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# **Young Hearts, Fleet Paws: Kate Henry's Journey to the Kelpie Muster**

At just 11 years old, Kate Henry and her Kelpie, Kanika Croc, embody youthful enthusiasm and the close bonds formed between young handlers and their canine partners.

As they gear up for the 28th Eukanuba Australian Kelpie Muster, we delve into their story, which may inspire teenagers like Kate to take on the challenge.

For years, the Henry family has been a staple at the Casterton Kelpie Association, with involvement spanning from participating in auctions to volunteering on auction days for the local Polocrosse club. Kate has even made and sold dog treats with her school friend Ruby and taken home first place in the Junior Photo Competition.

The partnership between Kate and Croc is more than just a girl and her dog. It's a partnership fostered by mutual respect and an unspoken understanding.

When asked about her inspiration to enter The Geelong College Junior Competitor events, Kate is quick to express her gratitude to the sponsors.

"The Kelpie Association is very fortunate to have the support of many sponsors. The Geelong College sponsorship for junior competitors is a great way to encourage kids to show the connection and bond we have with our dogs."

"We need to support these events to thank the sponsors who support the Kelpie Muster."

Training for the Kelpie Muster has brought its own rewards.

Kate beams, "It's a really great feeling when you can work a dog yourself to round up sheep and cattle and do a few tricks."

Kate is like any other kid outside the training field—she rides her horse, enjoys reading, and plays netball. Yet, she cherishes the time spent with Croc the most. "He's more than a working dog; he's my mate," she says.

Like many kids in regional Victoria, Kate learned a lot growing up on the family farm; working with Croc has provided her with her own learning.

"Patience and positive reinforcement are essential in forging a strong bond with your dog," Kate said.

"With these, your dog will always give its best effort to you. Croc is more than just a pet; he's a great mate, and I like just hanging out with him."

Anyone will tell you that working with animals may never go according to plan. For Kate, this brings her joy, as she recalls Croc's loyalty, goofy dog antics, and love of diving into the dam for a swim.

"He loves attention and will almost knock you over for a pat. Watching him round up the cat and guinea fowl is funny; when you take a photo of him, he always pricks his ears up."

The Kelpie Muster is a celebration of skill and spirit, and Kate looks forward to meeting peers who share her passion. "Win or lose, it's about the experience, the learning, and the joy of just being part of it all," Kate encourages other kids.

To those contemplating their debut at the Muster, Kate's advice resonates with simplicity and truth: "Better to have tried than not. You may not win anything, but you will probably learn a thing or two."

So, to the juniors out there, take a leaf out of Kate and Croc's book. Dive in, have fun, and who knows? You might find a friend and a passion that lasts a lifetime.

Come, be a part of the 2024 Eukanuba Australian Kelpie Muster, where every heart beats in tandem with the paws that race across the field.

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Photo Captions:

**IMAGE 6954:** Kate Henry and Croc are set for next month's Eukanuba Australian Kelpie Muster, with entries in The Geelong College Kelpie Dash and Kelpie High Jump.

**IMAGE 6936:** Pawing at new heights, 11-year-old Kate is all systems go for this year's Geelong College Junior Competitor events, including Kelpie Dash and Kelpie High Jump Competitions alongside Kelpie mate Kanika Croc.

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Should you require further information, please contact the Casterton Kelpie Association at 0435 770 626 or email: [secretary@castertonkelpieassociation.com.au](mailto:secretary@castertonkelpieassociation.com.au)