



# Sept-Dec 2025 Newsletter

## From your committee

Gwen Gilmore	Chairperson
Hess Vertogen	Head Coach and Deputy chair
Elly Thomson	Treasurer
Monica Rietveld	Secretary
Karin Newport	Membership Secretary
Karen Shaw	Rider Rep
Kirsten Regos	Uniforms
.....	Rider Rep

We have a vacancy for a general member or to support our rider reps. We could do with some support to gather sponsorship? The size of the club now means we need a bit more support please. Spread the load

To contact any committee member please use club email  
[waimakridingclub@gmail.com](mailto:waimakridingclub@gmail.com) with your query ref in the subject line.

This newsletter covers a tribute to Dawn Morris, Team Dressage Quest, Musical Freestyle, Christmas Ribbon Day, Hacknix, Events three months in advance, Camp, treasury and membership update and an article '***Often thought about but not talked about***' from Helen Bowler at Shine Counselling.



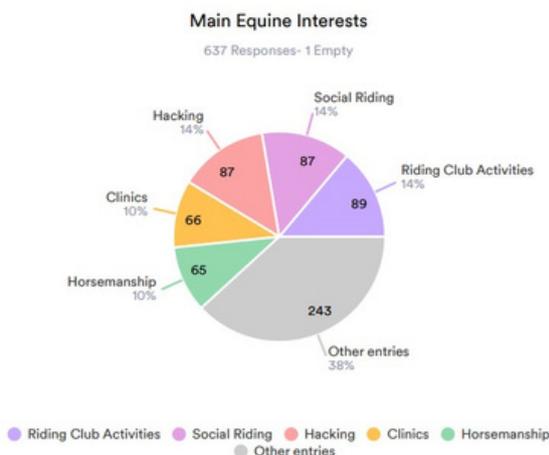
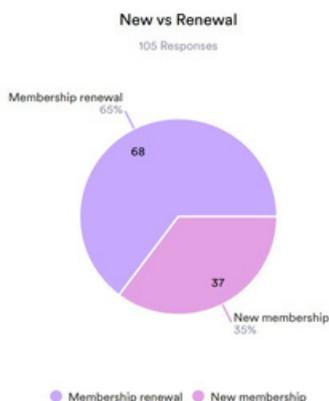
# From the Chair and committee

This newsletter reviews a very busy start to our riding year to late December. The theme for the last four months has been events! Team Dressage Quest, Musical Freestyle, South Island Teams Event, Camp and Christmas Ribbon Day. Phew. Your treasurer and programme people have been very, very busy. Oh yes we've had some hacknix and amazing speaker-dinners as well.

At this point we have over 100 members including family members. Most exciting is the range of horse disciplines represented by these new members and the continued diversity of locations. That is, members both sides of the Waimakariri River extending to Hokitika on the West Coast, Timaru and all parts in between.

I am continually impressed by the help and support our events have had this year. We ask, on membership that you contribute something, and you have responded accordingly.

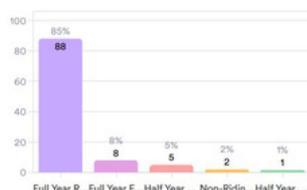
## 2025-26 Membership



## Membership Options

104 Responses

Data	Response	%
Full Year Riding Member	88	85%
Full Year Family Membe...	8	8%
Half Year membership	5	5%
Non-Riding Member	2	2%
Half Year Family Membe...	1	1%



**Membership is open for the Jan to June 2026 season!**

- Monthly subsidised **coaching** with superb coaches.
- Friendly** and **encouraging** environment.
- Variety of venues around Canterbury.
- Monthly **Hacknics**, small group hacking followed by a picnic.
- Monthly **dinners** with speakers, plus eat free on your birthday!
- Focus on **education, horsemanship** and **friendship**.

Membership form and joining process on [website](http://www.waimakaririridingclub.com)



## A Tribute to Dawn Morris

We were all saddened by the death of Dawn Morris. I had known Dawn since coming to Canterbury as a quiet, dedicated horsewoman. More recently, she had enjoyed our speaker-dinners. She was always thoughtful and quiet in her achievements.

**Pauline Colcough wrote** I only knew Dawn for a few years from riding with her with the Kaiapoi ladies group. Dawn was a lady that would give everything a go. Dawn loved her life with her horses and gave them the best life ever. She was a gentle lady that always had a smile on her face and a kind word about everyone and was always the first to offer help and support to other riders, never any judgment. We often talked about our families and how Stu her husband supported her in everything she did with the horses over the years despite not being a horsey person, and how he was pleased that she was living her dream. She was also so proud of both her sons and their achievements and was looking forward to the birth of her first grand child. It was a privilege to know you Dawn, you were a truly beautiful lady.

**Robyn Wakelin Lewis wrote.** I met Dawn back in 2017 doing a CTR with her then horse Katie I remember she was riding the 10km CTR but had somehow managed to jump onto the 20km track. 2 and a bit hours later along came Dawn and Katie. Dawn was still laughing over how did this happen? Over the years we did many a trek together from Quartz hill to China town. Dressed in xmas costumes into China town we rode, even Stu came along on his push bike. Now that was true grit riding up Okuku pass. I'm sure he enjoyed his lunchbreak at the top to regain his breath. Dawn had a way about her that was warm welcoming and friendly. She will be so sorely missed. Pic of Dawn and Spartacus riding into China town Xmas of 2023

**Helen Egan wrote.** I was lucky to meet Dawn Morris when our sons became firm friends at West Eyreton Primary School. Those boys are now 31 and 32, where has that 25 years gone! That was the first time Dawn ever asked for my help with her horses. I got a frantic phone call one day, could I go down and help her teach the foal to lead and pick up a foot, the farrier was booked for first trims! It was my privilege to continue to spend time with Dawn and her horses right up until her accident and I know there will be several people reading this that have ridden and enjoyed time with Dawn for even longer than that. Dawn was a gentle, kind and positive person who valued those relationships with both people and horses more than anything else. She took a structured approach to her time with her horses but enjoyed and appreciated their individual quirks. Dawn was involved with Kaiapoi, Cust and WRC groups, she would help anyone in need and always quick to give back as a volunteer. Dawn had stepped into committee roles and could be relied on to help out at events. What a sad loss to our horse community of a genuinely nice person. Dawn used to surprise me with her quick wit, a dry sense of humor and an active brain!



**We know Dawn will continue to ride alongside us all**

[www.waimakaririridingclub.com](http://www.waimakaririridingclub.com)



# The Mane Events 2025

## January



### 2026 Events

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	Cost
<b>January 2026</b>			
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> to Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Castleridge Station	Castleridge station - Hakatere	834 Hakatere Heron Road
Rally but last minute postponement	Sorry folks cancellation - tba		
Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> January Feet in stirrups 10am	Hacknix	The Grange 211 Ashley George Road, Oxford	\$10 Re. Surname and Jan Grange



## March



### 2026 Events

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	Cost
<b>March 2026</b>			
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	Flatwork	Harris Road	\$20
Sunday March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Harris Pegasus Team Trophies	TBA	TBA
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> March Order food 5.15 - speaker starts at 5.45	Speaker - Dinner	RSA spitfire	Member = \$2.00 Non-member = \$5.00
Saturday March 28 <sup>th</sup> - 10.00 feet in stirrups	Hacknix	West Melton Forest Horse Park <a href="https://www.sehwynconnect.co.nz/new-zealand/west-melton/activities/west-melton-forest-horse-park">https://www.sehwynconnect.co.nz/new-zealand/west-melton/activities/west-melton-forest-horse-park</a>	Bring lunch to share

## February



### 2026 Events

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	Cost
<b>February 2026</b>			
Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> February.	Rally. Show Hunter Robyn Woods	TBA	\$20
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> Feb Order food 5.15 - speaker starts at 5.45	Speaker - Dinner	RSA spitfire	Members \$2.00 Non-members \$5.00
Friday Feb 27 <sup>th</sup> - 10.00 feet in stirrups	Hacknix	Seafields Seafield Horse Park, Spencer Park. Open 8.00 am to 7.00pm (till 9pm summer ... The horse float park is available at Seafield Park - approx 65 Heyders Rd	Bring lunch to share



[www.waimakariridingclub.com](http://www.waimakariridingclub.com)

Castleridge Station - early January is full. We've potentially got a date for Castlehill trek but waiting to confirm for a date for that one.

<b>New Years Eve.</b> Please register on FB Member Events	Hacknix at Baynons. In a fine tradition for those who can meet at Baynons for a hack out, from 3pm and hacknix from 4.30pm or so...	Baynons break. If you don't know where this is please email message to club.	Bring food to share. We supply tea and coffee
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## November 2025. 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Camp.

There is a lot that could be said about our first annual camp. In fact we have five pages of feedback so the next organising committee will take points from that. However, the following are overwhelmingly the key points that we can take from it. Perhaps talk to one of the 20 people who attended and make up your mind for next year!

### Venue - Selwyn Equestrian Centre

Impressive in most respects. They allowed some to sleep in floats and some in bunks. Enabled us to go undercover in the storm that went through in the afternoon.

### Organisation. Vibe / atmosphere

- Supportive, kind, no drama.
- “Leave your stress at the gate” was noticed and appreciated.
- People felt seen and welcomed individually when they arrived.
- Strong sense of everyone helping everyone

### Coaches and lessons

- Loved the variety of coaches and approaches.
- Liked that coaches worked within each horse’s ability rather than forcing the full exercise.
- Many people said they learnt a lot and felt their horses tried really hard

### Demos, challenges and variety

- Demonstrations were a big positive.
- The line dancing came up several times as a highlight – fun, broke the ice, and got everyone laughing.
- Rowing / plank challenges were mentioned as pushed people out of their comfort zone
- People liked that there was always something to watch or do, but also permission to go have quiet time.

**In summary,** we are confident we have a good enough venue, which with some improvements in structure (more demos/lessons), we should put on the schedule for 2026 year. Ceciel and Phillipa with some help from committee did a fabulous job and we wish the new organisers all the best





## Team Building - Team Dressage Quest 2025

Waimakariri Riding Club (WRC) is fast becoming known for its innovative approach to events designed to bring equestrians from all over the South Island together for a great day out and this weekend was certainly no exception. Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October, saw the Team Quest event, now in its second year, being held at Rangiora Showgrounds in the morning with teams of three horse and rider combinations all competing at different levels using the Riding Club dressage tests. Despite the ever-challenging Canterbury nor Westerly winds causing arenas to blow down mid tests, the day was a tremendous success and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who took part. Teamwork does make the dream work! "Team sports do so much for camaraderie and helping to build confidence and participation that we wanted to create an event where riders could have a go at dressage and simultaneously learn and have fun with teammates who supported one another", says Gwen Gilmore, the Clubs Chairperson.

Some of the riders had only ever dreamed they would ride in a dressage test before the event and were encouraged onto a team by other club members.

Others were dusting off cobwebs after a winter of little riding due to battling adverse weather conditions and a lack of daylight hours and joined forces with unknown riders to make up a team. "What stood out on the day, was the shared passion and togetherness, not only between team members but across the teams as riders rooted for one another in spite of being on a rival team.

It felt like a real community which is what riding should be and as one rider wrote on FB the following day, "The team event was such fun – having the three of us riding together over six tests was just fantastic. There's something special about sharing the nerves, the giggles and the triumphs as a team." Congratulations to everyone who took part and to the winning team Generation Gap comprised of Karen Withell, Jorja Rose Parker and Nina Atkinson-Spiers. A huge thanks goes out to our sponsors without whom the event would not have been possible. Styx Landscaping for the beautiful rosettes and sashes, Generous prize money donated by Kathy and Bruce Chubb, meat for the BBQ supplied by Harris meats and goody bags supplied by Farmlands.

*Karen  
Withell's  
and  
Gwen's  
team*





## A Musical Affair! Musical Freestyle

The afternoon marked the second of the WRC 'Have a go' musical freestyle dressage competitions, one of the highlights for the club when it was launched in 2024.

Nineteen riders across the region took part and with the addition of a Test of Choice class for 2025, spectators were treated to some of the higher levels of riding skill.

Freestyles to music mean riders design a floorplan to incorporate specific required movements within an allotted time to make the best of the horse's gaits and then match this floorplan with music to fit the horse's movement and personality. With a focus on harmony and creativity, and music to match a horse's tempo exactly, it is a thrill to watch for spectators and judges alike.

*Pictured are: Gwen with the delightful Don Cruise BH, Andrea Marsden with all the class winners in the freestyle and Helen Bowler with her Domingo.*

The whole day is best summed up by the comments of those who took part and here's what they had to say:

"It was my first ever attempt at a musical ...I'm in total awe of everyone – the creativity, the music choices and how beautifully each horse and rider matched their routines. Days like these remind me how this club is so special and fun to be part of." Belinda Thomas.

"Here's to more great days like this ahead with our amazing WRC community" Monica Reitveld

Each of the winners got to take home a beautiful horse's head trophy and rosettes and sashes all provided by sponsors Andrea and Chris Marsden.

A generous voucher was donated Musical Freestyles by Lucy Cochrane for the judge's choice which was awarded to Wendy Price, winner of the Test of Choice class.





## South Island Teams Event.

There was no stopping the New Zealand Riding Club's South Island Teams Event from going ahead in 2025. After eight years of not being held WRC hosted eleven teams of four to six riders and 61 horses traversed the island and road detours to participate in the two-day event, at Kaiapoi Pony Club grounds, over Labour Weekend. "It was wonderful to have adult riding clubs coming together and in the spirit of this event, having fun and giving things a go. The feedback has been extremely positive, and its thanks to the commitment of everyone who attended monthly meetings and the team volunteers that made it a success", says SITES Chair Gwen Gilmore. WRC members shouldered a significant amount of volunteering including the Friday night BBQ, Saturday and Sunday judging and general set up help.

Events included a dressage test, Show-cross paired jumping, Jigsaw circuit of poles/jumps, Mounted Games, and CTR trail ride/ Word Find.

Team 'Enter at A, X Menopause' was the overall team winner, with Mane Event 2nd, Aoraki Western 3rd, followed by Heels Down Tits Up, Riders on the Storm, TellyhoTrekks, Well Seasoned, Navy Steals, North Otago Composite Team, The Advocators and The Roydvale Rockets. Of note however, was that WRC members supported at least 4 other teams including the winning team.

Individual, overall winner of the six Horse Events was Belinda Thomas and Team Sportsmanship went to the Advocators, made up of three ClydieXs, a Cob and TB and their vocal young groom. Thanks to the generosity of business sponsorship across the island, SITE was in a position to recognise individuals and their accomplishments with wonderful prizes. We wish to thank each and every individual and business for helping to make this Event a success. Looking ahead, the SITES team will debrief and announce plans for 2026. The intention is that the host club is moved around the South Island motu but we may help the new organising committee and chair. Watch this space.



The winning team Enter at A, X Menopause, Gwen in Riding Club Mount and The Mane Event. Pictured is also the NZ Riding Club Patron, Jennifer Howard who did the presentations.

Thanks Jennifer



## A Community saddles up for Christmas Ribbon Day 2025 -

An impressive turnout of 75 horse and rider combinations from across Canterbury and the South Island came along to the Waimakariri Riding Club (WRC) Ribbon Day on 13th December, to showcase their horsemanship. The event, held at the Kaiapoi Pony Club grounds, exceeded expectations drawing riders of all ages and experience together and demonstrating the depth and diversity of the local equestrian community.

The atmosphere was undoubtedly one of celebration and camaraderie as riders supported and cheered one another on regardless of placings and as one competitor remarked in a follow-up email, "there were smiles all round wherever I looked." Classes covered a wide range of breeds and types, making the event as inclusive as possible and for some riders who were braving their first outing into the showing, the relaxed and welcoming environment was helpful as a stepping stone to more events in future. A highlight too was the constructive feedback offered by the judges, which reinforced the educational tone of the day.



The fancy dress event which took place in the middle of the day was a real showstopper. So much time and effort had gone into the costumes on display and the judges were hard pressed to choose their winner. First place was finally awarded to five year old Joziah Aukusitino who was dressed up as Santa Claus with his horse Max masquerading as Rudolph pulling a sleigh and they were led by Mrs Claus (ten year old sister Sienna). Pictured here.

WRC want to make a huge shout out to the large number of generous sponsors around Canterbury who came forward to support this day with goodies and vouchers for all the competitors. The generosity of so many businesses made this day possible. In particular, Rhiannon Moss who sponsored rugs for the supreme winners in the led and ridden rings. And as with any event of this size, the excellent organisation and dedication of the judges and volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes are what enabled the day to happen and run so smoothly.

Each ring had a Champion winner and each of those Champion went forward into the Supreme Championship class at the end of the day. The morning supreme champion was our own *Gus Benzie on her lovely pinto Stella*. Pictured to the left. The combination who were crowned Supreme Champion ridden were the wonderful combination of *Annabelle Bertie riding Windermere Gloriana*. Pictured below. Thanks to everyone who came along and we look forward to seeing you all the Ribbon Day





# Sponsorship for Christmas Ribbon Day.

*Thanks to our Fabulous Sponsors  
Without your generous sponsorship these days would not happen!!!*



Bennington Park – Sarah Dring

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<https://www.facebook.com/BenningtonParkTrainingRehabCentre/>



<https://harnesshero.nz/about/industry-benefits/>

<https://srblaw.co.nz/> Christchurch and Rangiora



<https://www.smallbusinesssolutions.co.nz/>



[HelenB@kindredcentre.nz](mailto:HelenB@kindredcentre.nz)



<https://www.stewartcivil.co.nz/>



<https://equisolnz.com/>

<https://abobcatquy.co.nz/>

Many thanks to Rhiannon Moss for sponsorship of rugs for Supreme led and Supreme Ridden Champions.

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## Speaker Dinners

### Sarah Elcomb

Sarah's september address was a fascinating and most interesting reflection on her Masters of Equine Science! Who knew that mapping genomes, gait analysis, changes in the centre of gravity and the history of the horse could be so interesting! Thanks very much Sarah.

### Tracy Moir



Tracy bought us more benefits than a very interesting talk! Yes an exclusive discount. Most appreciated Tracy

### Next year's speaker-dinner dates

25 FEB 2026, WED

25 MAR 2026, WED

22 APR 2026, WED

27 MAY 2026, WED

24 JUN 2026, WED

22 JUL 2026, WED

26 AUG 2026, WED

23 SEP 2026, WED

28 OCT 2026, WED

25 NOV 2026, WED

### Jody Hartstone

Jody Hartstone delivered on her Equine Catalyst tag line last evening to over 56 horse riders at the Waimakariri Riding Club monthly speaker dinner event on Wednesday, 26th November. A catalyst means to precipitate or develop an event or situation! She certainly did that. There were two aspects to Jody being present at the speaker dinner event. First, it was to support the WRC's ambition to provide high-quality education and training for its members and guests. Second, Jody was there to support the Riding for Disabled Assn by encouraging donations. She achieved both to a superb standard.

Her presentation covered the 10 First Principles of Horse Training. These are scientific principles now being used by increasing numbers of coaches and horse-related organisations to improve horse welfare and rider safety. The principles include learning theory, yes horses learn as do riders, horse cognition and natural behaviours, bio-mechanics, psychology and sport science.

Indeed, rider and horse safety is the first principle that Jody spoke about! She highlighted the need for safe use of tools, equipment and environment recognising the dangers of inconsistent or confusing signals, ensuring a good match between horse and rider. The second principle involves regard for the nature of horses, so identify signs of pain and respect for the social nature of horses, for example! You get the idea. A dense, well-defined and intense presentation.

So, what did the audience think? "I wish I had known this 40 years ago". "I was absolutely engrossed, lots of reminders and some new things". "Informative and entertaining".

Plus, Jody and some of the committee from the local RDA spoke about the local organisation and forms of support that were welcomed. Jody also raised \$100 for the RDA organization. What a way to finish the Waimakariri Riding Club speaker dinners for the year!

*The talk is available on Youtube or check out her Equine Catalyst website*



## Hacknix and Christmas Party

Our only Hacknix in the last three months has been Whiterock Mains! And it was a ride of several parts. Great weather, some new members out riding, several groups that made good use of the day and a rider fall.

Fortunately, the rider is OK. We were lucky that Ceciel was there to take our rider off to doctors and for all the necessary checkups! We were also lucky we have plenty of trained first aiders and a lovely first aid kit with concussion guidelines.

It was Ceciel's birthday so those of us who were left had lovely birthday cake!



*A note about airvests or other safety gear when riding with us. Where you think you need it please wear it. Be considerate and respectful of others.*





## Members Enclosure Club Merchandise Orders

Kirsten Regos is your new club merchandise person. Order by using this jotform Back printing logo add \$11



\$78



\$23



\$88



\$58



\$148



## The often thought about but not talked about subject of ‘What happens to our horses when we pass away?’

Death is often something we don't like to discuss especially in our youth, but as time passes we become more accustomed to the fact that everyone must and does go towards this final transition and destination.

For those of us who have horses, we especially understand the daily tasks we undertake to ensure their needs are taken care of. After all, they are in our care and domestic, not running free on the plains. So what happens when we pass? What happens to their daily care? Do you have a plan?

I kind of did, but not really anything concrete. I had spoken to a friend and we made a pact she would take mine and I would take hers. How this came about after knowing this person for a few years and noticing we had the same ethos towards the care of our horses. So I broached the subject and asked her one day what she thought about taking my ridden horse if something happened to me. After this we decided that we should formalize this into a written document that we could each follow if the other were to pass away. We came up with a simple guide for the other and our loved ones to be aware of our wishes.

So in case you might like to have a think about what would happen to your horses ( and other animals) this is what we came up with.

- Have your friends' partners/ loved ones contact numbers in your phone in the event you have to contact them urgently.
- Have a written plan of action: this involves in the event of sudden death or near death.
- I have a structured plan of what happens. My friend has a copy and I will have her copy.
- There are two parts to planning for your horse and your death

### **PART ONE**

- At my Death or before imminent Death. ( if I can no longer care for the horse)
- The Horse is taken to the property of the caregiver/ friend.
- If sudden death occurs, the horse will be taken to caregivers' property forthwith so the family does not have to worry about the animals' care
- ALL GEAR: Everything to be given to the caregiver at no charge,
- HAY FEED: all taken to new property at no charge, cartage etc.. organised by the caregiver and paid for by my partner.
- Once the horse has settled and all gear is at caregivers then the next part is actioned.

*continued over*



### **PART TWO:**

- As I have 2 horses, only one will be taken to my friend's house. The other horse in my care cannot be rehomed. I have made the decision to have him euthanized by a vet. My friend, when she is ready, will make the arrangements and take care of this. It has been documented how and where and when etc..
- My partner will assist and take care of the costs.

### **FINANCES:**

My thoughts were that I did not want the financial burden placed on my friend for taking another horse in. It is enough that they agreed to do this and I understand as do they, the commitment is for the life of the horse. In this case I would not want the horse to be sold and would prefer if the horse could not be taken care of, for any reason, it too would be euthanized. So I have given permission for my horse float to be given as payment to the caregiver who can do with it as she wishes. Change of ownership to be done so its legal. This should at least provide money for a number of years to offset the upkeep of the horse.

There are of course a lot more variables and each situation will have their own unique set of needs.

In my case my husband would not understand the needs of my animals ( even though he is a capable person he really doesn't know how to look after my horses) and it would not be fair to expect him to either. That is why I have chosen this pathway.

### **MAKE A LIST:**

So now my friend has a list of all the things my horse needs from the right trim for his feet and dentist to his funny quirks like never feeding him magnesium! I found once I wrote down all the things I had found over the years that worked, it helped me to relax a bit about someone taking care of him. I know I won't be around but somehow just having passed on this information made it feel like I had done all I could to ensure my horses needs would be taken care of.

### **Finally:**

- Have the list signed by your loved one and designated person that they agree to the plan.
- Give each a copy and it can be changed or updated at any time.

So in the meantime lets just enjoy our charges for the time we have, they are of course not really ours but in our care for the short time we have the pleasure of being in their world.

***So as the saying goes 'Trust in God but tie up your Camel' ( in our case our horses!)***



Shine Counselling Services North Canterbury  
DipCounselling 2005  
ACC Registered  
MNZAC  
Equine Assisted Therapy.

[www.waimakaririridingclub.com](http://www.waimakaririridingclub.com)



# Committee Matters

## Committee matters

Raffles. A huge thanks to Equisol (Kym Murdoch) and A Bobcat Guy (Elly Thomson) who sponsored the Vetpro raffle.

**Pictured Wendy Bennett, winner, and Gwen handing over the goodies.**

**WAIMAKARIRI RIDING CLUB**

\$10 per ticket  
\$20 for 3 tickets

**FUNDRAISING RAFFLE**  
VetPro First Aid Kit Combo for Horse & Rider

Valued at **\$225**

Proudly sponsored by:

EquiSol NZ  
A Bobcat Guy  
vetpro



## Minutes matters: Other Sept to Dec meeting information

Thanks everyone for work and enthusiasm. In January we will be looking at the year ahead, planning events, budgeting and generally getting out in the big world with our equine friends

## Treasury or how well are we doing with our events?

Pretty well we think. Mostly, thanks to all the voluntary work from people over this very busy period.

Figures below are rounded

### WRC Christmas Ribbon Day

Event Surplus \$2600



Vet pro raffle = 1440  
 BBQ - total of 3 = 1000  
 Fence Judging = 925  
 Monthly Dinners = 840

### Team Dressage Quest

\$1240



Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us to you