

Chair: Carol Paterson

Secretary: Shannon Durrant

National Patron: Gillian Rolton OAM



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MEDIA RELEASE

Pony Club Pathways to the World

It was 1983 when Sheila Oorschot was a member of the Pony Club Australia team for the Inter-Pacific Championships in Japan. This week Sheila leaves for Tryon, NC, USA as Coach of the 2017 team, demonstrating the life-long association Pony Club members have with the organisation.

Sheila has been a member of Pony Club since immigrating to Australia from Africa in the late 1960's. Sheila competed at state level for Coomabidgup and then Munglinup Pony Clubs and achieved her B certificate.

As the highlight of her riding career, Sheila took her place in the 1983 Inter-Pacific team alongside John Hamilton, Tasmania; Scott Keach, SA; Christine O'Neill, NSW; Jenny Poole, Queensland; and Michael Smith, Victoria. The team competed in Japan against teams from Canada, New Zealand, 'Far East', Japan and Great Britain.

"In 1983 we did the scrambled ODE and the Nations' Cup Showjumping using different horses for each event. Very different in those days as there were no hard-and-fast gear rules and the competition rules for both events fitted on two pages."

Pony Club has been a big part of Sheila's life with three daughters going through the ranks at Esperance Pony Club and Sheila in the role of Chief Coach at the club. In 2016, Sheila was coach of the Pony Club Australia International Tetrathlon team that competed in Ireland.

Sheila continues to compete in eventing, showjumping and dressage on her off-the-track Thoroughbred and has her racehorse trainer's license.

"The trip in 1983 was a life changing experience and I formed some great friendships which to this day I still keep in contact with. I am honoured to be coach of the Australian team going to South Carolina in 2017. I also feel I had such a great learning journey through my Pony Club career it is time to give back."

The 2017 Pony Club Australia team for the Inter-Pacific Championships - Adeline Collins, Blake Jones, Milly Patton and Serina Ridge – will compete at Tryon, the venue for the 2018 World Equestrian Games.



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The 1983 team, left to right, Jenny Poole, Michael Smith, Sheila Oorschot, Team Manager Ern Barker, Scott Keach, Christine O'Neill, John Hamilton.



Sheila Oorschot with some of her horses today

For more information, please contact

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About Pony Club Australia

Pony Club Australia is a not-for-profit National Sporting Organisation recognised by the Australian Sporting Commission. PCA has over 40,000 members and 860 clubs making it the largest equestrian organisation in Australia. PCA is delivering equestrian education to young people across Australia and in China with an emphasis on safety, skill, animal welfare and fun.

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The Australian Government through the Australian Sports Commission recognises Pony Club Australia to develop Pony Club in Australia.

The financial support of the Australian Sports Commission is gratefully acknowledged.



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission