

## Jo Heard Memorial Trophy Winner

### Coomel Skylark (CPBSA 30255)

Foaled on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1988, Sky was the second-last pony ever bred by the late Muriel Dawkins at Coomel Stud in Western Australia. True to Connemara type in every sense of the word, he is strong, intelligent, agile, and a real sweet hearted gentleman. We purchased Sky when I was eight years old, he was a green three-year-old, and he proved the saying 'young kids and green ponies don't mix' wrong. As his education grew and our partnership built he did everything from; Pony Club, breed showing, dressage to elementary level, show jumping to 1.05m, bush rides and games. His versatility saw us picked for many prestigious teams such as the Gingamurrah and Wanda Nelson, as well as Zone Teams in all pony club disciplines, bringing home broad sashes every outing, including at Royal Show level. From day one, he has always been a reliable ride, bringing me home safely every time I climbed on, regardless of where we were, or what we were doing.

After teaching me just about everything I knew, Sky moved on to another young child, Casper, to show him the ropes. Sky was with the family for five years, and moved Casper from a nervous 'first ridden' child to a confident and competent show jump rider. Being a VERY tall boy, Casper had outgrown Sky by the age of 10, and Sky returned home to us. On and off, Sky was shared by other kids at pony club, until we were introduced to the Millett family. Young Bizzi was in need of a bigger pony. She was a petite girl, who was nervous the day she came to meet Skylark. But like everyone before her, he looked after her and very shortly after that first ride, Sky went on his next adventure with his new family. They competed with great success in all disciplines, gaining Pony Club certificates and qualifications along the way, and enjoying bush rides out with friends and family. Sky was in his element making another young child happy and teaching as he went. As all kids do, Bizzi grew, and moved onto a bigger horse. Sky had families lining up for his services, and went on to a new family with four children. Sky was the first pony they had ever met!



After sharing so much kindness and knowledge, giving so many smiles and great times, it was time for our little Sky to follow his calling as an RDA pony. Sky became part of the Hill RDA Team in 2016 and has shown what a true gentleman and a versatile pony he is. With the Hills group Sky looks after children with varying degrees of ability and ailments. He takes everything in his stride and has grown quickly to become a favourite with the riders and the handlers, many of the handlers start out with the group with little to no horse experience, due to his gentle friendly and happy nature. He attended the RDA WA State Games day in 2016. This included dressage, fancy dress, handy pony and a number of different individual games, and after competing in his events with his usual rider he was borrowed by another RDA group to compete in other events during the day. This year has seen Sky progress to being part of the Hippo-Therapy team at Hills RDA. Hippotherapy is very intense with up to five handlers/helpers/physio working with the pony and child at any one time. Sky has taken this all

in his stride and has proven again what a special pony he is. He will be attending the 2017 RDA WA State games with his hippotherapy rider.

Coomel Skylark is a truly special pony and a great ambassador for the breed. He has brought so much joy to so many families with his spunky and quirky paddock mannerisms (he still loves to hoon and play in his water trough) and his gentle nature while looking after his precious riders.

Victoria Strickland and Tanya Power

