

Boys and Pony Club – PCA Survey

Pony Club has been in Australia for more than 80 years, but faces increasing competition from many other sports, particularly among males.

“In one of the few sports where men and women, and boys and girls, compete against each other, Pony Clubs often have more female members than male, particularly at grass roots level,” CEO of Pony Club Australia (PCA) Dr Catherine Ainsworth said. “At the higher levels, boys who stay on are equally as successful as the girls.”

PCA conducted a survey to find out what boys (Pony Club members and non-members) like and don't like about Pony Club, or any obstacles they face to join a Pony Club. The key issues influencing males joining and staying are attached.

“We are sharing the results with our 800 Clubs around Australia to help them look at ways to attract - and keep - male riders,” Dr Ainsworth added.

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Patrick Perkins, 11, from Rathdowney Pony Club (pictured) loves his pony Max and going to Pony Club. He especially enjoys the thrill of mounted games.

Dr Ainsworth said these days riders at many clubs can participate in polocrosse, tentpegging, tetrathlon (riding, swimming, shooting, running), vaulting and campdrafting.



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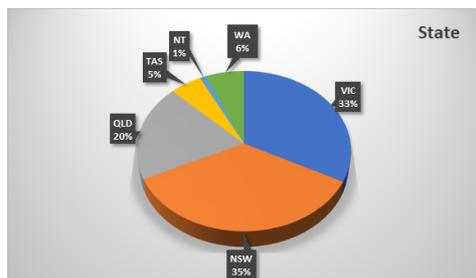
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Boys and Pony Club survey

Late last year, PCA sent out a survey to find out what boys (members and non-members) like and don't like about Pony Club, or any obstacles to joining a Pony Club. The results were interesting.

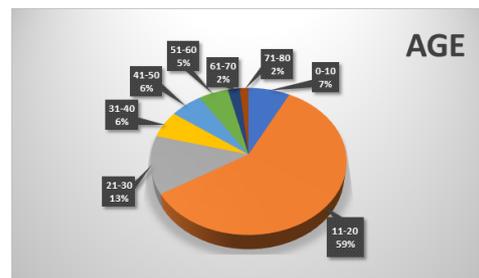
Here's a break down of some key issues, which we are looking at and which Clubs may find useful in attracting - and keeping - male riders.



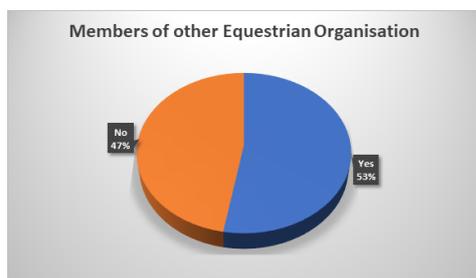
Responses came from WA, NT, TAS, NSW, QLD, VIC



Most rated their Pony Club experience as positive overall



Responses came from a wide range; over half were aged 11-20yrs



Over half of responders were also members of other equestrian clubs and sport-specific groups, including EA, polocrosse, campdrafting, stock horses, mounted games, showjumping.

Favourite Pony Club activity and why?

Activities at speed with an adrenaline rush, eg

- Mounted Games
- Showjumping
- Cross Country
- Sporting
- Barrel Racing
- Campdrafting

Least favourite Pony Club activity and why?

Dressage – It is slow, not fun and boring.
 Hacking – Too much standing and waiting
 Showjumping – Fear of falling
 Flat work – Slow and boring
 Rules – Too many outdated and unnecessary rules

Current and past members, what did you like about Pony Club?

- Really fun
- Real friendly environment with supportive people
- Small and welcoming
- Laidback and relaxed
- Good club, good friends, good grounds & good instructors
- Fun because we had many boys
- Helped build my confidence
- Made many friends
- Education on horse management
- Good coaches
- Got to try new disciplines and activities

Current and past members, what did you not like about Pony Club?

- Dull / uncomfortable uniforms
- Very girly
- Repetitive activities
- Disorganised
- Boring, not enough fun stuff
- Not enough boys my age (or not enough boys at all)
- lots of politics, complaining, and fights
- Parents telling me what to do / spectator interference
- New ideas got shut down
- Boys should be able to compete in jeans (or moleskins etc)
- Most theory lessons were boring

What prizes / rewards would you like to see?

- Gender neutral prizes; vouchers, caps, tools, pens, belts, rope things
- Trophies, medals; horse feed; saddlery
- Not pink glittery scrunchies, halters and brushes.
- It's not the prizes but the colour of prizes/rewards; needs to be less pink and purple colours.

