

## Ross Hocking

Little Topar 10BS Winner - SA06 16805 BCH - 143 Owners, 966 Birds.

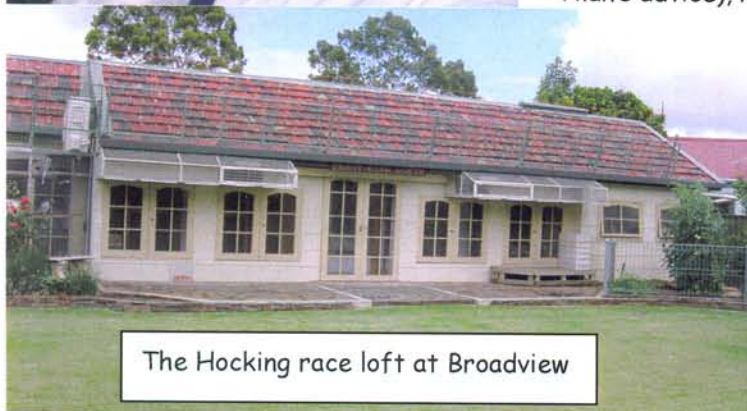
Cooper Pedy Open Winner - SA07 01866 BCPH - 187 Owners, 2453 Birds.



Ross Hocking has been racing pigeons since 1955 when he first raced with Woodville Juniors. He now races from Broadview with the North Suburban club. He rates his career highlights to date as winning 4 SAHPA races (Emmdale in 1991, Glendambo in 1999 and Little Topar 10BS and Cooper Pedy in 2009) and placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in SAHPA races on five other occasions. He won the Adelaide \$10,000 in its second year of operation.

The breeding of the winning birds are a combination of Goodger (Ross purchased 16 pairs at A Goodgers sale on Alan's advice), Pryor, Lu Bros imports and Smeulders

Janssen (based on the 'Golden Couple') from Steve Lucas. Ross believes that Lu Bros imported the best pigeons into Australia by purchasing directly from Vandeabeele, Houben, Flor Engles, Caesart and Herbot. Ross at one stage owned two of the three Gaby Vandenabeele cocks (direct from Wittenbuik) imported by Lu Bros. He has since sold one of the cocks but



The Hocking race loft at Broadview

kept 13 sons and daughters for stock purposes. The current breeding birds are all based on performance pigeons (either their own performance or their offspring).

Ross keeps 48 pairs of stock pigeons and aims to breed around 200 babies each year. This number is reduced by culling (he generally only races hens) so that the race season starts with about 90 birds. In this number he likes to have around fifty 2yo and 3yo hens.

Race birds are loft flown once a day for up to 1.5 hours and they are handfed twice a day. Feeding is based on peas and wheat with the percentage of wheat being increased as the races get longer.

The birds are not provided with any water or feed based additives, and no medications are provided. Any pigeon that does not respond to this regime is culled as are pigeons which do not conform to Ross's requirements as to training and racing activity.

Serious loft training starts around 1<sup>st</sup> March and toss training about 4 weeks before racing begins.

The first toss is about 50kms and the race team gets 20 tosses by first race out to a distance of 160kms. Once racing starts, he tosses as he sees the race team requirements. This year for example Ross decided that the birds needed some extra work and they were tossed from 340kms to 'sharpen' them up. This was done early in the club race programme.

Breeding birds are hopper fed peas and they are normally paired over the long weekend in October each year. Breeders are specifically bred for stock (race birds are not used) and his method of breeding is to inbreed for stock and outcross for racing.

His advice for new flyers is to buy the best performed pigeons you can afford.

Ross is concerned that the SAHPA is losing the history of the association, and that the SAHPA is not using the assets and expertise (within the SAHPA membership) to best advantage.