

Ray & I moved down to Lismore from the Northern Territory in July 1993. We joined the Summerland Dressage Club soon after that.

I was appointed as Dressage Coordinator & have remained in that position ever since (approximately 25 years). Time someone stood up to take on this job.

Ray soon took over the position of Treasurer which he held for about 16 years when he retired.

We had a very close friend (the late Judy Cubitt, an A level judge) who used to come up regularly to do judges seminars for the club in the early days. She was my mentor & had a great influence over my judging. She always used to say to me, always try & find a positive first when judging & don't look for the negatives because they usually stand out. With Judy Mason's help Ray & I started the first Far North Coast Championships in the late 1990's. The first one being held at Murwillumbah hoping they would come on board & make it a really big show. Our first major sponsor was City Toyota Lismore. I was lucky enough to win one of the original FNC Championship rugs on my little thoroughbred Ben at Advanced level (before all the big warmbloods came along). We used to have Freestyles back in the day as well.

As coordinator I have always endeavoured to obtain at least one A level judge from down south for the FNC. Last year we had two overseas judges - one from NZ & one from Tasmania.

Ray has been Graeme Fraser's firsthand man helping with the scoring for as long as he can remember. He says HOORAY 🎉 for tablets so now he is redundant.

We were both given Life Memberships in the early 2000's.

The club also ran an Endurance Ride in the early 2000's down at New Italy with thanks to Joan Peachey for the use of her facilities. This was a fun event.

I think that's about as much as I can remember!

Merle & Ray Speakman