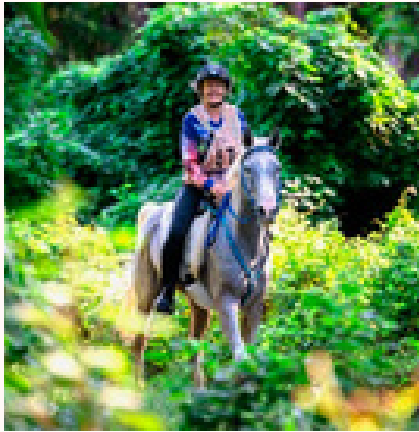


# THE LEE LEGACY



For nearly four decades, Tenterfield Endurance Riding Club member Karen Lee has been a familiar and respected figure in Australian endurance riding. Since recording her first official ride in 1989, Karen has quietly built a remarkable career founded on determination, horsemanship and an unwavering love of the sport.



Over those years she has accumulated more than 10,000 official competition kilometres, a milestone recognised at the 2026 Tom Quilty Gold Cup—a fitting tribute to a lifetime of dedication. While the kilometres are impressive, Karen's true legacy extends far beyond statistics. She has become a mentor, supporter and role model for riders across Queensland and New South Wales, always willing to share her experience and encourage newcomers to the sport.

The 2026 Tom Quilty Gold Cup was especially memorable. Before the ride had even begun, Karen was honoured with her 10,000 kilometre rider award, while her faithful partner Markus Romulus received recognition for reaching 5,000 official competition kilometres and a special 10-Year Competition Award, complete with framed certificates commemorating both achievements. Karen also contributed to Queensland's success as a member of the QERA Representative Team, which proudly finished third in the Teams Event.

Outside of competing, Karen has held official positions with both Tenterfield Endurance Riding Club (President 2025) and Northern Rivers Zone (secretary and representative) for several years.

*PHOTO CREDITS (ABOVE)- SARAH SULLIVAN PHOTOGRAPHY*

## MARKUS ROMULUS-

### A HORSE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS



Few horses leave such a lasting mark on endurance riding as Markus Romulus.

Since beginning his endurance career in 2015, the grey Arabian Warmblood gelding has accumulated more than 5,200 official endurance kilometres across 56 successful endurance rides, earning recognition as one of Australia's distinguished Decade Teams alongside Karen Lee.



## TOM QUILTY 2026

Setting out confidently at midnight, Karen and Markus completed what she described as a "perfect Quilty." The experienced gelding sailed through every vet check, dropping below 60 beats per minute almost immediately after each leg before heading straight to vetting. With ideal weather and excellent support from Elisha and granddaughter Violet in the strapping crew, the partnership demonstrated exactly why experience counts. Karen often credits Markus himself for much of their success.

"He is a seasoned horse and looks after himself well," she says simply. That quiet confidence has carried the pair through countless kilometres, major endurance rides and multiple Tom Quilty campaigns. Markus has become much more than a successful competition horse—he represents consistency, trust and everything endurance riding strives to achieve.

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# THE LEGACY CONTINUES

Perhaps the greatest reward for Karen has been watching the next generation discover the same passion.

Granddaughter Violet Cantwell has enjoyed an outstanding 2026 season. Riding Aspin Hill Rafiki, she completed three 80 km rides before partnering Yaramin, generously provided by Shelley Chapman, to complete both a 100 km and another 80 km qualification ride while working towards her own Tom Quilty dream.

Although heavy rain forced the cancellation of two Northern Rivers rides, leaving Violet just 80 kilometres short of qualifying for the 2026 Tom Quilty, disappointment quickly turned into celebration.

During Quilty week she proudly represented herself in the Arabian Horse Show aboard one of Shelley Chapman's buckskin horses, winning First Place in the Derivative Led Class and Second Place in the Ridden Event, collecting \$450 in prize money along with two impressive Tom Quilty ribbons that now take pride of place in her bedroom.

Karen says Violet has learned an enormous amount this season thanks to the generosity of experienced riders and mentors who have supported her journey.

With several more rides planned before the end of the year, the goal is already set: qualifying together for the New South Wales Tom Quilty in two years' time.

As Karen's remarkable career demonstrates, endurance riding is never simply about the kilometres completed. It is about partnerships built over years, friendships formed on the trail, and knowledge generously passed from one generation to the next.

The Lee legacy is measured not only in 10,000 rider kilometres or 5,000 horse kilometres, but in the inspiration Karen continues to provide to those following in her footsteps. Through Violet, and through the many riders she has encouraged over the years, that legacy is certain to continue for many seasons to come.



SARAH SULLIVAN PHOTOGRAPHY



VIOLET'S FIRST 80KM RIDE, SOUTHBROOK 2026- SARAH SULLIVAN PHOTOGRAPHY

