

# Media Release

## Cootamundra Riding For the Disabled NSW – SCF - Concrete flooring project

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

This year the winter weather won't be causing disruptions to the sessions at Cootamundra's Riding for the Disabled Centre. Thanks to a \$27,451 grant from the Stronger Communities Fund, which was dispensed by the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council and the NSW State Government.

A huge concrete slab has been installed in the saddling yards and an entry path constructed to allow for safer access to the yards, storage area sheds and grooming areas. The project has provided wheel chair access that assists with mobility independence for the Centre's students.

The new flooring to saddling yards and storage shed area has made the zone cleaner and safer for volunteers and students and will also double as a space to conduct lessons in wet weather.

In the past Cootamundra RDA have had to be extra vigilant during wet weather, the ground beneath the current shelters was prone to flooding. Hay could have been lost due to water damage and the area was inaccessible to students. Volunteers were also faced with cleaning up a boggy and muddy area contaminated with horse manure. The new concreted zone will eliminate these problems.

480 square metres of concrete was poured by local contractor Todd Bryant Constructions. The cost of the project was \$29,841 with the Stronger Communities fund contributing \$27,451 of these funds. Volunteers assisted with setting up some of the preparation of formwork prior to concrete pour.

The new area will now also open opportunities for the Cootamundra RDA to add to their programs for students. The Groom My Horse session allows for the warmth of the horse to be felt and may result in an increased awareness of the students own grooming needs. Horse care, saddlery care and learning about the anatomy of animal provides an extra sensory activity to the curriculum of services. These courses can now be undertaken in the all-weather facility, allowing access for wheel chairs and mobility aids.

Cootamundra RDA (NSW) Centre Secretary Olwen Smith said "our volunteers can now hose out the saddling area at end of each session keeping it clean. The new slab eliminates the need to cancel sessions during inclement weather."

Cootamundra – Gundagai Regional Council's Administrator Stephen Sykes said. This concrete flooring provides a clean all weather venue.

"Free from mud and a level surface it is now a much safer and more hygienic area for disabled riders and RDA volunteers. The grant has also provided an area where the RDA can provide alternative activities in wet weather," Stephen said.

Member for Cootamundra Katrina Hodgkinson MP said it is great the NSW Government's Stronger Communities program is further supporting the work of the Cootamundra RDA through this project.

"Accessibility is vital for participants of the Cootamundra RDA and it is important to have such infrastructure in place to make it a more rewarding experience for all involved," Katrina said.

### Picture and caption

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council Administrator Stephen Sykes, (centre), recently inspected the concrete flooring installed at Cootamundra's Riding for the Disabled (NSW) Centre. Stephen is pictured with Cootamundra RDA President Trish Taylor (left) and RDA (NSW) Director Olwen Smith. The concrete flooring was made possible with a grant from the Stronger Communities Fund.

