



# AFSS

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF SLEDDOG SPORTS

## Annual General Meeting Minutes 2025

**Date: Monday 1st December, 2025**

**Time: 8pm AEST / 5pm AWST**

**Place: Via Webex**

**Attendees:** Chris Maclean, Geordi Maclean, Andrew Gersbach, Vaughan Winther, Sammy Hartwig, Narelle Crozier, Katrina Cummins, Josh Neufield, Sam Patrikka, Mitchell Deahm, Annie Jackson, Cate Macnamara, Robert Ober, Emma Symonds, Adelaide Reilly, Cassie Painter, Max Baux, Job Blacker, Jamelia Bramwell, Derek Keeper, Jonathan Toquero and Gheetha Toquero.

### **Meeting Minutes:**

The AFSS AGM highlighted membership growth, successful events, new governance policies, financial stability, and appreciation for volunteers, emphasizing community resilience and camaraderie.

- AFSS AGM welcomed attendees and acknowledged their contributions to the association's growth.
- Membership increased to 28 individual members and there was 9 affiliated clubs.
- Clubs organized and held many races and various training events, demonstrating community resilience despite challenges.
- New policies developed for improved governance, event management, and safety standards across clubs.
- Introduced a \$5 insurance levy to offset rising insurance costs while maintaining fair participation fees.
- AFSS reported a modest profit of \$1,049, focusing on building financial reserves for future stability.
- Strong camaraderie and culture within the AFSS community highlighted as vital for future growth.
- Special thanks given to volunteers and committee members for their dedication throughout the year.

## **Presidents Report presented by Chris Maclean:**

Good evening everyone. As President of AFSS I'm pleased to present the Annual Report for the year ending December 2025. Thank you to our member clubs, volunteers, race officials and every individual who contributes time and energy to keep our sport safe and thriving.

### *Membership and activity*

This year AFSS continued to grow. We now have 20 direct members and family members, up from 7 last year, and nine affiliated member clubs (up from eight). In addition, we have seen the membership base of all our clubs grow this year. Our clubs ran dry-land sledding races, snow sledding races, canicross events and showing events across the season. A total of 25 races plus a number of showing, training and demonstration events were conducted by our clubs. The variety and number of events demonstrate the resilience and enthusiasm of our community, even when weather forces occasional changes in format or cancellations. In addition to the traditional sledding events, it has been wonderful to see Canicross gathering momentum and the introduction of a distance sledding event this year.

### *Governance and policies*

To strengthen governance and event safety we developed a number of new policies during the year. These policies are designed to support consistent standards across clubs, improve event management and clarify roles and responsibilities. The policies are available on our website and we welcome feedback on implementation as we work to make them practical and helpful for all clubs.

### *Insurance levy and risk management*

In response to rising insurance costs we introduced a \$5 insurance levy on a user-pays basis for event participants. A total of \$2,270 was collected in levies this sledding season. This approach was chosen deliberately so clubs that were effected by or unable to run events due to weather were not unfairly penalised. The levy has helped offset increased premiums while keeping costs as fair as possible for active participants.

### *Club initiative — the Derek Fund*

A highlight this year was the establishment of the Derek Fund by our clubs to provide financial assistance to Derek Keeper, who generously donates much of his valuable time providing race veterinarian services at many club events. This grassroots initiative is a wonderful example of our community recognising and supporting those who give so much.

### *Finances*

AFSS's profit this calendar year was \$1,049.00. While modest, this gain is an important step toward building a reserve to ensure the association's financial viability and ability to absorb unexpected cost increases (such as future insurance rises). Our intention is to continue growing this reserve carefully and responsibly.

### *Challenges and priorities*

Weather and event cancellations remain a challenge for both dry-land and snow-dependent activities. Providing inclusive, friendly events and maintaining robust safety standards are ongoing priorities. Over the coming year we will focus on: consolidating the new policies into routine practice, growing membership and participation, building our financial reserve, and supporting clubs with guidance around event planning and risk management.

### *Acknowledgements and closing*

My sincere thanks to the AFSS committee, club committees, race officials, volunteers, veterinarians (especially Derek), and every member who supported AFSS this year. I am particularly proud of the culture that AFSS and our clubs have developed this year. Our culture is strong and ready for the 2026 committee to build on. In particular, I would like to thank Sammy Harwig for her role as secretary. This role is critical to the functioning of the AFSS committee and without Sammy's efforts this year we would not have achieved so much. I also thank clubs for their initiative and practical support for one another. I recommend acceptance of this report and invite members to ask questions, offer feedback, and become involved in the work ahead. I will now hand over to the Treasurer for the detailed accounts.

### **Secretary's Report presented by Sammy Hartwig:**

2025 was a very successful year for affiliated clubs, members, volunteers and race entrants.

We welcomed back 8 clubs to the AFSS and 1 new club, UltraDog, in their inaugural year. It was a very successful year for our affiliated clubs with great entry numbers, well organised events, exceptional sportsmanship and a remarkable culture that is a true credit to our clubs and members.

Our clubs faced various challenges throughout the season including temperature and weather, and in particular the outbreak of kennel cough. I would like to thank our clubs and race vet, Derek Keeper, for their efficient and effective handling of this situation. The outbreak was kept contained and all clubs and members followed vital procedures to keep themselves and others safe at events.

Throughout the year the AFSS committee managed and handled multiple tasks to an effective and efficient standard which benefited clubs, members and improved the sport as a whole. This included providing information to multiple enquiring clubs, introducing the participant insurance levy to ensure our affiliation fees remained affordable, renewing our insurance policy, and assisting clubs with advice. New policies and rules were amended for long distance races, vaccination protocols and risk procedures at events.

Derek Keeper has once again volunteered his time and knowledge to the sport not only at events but also behind the scenes. We sincerely appreciate all the effort you put in, and this was shown by so many people donating to the 'Derek Fund'. A fantastic initiative from CSDC, NSW SX and the NSW Siberian Husky Club.

I would like to congratulate the UltraDog committee on a hugely successful first event. The thoughtful planning and organising that went into getting this event off the ground was immense, and is a true credit to those involved. I look forward to the continuation of a long distance event on the AFSS calendar, branching out from the standard sprint event. Well done UltraDog team.

A heartfelt thank you to the Mt Baw Baw committee for affiliating and supporting the AFSS over the years. Unfortunately we cannot control the weather, and it will be disappointing to not see the Baw Baw race on the calendar in the future. Thank you to the committee and race supporters for your commitment and perseverance to the sport.

Congratulations to the NSW SX committee on reaching their 10th anniversary this year. A true achievement for the club, and everyone who attended their race celebrated in style. It was a true showcase of the culture we've developed within the AFSS and will be one to remember! We have 3 affiliated clubs celebrating their 30th anniversary next year which are Dinner Plains, Canberra and the NSW Siberian Husky Club. I wish those clubs all the best in celebrating their milestones in the coming season.

We finished the season with 164 members which is a great achievement from our clubs, and our 28 individual members. We've witnessed comradery within our member base who demonstrated the reason we attend events - the pure enjoyment of both dogs and mushers. I would like to make a special mention to all those members who volunteered at races and helped clubs out - thank you.

Lastly, a massive thank you to our AFSS committee, club representatives and club committees. Without your passion for the sport, and volunteering your time, sledding would not exist. A special mention to Lisa Gersbach for keeping the website updated and taking on this role to assist me as secretary.

I am extremely proud of the culture created and upheld by all those involved with the AFSS. We've had a fantastic year and I look forward to 2026.

**Treasurers Report presented by Geordi Maclean:**

Financial statements for Financial Year (FY) ended June 2025 to be tabled are below.

As the sledding year, calendar year, and committee year align, I have also included 2025 calendar year accounts, and corresponding commentary.

AFSS income in the 2025 calendar year was from affiliate clubs, individual or family memberships, and insurance levies. New affiliations in the year increased with Ultradog joining the community, as well as an increase in individual / family memberships. Individual memberships doubled in 2025, increasing from \$180 in CY24 to \$405 in CY25.

The current year saw the introduction of affiliate clubs charging participants an AFSS insurance levy, which is subsequently passed back to the AFSS. In CY25 the clubs collected \$2,270 insurance levies on behalf of the AFSS.

Total income for CY2025 is \$5,985.

Expenses incurred in the 2025 calendar year were for insurance, web fees, and government fees (Department of Fair Trading). Insurance cost for CY2025 were \$4,559, increased from \$4,096 in 2024. It is relevant to note that there were a number of changes made in cover and inception dates between the years, so this increase is not necessarily like for like.

Web fees include costs for domain renewal, website hosting, and security fees, and for CY25 were \$377, an increase from \$210 in CY25.

Department of Fair Trading fees (~\$56) will not be incurred for the year until filings are completed in the month following the AGM.

Total expenses for CY 2025 is \$4,936

Cash at bank at the end of the calendar year is \$1,610.15, compared to \$560.88 at the end of CY2024.

Cash at bank at the end of the Financial Year 2024-2025 was \$3,419.65.

The Bendigo Bank co-signatories are Public Officer - Andrew Gersbach and Treasurer – Geordi Maclean.

**Australian Federation of Sled Dog Sports**  
**Registration number: INC1601474**

**Calendar Year Profit & Loss Statement**

|   | <b>2025</b>           | <b>2024</b>           |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Affiliation Fees                              | 3,310                 | 2,770                 |
| Membership Fees                               | 405                   | 180                   |
| Insurance Levies                              | 2,270                 | 0                     |
| Other Income                                  | 0                     | 0                     |
| <b>Total INCOME</b>                           | <u><b>5,985</b></u>   | <u><b>2,950</b></u>   |
| <b>Less EXPENSES INCURRED:</b>                |                       |                       |
| Awards  |                       |                       |
| Insurance                                     | (4,559)               | (4,096)               |
| Web Fees                                      | (377)                 | (210)                 |
| Govt Fees (Dept FT)                           | 0                     | (731)                 |
| <b>Total EXPENSES INCURRED</b>                | <u><b>(4,936)</b></u> | <u><b>(5,037)</b></u> |
| <b>NET PROFIT</b>                             | <u><b>1,049</b></u>   | <u><b>(2,087)</b></u> |
| <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed #0070C0;"/> |                       |                       |
| Cash at Bank - Bendigo Bank 159176338         | <b>\$1,610.15</b>     | <b>\$560.68</b>       |

Australian Federation of Sled Dog Sports  
Registration number: INC1601474

Profit & Loss Statement

|  | Current<br>Financial<br>Year<br><br>30-Jun<br>2026 | Financial<br>Year<br>of AGM<br><br>30-Jun<br>2025 | Prior<br>Financial<br>Year<br><br>30-Jun<br>2024 |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>INCOME:</b>                             |  |   |  |
| Affiliation Fees                           | 770.00   | 2,770.00  | 2,540.00   |
| Membership Fees                            | 35.00  | 370.00  | 180.00   |
| Insurance Levies                           | 2,105.00   | 165.00  |  |
| Other Income                               | 0.00   | 0.00  | 0.00   |
| <b>Total INCOME</b>                        | <b>2,910.00</b>                                    | <b>3,305.00</b>                                   | <b>2,720.00</b>                                  |
| <b>Less EXPENSES INCURRED:</b>             |  |   |  |
| Awards                                     |  |   |  |
| Insurance                                  | (4,558.61)   | (274.05)  | (4,165.76)                                       |
| Web Fees                                   | (160.89)   | (216.03)  | (209.88)   |
| Govt Fees (Dept FT)                        | 0.00   | (56.00)   | (674.96)   |
| <b>Total EXPENSES INCURRED</b>             | <b>(4,719.50)</b>                                  | <b>(546.08)</b>                                   | <b>(5,050.60)</b>                                |
| <b>NET PROFIT</b>                          | <b>(1,809.50)</b>                                  | <b>2,758.92</b>                                   | <b>(2,330.60)</b>                                |
| <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed #000;"/> |  |   |  |
| <b>CAPITAL</b>                             |  |   |  |
| Opening Balance                            | 3,419.65   | 660.73  | 2,991.33   |
| Net Profit (Loss)                          | (1,809.50)   | 2,758.92  | (2,330.60)                                       |
| <b>Total CAPITAL</b>                       | <b>1,610.15</b>                                    | <b>3,419.65</b>                                   | <b>660.73</b>                                    |
| <b>These funds are represented by:</b>     |  |   |  |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                              |  |   |  |
| Cash at Bank - Bendigo Bank 159176338      | 1,610.15   | 3,419.65  | 660.73   |
| Accounts Receivable                        |  |   |  |
| <b>Total ASSETS</b>                        | <b>1,610.15</b>                                    | <b>3,419.65</b>                                   | <b>660.73</b>                                    |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>                         |  |   |  |
| Accounts Payable GJM                       |  |   |  |
| <b>Total LIABILITIES</b>                   | <b>0.00</b>  | <b>0.00</b>                                       | <b>0.00</b>                                      |
| <b>Total NET ASSETS</b>                    | <b>1,610.15</b>                                    | <b>3,419.65</b>                                   | <b>660.73</b>                                    |

## **Club Representative Reports:**

### **NSW Siberian Express All Breeds Sled Dog Club presented by Mitchell Deahm:**

Good evening everyone,

The 2025 season was truly a remarkable season for us at Siberian Express and the greater AFSS community. Witnessing and watching some great events throughout the season, all our affiliate clubs should be very proud of themselves. Siberian Express would like to extend their gratitude to the AFSS executive committee for all their hardwork, it does not go unnoticed. We would also like to thank our neighbouring clubs SHCNSW and CSDC along with our interstate friends who attended our events for their support and passion this year.

Sibe X kicked things off with our always-popular Intro to Sledding and Bootcamp weekends—welcoming new participants, sharing knowledge, and watching many of those newcomers become valued members and return for more events throughout the year.

We then launched into Paws for a Cause, an unforgettable event filled with challenges, laughter, and the ever-entertaining relay. This year, Paws for a Cause was dedicated to our very own Dr. Derek Keeper. Alongside our neighboring sled dog clubs, we proudly supported Derek's goal of joining the veterinary team for the legendary Iditarod race. We're thrilled to watch his journey unfold and are deeply grateful for his contribution to our community. Collectively, Siberian Express raised an impressive \$1,765 this season in support of Derek's cause—thank you to everyone who donated and participated.

Our first race of the season was an absolute highlight. Traditionally a relaxed "shake off the cobwebs" night race, it was transformed into a magical forest of lights and colour. This event has now earned its place as an official Siberian Express signature race, we are so excited to see this become bigger and better! Thank you also to Nigel Wallis for taking on the role of Race Marshal.

Our main race was another standout moment that showcased the true culture, camaraderie, and spirit of our club. Between the friendly competition of Garden Games or the pub classic wake-up music before drivers' meetings. It was a weekend filled with laughter and connection and of course some incredible racing too!

Despite facing the challenge of managing an outbreak of Dog covid "kennel cough," which unfortunately reduced our entries, we were relieved to see no ongoing health impacts following the event. Even under those circumstances, it remained a truly memorable and positive experience. A huge thank you to Vaughan Winter for serving as Race Marshal for that event.

I'd like to acknowledge our generous sponsors, in particular Hypro Premium Dog Food for supplying dog food prizes for every event, and Antinol Australia for donating glow collars for Aurora and providing fantastic prizes and vouchers for our race and raffle winners. To all of those that sponsor the club in one way or other your support is invaluable, and we're extremely grateful.

Unfortunately, the club did face some disappointment with some upsetting news in regards to a former committee member, but our team have worked hard to support our members and act with integrity, at this stage there is no official update but despite the challenges faced, I remain immensely proud of what Sibe X achieved this season, on the trail, in our community, and as a club.

Once Again thank you to the executive AFSS committee and fellow club reps and here's to another fantastic year ahead. Bring on 2026!

### **Running West Sled Dog Club presented by Narelle Crozier:**

2025 was a great year for Running West, celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year.

While our first race was rescheduled to the end of the season, we were able to put on both our scheduled events and included a challenge open to all across the country, the Iditarod in a year Challenge.

#### **Sled Dog Masters – 23–24 August, Jarrahwood**

The 2024 Sled Dog Masters delivered a fantastic weekend of racing at Jarrahwood, with the classic winter conditions our teams know well. Crisp, cold mornings and steady rain set the scene, creating fresh, muddy, and technical tracks that kept both mushers and dogs fully engaged.

Saturday saw competitors take on newly laid courses that were twisty, slippery, and great fun for participants of all experience levels. By Sunday, the weather had intensified, adding extra challenge—but also plenty of laughter and camaraderie. In total, 27 entrants took part across all classes, with every division represented and strong participation from novices through to experienced mushers. It was a terrific showcase of the sport.

Off the trail, the atmosphere remained upbeat, with social time, snacks, a quiz, and an auction adding to the enjoyment. The entire weekend was marked by good spirits, teamwork, and many muddy paws—capturing everything we value about sled dog sports.

#### **Southwest Quest – WA King's Birthday September Long Weekend**

The Southwest Quest was successfully held at the end of the season following a reschedule from earlier in the year. The event featured a planned two-heat Sprint race across Saturday evening and Sunday morning, followed by solo and team relays on Monday morning. A total of 24 entrants participated.

Due to weather conditions, only the Sunday morning Sprint heat could be completed; however, this did not dampen spirits. The solo relay attracted six individual entrants, and the team relay saw eight teams compete. Impressively, every entrant was involved in racing across the weekend.

The relays ran smoothly thanks to full participation from all attendees, ensuring efficient transitions, organised changeovers, and safe racing conditions. Webscorer provided useful split times, though these included transition periods.

Overall, the Southwest Quest concluded the season on a high note. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many participants expressing enthusiasm for keeping the relay events as part of future seasons.

Narelle would like to thank Geordie for all her time, help and impromptu meetings with Webscorer registrations.

Narelle will be stepping off the committee after 8 years of service, and thanks the club and AFSS for making sledding enjoyable and fun.

Thank you to all the AFSS committee for all the work done this year. Looking forward to season 2026.

**Short annual reports were presented by the following:**

Sam Patrikka - The Siberian Husky Club of NSW Club Representative  
Emma Symonds - Canberra Sled Dog Club Representative  
Vaughan Winther - Dinner Plain Sled Dog Club Representative  
Robert Ober - The Canicross Club Representative  
Annie Jackson - Sled Dog Racing Victoria Club Representative  
Geordi Maclean - UltraDog Representative

***All AFSS committee positions are declared vacant.***

The following committee nominations are accepted and approved for 2026.

**Executive Committee**

President: **Chris Maclean**

Vice President: **Vaughan Winther**

Secretary: **Adelaide Reilly**

Assistant Secretary: **Sammy Hartwig**

Treasurer: **Geordi Maclean**

Public Officer: **Andrew Gersbach**

Social Media Co-ordinator: **Cate Macnamara**

**Club Representatives**

NSW Siberian Express Sled Dog Club: **Mitchell Deahm**

The Siberian Husky Club of NSW: **Sam Patrikka**

Canberra Sled Dog Club: **Emma Symonds**

Dinner Plain Sled Dog Club: **Vaughan Winther**

Sled Dog Racing Victoria: **Annie Jackson**

Running West Sled Dog Club: **Josh Neufield**

The Canicross Club: **Robert Ober**

UltraDog: **Geordi Maclean**

**Meeting Closed**