



National Office News Sheet – August 2003

National Office now in Sydney

Well, a lot has happened (and not happened) since the last newsletter. The National Office has moved to Sydney, we have four new staff and things are settling down slowly. I am certainly pleased personally with the progress and the end of sometimes rather difficult times in Adelaide in the last couple of months. On the other hand, living back in (or near) the "big smoke" means spending something like 14 hours on the road each week just to go to and from work. That will be cut in half when wife Toni, dog Max and I move house next week. Another move!!!!!!

It took a week to sort out the web and e-mail side of things because of problems with the ADSL provisioning but at least the new telephone system worked okay after a slightly bumpy start. The fax line was perfect from the start: We simply plugged in our fax/photocopier and it worked. Inside the office, things are slowly getting "sorted".

New Staff

With the move of the office, it became necessary to find replacements for our Adelaide staff who did not wish to move to Sydney. To help speed up the hand-over/changeover, I decided to leave the staffing structure initially the same as it was in Adelaide. Once we have the office running smoothly, however, and have most of the insurance renewals out of the way, I plan to make several of the positions more "sport" or "Discipline"-oriented. Short resumes of Marina, Monique, Niki and Siobhan (alphabetical order) are on our web at <http://www.efanational.com/content/contact/staff.htm>.

No AUS Dressage Team at Athens 2004

The sad news is that our Dressage team did not secure Team entry for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. We still have a chance for Individual entry through the World Dressage Rider Ranking List. For a summary of what happened, visit www.efanational.com.

National Board Meeting – 11 August 2003 – Sydney

Our new staff got a taste of the pressures that often exist in the National Office when, on the first weekend after the Sydney Office opening, we had the National Dressage, Eventing and Show Horse Committee meetings plus a National Board meeting on the Monday. No real weekend for any of us!

Here are some of the agenda items discussed:

Corporate Governance Review

Our Chairman Russ Withers presented the final recommendations of the Review Committee that incorporated responses to input received during the consultation period. The Board unanimously accepted the recommendations. The "Shareholders" (Branches) now need to agree to implement the changes. At least six of the seven will need to vote in favour. Let's hope that after several attempts to reform the Federation, this proposal will receive the required support and can be implemented. We need an independent and skills-based Board. Under the proposal, the Shareholder/Branches appoint a Board of five directors from nominations by the general membership. The Board can then appoint two more directors if required.

In **summary**, the proposal is now as follows:

- The Federation structure of the EFA is to be retained.
- The National Board to consist of five Directors elected by the seven "shareholders" (Branches) on the basis of skill. Any member may nominate. The Board can then appoint a further two Directors if required but cannot include unsuccessful nominees that stood for Board elections until at least one year has passed. – Directors can be on the Board for a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms and then need to "retire" for at least one year before they can stand again for elections.
- A Shareholders' Agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) to be developed between the National body and the Branches outlining who is responsible for what. Emphasis to be on the implementation of the EFA Strategic Plan and standardised administrative systems across the Federation.
- National Forums to be held annually to develop the strategic plan for the Federation. Disciplines to hold similar forums to plan the future of their respective sports.

As you would have read in the June newsletter, Russ Withers and I visited the Branches to explain the proposed reforms and listen to further input from Branch Committees and other stakeholders. Erni Rauter (ASC) joined us at all meetings except Hobart and Mr. Martin Roberts, Senior Sports Consultant responsible for Equestrian, was also present at the Sydney meeting.

2003-2006 Strategic Plan

With the move of the office and new staff in a number of areas, the Strategic Plan had to be revised, especially in terms of expected completion of various projects. The Board re-examined the plan and gave each item a priority ranking. The CEO will now reassess the timing of action items and submit the revised plan to the Board at the next meeting.

Carriage Driving Integration

The steering committee that was set up to prepare a plan for implementation has not as yet met. A report is due for the next Board meeting.

Draft Financial Statements for 2002/03

The CEO presented a draft Profit & Loss Account and a draft Balance Sheet. The audit was basically completed during the last week before relocation from Adelaide (a crazy time to do it yet we managed) but a few minor adjustments will still have to be made. The good news is, however, that we achieved a great turn-around during the last financial year. The financial statements will be published on the EFA web site after the AGM.

National Committees and other Official Positions

During the next couple of months, Branches and National Rider Meetings will be asked to nominate members for National Committees and other National positions like the FEI Contact Vet and the Steward General. As far as Committees are concerned, once their general composition is clear, elections will be held for the Chair of each Committee. Where the Chair is elected from among the Branch appointments, the Branch will then nominate a replacement. A Committee Chair can, of course, be elected from outside the Committee membership.

Insurance

We are now awaiting quotes for insurance for the coming year, commencing 30 September 2003. There seems to be a greater number of insurers around that are willing to look at the equestrian business, so our hope is to get policy proposals that both meet our requirements and are not too costly. Until we see the offers, however, we cannot give details of what clubs and coaches are going to be charged.

As a result of club and coach surveys, we do have a lot more information available this year compared to the last round of negotiations. This information has been useful to the brokers and has also given us a better idea of the activities and preferences of coaches and clubs. On the other hand, the response rate to the surveys was much lower than expected, leaving us to wonder how "representative" this data actually was. Still, we hope to be able to make our charges more equitable for affiliates.

Database

We have made great progress with the addition of an Eventing results and qualification module to which results are now being uploaded. The other good news is that Western Australia is about to update its computer system and will then be able to join the National Database. South Australia's Executive Officer Holly Wake is in the process of completing a user manual, something that was sorely needed, especially for new staff. The National Office will also get into the database synchronisation loop in the next couple of weeks and will then add a range of information that has so far been kept on separate databases.

Events

Please don't forget to support our sport by visiting Equestrian events. Major events are listed on our web calendar at <http://www.efanational.com/content/events/calendar.htm>. Branches have details other events as well. Whilst I can't mention all events, it would probably be a good idea to make accommodation bookings now for the National Dressage Championships (23 – 26 October), the Adelaide International Horse Trials (6 – 9 November), and Equitana (19 – 22 November). Links to these event are included in the calendar.

So much for now. Please visit our web at www.efanational.com on a regular basis, to get updates on equestrian matters.

Best regards,

Franz Venhaus
25 August 2003