

#taketheleaddogsnz

Getting the best out of dogs, and their owners

Earlier this year the Agility Committee had the wild idea that maybe, just maybe, we could make it cool to be kind, and competitive, in dog sports in New Zealand.

Overwhelmed and disappointed with so much negative energy, poor attitudes and behaviour, we wanted to make a positive change and create a culture where you actually look forward to turning up to a dog show to compete and hang out with your friends.

Take the Lead is a campaign to drive a conscious change of behaviour in dog sports in New Zealand. Our programme is based on Equestrian Sports NZ's 'Change the Rein' and we would like to thank Equestrian Sports NZ for generously allowing us to use 'Change the Rein' as a template for *Take the Lead*.

We should be proud of our own achievements and celebrate the success of others at every level, mentoring and supporting those who are new to our sport, promoting the individual potential of each and every person and dog, and also recognizing the people who have achieved at the highest level, many of whom give back an incredible amount of their own time and knowledge to our community.

The primary objective is to create a safe and supportive culture fostered by leaders, management, members, and volunteers.

Through *Take the Lead*, we want to foster a supportive environment where every competitor is out there cheering everyone on, regardless of their standing in the competitive world, promoting a welcoming, supportive environment, embracing diversity and being empowered to call out bad behaviour.

With this in mind, we have created **six core values** that we believe are representative of the behaviours that will enable the culture change we are seeking. Our six core values are illustrated by the posters across the bottom of this spread.





Change Ambassadors Lisa Duff and Dyson Beasley.

Take The Lead Community

A key feature of *Take the Lead* is that it will be driven by our community, centred on separate sections of our website www.taketheleaddogsnz.org.nz

- **Game Changers**

#GameChangerDogsNZ is about encouraging people to tell us about those individuals from our dog sports communities who have made a difference to someone's day through an act of kindness or helpfulness to them, their dog or someone else.

This doesn't need to be anything heroic, just a kind, considerate, helpful, supportive, inclusive, welcoming or friendly act.

To find out more about *Take the Lead*, and how to nominate a Game Changer, simply visit the website.

- **Change Ambassadors**

Change ambassadors are those people in our sport who stand out. They are role models for our core values and are the people in our

sport that others look up to and admire.

We know that to change the culture in our sport we need more than just some fancy posters and a t-shirt. We also know that just saying it needs to be better is not enough. Effective change comes from action, and that needs to be led from the top.

The founding *Take the Lead* Change Ambassadors are your 2021 Agility Committee. You will see us — Chris Richardson, Phil Johnson, Karen Grant, Nicola Parmenter, Diana Gausden, Karen Morrison, Clint Banks and Rosemarie Baker, and — out and about wearing our *Take the Lead* t-shirts walking the talk!

The Agility Committee also recognizes we have some very cool role models in our wider community who day in and day out model our core values. We are extremely proud to introduce your *Take the Lead* Ambassadors: Lisa Duff, Dyson Beasley, Jan Murden and Kerry Hockley-Remon.

You can find out more about what our Ambassadors have to say about *Take the Lead* by visiting this dedicated page on our website.





Change Ambassadors Kerry Hockley-Remon and Jan Murden.

• **Hashtags**

You can tag your social media posts and photos that fit with the *Take the Lead* core values with **#GameChangerDogsNZ** and **#TakeTheLeadDogsNZ**

Through every step, from concept to launch, Purina Pro Plan have been instrumental in not only helping us to shape this programme but have provided the necessary resources to bring this concept to life. We are extremely grateful for this wonderful partnership and



for their enthusiasm for the project.

While the Agility Committee initially wanted to develop something to address the culture in Agility, it quickly became apparent that the issues we had identified were relevant to all dog sports within Dogs NZ. With that in mind we presented the concept to Executive Council and, to our great delight, they lent their wholehearted support to *Take the Lead* and we'd like to thank all EC members for this. 🐾

Karen Morrison,
Agility Committee

**Miranda Stevens, Breeder
Manager Purina:**

When I was tapped on the shoulder at Dogs New Zealand's Annual Conference of Delegates in June to attend a meeting with the Agility committee I never knew the journey it would take us on. We at Purina Pro Plan were asked to be part of a campaign promoting positive behaviour in dog sport and I knew this would be a programme Purina would be thrilled to partner with.

The Agility committee is so passionate about fostering a change for the better, and the enthusiasm within the team was inspirational. We have worked closely with committee members, in particular Karen Morrison, and our design agency to develop a campaign that is bright, colourful, and fun but that has important messages. *Take the Lead* was born, and it's been a pleasure to work on. We were so excited to learn that after the Agility committee presented this concept to the Executive Council, they voted to promote this across all codes within Dogs NZ.

We all need to start at the bottom when beginning a new sport or hobby and it's so much more enjoyable when the people you aspire to take you under their wing to support and guide you.

Well done Agility Committee for highlighting the need for change, and your dedication in bringing to life a positive programme.

**Brian Harris, President
Dogs New Zealand:**

For many years, Dogs New Zealand has been aware of a serious issue with retaining members, especially among relatively new members. There is in our organisation a culture of entitlement and superiority among a small number of members. This often results in new exhibitors feeling unwelcome and they choose to leave. Dog showing and dog training in all its various guises is a wonderful pastime and we members of Dogs NZ should be doing more to promote our sport. But it is equally important that once we have convinced someone to join our merry band that we do all in our power to make them welcome.

When the Agility section came to Executive Council with the concept of *Take the Lead*, EC immediately embraced it and threw its full support behind the program.

The *Take the Lead* programme will be promoted across all codes of Dogs NZ and EC believes that if we all embrace the concept, the New Zealand dog world will be a happier, more welcoming environment for us all.

Thank you to the Agility Committee for taking the lead.

#gamechangerdogsnz