



Joe Agresta Honoured for Excellence at Godolphin Stud and Stable Staff Awards

One of Australia's best-known and most accomplished trackwork riders, Joe Agresta, has been named the winner of the Thoroughbred Excellence Award at the 2018 Godolphin Stud and Stable Staff Awards.

Agresta, who also won the Dedication to Racing category in the awards staged by Thoroughbred Breeders Australia and Racing Australia, was among seven GSSSA winners announced at a ceremony at Adelaide's Morphettville Racecourse on Friday, 4 May.

Each of them received a \$10,000 cash prize along with a commemorative trophy with a further \$3000 to the winners work colleagues. Each of the runners-up received \$1000.

Agresta, who had a brief career as an apprentice jockey, was the main exercise rider for Bart Cummings in Melbourne during a period when the great trainer enjoyed phenomenal success, winning five of his 12 Melbourne Cups, four Cox Plates and three Caulfield Cups.

It was Agresta who was relied on to follow the master's instructions, provide feedback after a gallop and to keep it all between the two of them.

Agresta moved on from Cummings in 2014 and was immediately snapped up by Leon Corstens, a former Cummings foreman, and his son Troy.

The 66-year-old has also been a tireless advocate for stable staff and track riders, striving for better conditions for the same industry participants that the GSSSA recognises globally.

Along with the prize for winning his category, Agresta received a further \$5,000 for the Excellence award.

"Winning this award means everything to me. This award is for everybody who works in the industry across Australia," Agresta said.

"My life is this industry, I love people and the horses. I really can't believe it, I'm shocked."

"I just love what I do, I love helping the kids and the apprentice jockeys. I try to encourage them and help them along the way. I think I owe something back to the industry and anything I can do is terrific."

"Honestly I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for someone who has been with me since I was a teenager... my wife. Since I started working with horses, it's been 45 years and she has been with me every step of the way."

"I can't thank Godolphin and the organisers enough for what they are doing for the real unsung heroes of racing and breeding. This is a dream come true," Agresta said.

Agresta recalls his time with the Cummings stable fondly and with deep admiration for the man who all of Australia, and much of the world, knows as "The Cups King".

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During all the years he worked with Cummings, and until today, Agresta also had another full-time job with the Moonee Valley City Council performing maintenance work on homes for the sick and needy.

Johan Petzer, Chair of the 2018 judging panel said of Joe Agresta, "Joe's long-standing involvement and loyal commitment of over 50 years in the industry is a testament to his resolve, dedication and character, which included a 34-year involvement as a track work rider for the legendary Bart Cummings.

"Joe, an industry legend himself, and a team player, is held in high regard in the industry and is a valued ambassador. Joe's diligence and passion for the industry, and his involvement with some of the greats of the Australian turf are just some of the qualities which makes him a very deserving winner of the 2018 GSSSA Thoroughbred Excellence Award," Petzer said.

Other winners, each of whom received a cash prize of \$10,000 and a commemorative trophy, announced at the ceremony attended by some 120 guests were:

Thoroughbred Excellence Award:

Winner: Joe Agresta, Leon and Troy Corstens/Malua Racing (VIC)

Leadership Award:

Winner: Peter Keating, Newgate Farm (NSW)

Runner up: Jade Rossington, Willow Park Stud (NSW)

Horsemanship Award:

Winner: Scott Eeles, Godolphin (NSW)

Runner up: Warren Sutton, McEvoy Mitchell Racing (SA)

Dedication to Breeding Award:

Winner: Patrick Sheehan, Coolmore (NSW)

Runner up: Angus McAlpine, Eureka Cambooya Stud (QLD)

Administration and Ancillary Services Award:

Winner: Hannah Dick, Widden Stud (NSW)

Runner up: Michelle Nichols, Arrowfield Stud (NSW)

Thoroughbred Care and Welfare Award:

Winner: Lee Purchase, Darren Weir Racing (VIC)

Runner up: Liz Andriske, Saleyard Thoroughbreds (VIC)

Newcomer Award:

Winner: Meg Stanley, Kathryn Durden Racing (VIC)

Runner up: Jarom Rhind, Armidale Stud (TAS)

Dedication to Racing Award:

Winner: Joe Agresta, Leon and Troy Corstens/Malua Racing (VIC)

Runner up: Steve Adams, Anthony Freedman Racing (VIC)

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For further information please contact:

Barry O'Farrell
Chief Executive Officer, Racing Australia
Telephone: +61 2 8072 1900
Email: barry.ofarrell@racingaustralia.horse

Tom Reilly
Chief Executive Officer, Thoroughbred Breeders Australia
Telephone: +61 2 9663 8581
Email: tom@tbaus.com

About Racing Australia:

Racing Australia is the national industry body representing Thoroughbred racing in Australia.

Commencing operations on the 13th of April 2015, Racing Australia merged the functions and assets of the Australian Racing Board (ARB), Racing Information Services Australia (RISA) and the Australian Stud Book (ASB) into one entity.

Importantly, Racing Australia commercialises the industry's racing materials on a national basis, through the sale of a variety of products and services such as Fields, Form and Results to a diverse range of print and digital publishers domestically and internationally.

Racing Australia continues to develop and expand the number of integrated products and services available to Principal Racing Authorities, race clubs, owners, breeders, trainers, jockeys, punters and racing enthusiasts.

About Thoroughbred Breeders Australia:

Thoroughbred Breeders Australia TBA is the parent company of the six State breeders' associations and has an associate membership base of 3,780 individual breeders and industry participants. TBA is a non-profit industry body established for the benefit of the Thoroughbred breeding industry. TBA is comprised of a Board of 14 directors constituted by two representative members from each of the 6 state breeders' associations and Aushorse Ltd.

TBA takes a leadership role on issues of national and international importance such as quarantine, biosecurity, animal welfare, taxation, immigration and other government and regulatory issues. It represents the interests of breeders in dealing with the Stud Book, The Australian Racing Board and race clubs in addition to other stakeholder organizations.

About Godolphin:

Godolphin was founded in 1992 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. Named in honour of the Godolphin Arabian, one of the three founding stallions of the modern thoroughbred born in the

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Arabian Gulf, what started with a handful of horses in the desert has evolved into the foremost international horseracing stable.

Sponsored by Emirates Airline and racing in the famous Royal Blue silks, Godolphin strives for excellence, winning many of the world's major races along the way. To date, Godolphin has won over 250 Group One races in 12 different countries, across four continents. For further information, please visit: www.godolphin.com.

Members of the Judging Panel:

- Johan Petzer (Chair), Chief of Stewards TRSA (SA)
- Basil Nolan, President of TBA and stud owner (QLD)
- Melissa Weatherly, Racing Victoria (VIC)
- Peter Heagney, Inglis (VIC)
- Caroline Searcy, Sky Racing Channel (NSW)
- Chris Watson, Director TBA and stud owner (SA)
- Troy Corstens, Thoroughbred Trainer (VIC)
- Shane Anderson, GM Product and Delivery Racing.com (VIC)
- Jenny Watson, 2016 Thoroughbred Excellence Winner (TAS)
- Jeremy Rogers, 2017 Thoroughbred Excellence Winner (VIC)

Categories of Awards and Prize money:

1. Leadership Award (Stud or Stable)

An award to an individual staff member in a managerial or supervisory role in a stud or stable who has displayed leadership qualities – in particular in terms of quality people management, mentoring and support of staff, attention to workplace health and safety, commitment to continuous improvement and displaying good business acumen.

Prize: Trophy and \$10,000 to winner with \$3,000 to employer to share amongst staff. \$1,000 to the runner-up.

2. Horsemanship Award (Stud or Stable)

An award to an individual staff member who has shown talent for horsemanship, consistency and reliability in or out of the saddle. Must include an affinity with horses and gives a priority to animal welfare. Must demonstrate a degree of success with the thoroughbred, whether it be in breeding or racing or both, that has been borne out of their particular skill set.

Prize: Trophy and \$10,000 to winner with \$3,000 to employer to share amongst staff. \$1,000 to the runner-up.

3. Dedication to Breeding Award

An award to an individual staff member who has shown talent in thoroughbred breeding horsemanship, consistency and reliability in a stud role. Must have at least 5 years service in the breeding industry and must have been pivotal in his or her employer's success.

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Prize: Trophy and \$10,000 to winner with \$3,000 to employer to share amongst staff. \$1,000 to the runner-up.

4. Dedication to Racing Award

An award to an individual staff member who has shown talent for horsemanship in the racing field, consistency and reliability in racing role. Must have at least 5 years service in the racing industry and must have been pivotal in his or her employer's success.

Prize: Trophy and \$10,000 to winner with \$3,000 to employer to share amongst staff. \$1,000 to the runner-up.

5. Administrative and Ancillary Services Award (Stud or Stable)

An award to an individual staff member who works in an administration role in a stud or racing yard or services ancillary to racing or breeding (such as Race Club administrators and staff, stud or stable administration staff, farm, garden and maintenance staff). Must demonstrate exceptional skills, loyalty or some achievement that has added value to their employer's business, and directly or indirectly to industry standards.

Prize: Trophy and \$10,000 to winner with \$3,000 to employer to share amongst staff. \$1,000 to the runner-up.

6. Thoroughbred Care and Welfare Award

An award to an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to the care and welfare of thoroughbreds who are not actively racing, and/or created a greater awareness, passion and care for the thoroughbred horse in its second/ alternate career (breeding, breaking, pre and post racing career, re-homing, retraining, providing a comfortable retirement etc.). These may be, for example, a quite achiever/ paid or volunteer in retraining or re-homing of the thoroughbred. (This winner will not be eligible for the Thoroughbred Excellence Award).

Prize: Trophy and \$10,000 to winner with \$3,000 to employer to share amongst staff. \$1,000 to the runner-up.

7. Newcomer Award

An award to an individual who has worked in the industry, in any capacity, for less than 3 years. Winner will display passion for, pride in and an excellent contribution to, the thoroughbred industry. The winner will stand out from other newcomers and will be identified as a future and significant valuable member of this industry. This winner will not be eligible for the Thoroughbred Excellence Award. Additional conditions will apply to the trip to Dubai, including as to timing (to coincide with the visit by other International winners), the terms of the travel, and associated matters. Trophy, \$5,000 and trip to Dubai* to winner with \$3000 to employer to share amongst staff. \$1000 to the runner-up.

8. Thoroughbred Excellence Award - Overall Award (Stud or Stable Only)

Winner to be selected from one of the five categories (i.e. excludes Thoroughbred Care and Welfare Award). Must have made a significant, exceptional contribution to the industry.

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Prize: Trophy and an additional \$5,000 to the winner with an additional \$2,000 to the winner's yard/stud to be divided amongst stable/stud employees.

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