

Presentation of the “German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia Outstanding Canine Service Award” to:

Police Dog “Ruger” and handler Senior Constable Craig Charles

Police Dog “Ruger”

Born 13/11/2011

Acquired from BROOKSVALE kennels.

Commence course on 8/10/2012

Complete course on 15/2/2013

To date Ruger has been deployed on 791 occasions resulting in 115 persons being apprehended and charged with a combined total of 274 offences. He has also located property on 81 occasions to the value of \$43,000.

Some memorable deployments are:

23/2/13: TAPEROO: Rugers first operational deployment resulted in his first “win”, finding a man hiding in the sand hills after committing a serious criminal trespass. 9/9/2016: GREENACRES: Ruger deployed after an armed hold up on pizza bar. Ruger tracked for about 500m to an address where he began barking. Numerous persons at address. Address searched and clothing, balaclava, and knife used in robbery located hidden in various spots.

13/7/2017: TATACHILLA Ruger deployed after a police pursuit of a stolen car ended in an olive grove on a rural property. Ruger tracked through vineyards, roads, and a quarry in very windy and rainy conditions for a distance of 2.5 – 3 km. Track ended at a culvert along Main South Rd where it is believed suspect was picked up. Along route of track, Ruger identified numerous items – balaclava, tools, and a jumper. These items were processed and a DNA match received. A male person was arrested for this offence. One of Rugers strengths is his scent discrimination ability.

16/7/17: QUEENSTOWN Ruger deployed after stolen vehicle located abandoned in a unit block. Ruger tracked from the drivers’ door across Port Road to a nearby address and began barking at the front yard of a house. Several occupants of the house were persons of interest. Patrols separated persons on street and Ruger walked past all. Ignored all but one who he began barking at. This male had been located by patrols “asleep” in bed but sweating. Arrested for the stolen vehicle and pursuit.

Ruger has certainly had some ups during his career, but there has also been some downs. In September 2016 after a rigorous internal selection process, Ruger was one of two dogs selected to represent SAPOL at the Australasian Police Dog Trials in Melbourne in October. Unfortunately a week prior to the trials, after a sudden significant weight loss, Ruger was diagnosed with a serious bacterial lung infection. This resulted in his lungs filling with fluid and him “basically” drowning. The second day after he was admitted to the Trinity Gardens Adelaide Vet Hospital his handler was advised to attend the hospital in preparation for Ruger to be put down.

Thanks to the awesome work by staff and the support by SAPOL management, Ruger fought through and after 14 days in hospital returned home. By the end of the month he was back to his favourite past time “catching criminals”. He did however miss his opportunity at the Australasian Police Dog Trials. Ruger is easily identifiable by his trademark titanium canines.

Presented at the 46th National Show and trial, Adelaide, April 2018.