



# ASHS National Youth Exchange Program

## The Aim

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To promote and build the profile of Australian Stock Horses and the Australian Stock Horse Society, and offer Youth Members the opportunity to take part in a unique experience while developing sportsmanship, leadership and horsemanship skills and building friendships. Youth Ambassadors in the program will stay with Host Families that are actively promoting Australian Stock Horses through campdrafting, polocrosse, showing, breeding or station work.

## Overview

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The Youth Exchange Program is not just about competition but about the experience and making friends. The program is open to riders from **14 to 18 years of age**.

Initially the program would be offered on a state by state basis within Australia, with the aim of expanding to include New Zealand and the USA. As the Society's profile grows and ASHS Branches are established in other countries, for example the UK, these countries may also be included in the program.

## Age of Youth Ambassadors

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The Youth Exchange is offered to riders between 14 and 18 years old.

## Time of Year & Length of Stay

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The National Youth Exchange Program will coincide with local school holidays. The program is designed for Members that are still at school and would therefore be made available during school holidays for short stays. Ideally Youth Ambassadors will be able to attend a Branch or State Youth Camp or show while on exchange; for example the Hunter Branch or Cumnock Youth Camps or equivalent in other states, or the National Youth Show or ASHS National Show. This type of exchange will be organized around shows, clinics and youth camps.

The Society may consider offering options regarding extending the length of the stay and age limits of Youth Ambassadors in consultation with the National Youth Exchange Committee (NYEC), the Youth Ambassador and both families involved.

## The Process of Exchange and Administration by the National Youth Exchange Committee (NYEC)

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- The ASHS NYEC will administer, promote, liaise and coordinate exchanges.
- Potential Host Families will need to submit and complete the ASHS National Youth Exchange Host Family Application Form
- Host Family applications will be reviewed for suitability before families are notified as to whether they are successful or otherwise
- Interested Youth & Youth Participant Members are to complete and submit an ASHS National Youth Exchange Youth Ambassador Application Form
- The NYEC will interview potential Youth Ambassadors and their parents/guardians prior to being accepted
- The NYEC and Host Families will communicate in regards to their horses, family situation and family dynamics, which will affect the pairing of families to Youth Ambassadors regarding age, gender and riding ability
- The Selection Panel will be responsible for the final selection of the candidate
- THE NYEC may involve ASHS State Management Councils/Branches where applicable to assist in the selection of candidates
- The NYEC is responsible for planning, implementing, communicating, as well as support prior, during and after the exchange. The NYEC will liaise between the Youth Ambassador and his/her family and the Host Family. The Committee will also:
  - Establish the person/s to be the primary source of contact for Youth Ambassadors and Host Families. This person should enjoy working with young people and perhaps have previous experience with exchange programs. Members of the Host Family are not eligible
  - Be responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with all parties and explaining expectations to all involved
  - Supply to all involved, relevant contact details, documents and details of pre-approved ASHS events the Youth Ambassador will be attending during the exchange
  - Ensure ASHS Membership is current where applicable
  - Ensure all documents, copies of ambulance and health insurance and Working with Children requirements have been completed and submitted
  - Coordinate travel arrangements and itineraries, including drop off and pick-up arrangements both at the start and completion of the exchange
  - Establish a support team/network of people available 24 hours in the event of an emergency
  - Establish guidelines for the just-in-case incidents - health issues, homesickness, etc.
  - Make sure a backup Host Family is available for emergency situations
- As part of the exchange, Host Families and Youth Ambassadors are to complete an Evaluation Form at the conclusion of the exchange and submit it to Head Office. The NYEC will then generate an annual report.

## Expectations of the Youth Ambassador & Families

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- All travel and insurance costs are paid by the Youth Ambassador and his/her family.
- Standard WH & S Principals & Practices are to be adhered to e.g. Australian Standard Approved Equestrian Helmet to be worn when riding and handling horses.
- Youth Ambassadors need to complete and submit a written application form and supply references.
- Youth Ambassadors need to comply with the Code of Conduct and sign the relevant documents.
- Youth Ambassadors are required to promote the program in the community and encourage others to get involved.
- Youth Ambassadors are required to establish and maintain contact with the Host Family.
- Host Families are encouraged to make contact with the Youth Ambassador and his/her family before the commencement of the exchange.
- Host Families are required to meet Youth Ambassadors at airport/train/bus or pre-arranged destination.
- Maintaining contact with ASHS NYEC.
- Agree & adhere to the National Youth Exchange Rules, Regulations and Obligations.

## Eligibility Requirements - Youth Ambassadors

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- Applicants need to be the appropriate age at the time of the exchange.
- Youth Ambassadors need to be willing to adjust to the Host Family's situation and not be prone to homesickness.
- Youth Ambassadors need to be Financial Members of the ASHS and be good ambassadors for the Society.
- Provide references i.e. Branch Coordinator/School/Community Representative.
- Meet all Selection Criteria.
- Be available for a Selection Interview with the National Youth Exchange Selection Panel - Interview to be conducted in person where possible or via Skype or other electronic method.
- Complete and provide all required documentation within the designated time
- Youth Ambassador will be responsible for supplying own saddle, helmet and boots etc.
- All equipment must be well maintained and helmets must comply with the current Australian Approved Safety Standards or recognised equivalent.
- In some cases where excess baggage on flights may be restrictive the saddle may be provided by the Host Family. In this situation arrangements will be made in advance.
- Provide photos and report for publication in the ASH Journal/ASHS Website and other relevant publications

## Insurance Requirements - Youth Ambassadors

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- Exchange Youth Ambassador must have current Ambulance and Health cover. A copy of the policy is to be included with the Youth Ambassador's Acceptance Form.
- The ASHS will provide Youth Ambassadors with Corporate Travel Cover that covers the duration of the Exchange. A copy of the policy will be available to be viewed by the Youth Ambassador's family and if the family requires a top-up this is the responsibility of the Youth Ambassador and their family.
- Applicants must sign all ASHS Liability Waivers included in the ASHS NYEP Application Form.
- If the Youth Ambassador is 18 years of age at the time of the exchange they must supply an Adoption of the Statement of Conduct for Working with Children.

**The ASHS does not endorse any exchange undertaken by ASHS Members that have been organised outside the ASHS National Youth Exchange Program and not endorsed by the NYEC.**

## Selection

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After reviewing applications, references and conducting interviews, selection can be made based on the following criteria

- Maturity level
- Ability to exercise good judgment
- Compatibility with the goals of the ASHS National Youth Exchange Program
- Ability to fit in and adjust to a different environment
- Health
- Riding Ability
- Meet the criteria of the particular exchange

After the selection of the Youth Ambassador, their parents/guardian and the Host Family will be notified in writing. Included will be a schedule including dates, events the Youth Ambassador will be attending, Host Family details and other relevant contact details and information. All completed and signed documents and acceptance forms would then need to be returned to the ASHS Head Office.

## Selection Panel

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A selection panel for the program would be made up of 3 ASHS Board Members including the Chairman, and Youth Director plus the National Youth Exchange Officer (ASHS Staff member).

## Eligibility Requirements - Host Families

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- Be committed to the support and well-being of the Youth Ambassador during the exchange.
- Provide a safe and harmonious environment (including horses).
- Provide Youth Ambassador with horse/horses that are appropriate to rider's ability.
- Provide clean and comfortable accommodation.
- Youth Ambassador's accommodation (single/shared bedroom), to be confirmed on documents provided by Host Family prior to the commencement of the exchange.
- Provide all meals for the duration of the exchange.
- Provide 2 references and where possible be endorsed by an ASHS Branch or ASHS State Management Council.
- Meet all ASHS NYEP selection criteria.
- Some Host Families may stipulate gender of the Youth Ambassador depending on the family situation.
- Host family to supply an Adoption of the Statement of Conduct for Working with Children for all people over 18 years who will be residing with the Host Family during the exchange.

## Insurance Requirements - Host Families

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- Host families are to have adequate Public Liability in place.

## Program Rules, Regulations and Obligations

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The ASHS National Youth Exchange Program Rules, Regulations and Obligations are included in the Application Forms and include the following:

- All applications must be submitted to the ASHS Head Office.
- All travel costs are paid by the Youth Ambassador's family.
- Standard WH & S Principals & Practices are to be adhered to e.g. Australian Standard Approved Equestrian Helmet (or recognised equivalent), to be worn when riding and handling horses.
- Host Families and Youth Ambassadors need to be endorsed by the NYEC and all required documents need to be submitted to Head Office by the assigned date.

**All people involved in the inbound or outbound exchange need to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities of their position.**

## ASHS National Youth Exchange Committee (NYEC)

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There will be a NYEC member available 24-hours a day for the duration of the exchange for the Youth Ambassador, his or her family and the Host Family in the case of an emergency. During office hours the National Youth Exchange Officer at Head Office would be the initial contact. Emergency contact names and numbers will be pre-arranged prior to the commencement of the exchange with the location of the exchange taken into consideration.

While coordinated at national level, the Youth Exchange Program depends on the participation of Branches, ASHS Members and participating families to build an effective support system for Youth Ambassadors, both incoming and outgoing.

## Support from Branches

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The ASHS will promote the National Youth Exchange Program to Branches who are encouraged to get involved by providing details of events that would be suitable to National Youth Exchange Youth Ambassadors. Branches that are interested in being involved are encouraged contact the NYEC. Branches are encouraged to promote and encourage worthy individuals to apply for the exchange.

## Promotion

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- The ASHS NYEP will be promoted broadly to our target audience - ASH Journal, Website, Facebook Page, and at Branch, State and National events and all events where the Society has a presence also through other relevant publications.
- The National Youth Exchange Program will be advertised through designated external publications to optimise maximum coverage i.e. Horse Deals and Australian Campdraft Magazine.

**ASHS National Youth Exchange Program Information and Application Forms are available through the ASHS Website and by request from Head Office.**

## ASHS Exchange Programs - Ongoing Development

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As a commitment to the Australian Stock Horse Society's youth, the NYEC will monitor and assess all exchanges. If it is deemed necessary to develop longer exchange programs or introduce International Exchanges, the Society will investigate the options and endeavour to meet the demand.

