

## **VAY at Royal Melbourne Show**

The Victorian Alpaca Youth played a large role in this year's Royal Melbourne Show. In addition to the Parader's Competition and Fancy Dress competition held over two days, activities such as "walk an alpaca", "build an alpaca" and "have your photo taken with an alpaca" were tremendous in involving and educating the public.

Students from Donvale Christian College and other local children competed with close to 40 children participating.

Results of the Parader's Competition are:-

### **Open**

Supreme Champion -Tahniesha Lazarus  
Master Trainer - Tahniesha Lazarus  
Senior Champion - Leah Burnett  
Intermediate Champion - Tahniesha Lazarus  
Intermediate Reserve - Taleisha Yelland  
Junior Champion - Zoe Mather  
Junior Reserve - Abbey Mather

### **Preliminary**

Supreme Champion - Ayla Hoskings  
Intermediate Champion - Ayla Hoskings  
Intermediate Reserve - Malachie Dangerfield  
Junior Champion - Adara Hoskings  
Junior Reserve - Kara Muller

The following article was written by a parent of children who participated.

"The sun was shining as the Donvale Christian College Alpaca Paraders and their families arrived bright and early at the Royal Melbourne Show. We were greeted by smiling Rachel, Leah, Bill and Mr Jones who briefed the students and families before the competition began. We then managed to have a look around the show before it was open to the public - it was very quiet at that time of morning!

Then it was all hands on deck as parents got the kids ready for the parades and others helped out at the Victorian Alpaca Youth Group (VAYG) activities. This was a fundraiser

activity where visitors to the show could make a wooden alpaca (complete with real alpaca fleece!), have their photo taken with an alpaca and even 'walk an alpaca'.

There was a great community spirit and we all pitched in to help. It was also a good opportunity for us to witness by demonstrating our willingness to help and show the 'Donvale Difference'.

Although it is competition, there is a very strong spirit of encouragement at all the alpaca parading competitions where all are encouraged to 'have a go'. There is a lot of extra encouragement for students who end up with a temperamental alpaca who decides in the moment to be stubborn.

The students train at school during lunchtimes and then compete at different levels according to their experience and confidence. They all dress in a checked shirt, boots and hat and then lead an alpaca (one they know well and have developed a relationship with) through an obstacle course. Some students at the next level also complete a 'hands-on' assessment where they demonstrate to the judge their alpaca knowledge and how to check an alpaca's health.

The whole purpose of the VAYG is to encourage young people to get involved in the alpaca industry, so the judges are very kind and supportive. All participants receive a ribbon as well as feedback about what they can work on. The students learn really valuable lessons about having a go, supporting one another, courage, resilience, as well as respect and care for God's creation - in this case, alpacas - as they enjoy a special bond with them.

My girls are now passionate about all things alpaca (just don't call an alpaca a llama!). I am really grateful for the opportunities and learning provided by our DCC alpaca training program and particularly grateful to Leah and Rachel for all the volunteer hours they so generously give, as well as the support offered by Mr Jones.

**But wait! There's more ...**

Not content with their appearance at the Royal Melbourne Show, Rachel, Leah and Peter Jones managed to introduce Mighty Mouse to Light FM's Lucy Holmes on 17 October! Ever the perfect gentleman, he behaved impeccably in the studio and demonstrated another great alpaca virtue – that of calming and consoling.”

Written by Bronya Monro-Stevens - Parent