

## **President's Report – AGM 2025**

Greetings, Dogs NT Members,

As we gather here for the 2025 Annual General Meeting, I thought it would be fitting to reflect on the past few years of my journey with Dogs NT and my contributions as President – a role I never initially envisioned, but one I have embraced wholeheartedly.

For a bit of background, I'm now in my third year as a member of Dogs NT. My involvement began years ago with a commitment to help out where needed, from volunteering at our beloved Bunnings BBQ fundraisers to mowing the lawns, patching up repairs, and liaising with volunteers for ground and water management. A little behind-the-scenes work that kept the wheels turning – from patching up toilets to overseeing the modification of our fences and the installation of the driveway. And yes, I even managed to repair the internal toilet door handles!

In 2024, I nominated for the role of Vice President. But as life sometimes goes, the unexpected happened – the previous President resigned shortly after the AGM, and I found myself 'dumped' into the role. It's been a challenging, sometimes overwhelming, but incredibly rewarding experience. My time as President so far has been a rollercoaster, but I've had the privilege of leaning on the experience of our fantastic council and new members, who have truly been a breath of fresh air.

As many of you know, the council has been actively working on various initiatives to improve our association. From assessing the costs of power and water to reviewing affiliate ground and light fees, we are committed to passing any savings on to our clubs and members. We've also been working hard to ensure that our visitors feel welcome during the NT circuit, with the recent influx of interstate competitors. And, of course, safety remains a priority – especially with the ever-present risk of tick-borne diseases like Ehrlichiosis.

The council has been busy, especially during our busiest months, June, July, and August. Highlights included the record-breaking Alice Springs Show Cluster, where we saw incredible participation. The Royal Darwin Show also brought fantastic results in both conformation and trial rings. A special thanks to all our volunteers, including the dedicated stewards and committee members, for making these events a success.

On the maintenance front, we've tackled issues like replacing external doors in the amenity block, irrigation maintenance, and removal of dead trees. We've even managed to address some long-standing insurance issues, which I know will ease the burden on our affiliates by bringing down the cost by \$8000, acknowledging that last year, council made a decision not to pass any insurance costs on to the affiliates in 2024. All of this work is part of our ongoing commitment to the sustainability and safety of our grounds, association, affiliates and members.

Throughout all of this, I've always made sure that governance was handled appropriately – minutes ratified, conflicts of interest managed, and all tasks taken on with transparency and accountability. For example in seeking 2 quotes for tree

trimming, we were able to get more bang for our buck with trimming around all the lights and dead trees removed!

We've also started a new subcommittee for the Conformation Ring Stewards Course, and for the NT Judges Training Scheme which will hopefully encourage more of you to get involved in training as stewards and judges. We have 2 trainee judges. If you're interested in more information about being a steward or judge, please do reach out to Sandy Irlam who we thank for her hard work!

Additionally, we're actively working to reduce water consumption, thanks to valuable consultations with the Darwin Obedience Dog Club and Steve Russell, who has been instrumental in keeping our grounds in tip-top shape. We have been proactively maintaining the irrigation which needed substantial repairs from deterioration and are poised to aerate and fertilise the lawns in time for the dry season. I'd like to thank our volunteers for saving us thousands in grounds maintenance!

It's also been a year of reflection, especially with some unfortunate social media posts circulating. To clear the air: I've been involved with dogs for years – not just professionally, but personally. From exotic Xoloitzcuintle to loyal Cattle Dogs, I've shared my life with dogs of all kinds, both purebred and crossbred. These bonds are precious, and I have always been dedicated to them. If any of you have concerns or are aware of malicious gossip, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly. Let's work together to maintain the integrity of our association.

As we look ahead, the 2025 Dogs NT calendar is filling up with exciting events, and I look forward to another year of progress. The council has some strategic initiatives underway which they will seek member feedback on through the TDW, facebook and website, so be sure to connect with so you can have your say.

I encourage all members to continue supporting one another and to honour our shared passion for dogs with sportsmanship, respect, and a commitment to keeping the joy of our hobby alive.

In closing, I would like to thank all my fellow councillors, the volunteers, sponsors, and supporters who have made this year so memorable. And, of course, thank you to all of you for your continued dedication and enthusiasm. I have enjoyed serving you as your President this year.

As always, I am here for any questions, suggestions, or ideas you might have – don't hesitate to reach out.

Cheers,

**John Wheeler**

Dogs NT President