



Dawn Barwick carrying the Australian Flag during the National Anthem

Jodie Adams
PHOTOGRAPHY

Ranch Sorting National Championships Australia 2026

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY JODIE ADAMS PHOTOGRAPHY

Ranch sorting provides a unique blend of strategy, skill, and adrenaline, and thanks to its accessibility, affordability, and sheer fun for competitors and spectators alike, the sport is exploding in popularity. It's one of the equestrian sports where everyone in the family can compete together and be recognised at the top due to the unique class structures and handicap system, something usually reserved for only the highest-level competitors in other disciplines.

This year's championships took place over four days at the Dubbo Showground undercover arena, where competitors vied for over \$100,000 in prizes and prize money. Elite competitors from NSW, QLD, WA, and SA along with competitors travelling from the USA and France to be part of the action, gathered to test their skills. Before the action began, Dave Schaffner from the USA, a veteran World Champion ranch sorter and Top 10 in all-time money earners, led clinics and provided invaluable sideline support during the finals. The event was superbly organised, with three pens running constantly and announcers and timekeepers working seamlessly alongside their banks of laptops and timers, tracking hundreds of runs with the precision of a spaceship's control room.

The RSNCA **Open Division** is where the best of the best step into the arena — featuring our elite No. 7, 8 and 9 rated riders, and this year they certainly put on a show!

These competitors are some of the toughest in the country, and the Open division always delivers fast runs, big pressure moments, and plenty of entertainment. A huge congratulations to our **National Champion**, Ben Lawrence from NSW, who put together an outstanding season to finish on 394 points and claim the title!

The B&L crew from Mirannie, NSW certainly made their presence known in this division, dominating the leaderboard while keeping everyone entertained with plenty of family banter along the way!

Your RSNCA Open Division Top 5 are:

National Champion – Ben Lawrence (NSW) – 394 points
Reserve National Champion – Dawn Barwick (NSW) – 314 points
Cody Barwick (NSW) – 298 points
Sharon Fletcher (WA) – 131.5 points
Clint Fletcher (WA) – 87 points

Congratulations to all of our Open competitors on an incredible season. The level of talent in this division continues to raise the bar for ranch sorting in Australia, and we can't wait to see what next season brings!

The RSNCA **Amateur Division** delivered one of the closest championship races of the entire season — and it came right down to the wire at National Finals! With just half a point separating first and second place, this division kept everyone on the edge of their seats right until the very end. That's how close the competition was!

A huge congratulations to our **National Champion**, Georgia White from NSW, who claimed the title with an incredible 430.5 points after an outstanding season of consistency and determination.

And a massive shoutout to Reserve National Champion Clancy Henderson (NSW), who finished on 430 points — just half a point behind in one of the tightest finishes we've seen!

Your RSNCA Amateur Division Top 5 are:

National Champion – Georgia White (NSW) – 430.5 points
Reserve National Champion – Clancy Henderson (NSW) – 430 points
David Nell (NSW) – 370.5 points
Lonnie Henderson (NSW) – 340.5 points
Millah Frost (NSW) – 321.5 points

Congratulations to all of our Amateur competitors on an incredible season. The level of competition in this division was outstanding, and this championship race was one for the history books!

Master Division Champions:

National Champion – Sheree Smith (WA) – 90 points
Reserve National Champion – Darren Manning (WA) – 74 points
Deanna Johnson (NSW) – 73.5 points
David Nell (NSW) – 56.5 points
Scrub O'Brien (WA) – 55 points

The RSNCA **Novice Division** delivered plenty of tough competition this season, with riders putting in the miles and showing incredible dedication to chase valuable points across the country. A huge congratulations to our **National Champion**, Natalie Dalziel from QLD, who certainly clocked up the kilometres this season and was rewarded for her hard work with an outstanding 420 points to claim the title! What a season

Your RSNCA Novice Division Top 5 are:

National Champion – Natalie Dalziel (QLD) – 420 points
Reserve National Champion – Nicole Speghan (QLD) – 276.5 points
Dakota Poulton (WA) – 188 points
Jonathan Flak (SA) – 177 points
Chris Hocking (SA) – 145.5 points

Congratulations to all of our Novice competitors on an incredible season. Your commitment, travel, and determination to improve your craft is what makes this sport so special, and we can't wait to see where your ranch sorting journey takes you next!



Molly Fuge



Chloe Magill



Chris Hocking



Jonathon Flak



Nina Selleck



Byron Flak

The **Beginner/Rookie/Graduated Rookie** Division showcased exactly what RSNCA is all about — giving new competitors a place to learn, grow their confidence, and develop their skills in the sport of ranch sorting. And this year, the competition was stronger than ever!

This division is often where future champions begin their journey, and judging by the talent we've seen this season, there are plenty of exciting competitors rising through the ranks. A huge congratulations to our **National Champion**, Geoff Lucas from QLD, who put together an outstanding season to finish on an impressive 357 points and claim the title!

Your Beginner/Rookie/Graduated Rookie Top 5 are:

National Champion – Geoff Lucas (QLD) – 357 points
Reserve National Champion – Tom Pombart (NSW) – 233.5 points
Courtney Taylor (WA) – 226.5 points
Charlie Nell (NSW) – 210.5 points
Ann Harris (WA) – 180 points

The **Western Heritage All Levels** Division delivered an incredible season-long battle, and like many divisions this year, it all came down to the RSNCA National Finals! With valuable points on the line and competitors pushing hard until the very last run, this division showcased just how competitive Western Heritage has become.

A huge congratulations to our **National Champion**, Ellen Adams from New South Wales, who put together an outstanding season to finish on an impressive 105.5 points and claim the title!

Your Top 5 Western Heritage All Levels Champions are:

National Champion – Ellen Adams (NSW) – 105.5 points
Reserve National Champion – Ben Lawrence (NSW) – 76 points
Brooke Benbow (WA) – 74.5 points
David Nell (NSW) – 71 points
Sharon Fletcher (WA) – 69.5 points

The race for the **Western Heritage #6HC** National Championship came right down to the wire — and what a finish it was! With many divisions being decided at the RSNCA National Finals, this class was no exception, with every run counting and plenty on the line.

Making one of the biggest moves of the finals was Allan Roberts, who came into Nationals sitting in fifth place and surged his way to claim the National Championship with an impressive 69 points — a huge effort when it mattered most!

Your Top 5 Western Heritage #6 HC Champions are:

National Champion – Allan Roberts (NSW) – 69 points
Reserve National Champion – Brooke Benbow (WA) – 66 points
Nicole Sbeghan (QLD) – 58 points
Jenny Kindred (WA) – 57.5 points
Courtney Taylor (WA) – 53 points

The future of ranch sorting is looking incredibly bright, and the RSNCA Youth Division proved exactly why at this year's National Finals! These young guns continue to impress with their confidence, determination, horsemanship, and competitive spirit. Watching them grow and develop in the sport is something pretty special — and if this year is anything to go by, ranch sorting has an exciting future ahead.

A huge congratulations to our **National Champion**, Ellen Adams from NSW, who had an outstanding season to finish on an incredible 460.5 points! What an achievement!

Your RSNCA Youth Division Top 5 are:

National Champion – Ellen Adams (NSW) – 460.5 points
Reserve National Champion – Keira Speghan (QLD) – 319.5 points
Mikayla Jackson (NSW) – 304 points
Lottie Sellick (SA) – 214.5 points
Taliesha Tiller (SA) – 169.5 points

The RSNCA National Finals isn't just about national titles — it's also about recognising outstanding performances from competitors representing their home states. Each year, we proudly award a beautiful shiny buckle to the rider from each state who accumulates the most points across the National Finals event, and this year's winners certainly earned their bragging rights!

Congratulations to our 2026 State High Point Riders:

Western Australia – Sheree Smith
South Australia – Jamey Foster
Queensland – Tianna Berry
New South Wales – David Nell

These riders consistently performed under pressure throughout the National Finals and came away as the highest point earners for their state — an outstanding achievement!

A huge congratulations to our RSNCA 2025/2026 Overall High Point Rider, Ellen Adams from Uralla, New South Wales, finishing the season on an outstanding 549.5 points!

Ellen's consistency, determination, and hard work right across the season have truly paid off, making her a very deserving winner of this prestigious title. To accumulate that level of points across the year is no small feat — an exceptional effort!

We would also like to extend a massive thank you to our High Point Prize sponsors, *AEW Horse Walkers* for their continued support of the RSNCA and our competitors. Your contribution helps us recognise and reward excellence within our sport.



L-R: Bella Davie, Clancy Henderson & Lily Henderson



Rylee Smith #10 Beginner Ranch Hand



Brontie Frost - Jaye Davie Memorial Receptient



Ellen Adams Overall High Point

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John Rodney - Lifetime Ranch Sorter recipient

One of the most meaningful moments of the RSNCA National Finals each year is the presentation of the Lifetime Ranch Sorter Buckle — an award that recognises not just success in the arena, but the true spirit of our community.

This year, we were incredibly proud to present this special honour to John Rodney (JR). John is a truly inspirational gentleman who has been part of the Ranch Sorting family for many years. Whether he's competing alongside his children and grandchildren or catching up with mates and sharing a yarn, John represents everything our sport stands for — sportsmanship, friendship, and genuine camaraderie.

He is the kind of person who makes everyone feel welcome, and his presence at events is something many of us look forward to. We would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to John's family for bringing him to this year's National Finals, especially as he navigates current health challenges. Your support and dedication to being there together is something truly special.

Another one of the most heartfelt and emotional moments of the RSNCA National Finals each year is the presentation of the Jaye Davie Memorial Youth Award.

This very special award is presented annually by the Davie family in memory of their much-loved son and brother, Jaye - who was taken far too soon. We are truly honoured to continue this tradition alongside the Davie family, recognising a young competitor who embodies the qualities Jaye was known for — sportsmanship, camaraderie, encouragement, and always being willing to lend a hand or step in wherever needed.

Each year, the presentation is made even more meaningful with a moving speech read by Molly Fuge on behalf of the family, while Jaye's sister, Bella, proudly carries the Jaye Boy flag — a moment that brings the entire community together. This year's recipient is the incredibly deserving Brontie Frost.

Brontie consistently demonstrates the values this award represents, both inside and outside the arena. Always supportive, encouraging, and ready to help others, Brontie is a wonderful example of what the RSNCA youth community is all about. Congratulations Brontie, and thank you to the Davie family for allowing us to share in honouring Jaye's legacy each year.

One of the most special moments of the RSNCA National Finals is recognising competitors who truly embody the spirit of our sport — and this year's **Encouragement Award** recipients are incredibly deserving. Our Adult Encouragement Award was proudly presented to David Ramsey, who at the young age of 82 years old continues to inspire everyone around him.

David has not only stepped into the arena and found success, but he's also kept us all thoroughly entertained along the way with his fun personality, quick wit, and great sense of humour. He's a reminder that ranch sorting is a sport for all ages and that it's never too late to get involved and enjoy the ride.

Our Youth Encouragement Award was awarded to Byron Flak from SA, and what a bright future this young man has ahead of him. At just 13 years of age, Byron's improvement over the past 12 months has been incredible to watch. His dedication, willingness to learn, and positive attitude both inside and outside of the pen make him a deserving recipient, and we're excited to watch his continued development in the years ahead.

The RSNCA Dubbo community expressed heartfelt thanks to the cattle donors for providing top-quality stock, as well as to the judges, announcers, yard helpers and to Molly Fuge for her interviews with the winners throughout the event. Special thanks also went to sponsors Westside Hotel Dubbo, AEW Horse Walkers, Beyond Barriers, Dubbo Regional Council, Dusty River Services, Equinade, Furneys Stockfeeds, Wazz-a-Cow, Marsh Carney Saddlery, CINCH, Jeys Saddlery, Iconoclast, Tuffrock, Kennards Hire, Stance Equitec, Ultrapulse, Yeti and Rockin W Ranch, whose support helped bring this exceptional championship to life.

What an incredible RSNCA National Finals! We were thrilled to see the number of competitors increase this year, even in the current economic climate, and loved welcoming riders from right across Australia — along with competitors travelling from the USA and France to be part of the action.

This year's program changes certainly raised the bar, with the introduction of the Challenge of Champions, an action-packed Saturday night finals, the debut of our brand-new #11/2 Adaptive Riding class, and our annual Youth Auction, which raised just over \$5,000 to support youth development clinics across Australia.

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the auction — your generosity will help provide opportunities for young riders through producer-led clinics designed to grow the future of our sport.

This year's National Finals truly highlighted just how valuable the Youth Development Program has been over the past 12 months, with successful clinics already held across WA, South Australia, and NSW, and even more planned for New South Wales, QLD, and returning to states that have already hosted throughout 2026–27.

The atmosphere, competition, sportsmanship, and community spirit made this year's National Finals one to remember. See you all next year.



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