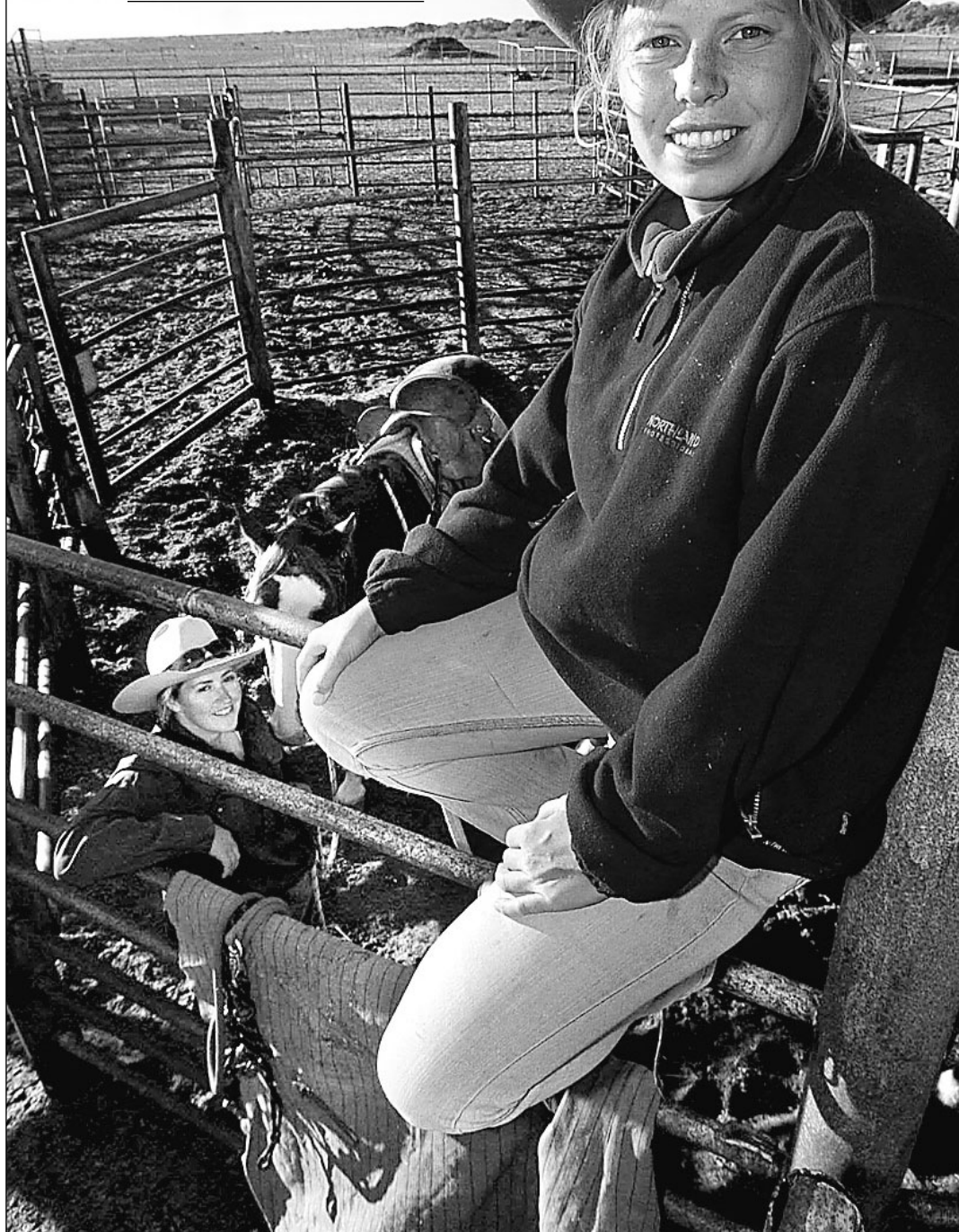


Letters from past lead to new life



CHANGE: Maj-Britt Medenwaldt with Shannon Bell at Dulkaninna station yesterday. Picture: MARK BRAKE

NIGEL AUSTIN
RURAL EDITOR

YOUNG German horse handler Maj-Britt Medenwaldt, 20, has found a new life on an isolated Birdsville Track cattle station, following the chance discovery of a series of letters from Germany.

Mundoora couple Leonie and Glen Schmidt were cleaning out his late father's possessions, and came across nine letters sent from Germany between 1925 and 1933.

Mr Schmidt had the letters transcribed and with only a surname of Medenwaldt to go by, he began contacting all the people with the same name in the Hamburg phone book.

It turned out that the families were related, but had lost

contact between world wars, and Mr Schmidt's newly discovered fourth cousin, Maj-Britt, was soon on her way from Eutin in the north of Germany.

She is now working on Dulkaninna station, 84km north of Marree on the Birdsville Track, for the Bell family. She found her way there because Mrs Schmidt babysat the Bells' young children, David and Shannon.

Apart from being a companion for Shannon Bell, she also helps out with the horses and other work on Dulkaninna station.

Her new life on the 240,000ha cattle station involves working in one of the driest and most remote parts of the world.

"Although I'm in one of the

most remote parts of the world, it doesn't feel remote," she said.

"There are always people driving along the Birdsville Track and calling in. I think the Bell family has more visitors than a lot of city people."

The visitors in the past week have included Governor-General Michael Jeffery and a party of 43 people for a night on the Year of the Outback Back to the Bush trip from Adelaide to Birdsville last Friday night.

Even so, at Dulkaninna the nearest neighbour is 40km away. But the work is similar as she spends most of her time working with horses as she did in Germany.

Kangarilla Rd, Parafield Gardens; Main South Rd, Old Noarlunga; Aldinga Rd, Willunga; Main Rd, McLaren Vale; Young St and Sherriffs Rd, Reynella; Wheatstreak Rd, Morphett Vale; Main South Rd and Penneys Hill Rd, Hackham; Hillier Rd, Reynella; Main South Rd, Hackham West; Gulfview Rd, Christies Beach; Goodman Rd and Phillip Hwy, Elizabeth South; John Rice Ave and Oldham Rd, Elizabeth Vale;

speedcameras

SELECTED LOCATIONS OF POLICE SPEED CAMERAS TODAY

Hogarth Rd, Elizabeth Grove; Main North Rd, Elizabeth; Salisbury Hwy and Commercial Rd, Salisbury; Yorktown Rd, Craigmore; Main North Rd, Munno Para; Waterloo Corner Rd, Burton; Angle Vale Rd and Old Port Wakefield Rd, Virginia; Heaslip

Rd, Waterloo Corner.
Country roads
Fifth St and Main Coast Rd, Ardrossan; Main North Rd, Auburn; Champion St, Port Rd and Waring St, Kadina; Kadina Rd, Kulpara; Robert St, Maitland; Main St and Yorktown Rd, Minlaton; Blanche Tce

and Moonta Bay Rd, Moonta; Port Wakefield Rd, Port Wakefield; Minlaton Rd, Stansbury; Alford Rd, Chatfield Tce, Irwin St and Kadina Rd, Wallaroo; Stenhouse Bay Rd and White Hut Rd, Warooka.

Fatalities so far this year: 47.
Fatalities to the same time last year: 60.
Fatalities May 2005: 14.
Fatalities May 2006: 3.
Provided by The Advertiser and SA Police in the interests of road safety.

Incentive for women in trades scrapped

LAURA ANDERSON
POLITICAL REPORTER
CANNBERRA

A \$1000 incentive payment encouraging employers to hire women for the "traditional trades" has been scrapped by the Federal Government.

Opposition education and training spokeswoman Jenny Macklin yesterday accused the Government of ignoring the skills crisis by scrapping the Women in Non-Traditional Occupations incentive.

The incentive was a \$1000 payment paid to an employer of a woman in an eligible Certificate II, III or IV level new apprenticeships in a non-traditional occupation.

Budget papers for 2006-07 show the program will be discontinued from July 1 this year.

"Women only account for one third of all apprentices in training despite

the skills crisis facing Australia," Ms Macklin said.

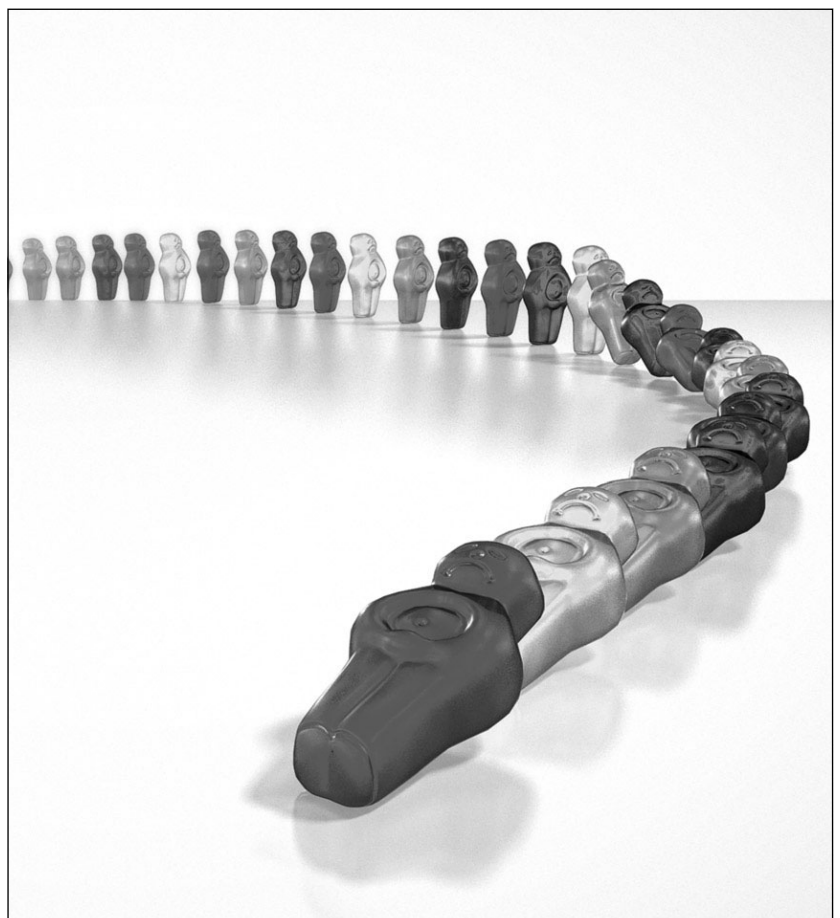
"Australia's skills crisis is hurting businesses and families and putting upward pressure on interest rates. It won't be solved unless we train more people in the traditional trades and that includes training more women."

However, Vocational and Technical Education Minister Gary Hardgrave said funding for the scheme had been redirected, as the incentive payments were not being taken up.

Childcare and other incentives to encourage women into the workforce would receive the redirected funds, he said.

"There are still incentives available for skills-shortage occupations, particularly in rural and regional areas, and this was just an additional layer of incentive if that person happened to be a woman," he said.

"But that was not being taken up."



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