

THE ANNETTS FAMILY



A family story built across generations, horses and many thousands of kilometres.

As the Tenterfield Endurance Riding Club celebrates its 40th anniversary, the Annetts family story reminds us that endurance riding is rarely the journey of one rider alone. Behind every successful ride are horses carefully prepared, family members travelling long distances, crews waiting at checkpoints and friendships formed around the endurance circuit.

For Trish Annetts and her family, endurance began simply—with children learning to ride and a family willing to follow wherever the horses might take them.

Where it all began

In 1992, Trish's children began taking riding lessons with Elsie Newsome in Glen Innes. Before long, the family was attending local training rides, particularly at Tenterfield and Bendemeer. Trish remembers arriving with a semi-trailer and as many as ten horses, with Luke and Jenny heading out to complete the 40 or 50 kilometre rides.

It was busy, practical and great fun. More importantly, it laid the foundation for an endurance journey that would eventually take the family throughout Australia and onto the international stage.

Luke was around ten when he began riding, while his sister Jenny completed her first ride at eight. Luke's official AERA record begins in 1997 with an 80 kilometre junior ride at Koorainghat, but by then horses, ride weekends and endurance friendships were already firmly established as part of family life.

The Quilty Plan

The turning point came in 1997 when Trish travelled to the Tom Quilty Gold Cup at Watagans near Cooranbong to support a local rider. Seeing more than 200 horses gathered for Australia's national endurance championship left a lasting impression.

When Trish realised that the 2000 Tom Quilty would be held at Boonah, the family formed a plan: qualify the horses and riders and make the journey north.

It was not easy, but they did it. Four of the children, together with Elsie, started the ride, and four buckles came home. They rode through sleet and finished late into the evening. Although Jenny vetted out, it only strengthened the family's determination to try again. The following year they crossed the Nullarbor for the Western Australian Quilty, returning with four completions from four entries. Even their spare horse completed the ride, carrying family friend Gayle Holmes.

As Trish says, that was the beginning of becoming what she affectionately calls "Quilty Tragics."



LUKE'S CAREER

Luke's AERA rider history records 11,288.1 official endurance kilometres across 106 rides, together with a further 480 kilometres in intermediate events. His career has covered junior, lightweight, middleweight, heavyweight, open and young-rider divisions.

Even his earlier results showed the consistency that would become a feature of his riding. In 1998, Luke won the junior division of the 120 kilometre Rappville ride on Mimosa Beauty. The following year, the pair finished second junior in the 100 kilometre ride at Tenterfield.

The year 2000 was particularly significant. Riding Poets Corner Hanna, Luke completed the Tenterfield 100 kilometre ride before earning his first Tom Quilty buckle at Boonah. Just weeks later, he and Hanna completed the demanding 400 kilometre Shahzada Memorial Marathon, finishing 13th.

From there, Luke's career developed through longer and increasingly competitive rides. He completed 160 and 200 kilometre events, represented Australia as a young rider and competed successfully in FEI rides and major endurance events across several states.

Fourteen Tom Quilty Buckles

The Tom Quilty Gold Cup has remained central to the Annetts family story. Luke's official record confirms 14 successful Quilty completions, achieved over more than a quarter of a century.

His Quilty results include sixth middleweight in 2003, eighth middleweight in 2014 and fifth heavyweight in 2018. In 2019, he and Churinga Taboo finished third heavyweight before returning in 2023 to win the heavyweight division.

That 2023 victory was followed by another third heavyweight placing in South Australia in 2024, this time riding Churinga Jack Frost. In July 2026, Luke and Jack Frost again completed the Quilty in third place heavyweight, finishing the 160 kilometres in 14 hours, 39 minutes and 45 seconds.

Those results speak for themselves, but they also represent years of patient preparation, sound horsemanship and a willingness to return after the inevitable disappointments. Trish's account is open about the vet-outs as well as the successes. In endurance riding, both are part of the journey.



TENTERFIELD ENDURANCE

Luke- by the numbers

11,288.1 km of official endurance comps

106 endurance rides

14 Tom Quilty buckles

400 km Shahzada Memorial completion

1st Heavyweight – 2023 Tom Quilty Gold Cup

3rd Heavyweight – 2019, 2024 and 2026 Tom Quilty Gold Cups



BEYOND THE NR ZONE

Luke's riding has taken him well beyond northern New South Wales. During his years studying veterinary science in Western Australia, he rode as a Western Australian member and competed regularly in that state. Across his career he has been affiliated with the New South Wales, Western Australian and Queensland endurance associations.

The family travelled to Tasmania three times and crossed Australia to Western Australia three times. Trish admits she does not like to think about the fuel used or the kilometres driven, but remembers every trip as exciting and worthwhile.

Luke and Jenny also rode in Bahrain as members of an Australian young riders team, finishing tenth and twentieth in the world. Jenny later rode in Argentina, extending a family story that had begun with children completing local training rides around Tenterfield and Bendemeer.

Horses that remain family

Throughout Trish's account, the horses are never treated simply as competition mounts. Each has been part of the family, and the horses that carried the Annetts riders through the Quilty have retired to the family paddocks. Castlebar Citation is one example. Luke rode him to Quilty completions in Western Australia in 2014 and New South Wales in 2015. Now twenty years old, Citation continues to give rides to the next generation of Annetts girls. Other horses—including Mimosa Beauty, Poets Corner Hanna, Tismah Park Bint Chardonnay, Tallawarra Jazardis, Churinga Taboo and Churinga Jack Frost—each represent a different chapter in Luke's long riding career.

The Annetts family also helped establish and run the Glen Innes Endurance Club, hosting a New South Wales State Championship and an FEI Australian Championship three-star ride. Their contribution has therefore extended beyond competing to helping provide opportunities for other riders and strengthening endurance within the region.

The next generation

Today, Jenny's daughters are riding, and Trish hopes they will continue into endurance alongside their mother and uncle.

That may be the most fitting measure of the Annetts family journey. The results are considerable—more than 11,000 official kilometres for Luke, fourteen Quilty buckles, major placings and international representation—but the lasting achievement is the family connection built through horses.

