

# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 17 August 2025

## Casterton Kelpie Association Celebrates Surprise Win at Glenelg Shire Business and Tourism Awards

The Casterton Kelpie Association has been recognised with one of the region's top honours, taking out the **Tourism Event, Festival or Tourist Attraction of the Year 2025**, proudly sponsored by Portland Signworks, at the Glenelg Shire Business and Tourism Awards.

The prestigious Gala Awards Night was held on Friday 15 August, where 25 finalists across eight business and tourism categories and two individual awards gathered to celebrate excellence and innovation. Hosted by beloved Australian comedian and radio presenter Anthony 'Lehmo' Lehmann, the evening featured entertainment from the acclaimed Orlando Combo Jazz Band and highlighted the strength and diversity of Glenelg Shire's business and tourism sector.

Mayor **Cr Karen Stephens** praised the calibre of entries, saying:

"The calibre of entries this year has been exceptional, and it's inspiring to see such passion, resilience and creativity across our community. These awards are more than just accolades, they're a chance to shine a spotlight on the vibrant and diverse businesses that make Glenelg Shire such a wonderful place to live, work and visit."

### Judges' Recognition

In announcing the award, Lehmo presented the judges' comments, which acknowledged the Association's commitment to innovation over the past three years, including the edgeguides check-in system, live streaming, online entry systems, and the integration of online auctions for Australia's Premier Working Dog Auction.

### Words of Thanks

Founding member **John Matthews** reflected on the Association's proud history in his acceptance speech:

"This volunteer-run event was established by the Casterton Apex Club almost 30 years ago, and each year is supported tirelessly by a large army of volunteers. It is extraordinary to see the Kelpie celebrated both here in Casterton and by people travelling from across Australia and around the world."

Association President **Karen Stephens** added with emotion:

"Not much is usually kept from me, but when the committee walked through the door, I was truly surprised to learn we were finalists. To then win this award is a credit to the community, our volunteers, and the bright future of the Australian Kelpie Muster and Australia's Premier Working Dog Auction."

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## 2025 Highlights

The Association's flagship event continues to go from strength to strength:

- **Australia's Premier Working Dog Auction** achieved a 78% clearance rate (up 15% on 2024), with total sales of \$313,450 (up \$109,850) and an average of \$7,463 per lot sold (up \$1,294).
- The **Photography Competition** drew over 1,000 entries, including submissions from around the globe.

The Association's success underscores the enduring appeal of the Kelpie to the local community and international visitors, securing Casterton's place as the home of the Australian Kelpie Muster.

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## PHOTOS:



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## Captions:

**PHOTO 1** - The Australian Kelpie Muster trophy and certificate proudly displayed at the Australian Kelpie Centre in Casterton, after the Casterton Kelpie Association was named winner of the 2025 Glenelg Shire Business and Tourism Award for Tourism Event, Festival or Attraction of the Year.

**PHOTO 2** - Casterton Kelpie Association committee volunteers celebrate their win at the 2025 Glenelg Shire Business and Tourism Awards. Pictured from back left: John Matthews, Sarah Bruce-Smith, Cr Karen Stephens, Jodie Jolly, Portland Signworks primary, Andrew Bryant, Ashley Quinsey and event host Anthony 'Lehmo' Lehmann.

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