

## Regenerating ESA Driving in South Australia

*Text and Images by Lisa McDonald, ESA Driving Discipline Committee*

Many of us who are interested in driving horses have been busy over the past year or so despite the Covid-19 pandemic having touched all our lives. We have been schooling our carriage ponies and larger breeds in anticipation of a return to competition and greater social freedoms afforded by new vaccines. Fortunately, caring for and schooling our horses has kept us focused on the future and how to regenerate people's interests in the elegant and skilful discipline of driving horses.

To help facilitate greater interest in the sport, the ESA Driving Discipline Committee has collaborated with the EA affiliated Angas Harness Driving Club (AHDC) to develop a program of information and instruction covering as many aspects of driving as possible. This two-day event was held in mid-May at Kirkcaldy Park in Meadows, SA, and attracted significant interest from people wanting to try a new horse sport, as well as those already experienced in other equestrian disciplines.

Well recognised as the oldest equestrian sport in the world, and recently having an elevated profile through the passing of former FEI President HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, carriage driving in SA is ready to attract new interest if indications at our May event are any indication. The program included all aspects of harnessing up and correct fitting of harness and carriage for singles and pairs, with AHDC President Jackie Boyd handling the former, and accomplished pairs driver Kim Branch demonstrating how it's done with larger breeds in pairs harness.



**Jackie Boyd with Marie Jarrett assisting in explaining harnessing up with Hunter.**



**Kim Branch showing the weight of the pairs harnesses, with Jackie Boyd assisting.**



**Kim Branch with Greg Norris driving Steinway (L) and Ozzie (R) skilfully around the top arena.**

ESA Driving Discipline Committee Chair, and AHDC Secretary, Anne Lindh, brought both Hackney and Shetland ponies with which to demonstrate long reining and give driving lessons, with Jackie Boyd doing similarly with star Haflinger pony, Hunter.



**Anne Lindh long reining Hackney pony Toby.**



**Haflinger pony Hunter showing us the long reining ropes at Kirkcaldy Park.**

This event marks what we hope is the turning point in ESA driving during what has become known as the 'new normal' post-Covid. To build on this positive momentum, on June 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> we will present accomplished Victorian driver and coach Jodie McKeone whose skills range from Show Driving to CDE, as well as horse wrangling in the Australian film industry. Individual lessons with Jodie will be held at Kirkcaldy Park. Join us on [Facebook](#) for further information or let us know you're interested by contacting Driving SA Committee Chair [Anne Lindh](#).

It's a great privilege to experience the power and grace of the horses who share our lives. The Driving SA Discipline Committee is grateful for the support of ESA in funding these events and looks forward to building further collaborative relationships through education and enterprise.