MEDIA RELEASE
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Could your dog be the 2027 Australian Dog of the Year?

From hard-working farm dogs to life-changing best mates, Puppy Tales is celebrating Aussie dogs making a difference

Has your dog changed someone's life, helped their community or shown extraordinary talent? Puppy Tales wants to hear their story, with nominations for the 2027 Australian Dog of the Year closing on Sunday 10 January 2027.

Now in their seventh year, the **Puppy Tales Australian Dog of the Year Awards** – Australia's original national awards recognising the contribution of dogs – celebrate the true-blue Aussie spirit through the love, courage, companionship and remarkable contributions of dogs across Australia. The winners will be unleashed on Australia Day, 26 January 2027.

"These awards shine a national spotlight on the often-unsung dogs making a difference every day, in homes, schools, hospitals and communities across the country, usually without asking for anything in return," says Kerry Martin, award-winning dog photographer, author and founder of Puppy Tales.



The awards are inspired by the dogs, including her own, Kerry has met and photographed throughout her years of travel across Australia.

"Our dogs are as diverse as Australia itself, from hard-working farm dogs, conservation heroes, therapy and assistance dogs to the fearless hounds serving in rescue teams, the military and the police force," she says.

The 2026 Australian Dog of the Year, Louie, is a gentle Border Collie and certified therapy dog who offers calm, grounding comfort to people during some of the hardest moments of their lives.

"Louie doesn't seek attention. He simply shows up, and that quiet presence makes a real difference to the people he meets," says Kerry.

The 2026 awards attracted nominations from every state and territory, with around 35 per cent coming from regional areas and 9 per cent from rural or remote areas. A third of the dogs nominated came from rescue backgrounds.

Alongside Australian Dog of the Year, the awards recognise dogs' contributions through the Canine Home Hero, Dog of Talent, Paws-itive Change, ARAS (All Rescues Are Special) and People's Choice medals.

The 2027 judging panel will be announced soon. Keep your paws on the Australian Dog of the Year website for updates!

Celebrating dogs with big rewards

Puppy Tales wants to hear about the dogs who've gone above and beyond, whether through service to their communities, life-changing support to humans or simply being the best mate a person could ask for.

"I'd love to see even more of Australia in the mix this year: the working dogs on farms, the little dogs doing big things, the sporting and trick dogs, and the rescue dogs who've turned lives around. If a dog has made a difference, their story belongs here," says Kerry.

Winners, nominees and voters will share in prizes and charitable donations valued at more than $20,000.

Australian Dog of the Year

The winner receives:

- $1,000 donation to their chosen charity or not-for-profit organisation.
- Photography session and 'The Bailey' Collection from Puppy Tales (minimum value of $4,000)
- Personalised trophy of the winning dog (valued at $300).
- Media campaign with Pet Journo to publicise the dog's achievement.

Medal categories

People's Choice Medal
Chosen through public voting from the finalists. The recipient also receives a $250 donation to their chosen charity or not-for-profit organisation.

ARAS (All Rescues Are Special) Medal
Recognising that rescue dogs are just as special, talented and deserving of celebration as dogs from any start in life. Every rescue dog nominated is considered for the ARAS Medal and is also in the running for Australian Dog of the Year.

Paws-itive Change Medal
Celebrating the dog who makes a positive impact in the community, from work in policing, conservation, biosecurity and therapy to education, advocacy, fundraising, awareness roles and more. This category also honours dogs influencing change in the pet industry, veterinary care or legislation.

Canine Home Hero Medal
Recognising the dog whose courage, intuition, work, companionship or life-saving actions have made a significant difference to their human, family or other pets. This includes medical or safety alerts, essential emotional support, farm working duties and more.

Dog of Talent Medal
Recognising the talented pooch who loves to excel, entertain or perform, from sporting stars and trick dogs to theatre or TV performers, clever canines with show-stopping party tricks, and dogs who can paint, surf or pose with paw-fection. This category celebrates every unique doggo talent!

Each medal recipient receives:

- A photography session and large canvas from Puppy Tales, valued at $1,250.
- A personalised medal for the winning dog.
- A media campaign with Pet Journo to publicise the dog's achievement.

Nominee and voter prize draws

Ten nominators and ten People's Choice voters will each receive a $450 Puppy Tales photography gift card.

Which dogs can be nominated?

Every dog is a hero in their own way, and **ALL** are encouraged to enter!

“Whether they’ve saved lives, supported their humans through challenges or simply brought joy and comfort to those around them, every dog’s story deserves to be celebrated,” says Kerry.

Nominations are welcome for all dogs, including:

- Guide dogs, hearing dogs and assistance dogs
- Therapy dogs visiting hospitals, aged care or schools
- Dogs who help people with disabilities or health challenges
- Dogs involved in reading programs or providing support in classrooms
- Wildlife detection, conservation or protection dogs
- Dogs who have located, rescued or saved people or animals
- Police, military and other service dogs
- Working dogs on farms and in the community
- Dogs who are blood donors helping to save other pets
- Sporting, trick and performance dogs
- Rescue dogs who have turned lives around
- The loyal best friend who helped you through a tough time

If your dog represents the true spirit of Australia by being courageous, loving or simply amazing, share their story for a chance to be celebrated for the awesome doggo they are!

Nominate your dog and find out more here.

Important dates

- Nomination deadline is 8pm (AEDT) on Sunday, 10 January 2027.
- Finalists will be announced on Tuesday, 12 January 2027.
- Voting for the People’s Choice of the finalists will also open on Tuesday, 12 January 2027 and will close at 12pm (AEDT) on Friday, 22 January 2027.
- Winners will be announced on Australia Day (Tuesday, 26 January 2027) on Puppy Tales Photography’s Facebook page.

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IMAGES: Please credit all photos to Puppy Tales Photography.

- General Awards
- Previous Winners
- Kerry Martin – publicity photos
- Social Media Visuals



About Kerry Martin & Puppy Tales
PhoDOGraphy™ you'll adore, travel adventures you'll dig

Kerry Martin of Puppy Tales considers pets very much part of the family, and lives this adage to inspire fellow pet parents to create incredible memories of a most pawsome life together. Melbourne-based but often on the road throughout Australia, Kerry offers her award-winning dog photography across the country. She's known for her seasonal 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 her Master of Photography from both the Australian Institute of Professional Photographers (AIPP) and Icon International, Australian Pet Photographer of the Year, and winner of the Pets and People category in the International Pet Photography Awards. Kerry travels with her Border Collie Scout and Exotic Shorthair cat Mr Magoo, writing and photographing to share her knowledge and experiences of all things dog, photography and travel.

She is the author of the Dog Tales of Australia books, and creates content for the Puppy Tales website and a social media community of over 500,000, celebrating the relationships between dogs and people through dog-inclusive lifestyles, travels and adventures, resources and heartfelt dog stories, all accompanied by her photography. Puppy Tales is a business for good with a mission to make a paw-sitive difference. It operates as carbon negative, supports local organisations through photography and fundraising, and plays a part in the global effort to care for animals and wildlife.

Kerry is also the founder of the Australian Dog of the Year Awards, which recognise the incredible contribution of dogs to people, communities and society. To discover more, visit puppytales.com.au.