, social media content, branding, and creative direction, particularly within the equestrian industry. It has been exciting to expand from simply documenting moments to helping riders, businesses, and brands tell their stories and build their identities online. What makes it especially meaningful is that so much of that growth happened within the same community that supported me from the beginning. In many ways, Interschool Queensland gave me the environment to experiment creatively, gain confidence in my work, and slowly develop my career naturally over time.

Looking back, I don't think I realised at the time how much these events would contribute to my growth not only as a rider, but as a creative person. The opportunities and encouragement I received helped me build confidence in my work and continue pursuing photography and content creation seriously. It gave me the chance to grow organically, surrounded by people who genuinely wanted to see me succeed.

I still feel incredibly lucky that I now get to attend events not only as someone who grew up in the sport, but as someone trusted to capture it. Being able to document moments for riders, families, and brands within the equestrian community is something I never take for granted, because I know firsthand how meaningful those memories are.

For me, it really all started with a camera, a love for horses, and a community that was willing to support me along the way.



Beyond the Bridle

FOR EQ MEMBERS, BY EQ MEMBERS

EQUESTRIAN QUEENSLAND

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