

# Reining In

The Newsletter from Hope Reins Inc.

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## CHOOSING HOPE IS OUR CHALLENGE

We started the year with a lot of use of the 20/20 vision idea projecting purpose and planning onto a new decade. The long drought and the devastating fires that were relieved by rain and green pastures caused our hopes to start to soar. The way ahead seemed clear and bright.

And then everything plummeted and our very way of life changed because everything that we had taken for granted – our freedom of choice, our comfort, our certainty – was under threat. Our devastation was not from another country through acts of war, but from each other – and sometimes from acts of love. All because of a virus that can be transmitted by human touch and closeness. No longer able to hug, shake hands or come into any contact at all, we have been advised to socially isolate, remove ourselves from gathering places and stay home.

We now realise what social beings we are. How important family and community are in our lives. How thankful we are for the small things and how selfish behaviour is a violation of all of us and selfless behaviour worthy of note and celebration.

It would be easy to live in a headspace of despair and gloom if we focussed our minds on all that we can see on the television. Whilst we need to keep informed, we also need to be wise.

How do we find hope for the months to come?  
How do we get through this time as a local, national and global community?  
How do we move forward into the next few months, let alone think of 2021!  
How do we generate hope when all around seems hopeless?



Whilst some of us have more “the glass is half full personalities” we believe we all have the ability to build hope in our lives. And it begins by building gratitude. If we are thankful for what we have and can name these things (by writing them down), it changes our thought patterns. An attitude of gratitude may need nurturing but as we identify those things for which we are thankful, then we begin to feel joy and as we continue to be thankful, our joy blossoms into a more hopeful enthusiasm for life.

So what are you thankful for? Why not start a list today. And maybe you would like to join our 30 days of Hope Challenge on Facebook. The Hope Challenge is to deliberately add to your thankful list everyday. This is not easy. Not that we aren't thankful but sometimes to take the time to write it down is hard. But as we do, and in those hard times, our list is going to help us find joy and bring hope back into our lives.

### Our Mission

**Rescue**  
*the equine*

**Restore**  
*Relationships*  
*trust and hope*

**Recreate**  
*and transform*  
*the whole person*

**HOPE  
REINS:  
WHERE  
HORSES  
AND  
HUMANS  
ARE  
HEALING  
TOGETHER**

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# Australia: a Land of Drought and Rain

## What is drought?

According to National Geographic, "a drought is a period of time when an area experiences below-normal precipitation". When little or no rain falls, soils dry out and plants, pastures & crops may begin to die; water levels in streams, rivers and dams declines. When ongoing, this lack of available water can become a drought. As a result of drought, water must be pumped from bores, or trucked in from other areas; stock feed prices such as hay and grains rise significantly as demand outstrips supply. Farmers may not be able to care for their stock, forcing them to either sell or euthanise their animals.

## Who says it's a drought?

Drought is declared by each State Government who consider not only the rainfall needs of the area, but also social and economic impact of the lack of rainfall. Along with 'drought declared' status come a range of economic supports for people, farms, and businesses (but alas, not for charities like Hope Reins).

## What did it mean for us?

As at 1 December 2019, the Gympie Council region was drought declared, along with over 67% of Queensland. While our region was added to 'drought declared' status at this time, many other regions in Queensland—and across Australia—have been in drought for some time. As a result, there have been many impacts on Hope Reins:

- Our dams have been the lowest ever and rainwater tanks were quickly depleted. Through the worst of the drought, we were buying truckloads of water
- Shannon Godwin, Technical Advisor of Gympie-based Ag Solutions, states that horse's MUST receive at least 1.5% of their bodyweight each day in forage – 7.5kg/day for a 500kg horse. Forage is important, but does not provide all the nutrition a horse needs, as many vitamins and minerals are lacking. So along with hay, our supplementary feed regime also had to increase
- For much of last year, our feed bills were around \$2,000 a week (compared to roughly \$1,000/week normally)
- It was significantly stressful for Kylie as she spent many long hours on the phone, trying to source hay. The hay we did find was trucked up from Victoria or down from northern Qld, with transport costs adding to the bill
- Throughout much of the drought, there was an average of 10 horses a week offered to Hope Reins as horse lovers near and far tried to find a good home for the animals that they could no longer afford to keep
- The mental and emotional health of our horses suffered, as they competed for every last blade of grass, hay, straw or weed that was available, becoming cranky in the ongoing heat and fighting each other over nothing
- The mental and emotional health of Kylie, Ruth and the Hope Reins team also suffered as the possibility of needing to reduce our stock numbers increased on a daily basis. How do we choose which horses to keep and which to put down? They are all our family and mean so much to so many



Our dam got even lower than this, and then it rained!



## It's rained! So the drought is broken - isn't it?

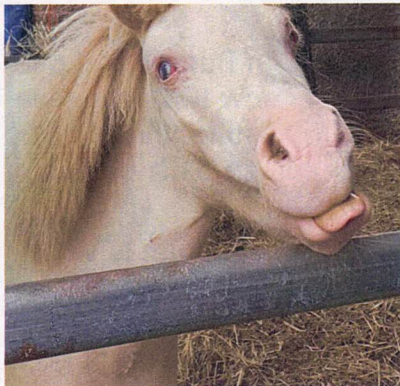
At its core, drought is not enough rainfall to meet the needs of people, land, stock, crops and pastures. Therefore, a drought is broken only when there is enough rain to meet both immediate and longer-term requirements for water. Depending on the length and severity of the drought, it could take many months of above-average rainfall before enough water is available to meet needs – before the drought is broken.

## What does it mean for us?

The recent rains since late January have been a welcome relief. The grass is growing again, and the horses are not competing with each other for feed.

- Our pasture is green and growing again, and able to provide some of the vitamins and minerals that horses require
- The death of many of our pasture grasses because of the drought mean that weeds are taking over
- We are continuing to feed out hay in order to try to conserve our pastures, and allow the grasses to grow and hopefully out-compete some of the weeds
- A lot of the rain we have had is good soil soaking rain, but with little runoff, so our dams are still very low





## Lightning 'Strikes'

Jake joined the Hope Reins team as a young volunteer in 2019 after completing our Connect programme. What an amazing young man he is!

The moment Jake came to Hope Reins he was smitten with Lightning. Lightning is a miniature horse and came to us with infections in his eyes that had caused him to become blind.

Jake is not the tallest of young people. So he immediately connected with Lightning's stature as our smallest horse! Jake's heart and compassion were stirred by Lightning's story of abandonment and the resulting blindness.

In order to be near Lightning, people need to be calm and relaxed. This builds trust in this little horse who is trying to make sense of his environment.

Jake found sitting still difficult. His restlessness and size had caused him to develop an aggressiveness that was not appreciated at his school. It sometimes resulted in him not being able to attend school. Likewise on the footy field. Jake's aggression would sometimes cause him to be sent off.

But that is all changed. Jake realised that he needed to change his behaviour and he did that by imagining Lightning was with him. An aggressive response would mean he would scare Lightning. If he didn't remain calm, it would scare Lightning. Jake was able to change his behaviour, because he loved this little horse.

Jake is now rarely in trouble and he is doing chores in order to sponsor Lightning and help pay for his care needs. Hope Reins has been able to give Lightning another chance, and Lightning has been able to do the same for Jake.



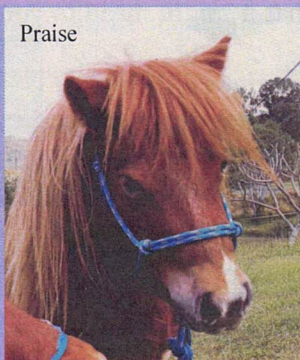
## Healing From A Horse

Kelly and Praise

Kelly was a gift to us from John and Judy Kropp in the Mary Valley because they knew we needed a reliable riding horse to use within our programmes. Kelly is the first foal from Cheeky – who John also gifted to us a number of years ago. She was the workaholic horse referred to in the video on our website.

Kelly had been here not even a day when Kylie noticed she had colic like symptoms. We had been very careful with her feed as too much too soon of new feed can cause colic in horses. We called the vet and his prognosis was not good. He felt that there might be a major issue in her gut and did not hold out much hope for her survival. We prayed for her. Kelly means "warrior" so we knew she was in the fight for her life.

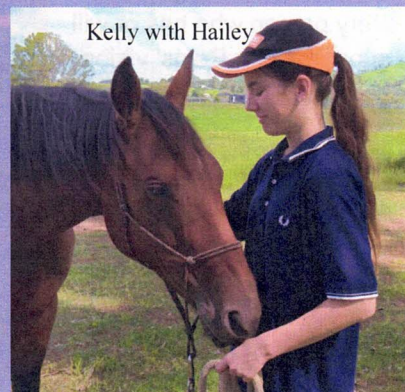
All the time we were treating Kelly we could not help remember Praise who had colic at the end of last year. The same vet attended her. Her pain increased rapidly. We prayed for her. She died.



Praise

God is a God of miracles and we see them often. But he is God and we can't begin to know all that he does or why. Praise's death is a reminder to us to praise Him in all circumstances—not just the good ones. In all times of our life, in all seasons, whether in drought or in rain, we choose to offer praise and worship to our God.

Kelly survived against all odds and is now paddocked with her mum Cheeky. The two are best friends. But that's a story for another day!



Kelly with Hailey



## Our Values

Compassion

Hope

Relationships

Integrity

Safety

Teamwork

## Donating

Hope Reins is a not-for-profit organisation with deductible gift recipient status. This means that donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.



Direct Deposit to our Bank

Bendigo Bank

BSB: 633 000

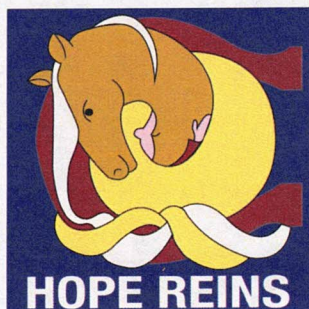
Acc: 160542924

And don't forget to email us so we can send you a receipt for tax: [finances@hopereins.org.au](mailto:finances@hopereins.org.au)

Cheques are payable to Hope Reins Inc.

Secure donations can also be made on our website through PayPal.

We are immensely grateful for every person who has or will support Hope Reins' vision



## The Secret Garden

*The Secret Garden* is a novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett first published 1911. Set in England, it tells the story of how two disagreeable children found healing and wholeness in nature through the means of bringing a garden back to life. It is seen as a classic of English children's literature.

At Hope Reins we have a secret garden - or at least that is what it feels like when you work there! For much of last year we were trying to construct walls to terrace the garden in order for us to put in wick-ed garden beds. While we were in drought, the weeds did not grow and we were able to progress.

Then the welcome rains of February came and so did the weeds!



Now you cannot even see the walls and finding steps is like a treasure.

We will get the garden back and it is our goal for it to be productive this year. It will take a communal effort, but it will become a focus of our Hope Reins jobs for future programmes.

## Hope Reins Programmes:

*Unfortunately we will be unable to run our normal programmes or start new volunteers until current restrictions are no longer in place.*

When we are back to running programmes we will be starting a new programme for 8-12 year olds called **HorsePlay Club**. It will occur twice a term, after school hours.

We also hope to have some Sunday afternoons as **Family Funday Sunday**. More about this later.

This year we were also hoping to have our **Pot Hope** dinners return particularly at the end of each term as a way of participants families interacting and meeting our team, including our horses.

We will be continuing our one-on-one programme **C5**—where we focus on Communication, Care, Commitment, Consistency and Courage—needed to look after horses and ourselves

Our **Connect** programme will also continue for our teen aged participants. This programme has some individual and group sessions and is focussed on not only what it takes to connect with a horse, but what it might mean to connect with ourselves and each other.

Our **Brave On** programme for Women will also continue. This is a non-ridden programme challenging women to find their courage with horses but also with themselves and the life situations they have and are facing.

At present our **Mentoring and Leadership** of our Young Volunteers continues and as many of our volunteers who can are still coming and helping care for our horses. We have site restrictions of numbers and new safety procedures in place, but we are doing all we can to continue to care for our horses and their environment so we will be able, when the time is right, to provide the programmes that we know are changing lives.