



**DANCES WITH DOGS CLUB, QUEENSLAND  
PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR YEAR 2009/2010  
PRESENTED AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 27 MARCH 2010**

**1. Introduction**

I am pleased to provide this report on the operation of the Dances with Dogs Club, Queensland (DWDQ), in this inaugural year not only for the Club but also for the discipline of Dances with Dogs in Australia. It has been a busy and exciting year since the inaugural meeting to establish the Club was held in March 2009, and many members and their dogs have participated in the available competitions and some members have achieved Dances with Dogs titles with their dogs. Overall, the standard of performance achieved by members has been very high, and the development of the sport in this inaugural year augurs very well for its future.

**2. Activities and Achievements**

DWDQ and its members have been very active during 2009. Activities conducted and achievements of the Club and its members include:

- Conduct of seven Committee/general meetings;
- Affiliation with CCCQ
- Financial situation;
- Insurance;
- APRA licence;
- Facilitation of arrangements for training, in preparation for the Brisbane Royal and Gold Coast Show DWD competitions;
- Conduct of a dress rehearsal in preparation for the Brisbane Royal DWD competitions;
- Development of a DWD beginners training program;
- Development of *Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of DWDQ Activities*;
- Contribution to the development of *Guidelines for Clubs wishing to Conduct DWD Competitions*, and *Guidelines for DWD Heelwork to Music and Freestyle Routines*;
- Contribution to judges training program and promotion of the discipline;
- Training workshops by international presenters;
- Club logo;
- Approval for conduct of competitions;
- Undertaking fundraising activities;
- Equipment.

Each of these is addressed in further detail below.

**2.1 Conduct of meetings**

The inaugural meeting to establish the Dances with Dogs Club, Queensland, was held on 28 March 2009. Following a motion to establish the Club, the following office bearers were elected:

President: Gay Westmore  
Vice-President: Maree Rablin  
Secretary: Sharon Clark  
Treasurer: Karen Moore  
Committee: Ann Bulke  
Pam Kettle  
Wendy Russell  
Robyn Thomas.

DWDQ has held seven Committee meetings, held in each of March, April, May, July, September and November 2009 and February 2010. Each of these has been widely attended by members, not merely by the elected Committee members. Between meetings a number of matters have been dealt with by the Committee via email.

## **2.2 Membership**

The number of financial members of DWDQ continues to grow and membership numbers are expected to continue to grow as awareness of and interest in the sport grows.

Newsletters have been circulated to members by email each month, and the business papers for and minutes of each Committee meeting have likewise been circulated to all members by email. Matters arising out of the meetings as well as information about competitions and other more general information have also been communicated to members by email.

We are particularly conscious that most of our activities have centred on the Brisbane metropolitan/south-east Queensland area. We are keen to support the development of the sport more widely and will be looking at more ways in which we can assist our members outside south-east Queensland during the year ahead; we would welcome suggestions from those members as to how we can better meet their needs.

## **2.3 Affiliation with Canine Control Council (Queensland)**

In September 2009, the Club applied to the Canine Control Council (Queensland) (Dogs Queensland) for affiliate status. Normally social clubs are required to operate for 12 months before gaining affiliation, but we were very pleased when we achieved full affiliate status, effective from 1 January 2010. Among other things, achieving this milestone means that the Club is authorised to conduct competitions in its own right.

## **2.4 Financial situation**

A bank account has been opened with the Commonwealth Bank and the balance as at 22 February 2010 stood at \$3643.17. In addition to membership fees, income has been generated through donations from DWD training events, raffles, and the production and sale of training and/or performance equipment (eg canes, boxes) and merchandise (eg caps, bumper stickers). Further fund-raising activities are planned for 2010.

## **2.5 Insurance**

Public liability insurance and product liability insurance, each of \$10m, were taken out through Forde Kinter.

## **2.6 APRA licence**

After extensive enquiries by the Secretary and discussions by and with other members, the appropriate APRA licence type was identified and was issued by APRA in August 2009.

## **2.7 Facilitation of arrangements for training, in preparation for the Brisbane Royal and Gold Coast Show DWD competitions**

Maree Field from VIP generously invited members to join VIP Club members in DWD training sessions in preparation for the Brisbane Royal and Gold Coast Show DWD competitions. Members attended a total of three such training sessions, and no doubt members' participation assisted them in the preparation of their routines for those two competitions. The Club is grateful to Maree and VIP for their assistance in this regard.

### **2.8 Conduct of a dress rehearsal in preparation for the Brisbane Royal DWD competitions**

In addition to the above sessions, the RSPCA indoor training facility at Springwood was booked for the afternoon of Sunday 26 July, and members were provided with the opportunity to undertake a dress rehearsal of their routines for the Brisbane Royal. This venue provided exposure to performing in an indoor environment, and again benefitted those members who participated.

### **2.9 Development of a DWD beginners training program**

A sub-committee was appointed to develop a beginners training program in DWD. It is planned to run the initial cycle of this program from May 2010. In addition, consideration will be given to developing training opportunities for more advanced handler/dog teams, as well as addressing more general issues such as choreography, music selection, music editing etc. The formation of small local networks and mentoring arrangements are also being set in train to assist members to progress their training.

### **2.10 Development of *Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of DWDQ Activities***

Members contributed to the development of a suite of *Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of DWDQ Activities*, which was endorsed at the meeting held on 5 July 2009.

### **2.11 Contribution to the development of *Guidelines for Clubs wishing to conduct DWD Competitions*, and *Guidelines for DWD Heelwork to Music and Freestyle Routines***

It is hoped that a number of obedience clubs, as well as DWDQ, will conduct DWD competitions in the future. Because DWD competitions have a number of unique requirements, it was recognised that clubs would find it helpful to have a framework against which to operate. Accordingly individual DWDQ members contributed to the development of *Guidelines for Clubs wishing to conduct DWD Competitions*. Members also contributed to the development of a checklist of tasks to be performed in connection with competitions.

In addition, in the light of experience in the development and performance of Heelwork to Music and Freestyle routines, individual members contributed to the development of *Guidelines* as to expectations in the various classes in each of the Divisions.

### **2.12 Contribution to judges training program and promotion of the discipline**

At the request of Coral Pethers, convenor of the judges training program in Queensland, individual members have contributed to the DWD judges training program by providing demonstration performances as 'live' exhibits for judges' training sessions and for judges' practical examinations.

Two members presented demonstration routines at the German Shepherd Dog National and three members were invited to present demonstration routines at the Queensland State Obedience titles. Maree Field was asked to perform with her Border Collie Mutley before Best in Show at the Brisbane Royal and Karen Moore and her Malinois Zoya performed at the 2009 Dog of the Year Competition.

### **2.13 Training workshops by international presenters**

A half-day training workshop with Hannah Crook, a DWD trainer and competitor from the UK, will be held on 11 October 2009. Twenty-one members attended this workshop, which participants considered was highly beneficial.

Arrangements were initiated for Richard Curtis, a renowned DWD trainer and competitor from the UK, to visit Brisbane in April 2010, following conduct of a workshop in Melbourne. Ultimately, it was agreed that this workshop be held at Camp Tailwaggers and, as such, responsibility for its further organisation and conduct have been taken over by the owner of Camp Tailwaggers. However, DWDQ is organising a more broad-ranging seminar on dog training and motivation, which is anticipated to attract enthusiasts from other disciplines as well as DWD. This seminar will be held on the Wednesday 21 April 2010.

Discussions have taken place with Kath Hardman, another highly experienced trainer, competitor and judge from the UK, to visit Australia and conduct workshops in Brisbane and Melbourne on 2/3 April and 9/10 April 2011 respectively. Kath will be joined by fellow UK trainer, competitor and judge, Karen Sykes.

#### **2.14 Club logo**

Members contributed ideas for a Club logo, which was voted on and the above logo was adopted at the meeting held on 31 May 2009.

#### **2.15 Approval for conduct of competitions**

DWDQ initiated discussions with the Metropolitan Dog Obedience Club (MDOC), leading to that club hosting a DWD competition in November 2009. DWDQ members provided significant assistance to MDOC in the organisation and conduct of the competition which was well attended. MDOC not only conducted the competition but also donated the income from entry fees to our Club.

It is hoped that some obedience clubs may wish to conduct DWD competitions in 2010. However, DWDQ is also keen to conduct a number of competitions in its own name, now that it has achieved affiliation, as well as to support any obedience or other clubs or associations (eg agricultural shows) wishing to conduct DWD competitions.

So far in 2010, two competitions have been held, viz

- Toowoomba Dog Obedience Club – held at Durack on 6 February 2010
- Pine Rivers Dog Obedience Club – held at Mt Gravatt showgrounds on 13 March 2010.

We are grateful for Toowoomba Dog Obedience Club's work in running all competitions in 2009 and committing to this sport during its infancy. Without that Club's support and hard work – particularly on the part of Coral Pethers – there is no doubt that the sport in Queensland would not have advanced to the extent that it has. We are also grateful to Pine Rivers Dog Obedience Club and Metropolitan Dog Obedience Club (who ran a competition in Nov 2009) for demonstrating their support for DWD. At this stage all competitions are run at a loss, and it is a significant commitment for obedience clubs to run these events; basically they are demonstrating their commitment to and support for the development of this discipline, even though their own members may have limited involvement in the sport at this time.

DWDQ now has approval to run competitions during the balance of 2010 as follows:

- Saturday 15 May: Val Bonney, Maree Rablin, Trevor Telford – Caboolture Sports Dog Obedience Club, Caboolture
- Saturday 5 June: Ann Bulke, Joanne Meredith, Gay Westmore – Mt Gravatt Showgrounds (indoors)

- Saturday 17 July: Vyvyan Mannion, Coral Pethers, Trevor Telford – Obedience Dog Club of Brisbane, Oxley
- Sunday 3 October
- Sunday 21 November.

The conduct of competitions requires a number of roles to be performed, and we will welcome helpers from among our membership to enable such events to be conducted.

There will be additional competitions as follows:

- RNA Royal Show, August
- Gold Coast Show, August
- Grafton Dog Obedience Club – 11/12 September (to be held at Camp Tailwaggers)

## 2.16 Undertaking fundraising activities

As is evidenced by the current financial standing of the Club, considerable fundraising has been undertaken during the year.

At the inaugural meeting, membership fees were set as follows:

### For 2009/2010

Joining fee: Single \$25; Family \$40  
(No annual membership fee)

### For 2010/2011 (subsequently revised)

Joining fee: Single: \$15 Family: \$15

Annual membership fee: Single \$25; Family: \$40

### Members outside south-east Queensland

Joining fee: Single \$10 Family: \$10

Annual membership fee: Single \$25 Family: \$40

### Junior membership:

Joining fee: Nil

Annual membership fee: \$15.

Club funds were augmented by the net income from a weekend training camp, raffles (with products generously donated by Ann Bulke (Camp Tailwaggers), Angela Burke, Lilian Cunningham and Gay Westmore) and training fees (eg from 'dress rehearsal' training and Hannah Crook workshop).

The Club has obtained caps inscribed with the Club's logo and these are being sold at a small profit. Vyvyan Mannion kindly donated car bumper stickers which are also being sold for fundraising purposes. We are also about to have T-shirts printed with the Club logo.

## 2.17 Equipment

DWDQ is extremely grateful to the Toowoomba Dog Obedience Club (TDOC) which has generously donated a sound system to DWDQ; this is a very significant financial commitment and addresses a need which it is unlikely that DWDQ could have met from its own finances for some considerable time. The Club is also extremely grateful to Dogs

Queensland for its generous decision to meet the cost of two external speakers to facilitate use of the sound system at external venues.

The generosity and support of both TDOC and the Dogs Queensland are gratefully acknowledged.

### **2.18 Website**

In conjunction with Melbourne DWD enthusiasts Sue Cordwell (Victorian representative on the National DWD Committee) and Christina Pickersgill, DWDQ has contributed to the development of a *Dances with Dogs Australia* website. The website provides the opportunity for each State/Territory to publish its own information, and DWDQ has undertaken the task of development of content for the Queensland web pages. My particular thanks go to Eddie Kirkman who has done a lot of work with Christina in getting the site up and running, and in populating the Queensland web pages with a variety of content. We look forward to the continued expansion of web content in the future, and invite members' contributions for this purpose.

### **3. Members' achievements in DWD competitions**

Members have worked enthusiastically with their dogs to enhance their ability to perform in this discipline. Members who had some experience prior to formal recognition of DWD have progressed to achieve Starters, Novice and one Intermediate title with their dogs in Freestyle and Starters and Novice titles in Heelwork to Music. Members who have joined the sport this year have progressed very well. For all trainers/competitors, it is evident that the relationship between them and their dogs has been further enhanced through their DWD training. To date almost 30 DWD titles have been awarded in Queensland – an excellent achievement and testimony to the enthusiasm and commitment of the handlers concerned. Indeed, all members are to be congratulated on the progress they have made.

DWD competitions have also been very well received by the general public, particularly at events such as the Brisbane Royal and the Spectacular Petacular.

### **4. Donations and sponsorship**

As mentioned above, DWDQ has been generously supported by a number of people and organisations during its inaugural year. Particular mention must be made again of Toowoomba Dog Obedience Club and Dogs Queensland for the financial and operational support, to Ann Bulke and Camp Tailwaggers for their donations to the Club and provision of trophies, to VIP Pet Foods for their very generous sponsorship of the Club and of competitions held to date, and to Lilian Cunningham for her regular donations of Avon 'goodies' for raffles. Many other members have made financial contributions and/or simply incurred expenses on behalf of the Club without claiming reimbursement. I thank them for their commitment and generosity.

### **5. Acknowledgements**

Members are very grateful for the support that the discipline and DWDQ have received during this inaugural year. Particular thanks are due to –

Dogs Queensland

Barbara Murfet as chair of the National DWD Committee

Coral Pethers as Queensland representative on the National DWD Committee and convenor of the DWD judges training program

Toowoomba Dog Obedience Club, and in particular to Coral Pethers and Trevor Telford Royal National Association, Queensland

I would also like to express my thanks to our inaugural Committee members. They were willing to step into the unknown and each of them has committed their time and expertise to

the running of the Club during the year. I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of Sharon Clark as Secretary and Karen Moore as Treasurer, both of which positions are very demanding in terms of time commitment, and to Ann Bulke for her regular newsletters.

I would also like to thank Barbara Murfet and Coral Pethers for their personal support and mentoring and to Barbara for her representations to the CCCQ on behalf of our Club.

I wish the Club every success in the year ahead and look forward to its continued growth and development into the future.

Gay Westmore,  
President, DWDQ

27 March 2010.