

Young Rider State Championships in Werribee, Australia, from 16-18 December 2011

(Article by: Jenny Hoggarth)

Mikhaila Lauth, Natalie Erman and Robyn Kopsch recently represented South Africa in an inter-country team challenge at the Young Rider State Championships in Werribee, Australia, from 16-18 December 2011.

During the challenge, teams from New Zealand, Australia and South Africa competed on borrowed horses and swapped horses after each event to ensure a fair field.

Our riders were privileged to be supported by Gavin Chester, an Olympic rider and local coach at the event as well as an honorary team member, Nicole Bruggman, a South Australian rider, as their fourth rider.

The first round of the competition was held indoors and was closely contested with Australia narrowly taking the lead. The second day was won by South Africa, to the delight of the spectators and also Brian Lavery, South African born course builder who made a special trip from his home in Australia to support our team.

The final scores were so close: Australia first with 20 points, South Africa in second place with 21 and New Zealand with 26 points.

The girls worked hard as a team and did SA proud.

Australia's show jumping is clearly benefitting from an excellent team programme, with regional squads being developed by top Olympic riders and coaches. Regular team competitions are held and help to lift the quality and experience of all the squad riders.

The other teams said that they look forward to competing against South Africa again, having found them worthy opponents!

Thanks to SANEF, Annie White from Victoria equestrian and all the Australians for their amazing hospitality and support.

Thanks also to the team sponsors, Pam Golding, who generously donated kit for the trip.



The girls with Annie White and Brian Lavery