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**LIFE SAVER:** Equine Invention director Nicole Allmann with the Escape stirrup.

Photo: Karl Robinson

# Horse riding safety push

By **AMY SHEEHAN**

A COOLUM company wants the Federal Government to make its latest equestrian safety device compulsory in horse riding clubs across Australia.

Equine Invention's newest product, the Escape stirrup, has already received national and international attention after one week on the market.

Inventor Peter Zillmer said while there were other safety stirrups available, his reduced a rider's chance of becoming "hung-up" and dragged during a fall.

The company is calling for the Federal Government to standardise the safety stirrups because of the number of horse-riding accidents in Australia.

Equine Inventions director Nicole Allmann said Queens-

land currently had the most horse-riding fatalities and injuries in the country.

"Australia has more than 300 accidents a year and Queensland is the biggest contributor to that figure," she said.

"We truly believe there is a need to make products like this mandatory because we know, just from talking to customers, that there are too many serious accidents happening."

Mrs Allmann and Mr Zillmer will meet with Member for Fairfax Alex Somlyay next week to discuss their proposal.

Caloundra Pony Club president Robert James said while he welcomed any product that improved rider safety, he didn't think it should be made compulsory without proper testing.

"I think any new product needs to be properly and tho-

roughly tested before it is made compulsory," he said.

Equine Inventions has already had the Federal Government's attention, being one of 17 south-east Queensland businesses invited to showcase their inventions at Parliament House in Canberra.

Mr Zillmer, who's been designing equine safety equipment for 10 years, said his stirrups were in high demand.

"In two months time, the New York Mounted Police and Royal Canadian Police will be using the stirrups," he said.

"My other designs have also been used by stuntmen."

Yesterday, Mr Somlyay's office released a statement saying he supported the concept, but it was up to the State Government to mandate that saddle makers insert the new stirrups.