



News & Views from the Board

September 2025

Hi all

Last weekend the new board held its first face to face board meeting in Christchurch. This was held over two days and contained a very full agenda which we were pleased to complete in good time.

The first major task was to set a Strategic Plan. As we worked through the process we looked at what had worked well, what could be improved, confirmed our vision, had a re-think on our values, completed a SWOT analysis and set some goals and objectives. The full document is now up on the website to view but the key points from that session were:

Our Vision:

The education, promotion and representation of New Zealand Dog Judges.

Our Values:

Integrity – Honesty, fairness and impartiality.

Excellence - Continue to learn and develop and uphold the highest standards of judging and breed knowledge.

Respect – Commitment to the health and welfare of pedigree dogs. Respect for judges, exhibitors and contributors to our sport.

Points to note from the discussions:

- We have a great Online system in JOLTED and there is opportunity to develop this further.
- Our exam system would benefit from a full review.
- There is a need for further development in the training of our judges.
- The website needs improving and our desire is to have one judges list i.e. NZDJA website would have a link to the Dogs NZ list once it has been put into a format that includes the additional information on the NZDJA one.
- Geographical isolation continues to be a challenge for some our judges.
- Branch engagement (some, not all) is a weakness.
- Lack of volunteers for our branches is a challenge.
- Lack of compliance with our Code of Conduct by some of our members is of concern.
- Some of our judges are not meeting standard expectations with ringcraft, application of, or lack of, breed knowledge, lack of knowledge of anatomy and in some cases, expected behaviour of our members.

The next item on the agenda was a review of the 2025 theory and practical exams and setting out the requirements for the 2026 exams. We considered the feedback received from the examiners and while the board acknowledged that many of the candidates benefited from the open book style exams, there was a shared view that this style does not support the depth of knowledge in breed standards, canine terminology and anatomy that is expected before sitting the practical exam. On a positive note, the transition to online exams had been a very successful step forward and Bronwyn has done a great job leading this. It was agreed that the 2026 theory exams will be as follows:

- Online, supervised using JOLTED.
- Closed book i.e. no reference to breed standards or other material will be allowed.
- Exam to consist of 100 breed questions and 20 questions from the Glossary of Terms and Anatomy document.
- 70% will be required to pass i.e. 84/120
- Time allowed will be 2 hours.

The practical exams have yet to be finalised, but the board feels that a full review of our examination system is appropriate with a view to implementing any changes in 2027 at the earliest.

Subcommittees were confirmed and the leads on these are as follows:

Junior Showmanship – Sonia Nicholson

JOLTED – Bronwyn Murdoch

Examination – Keith Brown

Training – Diane Riley

The meeting also confirmed changes to the Judges regulations that were discussed at the AGM plus made further changes to support our value of seeking excellence in our judges. A copy of these changes will soon be on the website. **Note** – these will take effect from the 1st January 2026 for the year following. To clarify - all judges who are intending to apply in January 2026 to sit exams will be required to meet the requirements of the **current** regulations.

The main points from the regulation changes are:

- Judges who are on the General Specials Panel will be permitted to judge any stake classes in addition to General Specials.
- Observations now include a minimum number of 20 dogs to be observed.
- Judges applying for Championship show panels will now be required to complete a minimum of 10 written critiques on at least 5 different breeds or varieties of the group they are aspiring to. These critiques are to be signed off at the time by an NZDJA approved observer, with no more than 5 critiques with any one observer.
- The other qualifying criteria has been amended as follows:
 - Second group: number of dogs increased from 300 to 350 and added the requirement to judge at least once at championship show level.
 - Third group: number of dogs increased from 400 to 500 and added the requirement to judge the previous group appointed to at least once at championship show level.
 - Fourth group: number of dogs remains at 700 but these must be at championship show level and added the requirement to judge the previous group appointed to at least twice at championship show level.
 - Fifth group: number of dogs remains at 1200 but these must be at championship show level and added the requirement to judge the previous group appointed to at least twice at championship show level.
 - Sixth group: number of dogs remains at 1800 but these must be at championship show level and added the requirement to judge the previous group appointed to at least twice at championship show level.
 - Seventh group: number of dogs remains at 2600 but these must be at championship show level and added the requirement to judge the previous group appointed to at least twice at championship show level.

Code of Conduct

Following discussion at the AGM:-

Item 5 has been amended to include a definition of what is considered soliciting or touting for judging appointments.

Item 10 has been amended in line with the Dogs NZ Show regulations.

Item 13 has been amended to include vaping.

The updated version is available to be viewed on the website and a copy is attached to this email.

Note: All judges, in renewing their membership, agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.

New Breed Exams

The board is currently preparing open book exams for the following new breeds which have been recognised by Dogs NZ:

- Bavarian Mountain Scent Hound – Hound Group
- Munsterlander (Kleiner) – Gundog Group
- American Hairless Terrier – Terrier Group

Once finalised all judges currently licenced to judge each respective group will be required to complete the open book exam which will be available online via JOLTED. Further details to come.

Mandatory Items

Some of these will soon be available online. We will have further information soon.

Specialist Exams

We are wanting to get a head start on the writing of the exam papers so would appreciate it if you could let the Secretary know if you are planning to sit a specialist exam next year.

Exam Fees

Some exam fees have had small increases in line with CPI index. These will be updated on the website soon.

Formal Complaints

A new form has been developed for formal complaints. This was at the recommendation of the Complaints Committee to ensure that any complaints follow the correct process, include the required information and accompanying fee. A copy of the new form can be found on the website under forms along with the updated Disputes Regulations.

Effective date for breed standards for exams

The 31st August each year is the effective date for breed standards when we set the exam questions. If you are intending to sit an exam next year, please download the breed standards from the Dogs NZ website now. Any new breeds added or any changes to existing standards after the 31st August will not be included in the exam questions.

Subscriptions

A friendly reminder - Invoices for subs are being sent out early in October. These are due by 31st December.

Lavina and the NZDJA Board

"It takes time to create excellence, If it could be done quickly, more people would do it."

John Wooden

