



2026 ADVANCE™ SYDNEY ROYAL DOG SHOW

MEET YOUR JUDGES

CONFORMATION & SWEEPSTAKES



ANTONIO ALMEIDA (CHINA)

Antonio Almeida was born into a family of dog lovers and began showing at the age of 8, winning Best Handler titles as both a junior and adult.

Antonio has been involved with numerous breeds over the years including specialising in German Shepherds, Boxers, Shar Pei, the Siberian Husky, Rottweilers and Shih Tzu. He founded Belaxe Kennel and from 2018 focused primarily on Basenjis, producing numerous Champions and Best in Show winners. His Basenjis have achieved top breed ranking in China and remarkable results at international Competitions worldwide.

In addition to his work as a practicing attorney in Macau, Antonio has had the privilege of judging in countries around the world including Japan, Canada, Brazil, the Philippines and Russia.



BORIS ŠPOLJARIĆ (CROATIA)

Boris Spoljaric has had a long and esteemed involvement with the show world, has judged in more than 65 countries and at more than 20 European and World Dog Shows.

An all-breeds Judge since 2003, Boris has awarded over 200 Best in Show winners in the past 25 years.

By profession Boris is a Civil Engineer, he is also the author of three books on dogs and many articles published in zoological and cynological magazines. His depth of knowledge on shepherds, sheepdogs, sighthounds, scent hounds and spitz breeds is particularly significant, having conducted extensive field research.

Boris is looking forward to being part of the Sydney Royal Dog Show judging panel in 2026.



JANELLE ROBBINS (AUSTRALIA)

Janelle Robbins began handling Boxers in the 1960s and with her parents, built Tobana Kennels into one of Australia's most respected Boxer lines. Her love of dogs was also fostered by her grandfather, Arthur Walshaw, a respected hound breeder, and further shaped by her uncle, Kevin Walshaw, an ANKC Hall of Fame inductee and judge whose influence sparked her enduring interest in gundogs.

Throughout her canine career, Janelle has successfully handled breeds from every Group and has been a licensed judge since the early 1980s. She has officiated on every continent and since 2013, has held ANKC–FCI and AKC Championship Show credentials as an All-Breeds and Best-in-Show judge. In addition, she is an accredited Junior Handler Judge and was instrumental in expanding opportunities for young exhibitors including raising the age limits for Junior Handling Classes, helping to establish the national Junior Handling Competition that selects Australia's representative to Crufts, and founding the Junior Kennel Club NSW, where she served as the first President.

Alongside her distinguished career in the dog world, Janelle is an accomplished consultant to governments and companies across Australia, the USA, and the United Kingdom. Despite her international professional commitments, she considers it a special honour to return home to officiate at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, proudly continuing in the footsteps of her late father, Wally Robbins.



WARNER CÉSPEDES ARIAS (COSTA RICA)

Warner Céspedes Arias began his distinguished involvement with the dog show world as an exhibitor of German Shepherds, achieving remarkable results both at home in Costa Rica as well as abroad.

With an interest in helping to grow the purebred canine world, Warner began developing the breeding of the English Pointer and English Setter, producing multiple national and international champions. He's also bred Australian Terriers, Papillons, Wire Fox Terriers, Pugs, Pekingese and later Dobermanns which he is still heavily involved with.

A lawyer by profession, Warner has worked and represented the Costa Rican Association during FCI assemblies over a decade, he is the President of the Society of Exchange of Latin American Canofilia SICALAM.

As a Judge Warner has officiated across the world including Africa, New Zealand, China, Malaysia, the Philippines and United Kingdom. He is honoured to be part of the Judging panel for the 2026 Sydney Royal.



MARY WHITE (CANADA)

Mary's passion for the dog show world began in 1971 with an Irish Setter but her renowned Freespirits Kennel was founded two years later with Doberman Pinscher bitch, Ch Freespirits Electra CDX.

Under the Freespirits kennel name, Mary has bred over 150 Canadian and American champion Dobermans, Salukis and Papillons including many National Specialty, Specialty, Group and Best in Show winners. Ch Freespirits Far and Away was Canada's Top Dog of All Breeds in 2001.

Between 1979 and 1995 Mary handled all breeds of dog professionally, experiencing great success before retiring in 1996 to pursue her judging career. She is fortunate to have judged at shows across the world while also exhibiting her own dogs, including lure coursing on occasion with her hounds.

Mary is a lifetime member of the Canadian Kennel Club, has served on the board of the Doberman Pinscher Club of Canada and is a member in good standing of the Saluki Club of Canada as well as the American Saluki Association. She currently resides in Ohio in the USA with her husband and three lovely hounds. Mary is honoured and excited to be part of the 2026 Sydney Royal Dog Show judging panel.



ARAMIS JOY LIM (SA)

Sweepstakes

For renowned Judge Aramis Lim, dogs were in his DNA! His parents were both all-breed Judges as well as breeders of German Shepherds, Boxers, Great Danes, Poodles, Min Pins and Dachshunds which Aramis began show handling from childhood.

Since moving to Australia in 1984 Aramis and his wife Pauline began breeding and showing Shetland Sheepdogs, many of which have achieved Best in Show wins at both All Breeds and Specialist Shows.

Aramis has had the privilege of Judging in more than 40 different countries around the world over a period of 30 years including at World Dog Shows, FCI Section Shows and the FCI European Winners Show.

He is delighted to be part of the esteemed 2026 Sydney Royal Dog Show Judging panel.

OBEDIENCE & RALLY



JILL HOUSTON (WA)

Obedience

Jill's judging experience began in the UK with obedience Classes, including the top class Championship C. She was also an instructor and examiner for the British Institute of Professional Dog Trainers.

Jill has trained a variety of breeds over the years starting with Great Danes and Whippets followed by Border Collies and German Shepherds. Her GSD OB CH Sabre Of Potterspride took out the Res Obedience Championship at Crufts in London UK.

In Australia, as well as being an Obedience, Rally, Trick Dog, Dancing with Dogs and Agility Judge, she is trialling her own Border Collie, currently the top Obedience and DWD Dog of the year. Jill is honoured to judge at the 2026 Sydney Royal Dog Show.



JAKE BLIGHT (NSW)

Obedience

Jake trained his first dog in 1984, a terrier cross he'd rescued through the RSPCA and together the pair discovered a love for obedience and tracking trials.

As soon as Agility was officially recognised, Jake began trialling and obtained one of the first AD titles in the ACT. He added a Hungarian Puli to the team followed by working Border Collies, one of which has achieved the rare combination of an Obedience Grand Championship and a Track and Search Grand Championship (as well as being a Rally Champion and having a long list of agility titles!).

Jake has taught and trialled all over Australia as well as in Japan and with tracking dogs in Canada. He's been an active instructor in both pet and Competition training and has worked with pets-as-therapy teams. Jake is looking forward to his first Sydney Royal judging engagement.



AMANDA HOUSTON (WA)

Rally Obedience

Amanda's knowledge and experience as a fully qualified Judge spans Obedience, Rally, Dancing with Dogs, Agility and Tricks. She has a true love for dog sports and seeing teamwork at its best.

A seasoned competitor herself, Amanda has enjoyed much success across multiple disciplines and trains all her dogs using positive methods. She's currently trialling a Swedish Vallhund Tri Ch (R)(FS) HTM CH FS GR CH AG CH 300 'Ubique Don't Walk Away' and has recently added a Golden Retriever to the team.

Amanda is delighted to judging Rally at the 2026 Sydney Royal Dog Show.



VEENI CRAIG (WA)

Rally Obedience

Veeni's passion for dogs was sparked in 1976 with a four-month-old Rottweiler puppy who quickly taught her family of first-time dog owners, the importance of obedience training!

Just eight months on the pair entered their first obedience trial, they scored well, and so it began. Veeni has been a competitor ever since, training and trialling several dogs to titles and obtaining her Judge's qualification in 1984.

Much of Veeni's own success has been with Miniature Schnauzers and she remains involved with the Schnauzer Club of NSW which holds an annual Obedience Rally and Tricks Trial. She is looking forward to the 2026 Show and seeing Exhibitors enjoying the experience with their dogs.

AGILITY



SIMONE TOLHURST (WA)

Agility / Agility Gamblers

Simone has been immersed in the world of dog sports for more than 30 years, competing in both Australia as well as at events in the UK and multiple World Agility Opens.

While she considers herself fortunate to have run several different breeds and crossbreeds over the years and various heights, Border Collies will always have her heart. She currently has a five and a two-year-old at home, plus a thirteen-year-old retiree.

An urge to give back to the community saw Simone move into judging in 2015 and since then she's been privileged to officiate at several Royal shows, the Agility Nationals, various State Titles and many Club Trials.

Striking the perfect balance between fun and challenging is Simone's course design objective and she's excited to do that for Sydney Royal Exhibitors in 2026.



JOANNA COMBER (NSW)

Agility / Agility Gamblers

Joanna was introduced to Agility by her Obedience instructor at the Manly and District Kennel and Dog Training Club in Sydney, where she's been a member since 2004. It's fair to say she never looked back!

With her Kelpie, 'Gus' and Border Collie 'Moose', both now retired, Joanna competed at the Nationals between 2012 and 2018. With Gus she also represented NSW in the Teams events at the Nationals in 2014 and 2016.

As a Judge Joanna has had the privilege of officiating at all levels of Agility, Jumping and Games across Sydney, country NSW, South Australia, State titles in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT and at the Nationals in Sydney in 2024.

Now living on the mid north coast of NSW Joanna says that designing fast, flowing and safe courses will always be her passion. She loves the thrill of seeing teams tackle her courses and is excited to be Judging at the 2026 Sydney Royal Dog Show.

FESTIVAL OF DOG SPORTS (SCENT WORK/TRICK DOG)



NATASHA NEPPL (NSW)

Scent Work

Natasha has been involved in the sport of Scent Work since 2005, first as a competitor with her dog Tari and then as an instructor.

As a Speech Pathologist with the NSW Department of Health, it was the art of communicating with a canine partner that first drew her to the sport. Accepted as an ANKC foundation judge, Natasha was Trial Manager at her first NSW ANKC Scent Work Trial in the NSW

Southern Highlands.

Natasha is a firm believer in Scent Work being fun and says it's the ability to work as a team that is fundamental to being successful. She loves seeing new competitors discover the joy of the sport and is looking forward to officiating at the 2026 Sydney Royal Dog Show.



SHARON WEE (NSW)

Scent Work

Sharon is an experienced and passionate Scent Work competitor, trainer, and judge who has been involved in dog sports for many years.

She began her journey with her Springer Spaniel, Rufus, and quickly discovered how Scent Work could inspire and improve teamwork, focus, and confidence. Since then, she has competed across multiple sports including Tricks, Rally, Obedience, Dancing with Dogs, and Agility.

Scent Work remains her true love however, and as a Judge, enjoys seeing teams grow in confidence. She is thrilled to be judging at the 2026 Sydney Royal and says she'll never get tired of watching dogs light up when they solve an odour puzzle.



SHANELLE CORBEN (NSW)

Trick Dog

Shanelle's passion for dog sports began with her beloved Border Collie 'Kadie' in 2013, and since then her commitment has only grown stronger.

Shanelle has a long list of Competition achievements having excelled in Obedience, Endurance, Dances with Dogs and Tricks. She obtained her Rally Championship in 2018. She is now enjoying the exciting journey of raising her new Border Collie puppy, Ember, who is already showing great promise as her next sports partner.

In 2019 Shanelle decided to extend her love for canine performance sports by becoming a certified judge, obtaining her certification for Tricks in 2022. Shanelle thrives on watching the synergy between handlers and their canine companions and considers her involvement in the dog community a lifelong journey. She also enjoys contributing through instructing at her local obedience club as well as organising training sessions and workshops with other clubs.



LORETTA RABBITT (NSW)

Trick Dog

Loretta Rabbitt is a long-time competitor and Judge specialising in Tricks and Dancing with Dogs, she has also competed in Agility, Obedience and Rally.

Over recent years Loretta has also become a small screen sensation, performing with her toy poodles in music videos, commercials and regularly on television programs including The Channel 7 Morning Show. Reaching the semi-finals of Australia's Got Talent was a highlight!

Loretta is passionate about encouraging the next generation to take up canine performance sports and discover the joy of developing a true bond with their dog.



CAROLYN JENSEN (NSW)

Trick Dog

Carolyn has always owned and loved dogs but her involvement in performance sports began in 2018 with 'that' dog, the problem one she knew she could learn a lot from.

Their journey began at their local club in Sydney and they began competing in Tricks, achieving their first title in 2021. Carolyn was hooked and in early in 2023 the pair gained their Advance Trick title amongst several others.

With a commitment to and talent for sports, Carolyn became an instructor at Hills Dog Club which extended into Trick Dog Judges training in 2024. She is passionate about seeing new competitors discover their own thrill for sports and helping them learn and improve. Carolyn is excited to be Judging Trick Dog at the 2026 Sydney Royal Dog Show.