
Newsletter



February 2026



YOUR COMMITTEE

Office Bearers

President	Rhonda Cheesman	0408 388 066
Vice President	Brian Arter	9874 1432
Secretary	Liz Bruhn	0410 258 944
Treasurer	Sokhun Lim	

General Committee

Anne Smith, Andrea Sciberras, Dodo Kelly, Debra Conway, Rebecca Carlin, Tamara Taylor

Instructors

Tamara Taylor, Rhonda Cheesman, Liz Bruhn, Brian Arter, Dodo Kelly, Susan Poyner, Debra Conway, Miranda Watkins, Matt Elder

Email	esodcmitcham@gmail.com
Website	www.esodc.org.au
Facebook	<u>Eastern Suburbs Obedience Dog Club</u>

INTRODUCTION

Our Club was founded in 1969 to cater for those owners of purebred dogs who were interested in training their dogs to Obedience Trial standard. The club was so successful in this regard that it was

granted affiliation with KCC (Kennel Control Council). In 1979 Victorian Canine Association (now Dogs Victoria) accepted all dogs into Obedience trials and the club was then also opened to all dogs.

CLUB RULES

1. Your dog is to be kept on leash at all times. The only exception is when given explicit instruction to work off lead in class.
2. Handlers wishing to leave their dogs tethered on Club grounds should only do so if their dogs are safe with people, especially around children. No dog may be tethered when it can reach another dog.
3. Dogs must be fully immunised before coming to classes which needs to be kept up-to-date.
4. Any sick dog, or one suffering from a communicative illness, are not to come to classes until Vet cleared.
5. Handlers are responsible for removal of their dogs' excreta from the training area.
6. We teach rewards-based training. Physical and excessive verbal abuse of dogs is not allowed. Any observed behaviour of this type will lead to expulsion from the club.
7. Instructors have authority over their classes and may ask a member to take their dog out of class if it is overly disruptive.
8. While at the grounds, before and after classes, please remain in control of your dogs, and respect the space of other dogs and handlers.
9. Dogs in season should not attend training for four weeks. However, this does not mean you should stop attending classes nor cease the training of your dog.
10. If an Instructor considers your dog to be aggressive, the Chief Instructor will evaluate your dog. If directed by ESODC, you agree that your dog must wear a yellow bandana/coat and/or soft muzzle while training and participating in club activities.

President's Report

Welcome back everyone! I hope you are rested and ready for an exciting 2026. Of course, a warm ESODC welcome to all our New Members too. I trust you will enjoy your year/s ahead at our club. Our Sunday classes and Family Fun Days are designed to keep you learning and joyously engaging with your dog. We will offer you exciting training techniques and fun games/challenges, your job is to attend regularly, and commit to a daily practice routine.

We pride ourselves on being a **small community based** dog training club. We are 100% run by volunteers who love our dogs; and in turn, love helping others to find the best results with their own dogs. Please remember though, we **are all** volunteers doing the best we can, and kindness and appreciation is a generous gesture to be shared often. We all trial our own dogs in a variety of competitive dog sports too, so although we don't teach ALL sports here at ESODC, we can definitely offer advice or redirect you to specialist clubs that do. Please feel free to drop in to the clubrooms anytime for a hot cuppa and an informal chat. You are very welcome.....



The big changes (off-field) for this coming year is the challenge of recreating our website. With exciting online advancements in members' portals/educational resource centres/instructors access (class) programs/shopping, I'm truly excited to watch our new website evolve. We've streamlined our e-communications over the past two years, and our Newsletters will continue to hit your inboxes every two months chock full of club news, helpful training advice, tasty treat recipes, and photos of recent trailing successes. Facebook and now Instagram will remain updated with all our social media news.

Please welcome our 2026 committee. Our Administration Team is: President: Rhonda Cheesman; Vice President: Brian Arter; Secretary: Liz Bruhn; Treasurer: Sokhun Lim; Chief Instructor: Tamara Taylor; Members Coordinator: Rebecca Carlin; General Committee: Andrea Sciberras, Anne Smith, Dodo Kelly, Debra Conway. What a team.

Thank you for trusting ESODC. I look forward to a long and successful training adventure together.

Happy training,
Rhonda Cheesman

Welcome to our New Members

February

Name	Dog	Breed
Caroline and Reece	Bailee	Labrador
James and Erin	Rooster	Wirehaired Vizsla
Osval and Elinor	Teddy	Cavoodle
Dylan and Pippa	Lulu	American X English Staffy
Jessica and Rory	Bear	American Staffy
Jessica and Daniel	Mya	Staghound x
Eddy and Pip	Billie	Soft coated wheaten terrier
Cassandra	Nugget	Labrador Retriever
Mag and Benny	Merlin	Pembroke Welsh Corgi
Michael and Emily	Sooty	Pomeranian X Husky
Maxine	Beau	Labradoodle
Michele and Steve	Mellow	American Staffordshire Terrier
Raine	Marley	Labrador
Yasmin and Shiori	Daisy	Border Collie / Kelpie
Lyn	Winston (Winnie)	Groodle
Jonna and Brenden	Archie	King Charles cavalier
Linda and Niall	Wilma	greyhound x
Aaron	Maverick	Wirehaired Visla
Bolin	Hagu/Chai	Shiba Inu
Jen	Bobby	Cavoodle
Denise and Cathie	Coco and Cello	Bordoodle
Carol	Axl	Tenterfield Terrier
Jo and Luci	Henry	Groodle
Kerrilee and David	Jessie	Kelpie x Border collie
Sahar	Coco	Cavoodle
Robyn	Clancy	Australian Cattle Dog
Kelly	Gus	Westie x Bichon
Jo and John	BOWIE	Whippet
Sophie	Hildie	Labrador Mix



Chief Instructors Report

Welcome back to training at ESODC for 2026! What a great year we are going to have.

We have expanded the classes we have on offer. As a small club this has been a wonderful development highlighting the passion and commitment of our dedicated volunteers.

Towards the end of 2025 we trialled an Intermediate Practice Class. This was mainly facilitated by Instructor Matt and gave us the opportunity to test the waters. The class was well received, and we decided to continue this class in 2026.

Additionally, we are also offering in 2026 an Obedience Trial Class. Several members have requested this class as they explore the option of competing in dog sports, including Obedience and Rally.

Which brings us to the other regular class we are offering at ESODC – Rally class. This class was started in the later part of 2025 and was very well attended. We are fortunate enough to have just enough Instructors to cover all these new additions.

See below (or on our website) for a full description on the scope of activities and skills covered in these three classes.

Practice Class

This class is designed to support you, and your dog, to learn skills that are taught primarily in the Intermediate classes, that you would like to practice more. This is a group class focussing on some of the main skills we all desire our dogs to do including loose-lead walking, recall, calm greeting (e.g. not jumping) and focus.

Sometimes you just need a little bit more time to refine the skills taught in intermediate class. This is a class where more time is spent on individual skills supporting you to be the best you and your dog can be.

Each week will be different as this class does not follow a set program. Various activities to build and refine your skills are there to be enjoyed and mastered before progressing to Advanced or Social class.

Obedience Trial Class

This class is designed to support your skills and developments in obedience training. This is a group class held outside of a Ring, where you will practice skills together. Activities such as heel work, formal recall, stand for exam, stays and a variety of other Obedience skills will be covered.

During class you may have the opportunity to go through the ring (dependent on how many are participating in the class), however there is always a practice ring set up and usually there is someone around to take you through a few exercises (one-on-one) to practice what you have learnt in the Obedience Trial class.

Chief Instructors Report, cont.

Ring etiquette and processes will also be taught and will include elements such as where to stand when entering a ring, what to expect from a judge or steward, when to enter and exit a ring, and more.

You do not have to compete in Obedience to participate in this class. Obedience skills are a great way to develop your dog and build a strong connection.

Many of the skills taught in the Obedience Trial class are transferable to competing in Rally. Rally class will explore the specifics of competing in a Rally Ring.

Rally Class

This class is designed to support your skills in undertaking the Rally stations. This is a group class held outside of a Ring, where you will learn skills together.

Each of the Rally stations will be taught, breaking them into easy-to-understand steps so you can learn and execute each activity with your dog. You will learn what each sign should look like when performed correctly and how to achieve it. You will have opportunities to practice the station activity and receive feedback from the instructor, and often a short Rally course will be set up to practice as you learn.

During the class you will also develop skills to improve your connection with your dog, including heeling. As well as what to expect if/when you compete including ring etiquette.



Rally practice rings are set up each week, for you to go through part or a complete course, and often there will be someone around to give you feedback.

You do not have to compete in Rally to participate in this class. Rally stations are a great way to build skills, build a strong connection with your dog and have fun.

Remember: Variety is the spice of life. If you would like more information or are interested in participating in any of these classes, please speak with either myself or your class instructor.

If you have any questions, please let us know. You can reach out to anyone wearing an ESODC t-shirt or vest, drop us an email or send us a message on Facebook.

Tamara Taylor, Chief Instructor



Updated club rule and understanding what a dog wearing yellow indicates

At ESODC, the safety and wellbeing of our dogs, members, and instructors is a top priority. Recently we updated **Club Rule #10**, and this article explains what aggression is, why it happens, what yellow equipment means, and what members need to know.

Why Dogs Show Aggression

When dogs feel afraid, their first instinct is to move away (flight response). However, if they can't escape – such as when on lead – they may switch to a fight response and react aggressively to protect themselves.

Sometimes warning signs are obvious – barking, hiding behind their owner, snarling, baring their teeth, etc. Other times it can be subtle and may include fearful body posture or attempts to retreat. In some cases, aggression occurs without growling or showing teeth.

Aggressive reactions can become self-rewarding for the dog. When a dog barks, lunges, or growls and the other dog moves away, the dog learns that the behaviour “worked.” From a dog's perspective: *“If I lunge, snap or growl, the scary thing goes away.”*

When a dog shows aggression, they may be:

- Overwhelmed or not coping
- Nervous, anxious, or scared
- Trying to create distance
- Attempting to escape
- In need of more space

Aggression is often driven by **fear, anxiety, or stress**, not bad behaviour.

What Aggression Might Look Like

Aggression can be displayed in many ways. At ESODC our definition is:

*An aggressive dog is one that attempts or exhibits threatening or harmful behaviour such as **growling, snarling, snapping, lunging, or biting** toward a person or animal.*

What Does Yellow Mean?

Yellow may indicate a dog that is:

- Nervous or fearful
- Protective
- Over-excitabile
- Selective with other dogs

If you see a dog wearing a **yellow bandana, lead, or coat** give them space. Talk to the owner **before** you approach and respect their request.

Giving space is not only polite – it helps prevent stress and supports positive training outcomes.

Updated Club Rule #10

If an Instructor considers your dog to be aggressive, the Chief Instructor will evaluate your dog. If directed by ESODC, you agree that your dog must wear a yellow bandana/coat and/or soft muzzle while training and participating in club activities.

This rule supports safety, responsible management, and continued participation at the club.

Thank you for helping keep ESODC a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for all dogs and members.

Etiquette for dogs wearing yellow



Dogs wearing yellow bandanas, leads or coats **need extra space.**

Remember to:

- Give the dog space
- Ask the owner before approaching
- Follow the owner's instructions

Yellow does not mean "bad dog". It means they may be nervous, anxious, protective or need space to feel safe.

Respecting dogs wearing yellow supports positive training outcomes for everyone.



BM Animals is committed to providing you and your dog with high quality food and treats for optimum health and vitality. Locally sourced, chemical and preservative free, salt and sugar free, high quality food for your furry family member.

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- Raw meats
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- Ready made meals (raw and cooked options)
- Treats and chews
- Supplements
- and more

Have a dog with a sensitive tummy or health issues? Chat with John or Maree and they will happily share their knowledge to help you and your dog.

Show your ESDC badge or this flyer to receive **10% off your purchase.**

BM Animals
ph: 0488 144 675

1 McLellan Street, Bayswater
w: www.bmanimalscompletenutrition.net



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We are currently accepting :

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- Wet Food for Dogs + Cats (Unopened)
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- Dog + Cat Toys
- Doggy Poop Bags + Puppy Training Pads
- Pet Accessories (Bowls, Jackets etc)

We can accept second hand pet accessories, as long as they are washed and clean, and in a condition that you would be happy to receive yourself. All food donations must be in sealed, unopened packaging.

Your donations will provide support for the beloved animal companions of people experiencing hardship and homelessness. To find out more, visit petsofthehomeless.org.au

Thank you so much for your support!

Rescuing and Fostering Ever Loving Fur Babies

This was written by one of our members, Janet Rahman, and has been sitting waiting for space in our newsletter since November! Well worth the wait though.

Within the last 2 yrs I have lost a gorgeous Cavvie-Maddie and a wonderful Birman cat (Lacey). We were devastated by the loss and I adopted an abused ChiX pup named Bonnie from a Ballarat rescue, who now attends Social class. I also adopted a wonderful abused Ragdoll (Penny) a few months later from a wonderful rescue here in Melbourne! I have 2 of my own dogs and 3 rescue cats whom I owned becoming a foster family.

When searching the rescues I discovered a diverse community of rescues who sought help for their ever-growing lists of pups and cats rejected after the pandemic or having been abused. Groups were looking for fosters to love and care for these shy and unsocialised dogs and cats from overflowing pounds to get them off the euthanasia lists. I have been inspired by a social influencer/volunteer in a California pound (Rocky Kanaka) who films himself 'sitting with dogs'! The techniques he uses when sitting with the most vulnerable and shy or reactive pups in a shelter are awe-inspiring! I considered volunteering at the pound I adopted my 3rd cat from but decided I would volunteer my own home instead.



So far, I have been able to foster the animals I have enquired about and feel appreciated for the efforts we put in as volunteers and supported all the way! Applying was hard but worth it! The rescues fully vet, desex, vaccinate and assess the state of our rescues. No cost to me except time and sharing our home, providing food and plenty of love. Some rescues provide welcome packs too, with food, bed and toys!

So far, I have seen a total of 7 adult cats become a part of our family & adopted into furever homes & 6 pups/adult dogs get adopted out successfully! I was never going to foster dogs but have discovered the beauty of fostering a little 6yr old Jack Russell-Foxie (Buddy) and a Shitzu Maltese pup who were both in appalling condition.



Rescuing and Fostering Ever Loving Fur Babies - cont

Buddy was with me for 3 months (longer than usual) and I had the opportunity to come to obedience club for beginners training. I appreciate the additional help and love from our instructors who share their skills with the shy little 'uns I have been caring for and seeing them thrive in our obedience club environment! This opportunity also gives me the chance to let my rescue group know how they are progressing. Our recent little girl Rosie is a 10month old terrier pup. Her shy and timid behaviour is leaving her and she is becoming a loving and cuddly tail wagging little terrier.



I often get asked- how do you give them up!?! My heart wants to keep them all but my head tells me that I already have a wonderful menagerie and I look forward to meeting their new furever families and to get feedback about their new lives in loving homes! I am thrilled to see their profiles listed and my rescue charity also allows me to help choose their new homes. They cover the interviews and I reinterview in our meet and greets. I have the chance to rehabilitate and save one cat and dog at a time, sometimes 1 of each! It's becoming quite addictive as it's super satisfying, beautiful to watch and a privilege to be a part of!

Don't hesitate to ask me any questions about opportunities out there and where to get started.

Janet Rahman



Spare Equipment

There is a collection of used but good condition leashes, car harnesses and magazines by the Pavillion available for any member to take. If you are in need of a longer or shorter leash for your dog or don't have a car safety harness for your dog come and have a look.

If you have leads or collars your dog has outgrown and you are wanting to clear out a bit feel free to add them to the collection for others to use as well.



Meet the Instructors - Matt Elder

Can you introduce yourself (and your dog) to us?

G'day, my name's Matt, I am a boilermaker/welder by trade. I have recently become an instructor at ESODC after completing the instructor course.

I have a 3yo Border Collie named Aoife (pronounced "Eefah"). Her name is Irish, and means "beautiful and radiant". I decided on that name because I wanted something different, she was a very cute puppy, and I didn't know how to say "geddouduvit ya dopey mutt" in Irish...

Aoife and I have done a bit of herding training, at a hobby level, and have also done a few trick dog trials.

What brought you to the club and how long have you been with us?

I have had two other Borders previously, but I wanted to train Aoife to a higher level, so I did a lot of research online about dog training before getting Aoife, but struggled to sort the wheat from the chaff, so I did a "puppy school" class at a big chain pet store, and wasn't particularly impressed. I looked around at other options and it pretty much came down to private trainers at \$100s per hour, or joining a club for around \$100 per year.

What do you love about being an instructor and part of the club?

I have gained a wealth of knowledge and help from many instructors and members at ESODC (all of which are volunteers and do it for their love of dogs, training, and dog sports), the value of which far exceeds the yearly membership fee. There are also really good people at ESODC, and I like to think I have formed friendships with both members and instructors. I like to give back when I can, I started helping with setting and packing up the rings. I got to know more people around the club and the instructor course was offered to me. I accepted that offer hoping it would make me a better trainer and despite my lack of public speaking skills (I've spent most of my life getting in trouble for the things I've spoken publicly!)



I have continued on to assist experienced instructors in all class levels, have instructed a couple of intermediate classes with and without assistance without any complaints, and am now instructing a pilot "Intermediate practice" class, where we focus on 1-2 of the intermediate class subjects a week, and really work on them.

If you could give your beginning training self one bit of advice what would it be?

Ha. The list really is too long to mention here.... Something I learned in one of Rhonda's classes, when I first started at ESODC. If your dog isn't feeling it, and you're getting frustrated. Give it a rest and go play with your dog... This will do far more for your relationship and bond with your dog, than trying to force those extra few yards at heel, or 30 seconds of stay....

Anything else you would like to share?

Training your dog is the key to giving them the best life possible. A well-trained dog is easy to be around and takes the stress out of outings with your dog. You can let them off-lead to play, sniff and explore, knowing they'll come back when called, enjoy peaceful walks without any pulling or lunging. With good training, your dog has the chance to be a dog, come along with you and enjoy the things they enjoy doing.