

Agility

More than a Measure

Agility is a sport that succeeds and thrives in a large part due to its wonderful volunteers. From judges and club members (and roped-in family members and friends) who help run events, to trainers at local clubs and those who sit on club committees. We could not function without them.

One volunteer group that sometimes gets overlooked are our fabulous measurers! No one can compete without a measure, and our team of measurers around the country are certainly kept busy, with 275 permanent measures (and nearly as many interim measures) completed in 2025 alone.

You can usually see our measurers hard at work at any Agility show you attend (often at the end of a long day running their own dogs) measuring dogs, doing some training with nervous dogs, or supporting the development of trainee measurers by doing some practice sessions. You may also see them running measuring clinics on a rare weekend or evening off.

Why do people become measurers?

Our measurers will tell you a range of reasons why they got started and continue to remain on the panel:

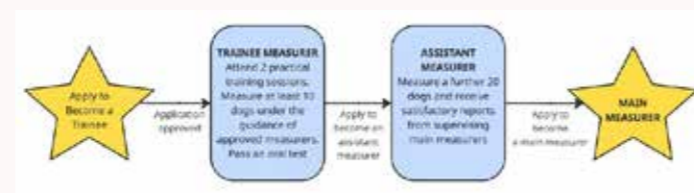
"I wanted to become a measurer so that the dogs that found it a little more stressful had another person that would give them the time and patience to feel okay in the situation. I try to spend time with nervous dogs prior to their measures so they feel familiar and reassured with me."

"I wanted to find a way to give back to the sport and help others get started on their Agility journeys without the barrier of struggling to

get a measure locally. Patience while measuring is such an important skill. I also love working with new measurers to share knowledge and I enjoy seeing them grow in confidence."

"I wanted to become a measurer so that clubs like ours, out on a limb geographically, could have easier access to measurers and because you get to interact with all types of breeds."

How do you become a measurer?



Getting started is easy: simply fill in an application form to become a trainee measurer. Application forms can be found on the NZ Dog Agility website in the Information section, under Measuring Dogs.

There are three stages to becoming a measurer: Trainee, Assistant and Main.

How can you support our measurers?

- Get in touch in advance of a show to organise a measure if you need one. Show entry lists will show you which measurers are attending.
- Be considerate of the other commitments of measurers. Please be mindful to not choose measurers who may be involved in organising and running their own club's show. There are usually others available who would be happy to help.

- Planning ahead is key and allows measurers to manage their time and avoids situations where large numbers turn up unexpectedly when only a few appointments were expected.
- Prepare your dog for being measured by doing some training first. A dog who has been trained to stand still while being touched by strangers will find it less stressful, and is likely to require fewer measures to get an accurate result. If your dog cannot stand for the measure after repeated attempts you may be asked to come back for another attempt after you have done some more training. Many measurers are happy to do some practice measures with dogs to help get them comfortable with the process ahead of their actual measuring session.



Tips on training for a measure



To be measured your dog needs to be able to stand square and still for several minutes. They also need to be comfortable being touched by strangers and be confident with a stick being placed beside them and touching them.

- Start early! Train a good stand from an early age with a chin rest. The stand should be square. Their forelegs should be directly under their body, straight and perpendicular to the ground. The hindlegs should be under their hindquarters, with their hocks straight and perpendicular to the ground, with the head about level with the line of the back.
- Check if your club has a practice measuring stick, and train with it when you are at club. If you don't have access to a practice stick, get creative. A rod and a pair of tongs make a great practice stick.
- Have a variety of people touch your dogs withers while they maintain a stand.
- Ensure that being touched and interacting with the stick are reinforced as fun. Make it a game and use lots of food or toys. Never force your dog if they are uncomfortable.

Tips for clubs — organising measuring clinics

If you have a lot of club members needing a measure, it may be worth considering organising a measuring clinic. Did you know that you can apply for a travel subsidy grant to aid in covering travel expenses for measurers when running a measuring clinic if you do not have any measurers at your own club?

Eligibility criteria:

- This subsidy must be applied for to the AC at least one week prior to the date of the measuring clinic, and the clinic must be pre-approved by the AC for this grant to be accepted.
- The clinic must not take place at a competition.
- The clinic must be advertised and open to all, at least one week prior via the Dogs NZ AC Facebook page. Dates of the clinic should also be added to the Agility Calendar.

Full details can be found in the Forms section of the NZ Dog Agility website.

One final thing everyone can do to support our wonderful measurers: don't forget to say "thank you"! Thanks go a long way to supporting the fabulous people who volunteer their time to measure dogs.

Without them, you would not be able to compete. 🐾

Cherie Picking

Agility Committee - Measurers Liais

Off Course with Chris

Watch out! They've just handed me a megaphone... which could be a brilliant or a terrible idea. I'm still deciding what to do with it. Do I aim for a casual chat, like we're having a drink after a show? Or should I write like I'm running a gamblers course, darting all over the place with as many Agility analogies as I can come up with, a few dad jokes, and a high probability of looking ridiculous? I could go the formal 'suit and tie' route, but I suspect you'd fall asleep.

Knowing me, the style will probably change with the wind. But hey, change is good, and there's a fair bit of it on the cards.

First up, let me introduce your Agility Committee for 2026: myself as Chair and EC rep, Wayne Turner as Vice Chair and Treasurer, Diana Gausden as Secretary, along with Heather Hood, Shellie Baikie, Briar Wilson, Cherie Picking and Kim Edwards. I like to think of us as the 'A-Frame' of the Agility community: we aim to be strong and sturdy and have a great viewpoint from the top. In all seriousness, it's a great team of enthusiastic and capable people. I'm incredibly grateful to have a group brave enough to be seen in public with me.

As of you know, NZ Dog Agility Championships is on the move. Big decisions like this always come with pros and cons, and we know this change will suit some people more than others, but the same could be said about the current situation. That's why getting input from you — the people on the ground — was so important. We're hopeful this change will help ease some of the challenges that zones face with holding the event over Labour Weekend. The vibe from the peeps was that Zone 4 DAC should be in 2027, and we are working to see if it can be pulled off that quickly after the 2026 DAC. We will announce the outcome of that after our March meeting.

One of our big focuses this term is better communication. We know it's an area where we can improve, and we're committed to keeping you in the loop. We want you to hold us to that! It doesn't mean a daily update, but we will share what we're working on through the Notifications System on the AC site, Dog-IE News, NZ Dog World magazine, and emails to clubs where appropriate. While we'll use Facebook for quick updates, we know not everyone uses social media, so the important stuff will always be shared through these other channels as well.

This is only supposed to be a sideline chat, so I'll wrap it up now. But don't fear — I will be back!

Chris Richardson

AC Chair and EC Agility Representative