

Date: 17th May 2017

Cootamundra RDA – Horse Rug Grant.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Cootamundra branch of Riding for the Disabled (NSW), (RDA), has been successful with their grant application to purchase new horse rugs through the Stronger Communities Fund, a program by the NSW State Government and in partnership with the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council. The rugs have arrived just in time, ready for winter, ensuring the horses will be warm and dry throughout our chilly winter months.

Riding for the Disabled (NSW) provides people with a disability the beneficial activities connected with horse riding. It is a unique form of exercise and rehabilitation. The complex movement improves coordination, balance, muscular development and fitness. These activities assist disabled people with personal confidence, self-esteem, communication skills and trust. Personal control significantly improves their behaviour towards family, teachers and friends.

In the past the Cootamundra RDA has relied on donations of used horse rugs, however these don't last long, and need to be patched numerous times.

Many of the local RDA horse are getting on in years, it's important to protect them from the weather. Keeping the horse warm particularly in winter, means it's comfortable and less stiff on those frosty mornings when sessions begin at 9.30am.

Cootamundra RDA (NSW) Centre Secretary Olwen Smith said "our horses are irreplaceable because of the thorough training they have undertaken to accept disabled riders and their idiosyncrasies."

Cootamundra – Gundagai Regional Council's Administrator Stephen Sykes said. There was a real need here.

"This was one of the smallest grants awarded, but the reward and benefits are huge, keeping these horses warm through winter will ensure the health and well-being of these animals, who in turn do so much for the disabled in the Cootamundra region", he said.

The long term benefits of the new rugs and keeping the horses warm and dry, will help keep them working for longer, allow the RDA to continue with the early morning starts in winter and eliminates the need for extra feeding supplements that can be expensive.

Member for Cootamundra Katrina Hodgkinson MP said it is great the NSW Government's Stronger Communities program is supporting the work of a wide variety of local organisations.

"The Cootamundra RDA helps to foster a very special connection for participants with animals and the outdoors," Katrina said.

"I'm pleased this funding will help to enhance their ongoing efforts to make it a rewarding experience for all involved."

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Volunteers will maintain and repair the rugs as required, and they will be professionally cleaned by our local laundry, Elouera where many of the employees have gained confidence and enjoyed the RDA experience first-hand.

END

Caption: (Buddy and his coat)

Cootamundra's Riding for Disabled, pony Buddy showing off his new red rug, is pictured (left to right) with Cootamundra RDA president Trish Taylor, RDA (NSW) director Olwen Smith and student Tamara Taylor. Buddy was all rugged up in his new horse rug purchased with funds from a grant received through the Stronger Communities Fund.



Caption: (Presentation of plaque)

Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council Administrator Stephen Sykes, presents Cootamundra RDA president Trish Taylor (left) and RDA (NSW) director Olwen Smith with the Stronger Communities Fund plaque, recognising the grant received by Cootamundra Riding for Disabled NSW (RDA) for the purchase of new horse rugs, for the centres horses.



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