

NZDJA

**NZ Dog Judges
Association Inc**

Hosting Judges

by Lavina Diamanti

If you hang around a group of dog judges long enough you will inevitably get to hear some of the wonderful and not so wonderful (and sometimes downright disastrous) experiences they have had when away judging. Some clubs are lucky enough to have experienced judges on their committees and the visiting judges usually benefit from this. Others aren't so lucky and learn as they go. The Canadian Judges website has a very good page on "The Care and Feeding of Judges" and is presented on a "wouldn't it be nice..." basis. I intend to put this on our agenda for something similar on our own website. In the meantime, I have collated some thoughts along with some anecdotes from those who have experienced something a little different.

Airport, flights and entry visas

As clubs, we are wanting to get the best prices for the air travel but not all judges appreciate a 4am start on Monday after a tiring weekend judging. Many would happily pay the extra money so they could depart at a more social hour. Some judges aren't in a rush to get home and would love the opportunity to spend some time in our beautiful country. Communication is the key here.

I am always grateful when I know who is picking me up at the airport or they display an identifying signboard. Playing "spot the dog show person" in a sea of faces at a busy airport can be a little stressful! Mind you, picking up a judge who has consumed a little too much of the 'free stuff' on the flight can be interesting too!

When travelling to faraway places or bringing judges from countries other than Australia, it is really important to make sure the correct entry visa has been issued. The New Zealand judge who travelled to an appointment in Argentina and then Brazil, had a rude awakening when she was denied entry to Brazil. Airport security, complete with loaded AK47 rifles, gave her a not so pleasant welcome. It transpires a recent change of arrangements between countries resulted in her visa (which was issued when she purchased the airline tickets some months earlier) was no longer sufficient. Thankfully the New Zealand High Commission were on hand to assist with obtaining the correct visa for her. The airline also received a \$10,000 fine for allowing her to board the plane with the incorrect documentation.

Accommodation, meals and transport

This can be a big expense for clubs and most judges are happy with modest motel accommodation. There are numerous variations on this though, as a New Zealand judge found out a couple of years ago. Arriving into Australia late afternoon she

duly arrived at the motel which, it turned out, was miles from anywhere. She hadn't had a meal and quickly found out there was no restaurant there and nothing open where she could get something to eat and the club host hadn't thought to make any arrangements for her. She was one very hungry judge when collected the next day. The judge who had to vacate his accommodation due to an infestation of bed bugs will never forget that experience either. The opposite though can be tough on clubs. Judges who demand an unnecessarily high standard of accommodation and meals can be stressful to host, not to mention the expense. Few judges are willing to be billeted when completing appointments. Judging a full day can be very tiring, especially if you have come into a different climate to what you had at home, and getting a good rest is beneficial to everyone. At a recent show where the temperature in New Zealand was in the 30s one of the judges had come from Canada where it was minus 20 deg when she left. Hopefully she had been fully briefed on what to expect prior to her leaving home.

Sometimes clubs go the extra mile and really treat their judges well. The chauffeured limousine arriving at the motel to pick up the judges is in total contrast to the judge who was left at the show grounds to find her own way having "put up the wrong dog"! Fortunately the caretaker was able to give her a ride back to her motel.

Sometimes it's the little things that make all the difference. The personalised itinerary emailed the week before the appointment, which includes all the details on where you are staying, who is picking you up and when, anything extra that may be planned (so you can pack appropriate clothing), even giving you a heads up on the weather expectations.

Being invited to judge overseas is an honour and sometimes we can include some sightseeing and take advantage of the opportunity to visit foreign countries. But we are there primarily to judge for the club. Judging a full day at show is very tiring and requires a lot of concentration. Judges who are well rested, and well looked after will certainly perform better and that benefits everyone.

Important Dates

20 March	Theory Exams
24 June	Annual Conference
21 & 22 June	Practical Examinations – Auckland
28 & 29 July	Practical Examinations – Christchurch