

## Youth takes the lead in sharing the horse keeping and land management story

Six young people, with an average age of 14 years, recently took part in a three-day workshop to learn filmmaking skills.

Mentored by staff from the Directing the Hero program, the youths had five key land management messages that they were asked to share with other horse owners their age.

The messages were:

- 1 maintain groundcover,
- 2 manure management,
- 3 protect watercourses,
- 4 get rid of dust and mud, and
- 5 weed management.

What was developed is like no other land management and horse keeping film ever!

Who would have thought that Detective Hamish of Horse CSI would solve a weed problem, that Purer-Trough would be such a nifty new product, a bargain-basement sale of cheap dust and mud-ridden land would occur or that an advert could be made promoting healthy pastures over hair shampoo as being a better product for your horse!

This short DVD of around six minutes will be attractive to the horse owning age group of 10-17 years which is the highest membership component of Pony Club Australia and Equestrian Australia, covering more than 10,000 people.

Mind you, at the 'Director's cut' showing, the 'oldies' had a good laugh too. The film is uploaded to <http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=GH-omQY3aY8>

The project was funded through a range of youth arts programs, the Environment Protection Authority (Watershed Protection Office), Melbourne Water, the Adelaide & Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board and Horse Owners of the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges. The film was produced through Tallstoreez Productionz.

## Port Lincoln hosts Field Day

On the last Saturday of November, around 15 horse property managers from the South Australian regional town of Port Lincoln met for a HorsesLandWater workshop.

The topics of discussion had a focus on rotational grazing and maintenance of ground cover.

Port Lincoln has a strong fishing industry base, with seasonal race meetings and a strong equestrian component. As the town offers a range of well-paid jobs, there is an increasing number of small properties now being found around the town boundaries.



The young film makers at work.

Photos courtesy of 'The Hero Project', Tallstoreez Productionz Pty Ltd



## Do you have horses in the Top End?

Do you own or manage a horse property in the Darwin region?

Would you like to attend a workshop on how to develop a property management plan for your property?

Would you like to benefit from a mentor assisting you along the way?

Registrations of interest are now being taken for interested persons to participate in this program, to take place in first part of 2009. The HorsesLandWater NT project has funding to provide an NT-based mentor to assist horse owners in this most important area.

Enquiries to Julie Fiedler, mobile 0402 488 306 or email [horsesa@horsesa.asn.au](mailto:horsesa@horsesa.asn.au)

## The way that horses graze and dung affects the pasture

A typical poorly-managed horse paddock has areas of long, rank grass and weeds (called 'roughs') and areas that are overgrazed (called 'lawns').

This occurs because horses group their dung in certain areas of the paddock. These areas tend to get larger over time as the horses continue to dung on the outside the area.

Horses do not like to graze near or over their own dung because of the parasitic 'worms' that they pick up from their dung. As these areas do not get grazed and receive large amounts of fertiliser (from the dung) the grass and weeds grow long and rank.

The other areas in the paddock where the horses do not drop dung (the lawns) tend to get over-eaten. If horses are left to their own devices these overgrazed areas will become bare and compacted as horses are able to graze right to the ground with their sharp incisor teeth.

In fact, over time the paddock will have little if any available grazing and will have a large imbalance of nutrients as the horse continuously takes from the lawns (by grazing) and deposits (dung) in the roughs. Manure is high in potassium, phosphorus and magnesium. Therefore the roughs receive lots of fertiliser from manure and the lawns do not

It is possible to reduce the effects of this behaviour by utilising good grazing management practices and manure management practices such as slashing and harrowing paddocks (breaking manure into smaller pieces) once the animals have been rotated on to another paddock.

The paddock then requires a period of rest and recuperation before horses are allowed back onto it. This period varies in length dependent upon season, climatic conditions, soil type, grass species etc, but a responsible property owner should learn to 'eyeball' the condition of their paddock in the same way they do the condition of their horses.



*Good grazing and manure management will avoid 'horse-sick' paddocks like the one above.*

## Horse owners helping themselves

### Case study: Horse Owners of the Mount Lofty Ranges (HOSMLR) – [www.horseowners.info](http://www.horseowners.info)

HOSMLR is a small organisation of fewer than 30 horse owners local to the area of Cherry Gardens, in the City of Onkaparinga. Established more than 25 years ago to service members in the dual areas of recreational horse trails and the promotion of good land management practices related to horse keeping. HOSMLR is an incorporated body.

Meeting only a couple of times per year, the small group decides on a horse keeping awareness activity and has updates and determines actions for the ongoing recreational trails issues. Most horse keeping activities revolve around seeking a grant, or being a partner in another project sponsored by a larger organisation.

In the past few years field days and workshops have been held and several publications produced, including an *Agistment* brochure, *Guide to buying your first horse property* brochure and a Calendar linked to land management. You will even see their name on a short DVD produced by youth (see lead story) – so nothing is too hard! HOSMLR is also the founding organisation behind Horse SA.

Have you thought of starting a horse owners group in your region?

This newsletter is a key activity of the project 'Managing Horse Grazing Pressures in Peri-Urban Environments' and has been funded by a Landcare Sustainable Practices grant under the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Initiative.

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

Please promote through your club or horse-related business website, noticeboard or newsletter.

**HorsesLandWater Corporate and Community Programs:** HorsesLandWater staff and volunteers are able to offer a range of programs tailored to suit horse keepers in your local area. Specialising in capacity building programs which engage the key stakeholders – horse owners, land management technical advisors, government agencies at all levels, research and educational institutions. The team also has experience in resource development, educational programs and related activities.

Please contact Julie Fiedler – email [horsesa@horsesa.asn.au](mailto:horsesa@horsesa.asn.au) or phone 618 8294 2460