



MEDIA RELEASE

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2026

Strong demand expected as Casterton marks 30 years of Australia's premier working dog auction

Entries closing soon, with interstate buyers and online bidding set to drive competition as producers turn dog training into a valuable income stream.

Casterton, the recognised birthplace of the Australian Kelpie, is preparing to host a landmark event as entries for the 30th Australian Premier Working Dog Auction close 1 May.

Held as part of the annual Australian Kelpie Muster over the King's Birthday long weekend, the auction continues to attract strong national attention, with buyers and sellers travelling from across the country — and increasingly bidding online — to secure some of Australia's best working dogs.

The auction committee is currently finalising several final lots, as the first rain for the season hits Victoria's South West — a timely boost for producers and a positive sign leading into the event.

Behind every strong sale result is the skill of Australian farmers and handlers, whose work with livestock dogs continues to underpin the nation's red meat and wool industries. Whether circling a mob of sheep or holding pressure on stubborn cattle, Kelpies remain a quiet but essential workforce on farm. Their contribution reaches every part of the operation — reducing labour demands, improving stock flow, supporting animal welfare and lifting overall productivity.

For generations, these dogs have been relied upon to move, manage and protect livestock, and today they stand alongside machinery and infrastructure as a genuine farm asset. Increasingly, that value is being recognised beyond the farm gate, with well-trained dogs attracting strong competition in the sale ring. Events like the Premier Working Dog Auction provide an opportunity for handlers to showcase their training, with many turning that skill into an additional income stream — reinforcing that time invested in developing a good dog is both valued and worth the dollar.

The 2025 auction highlighted the event's national reach and resilience, with strong interstate demand driving results despite challenging seasonal conditions. The sale was interfaced with AuctionsPlus, enabling buyers from South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia to actively participate.

Two Victorian Kelpies reached the top price of \$17,500, highlighting the continued demand for proven, high-quality working dogs. Several other dogs sold between \$8,000 and \$16,500, with multiple lots exceeding \$10,000 early in the sale — a clear indication of confidence in the market.

Auctioneers James Tierney and Bernie Grant described the sale as having strong depth, noting that quality dogs continued to perform well despite seasonal pressures.

Online bidding again played a critical role, with dogs selling right across Australia, reinforcing Casterton's position as the centre of the nation's working dog industry.

Casterton Kelpie Association President Karen Stephens said the results highlight the enduring strength of the event and the offering ahead.

"Last year's auction showed that demand for quality working dogs remains strong across the country," she said. "Casterton continues to bring together the best dogs, the best handlers and a national buying audience — whether they're ringside or online."

Mrs Stephens said this year's auction will again offer depth across all levels.

"The auction has a dog for everybody — we sell young pups, started dogs, right through to fully trained dogs," she said. "There really is something for everyone."

As the event celebrates its 30th year, organisers are expecting another competitive and well-supported auction, with entries already attracting interest from across multiple states.

The Casterton Kelpie Association is a volunteer-led organisation dedicated to celebrating and preserving the legacy of the Australian Kelpie, proudly hosting the annual Australian Kelpie Muster and Australia's Premier Working Dog Auction in the breed's birthplace.

Media Contact:

Should you require further information please contact the Casterton Kelpie Association at 0417 527 200 or email: president@castertonkelpieassociation.com.au

“The 30th milestone is a significant moment for the Muster and the auction,” Mrs Stephens said.
“It’s a celebration of the Kelpie’s legacy, and the role these dogs continue to play in Australian agriculture.”

The Australian Kelpie Muster draws more than 25,000 visitors annually and features a full weekend program including the Kelpie Triathlon, street festival, working dog demonstrations and community events — all centred around Casterton’s unique connection to the breed.

With entries closing soon, vendors are encouraged to secure their place in what remains Australia’s premier working dog sale, while buyers can expect a strong line-up across a broad price range.

For entry details and further information, visit: www.castertonkelpieassociation.com.au

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Photo Captions:

[Auctioneer James Tierney:](#) Auctioneer James Tierney calls the bids during the Premier Working Dog Auction at Casterton, where strong interstate demand continues to drive competition both ringside and online.

[Kelpie working sheep – Billy:](#)

Jack Leonard’s Kelpie “Billy” works a mob during the Casterton Pre Auction Demos, with the dog going on to reach a top price of \$17,500 at the 2025 Premier Working Dog Auction.

[Kelpie working in yards – Sky:](#)

“Beloka Sky,” handled by Ash Caruana, shows control in the yards before selling for \$17,500 to an online Queensland buyer at last year’s Casterton auction.