



2016 GSDCA Breed Survey Forum (BSF)

Background

Please find below the BSF Executive Summary as prepared by Melanie Groth and Janet Haase.

The BSF was initiated by the GSDCA Executive over concern expressed regarding the credibility and governance of the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme. The GSDCA Executive approved a working party was composed of Melanie Groth, Janet Haase and myself. We were ably assisted by Jane Pike and Jacinta Poole to set up as a first step an E-survey which led to excellent participation from across Australia, with 250+ members responding! Further to this, clubs also held in house focus group meetings. The data as collected was used to help drive discussion at the BSF held over the 2016 National Breed Commission / Judges Meeting weekend.

It must be noted that this is the first review of the Breed Survey scheme since its introduction and the Executive has been heartened by the full participation by Member Clubs, the leadership/peer group and Member Club delegates who gave up valuable time and own money to attend a most important initiative. The forum has put in place, a set of objectives that will be pursued by working parties and if enacted, see the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme better placed to meet our long term goal: to only have breed surveyed animals bred with.

I would again thank Annette Whiley whose analysis of the e-data and presentation helped drive discussion and Melanie and Janet for working in quick time whilst on holiday in Europe, to produce the executive summary. I have no doubt that the recommendations and rationale as made will act as drivers for the three working parties to put forward recommendations that will in due process, be discussed further by the Member Clubs and then put to a future GSDCA AGM for adoption.

*Vince Tantaro,
GSDCA President*

Breed Survey Forum Executive Summary

As part of the 2016 National Breed Commission meetings, a Breed Survey Forum was held on Saturday, 30 July. Out of a total of forty-five (45) Breed Surveyors, Judges and Trainees, twenty-four (24) attended. Of the twenty-six (26) GSDCA Breed Surveyors - fifteen (15) were in attendance at the forum.

The forum consisted of three workshop sessions facilitated by Janet Haase, Annette Whiley, Melanie Groth and Vince Tantaro. It was interactive and featured collaborative workshops, discussion and feedback. The forum was structured to elicit maximum participation from those in attendance. It highlighted a strong desire for further education and learning. The willingness of the participants to actively engage in all activities signals a convincing and positive mindset for change and hope for a positive outcome for our Breed Survey scheme.

The intentions for the day were to:

- Develop trust and collaborative relationships that enhance our productivity and learning as breed surveyors, specialist judges and German Shepherd enthusiasts
- Understand the need for deep personal critical reflection on our own practice and collectively as a peer group
- Gain a shared understanding of how to work together to move the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme forward to achieve its purpose.

The first session set the context for the forum. Annette Whiley (analyst) delivered a detailed presentation of quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the membership across Australia via the E-survey and focus group forums. It led to the themes, findings and overall conclusions contained in the evaluation report. Two hundred and sixty-eight (268) people completed the E-survey online. Ten of the twenty E-survey questions elicited in excess of 2600 comments from participants. The comments were coded, cross-referenced with other questions within the survey and with the focus group responses from clubs in Queensland (including far north Qld), NSW, ACT, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

The themes identified from the data were:

1. Consistency
2. Quality & Competence
3. Ethical Behaviour, Fairness & Honesty
4. Education for Breed Surveyors & Members
5. Confidence in & Support of the Scheme
6. Participation & Involvement
7. Practical Issues
8. Addressing Identified & Specific Issues.

The conclusions derived from the analysis were as follows:

- The GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme is highly valued.
- A high level of support for the scheme and desire for its success is evident.
- The level of participation in the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme is high.
- Opinions about the importance of participation in and adherence to the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme vary.
- Throughout the German Shepherd Dog (GSD) community, there is a lack of shared understanding and knowledge about the reasons for breeding with breed surveyed animals, the purpose of the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme, and the current requirements of GSDCA Breed Surveyors.

- The GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme and the information it provides is valued for the guidance it gives and is often considered in breeding decisions.
- The implementation of the Breed Survey Scheme needs improvement.
- Inconsistencies in the practical and ethical implementation of the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme, the quality of the information provided and outcomes achieved are identified as the most significant barriers to its use as an effective and trusted breed direction tool.
- The high expectations of Breed Surveyors are undermined by a significant lack of confidence in the advice provided by the breed surveyors.
- Suggested necessary requirements to maintain breed surveyor status relate to ethical behaviour, participation and active involvement in a number of aspects and activities of the breed, as well as the breed survey scheme, and participation in ongoing, compulsory education and learning that can be evidenced.
- Maintaining the position of a GSDCA Breed Surveyor should be dependent upon the individual's ethics, level of participation and involvement, their quality of health, knowledge, competence and credibility, not their age.
- Allowing members the choice of breed surveyor impacts significantly, positively and negatively, on the credibility of the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme when the survey is conducted by one breed surveyor and the allocation of two or more breed surveyors at each breed survey is desirable and beneficial for all involved.
- The understanding of and knowledge about breed survey classification, consistency in the process and its implementation and the level of integrity and trust are more important than the number of classification categories or the allocated number of surveyors in the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme.

The participants at the forum were not surprised by the data presented. The analysis confirmed long held beliefs that issues around breed survey and breed surveyors exists within the fraternity. The data provides the GSDCA with a mandate for systems improvement and much needed change. The participants concurred that there was an urgency to address accountability in order to maintain the high expectations members hold of the management of the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme.

In session two the group examined leadership, team work, collaboration and the importance of Perceptual Positioning when working with the fraternity. Key points included the commitment and responsibility that comes with being a leader as a surveyor and judge; and the need to actively listen and understand the perceptions of the fraternity.

There was strong acknowledgement from the group of the need for breed surveyors and specialist judges to lead by example and fully commit to the ideals and breed improvement schemes of the GSDCA.

The consensus was that this will be demonstrated through:

- a commitment to ongoing personal and collaborative education and skill development.
- ethical behaviour at all levels including, interactions with the membership, judging, surveying and breeding.
- a willingness to be held accountable for their actions.

Session three enabled the group to collaboratively prioritise actions for the Council as a result of the survey and forum. It was widely considered that the conclusions and recommendations from the forum be addressed by the GSDCA as a matter of urgency and high priority. For the momentum and enthusiasm generated at the forum to be sustained, it was agreed it was imperative that delegates, breed surveyors and specialist judges support and promote the actions and subsequent initiatives of the working parties at their clubs.

The aspirational goal of the GSDCA is for the ANKC to only accept litter registrations from animals that have been breed surveyed, thus enabling the implementation of a breed specific Litter Registration Limitation (LRL). The following recommendations have been developed with this long term aspirational goal in mind. They have been established from the findings, collaborative discussions and conclusions drawn from the Breed Survey evaluation report and feedback at the forum.

Recommendations

- *The GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme requires the development of systems and processes that will educate and inform the general membership about the nature and purpose of the breed survey scheme and its relevance to the improvement of the German Shepherd Dog in Australia*
- *Accountability and ongoing education of the GSDCA Breed Surveyors is paramount to the schemes' success in terms of ethics and consistency*
- *Working groups be formed to address*
 - o *accountability ethics and conduct of surveys and surveyors*
 - o *continuous education and skill development of Breed Surveyors, Judges and Trainees*
 - o *education of the membership about the nature and purpose of survey and its integral role in the development of the German Shepherd Dog in Australia*
- *Member Clubs, GSDCA Breed Surveyors and Specialist Judges support the initiatives of the working groups.*

The first action from the forum has been the formation of the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme Improvement Project (BSIP). The steering committee consists of Melanie Groth (Chair), Janet Haase, Val Moody and Vince Tantaro and will be supported by an Information and Technology Media Advisor, Jane Pike.

The working groups were formed at the National Breed Commission meeting on Sunday, 31 July and have commenced work on their strategic plans and timelines to further develop systems and processes that will enhance the GSDCA Breed Survey Scheme and meet the requirements of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation report.

Working Group 1 (WG1): Compliance and Accountability	Working Group 2 (WG2): Membership Education	Working Group 3 (WG3): Learning Plans and Skill Development: Surveyors and Judges
Frank Moody (Chair)	Ian Urie (Chair)	Louis Donald (Chair)
Jo Cathie	Sharon Ballantyne	Melanie Groth
Salvatore Pittelli	Janet Haase	Robyn Knuckey
Fay Stokes	Karen Hedberg	Joylene Neddermeyer
Vince Tantaro	Nicky McDermott	Vince Tantaro

The Breed Survey Evaluation Report containing the in depth data analysis from the E-survey and the focus groups will be finalised and accessible from the GSDCA website later in the year. This executive summary should be read in conjunction with this important document.

*Prepared by - Janet Haase, Melanie Groth
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