



# ACT COMPANION DOG CLUB INC.

www.actcdc.org.au

## Dances with Dogs ... New-Starters Classes Begin on August 22<sup>nd</sup>

DWD is about increasing the amount of fun you have with your fur kids while enhancing the relationship. Interestingly, from our DWD training, we have noticed a number of cross-over outcomes including – greater focus, better socialisation, more effective communication processes and increased work duration. This is supported by related postings on overseas chat groups. You will learn lots of new tricks (moves) and how to run these together to form a sequence. Next, select a piece of music you like, its beat will provide the timing for your routine. You will be shown how to match the music to your dog's natural gate and how to change the order of moves to reflect what happens in the music. The name of this new sport is taken from the movie "Dances with Wolves" – in which Kevin Costner and the wolves move around the campfire in a coordinated and interrelated way .

What moves will you learn? Most handlers have already taught their dog some tricks, we will simply add more. Some of the moves we teach are: spins on all sides, close and at a distance; stationary, moving, travelling and patterned weaves – both forwards and backwards; figures of eight (including with canes and other objects), hulas (dog close circles the handler – forwards & backwards); expanded heeling – both sides as well as across the front & back – all with handler & dog moving together, either forwards, backwards or reversed (handler & dog facing opposite directions) – also heeling sideways; rollovers, handshaking, paw touching to knees and feet, coordinated foot rises, jumps and for some breeds hind leg work ... and more.

There are many levels of involvement open to each new handler:

- Social & fun – learn & play with like minded owners
- Demo team – being a member of a group performance (a little anonymity in a group of four, six or more handlers and dogs) performing a group routine just for the fun of it at the Club, other dog events, school fetes etc
- Competitions – there are four levels of ANKC certified competitions that are recognised Australia wide; going all the way to Australian Champion
- International competitions – done using videos.

This new sport has been up and running in the CDC for about 10 months and is progressing well. We now have a core of 20 regular participants. How to measure the success of this new activity? The following are strong indicators:

- We will have 24 class entries in the next DWD competition to be held in Sydney on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July.
- There is a number of interested handlers who travel from outside the ACT to regularly attend classes.
- The attitude of our fur kids: almost all show excitement in their cars when recognising they are within a block or two of our training venue
- All the cross-over aspects already discussed.



**The next intake of New-Starters will commence classes on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August.** New-starter classes will be run on a separate evening from those who are continuing their DWD classes, but with the goal of promotion to the more experienced groups as their comfort and skill levels dictate.

The continuing groups have classes on either a Tuesday or Wednesday evening (Wednesday is a repeat of Tuesday).

All classes start promptly at 7:00 pm and run to 8:30 pm, with an evening-tea-break of around 10 minutes near 8:00. (i.e. 90 minute classes). Blocks of classes run for about two months each and finish with an optional one-day workshop featuring a major interstate performer/trainer.

So, what are the requirements for joining in this new, fun activity? Very simply:

- You must be a financial member of the CDC and pay the DWD activity fee (this is true for all CDC dog sport activities)
- Dogs are not dog or people aggressive
- There are no obedience etc. pre-requisites, but owners must be able to demonstrate good dog control or at least that this is being developed
- Off lead control is not necessary in the beginning, but is an early goal/outcome of the training
- Being able to dance is unimportant because this sport is not about dancing; it's about moves with your dogs using the beat or rhythm of the music to provide your timing
- A willingness to join in with like minded owners and have fun while learning new things

Please note that there are limited places in our DWD classes and I am already receiving bookings for the August new starters group. If you are interested in joining us and/or wanting to know more before making a decision – call or email me at your earliest convenience. Alternatively, you might like to come and watch one of our training sessions on a Tuesday or Wednesday night. If coming to look, please let me know a day or two in advance.

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