

The West Coast Challenge – how it all began

When the ban on entire German Shepherds was lifted on Christmas Eve 1976 the door that had been closed, for almost 50 years, was finally opened. Prior to this, with special permission of the Royal Agricultural Society we were allowed to show only sterilized dogs at Members' Competitions. The Royal Agricultural Society controlled all dog activities.

Once this door was opened, we could begin to breed and show our dogs.

There were breeders who had been breeding dogs in kennels over in the Eastern states.

Our first Championship show along with our first breed survey was held at our newly acquired Headquarters.

The show was adjudicated by the late Janet Doyle.

The survey Janet Doyle and Walter Reimann were co-surveyors.

Walter Reimann was one of the founders of the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia.

Immediately after this show Barry O'Rourke came up with the idea of the West Coast Challenge- an annual show for Western Australia that would be run on similar lines to the already established National – complete with a German judge.

The West Coast Challenge Committee was formed – fund-raising to bring top German judges to judge the senior classes and an Australian judge for the puppy classes. Carol O'Rourke headed this team for many years. One outstanding and favourite member of the team was June Corser who kept immaculate records as secretary and treasurer of this committee. The West Coast Challenge Perpetual Trophy was donated by her and is a much-coveted award.

The first West Coast Challenge Championship show was held at the Royal Show grounds on the weekend of 2nd and 3rd of June 1979. The judges were: Herr Herman Jochmann of the SV Germany judging Junior classes upwards and Dr Macolm Willis PhD from the UK judging the Puppy classes.

So many top dogs from all over the country came. The excitement of the competition was enormous – for most it was the excitement of seeing the visiting handlers and the unique experience of having to use an interpreter when speaking to the judge. It was not just the entry it attracted but the venue – using the main arena for this show and trial.

History would show that this was the start of W.A. being a breeding force. The traditions that have grown to be part of the West Coast Challenge are precious to those who watched an idea become a reality.

This information was gleaned from a previous publication of The West Coast Challenge Its History and Development. I would like to thank Lorraine Downie for the hard work she put into typing and recording everything that is West Coast - it made my job easy.

Margaret Adams Editor

