



The Show Horse Council Of Australasia proudly presented The Grand National Championships” at SIEC Equestrian Centre from 20th to 24th March 2018. This year marking the 26th year of the Grand National, the Event again lifting Show Horse competition to another level. SHC members all over Australia and New Zealand spent the year chasing the win to qualify them to compete; the best of the best then coming together to compete for the coveted titles on offer.

Under the direction of our International Judges who arrive with no preconceived ideas, every horse and rider combination has the opportunity to show their best work in what was the most spectacular arena to showcase their horses. As a committee, we try to give them the best possible experience at the event, and I think we achieve that.

The creation of a new Arena theme is always a challenging aspect of the event. 2018 we went PINK! A stunning Cherry Blossom image forming the backdrop for the Livestreaming & Photos. The wrought Iron Entry featured again and a spectacular floral Ceiling Chandelier filled the huge Ceiling area. Anna King designed a beautiful garden including many potted daisies, and two entry arbours that were decorated in twisted vine, ivy, flowers and lights forming a path way into both the tents. The star centre piece was “Florett”, a full-size model horse covered in Moss and adorned with a floral saddle blanket. As everything started to go into the arena the excitement grew, I cannot thank Anna and Steve enough for working with the Show Horse Council, they deliver exceptional designs of excellence.

This year our three Judges visited from the UK; The Council was extremely fortunate to have secured the services of High Profile Competitors & Judges Mrs Anne & Mr Allister Hood, and Mr Edward Young, Anne so very kindly stepping in at the last moment. All Judges were very impressed with the high standard of competition, being very complementary to the capabilities of our child riders and the level of presentation of our horses. Their highlight was the Saturday evening Grand Champion events.

This year we held Children’s day over Tuesday & Wednesday. Entries for these events had increased greatly from our 2017 event, and it offered our junior members special events just for them. All classes were strongly supported, and many happy smiling faces left the arena with beautiful gifts from Ponyella Design in Qld, ribbons, twinkling garlands this year made by Emma’s Garlands, and their trophy rugs. The Council also held a feature event Tiny Tot Rider 3yrs & under 6yrs, with 34 riders entered. These small riders were all immaculately turned out and filled the arena the excitement and the concentration that competition brings. Beautiful prizes were donated by the Parker-Eade family, with winner Abby Towers receiving a very special garland donated by HM Garlands and a pinto hobby Horse donated by The Paddock Pony QLD.

2018 saw the Five Grand Champions classes, & Mini Champion Pony included on Saturday night Final program, the culmination of five days of competition. The Night Of Stars was spectacular, many thanks to the Morelli family who saved the day in the last hour, allowing the judges to enter the Arena in the very special car, with a family holiday to the picturesque Hamilton Island, and two tubs full of Equine goodies up for grabs it was sure to be an exciting night.

The “Night of Stars” was how we promoted it, and WOW but did the horses and riders deliver for us. Everyone was on such a high, huge congratulations go to all competitors who won through and put on such a show for the crowd that filled the stands at SIEC. The winners of the Grand Champions – Hudson & Aylett “Owendale Butter Schnapps” (Show Hunter), Elizabeth & Rhonda Daly “Royal Oak Figurine” (Saddle Horse), Tracie-Lee Wells (Grand Champion Rider), Emma Richardson “Harrington Park Symphony” (Champion Ridden Mini Pony), Hudson & Aylett “Owendale Butter Schnapps” also winning (Childs Ridden Show Hunter) & Dale & Daizi Plumb “DP Lady Di” (Childs Saddle Horse) with all competitors delivered a polished workout to be awarded their Titles.

The Grand Champion winners take home cash, prizes, and special memories that they will have with them forever. Thanks, must also go to these great sponsors Giddy Up Girl, The Show Horse Council Competitors Assoc . SA, J & R Equestrian, Bamborough Pony Stud & Mark Bullen, Imperial Welsh Ponies, who all put their financial support behind these Grand Champion classes.

Results will be sent out to all sponsors, I have already received many positive emails from both business and personal sponsors as well as competitors, it is a testament to all the hard work the committee and individual helpers put in to make the 2018 event such a success.

This event relies heavily upon the support of our event sponsors, The SHC is extremely fortunate to this year welcome HUFGLÖCKEN as this year's major sponsor, and we thank Annalisa Phillips and our individual class sponsors who are very loyal to us, and continue to sponsor this event. I cannot thank them enough for coming along for the ride every year. This year Emma Rudder from Emmas Garlands became involved with the Grand National supplying the most beautiful Garlands for both our winning Horse and Rider Classes. Each piece was beautifully co-ordinated adorned in special jewels, these garlands are the most special treasure for the lucky winners to have as a keepsake of their win.

The Announcing team of Chris King & Lori Howell never missed a beat over the five long days & nights, presenting such a professional and polished contact to both those spectating in the stands as well as the audience watching on the Live Streaming. The Council also employed the services of Australian Equine Network to live stream the five days of competition, this again proving to be popular with members who were not able to attend the event, allowing exhibitors family and friends the opportunity to take in the atmosphere and see the results as they happen from their living rooms. Leonie Walsh in her role as announcer interviewed many experienced Show Horse Industry figures, this giving an insight into the action taking place on the arena, thank you very much Leonie you were a delight to have as part of the GN team.

Thankyou to the helpers who came from the other States to help us in an official capacity, their assistance was invaluable. Greg Trembath SA, Donna Button WA, Jo Moore QLD, with the marshal area very well manned on Thursday, Friday & Saturday by Victoria's Tony Norris.

Leanne McDowall ran the BBQ on Monday night. The South Australian contingent diced, chopped and served; Bruce Flood did the shopping assisted by Helen Kirton with the meat order. This night not proving as popular as past BBQs with such a short time frame from bump in, then straight into competition the next day.

The Show office is always a busy hub of activity and was very ably maned by Roseanne Bowerman (who worked with me at SIEC from the Friday before the event) and Roma Stonestreet, who in my absence were the faces that dealt with all the competitors needs prior to getting into the classes. The Sam's family were invaluable from beginning to end & afterwards, still pulling down when everyone else had long gone.

Leanne McDowall spent a lot of time assisting in the stabling office. The Bump in/bump out system was introduced and proved to be very effective for competitors and SHC, but it was made more difficult by the two prior events not bumping out till 10.00am, and the venue not being cleaned allowing for our competitors to Bump in at the scheduled arrival time. The Council recognises this made it extremely difficult and stressful for competitors travelling long distances, giving them very little preparation time for those in events the next day.

The marshalling this year was very efficient under the direction of Wendy Manchester putting in 5 long days, Wendy was amazing directing competitors; she was assisted by Demi Sams, with Dan Retschlag travelling from QLD to spend 5 days at the door, in contact with the announcer's booth. This is such a vital area, with these guys on their feet the whole time, out in the rain and heat, dealing with some challenging situations, trying to keep to the tight timetable.

This year the introduction of set work out allowed us to keep to time every day, till the end of Saturday, with only the Adult Rider & Small Hack Class taking longer than the allocated time periods. Positive feed back was received by many competitors in relation to the set workout, thankyou to Jordan McDowall who presented the workouts in an easy to follow format. Once they entered the arena our stewards Ashley Roberts, Melanie Skinner & Donna Button assisted the Judges over the 35 events, all done under the watchful eye of our Ring Master Bruce Flood & assistant Ring Master Jo Maunder who co-ordinated everybody to ensure the smooth running from ring control.

Amanda Peters was our chief ribbon & Prize steward, sorting out many of the wonderful prizes the competitors took home as keep sakes from the Grand National, assisted by Jody Winning, Greg Trembath & Nicola Donoghue. Thanks, must also go to Suz Worsley Deacon who supplied the Council with 5 Days of music, easily set out on an ipod. Lorelle Mercer Photography, Lisa Gordon (Little More Grace Photography) were on hand throughout to capture the magic moments & DVD for all Classes are available from Australian Equine Live Streaming.

The Saturday night Dinner had over 200 guests to be seated, the area looked very inviting and I received some lovely comments from guests as they arrived. Thank you to Sarah Reiger who created the beautiful fragrant Floral displays on the tables. To think the busy little team put it together in a few hours is a feat to be proud of. I must say the best thing is to have happy, positive people around you, it's great to have a bit of a laugh and that keeps you going when you start to feel a bit flat.

The 2017 SHC Volunteer Awards went to Helen Kirton the winner, with Amanda Peters & Nicola Donoghue joint second, Roma Stonestreet third, this tallied by most days attended as volunteer at four different events. All our volunteers are much appreciated for their support at SHC events.

The Grand National is a massive undertaking, getting bigger and I hope better every year, to become the most recognised Show Horse event in the Southern Hemisphere, without the help of the people mentioned above from Hawkesbury & Hills, Central Coast & Lower Hunter, Dubbo & Districts & the Tablelands Clubs in NSW I could never make all my own plans and dreams for this event happen.

Personally, I hope all members have a wonderful experience competing, sponsors are proud to have their name associated with the event and the Show Horse Council continues to grow & thrive with horse owners who want to qualify to compete at THE GRAND NATIONAL.

Leonie Roberts- Event Co-Ordinator.