



Who Let the Champions Out? 2025 Australian Dog of the Year Winners Announced Paw-stralians honoured for lifting spirits and defying limits

From therapy, military and conservation detection dogs to trailblazing paw-thletes, pawtrolling protectors and resilient warriors and more, dogs enrich our world in ways no one else can. The [Puppy Tales Australian Dog of the Year Awards](#) honour remarkable canine companions who embody the essence of the Australian doggo: love, courage, inspiration, assistance, and fur-iendship!

"Now in its fifth year, the Australian Dog of the Year Awards proves that dogs are more than just pets—they are gifts!" says Kerry Martin, an international award-winning pet photographer, author and founder of [Puppy Tales](#).

"This year's winners and finalists highlight the extraordinary ways dogs contribute to our lives—from inspiring hope and resilience to saving lives and advancing veterinary and medical fields. They truly exemplify what it means to be both a companion and a hero. Having seen it firsthand with my own dogs and through this year's nominations, I'm certain every nominee has touched someone's life in a meaningful way. That's the magic of dogs—they make the world better, showing us the true meaning of loyalty, kindness and some remarkable talents."

This year's winners remind us of what's possible: overcoming adversity, forging connections and showing kindness at every turn! Congratulations to all the finalists and the winners!

Australian Dog of the Year 2025

Elle, Border Collie, Gold Coast QLD ([STORY LINK](#))

Nominated Charity Recipient: Deaf Dog Rescue Australia

Elle is a deaf rescue dog who has transformed lives with her resilience, empathy and unwavering spirit. From excelling in agility competitions using sign language to supporting anxious children as a school therapy dog, Elle breaks down barriers and inspires everyone she meets, proving that challenges can be overcome with love and determination.

"Elle's story exemplifies perseverance and the incredible bond between humans and animals. Her ability to overcome challenges and provide such meaningful support to others is a shining example of why we celebrate dogs through this award. Elle's journey is a testament to love, resilience and the extraordinary ways animals enrich our lives," says Kerry.

People's Choice Award

Daphne, Tibetan Spaniel, Melbourne VIC ([STORY LINK](#))

Nominated Charity Recipient: Second Chance Animal Rescue

The People's Choice Award is a celebration of community spirit and love for our incredible dogs. This year, the Award goes to Daphne, a 12-year-old former therapy dog whose miraculous recovery from a severe brain injury has inspired countless people. Defying all odds, Daphne regained her ability to walk, see, and thrive, proving that recovery is possible and that the bond between dogs and their people can inspire hope and healing.





ARAS (All Rescues Are Special) Medal

Proudly sponsored by [The Saltiest Dog](#)

Bear, Border Collie x Koolie, Sunshine Coast QLD

[\(STORY LINK\)](#)

Nominated Charity Recipient: IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare)

The ARAS (All Rescues Are Special) Medal, proudly sponsored by *The Saltiest Dog*, goes to Bear, a rescue dog who found his true purpose as a conservation hero. After being surrendered by multiple families, Bear joined the University of South Australia's Detection Dogs for Conservation team. He has since saved more than 100 koalas, proving that with the right support, rescue animals can achieve extraordinary things.

Paws-itive Change Award & Special Mentions

The **Paws-itive Change Award** recognises inspiring stories of transformation brought about by dogs in our society, with a kind donation from Pet Circle. This year's award goes to **Sunday** (Sydney NSW), became the first Australian animal to undergo an osseointegration procedure, involving a hybrid Cobalt-Titanium implant in her tibia, after her leg was amputated as a puppy.

Sunday has made a pawstitive impact on the lives of other dogs. Her groundbreaking procedure has paved the way for other dogs to access innovative treatments and inspired advancements in human medical care, creating a ripple effect of positive change for countless lives. [\(STORY LINK\)](#)



The Puppy Tales team found all the finalists and many other nominations to be amazing dogs but would like to give a **Special Mention** to finalists [Fly](#) (Ulverstone TAS) and [Ruzie](#) (Sydney NSW).

"Fly and Ruzie may not have taken home the top awards, but their stories remind us that every dog plays a role in shaping lives and spreading joy," says Kerry.

Fly (RIP) was a therapy dog, touching the lives of veterans, at-risk youth and children, building confidence and providing comfort. Fly played a pivotal role in the Dolly's Dream campaign, raising awareness about bullying and promoting safety for vulnerable individuals.

Ruzie is an ocean-loving surfing dog who retired from her role as a Seagull Patrol Dog at Sydney Harbour to spend more time with her family, offering comfort and support as they navigate a challenging time.

Prizes and donations to charities

Amid exceptional entries, selecting a winner once again proved challenging for the Puppy Tales team. At the end of the day, every dog is a winner! Winners, nominees and voters received prizes worth \$20K, including \$1,000 donation by Puppy Tales to the Australian Dog of the Year winner's preferred charity and \$250 to the People's Choice's nominated charity.

You can read about the WINNERS [here](#) and other dogs selected in an incredible Finalist panel [here](#).

**** Nominations for Australian Dog of the Year 2026 are [OPEN NOW!](#) ****

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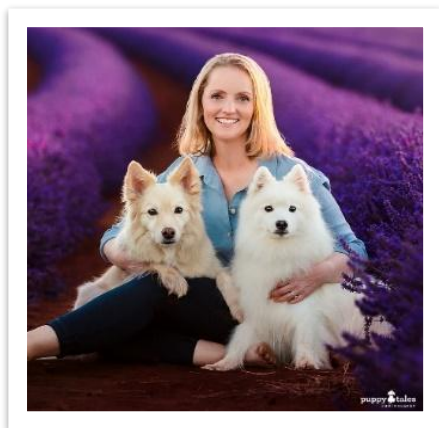
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For interviews of 2025 Winners and Finalists, please contact Caroline or Kerry.



About Kerry Martin & Puppy Tales

Photodography™ you'll adore
Pet Travel & Adventures you'll Dig

Kerry Martin of Puppy Tales considers pets very much part of the family so lives this adage to help and inspire fellow pet parents to create incredible memories of a most paw-some life together! Kerry's Melbourne-based but is often on the road throughout Australia offering her award-winning dog photography.

She's known throughout the country for her seasonal photography experiences, most notably Snow Dogs, and her studio-based Project Dogalogue. Of the many national and international photography awards she's received over the past decade, the highlights have been Master of Photography and Australian Pet/Animal Photographer of the Year and Winner 'Pets and People Category' in the International Pet Photography Awards.

She published [Dog Tales of Australia](#), a bucket list guide of dog friendly travel and destinations throughout Australia. Kerry also creates content for the [Puppy Tales](#) website, a social media community of over 500,000 and other publications to promote the wonderful relationships between dogs and people. All accompanied by stunning photography!

Puppy Tales is a business for good with a mission to make a paw-sitive difference. Puppy Tales operates as carbon negative; supports many local organisations through photography and fundraising; and plays a part in the global community's effort to protect the planet, take action on climate change and care for animals and wildlife. To discover more, visit <https://puppytales.com.au>