



Marlborough Group New Zealand Riding for the Disabled

President's Report Marlborough Group RDA, March 2023, Belinda Jackson

It has been a great privilege to take up the Presidency this year. I wish to acknowledge the committee, the coaches, and the team at RDA for their support. I don't spend nearly as much time as I would like on the premises, but I have Jo to thank for her smooth running of everything, meaning we can all get on with life in general, while doing what we can to ensure Marlborough RDA thrives.

From the ongoing challenges of finding and keeping volunteers and horses, to the increased costs of just about everything you can think of, we have managed to deliver another year of mounted programmes tailored to the needs of individual riders, be that general therapy, education, sport and rec or early intervention. The commitment, dedication and passion of everyone involved is remarkable, and fills me with pride.

I feel as if no stone has been left unturned this year. From reviewing our costs and approaching local businesses for support to maximizing grant applications and reviewing the roles within the team (including the four-legged members), we have been busy. Oh, and then there was this little dinner... wow, what a great success - \$28,000 raised. That was the highlight of the year for me – goosebumps and all as Roslein, Tessa Anderson and Dave Sim all spoke from the heart. An extraordinary effort from everyone and something we hope to repeat.

Jo and I attended the NZRDA Conference in Wellington and judging by my 18 (A4) pages of notes, there was plenty of learning. I'd actually like to revisit my notes to see how much we have, or still can, put in place. It is always so valuable to meet as a national organisation to hear from inspirational guest speakers, to network with other groups and learn what works, what doesn't and why. We all have the same challenges (finding enough volunteers, horses, money and time), but what we learned was to focus on our strengths and build on them. Rather than repair weaknesses, look for patterns and possibilities,

and focus on assets rather than needs. Sometimes easier said than done – but all good learning.

The year ended with a fun rider's Christmas party at the Simcox Stadium on Batty's Road. A loud and fairly riotous affair with all the sports gear out and a huge amount of energy, excitement and Dominos Pizza. Another great event organised by the team.

Finally, to the year ahead. We look forward to Samara coming back on board once fully recovered from the surgery on her hand, we wish Danielle all the best in this exciting chapter of her life as she heads off on maternity leave, and we prepare for another busy year of doing what we do best – helping improve the quality of life for our riders, their families and their communities.

With my sincere thanks.

A handwritten signature in a cursive script that reads "Belinda". The letters are connected and fluid, with a prominent loop at the end of the word.

Belinda