



MUSTER DOGS

THE UPLIFTING STORY OF FIVE ADORABLE
MUSTER PUPS AND THEIR TRAINERS,
ON A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

FUNNY, DRAMATIC, AND HEART-WARMING, MUSTER DOGS IS A SERIES WHOSE INSPIRING AND UNIVERSAL THEMES WILL ALSO APPEAL TO AUDIENCES GLOBALLY

An uplifting story of five adorable livestock-herding pups and their trainers on a journey of discovery, *Muster Dogs* is the ABC's highest rating program for 2022 YTD and is set to win hearts and minds... and ratings around the world.

Spanning the red earth of the Top End to the green pastures of regional Victoria, *Muster Dogs* is a warm, highly entertaining character-driven series featuring five graziers from across the nation, each of whom has been given a Kelpie puppy from the same litter to train up to be a muster dog.

Checking in with the puppies at key milestones, training gurus and mustering experts set challenges and assess the pups' progress – culminating in an ultimate working dog challenge.

Who will be crowned 'Champion Muster Dog'? And will any of the eager puppy participants graduate into the adult muster dog pack?

Dog lovers will connect with the distinctive bond the farmers and trainers have with their best friend – their muster dog – and audiences will be drawn into the entertaining stories of the diverse, authentic and engaging cast of characters, drawn from across the country.

Joni Hall travels alone with her pack of dogs across the Top End mustering cattle; Frank Finger's family have been farmers in Clermont, Queensland, for three generations; Station owner CJ (Catherine) Scotney is a gifted horse trainer; Aticia Grey is a third-generation grazier and dog breeder in the Pilbara; entrepreneur Rob Tuncks walked away from stockbroking to pursue his real passion: farming.



HD 4 x 60'
Ambience Entertainment

AN EMOTIONAL RIDE INTO FARMERS' LIVES, PROVIDING A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE **UNIQUE BOND BETWEEN HUMAN AND DOG**

The process of mustering – gathering and moving livestock from place to place – is a long, difficult and often dangerous job; sometimes done on foot, or with animals, vehicles or even aircraft, the techniques used can depend on region, culture, distances and the type of terrain involved, and the type of animal that is being mustered. In the vast and challenging terrains across Australia, muster dogs hold a special place in farming life.

The series features multiple recognised experts who take audiences through the bond between farmer and animal, the natural interrelationship between dog and livestock, the facts and science behind muster dog behaviour and how this mustering method affects overall livestock animal welfare and the lives of farmers.

Ideal for co-viewing audiences, this engaging factual entertainment series with a strong focus on sustainability explores the unique role of the muster dog – and the impact this has on the environment, the farmers and the industry.

Exploring the way in which this ancient herding art form is having a renaissance, the series also delves into the underlying emotional, economic and environmental benefits of using this form of mustering.

The themes explored are increasingly relevant; drought, fires and climate change remain a growing social and economic agenda, alongside the enormous battle regional communities face for survival.



AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

PREMIERED 23 JANUARY

ABC MAIN CHANNEL – SUNDAY NIGHT PRIMETIME

Episode 1

- #1 Beats *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here* for #1 entertainment program
- #2 Non-news program after the *Australian Open* (Ash Barty in the semi-final)
- +50% Achieved a 50% audience increase in overnight ratings, to over 1.4M – on its way to being the #2 show in the total TV ratings
- #1 Factual program on catch-up after first week

Episode 2

- Continued strongly, achieving 939K overnight, up against *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here*, *The Voice* and the *Australian Open*
- Within days, achieved a complete audience in excess of 1M



*at 2 February 2022

MEDIA ACCLAIM

A winning combination of entertainment, reality TV and documentary...and let's not forget to mention cute puppies that are sure to win hearts...enormous potential for the program in a global market

– **The National Tribune**

Simply delightful TV as well as being thoughtful, engaged and cast with a bunch of wonderful characters from the land...unlike most reality TV, in this cleverly produced, four part series, there is no humiliation or shame at its core – only love and delight

– **The Australian**

The new reality show set to charm the world...begins as all TV shows should – with a basketful of wriggling, squirming, squeaking newborn puppies

– **The Guardian**

The more interesting face of the show is the insight into the dogs themselves, the people who breed and train them, and the farmers who work them

– **Sydney Morning Herald**

A new documentary series that seriously has the 'awww' factor

– **Longreach Leader**

A show that has captured the nation's heart...the dogs are adorable, with heaps of personality – and their trainers carry plenty of chutzpah too

– **Newcastle Herald**



TWITTER LOVE



Have you seen *Muster Dogs* yet on ABC? It's all the cute puppy overload you can handle
[@trishhepworth](#)

My absolute favourite show
[@LisaGee68](#)

I'm not even a dog-ish person and I'm crying in episode 4!!
Love this show
[@Fran48548306](#)

Compelling viewing
[@Discomclennan](#)

FACEBOOK LOVE



Clear the calendar, set the alarm
Asher Boekeman

I think the kids will like this one
Kate Rowette

After watching this I think I'll stop saying that I hate reality TV shows
Rebecca Zahra

The show is wonderful – great characters and many life lessons to learn as well as being thoroughly entertaining
Patricia Woods

Sunday nights sorted
Claire Drogemuller

Puppy porn!
Bevan Bailye

Brilliant show! Can't wait for Ep 2. Pups are super-cute, but also lots to learn for us non-farming types
Terry McDonough

Thank you! Fantastic series... absolutely perfect!
Anne Cullen

MEET THE PUPPIES

Chet is a tan male dog who is partnered with Joni. He is a goofy, gangly pup with loads of skill and no style. As Joni puts it 'he thinks he's Justin Bieber, stays up all night and sleeps all day'. At his core he is a loyal and courageous dog who holds his own against the huge cattle he meets every day.



Lucifer is a tan male pup who is partnered with Rob. Lucifer is the biggest and boldest dog in the litter. He began as the cute but feisty black and tan pup. He is loving but loose. His desire to hunt and stalk sends him into a spin. His energy is overwhelming at times and he's always looking for something slightly off-piste to get involved in.



Gossip is a black and tan female pup who is partnered with Aticia. She is a sassy and chatty pup with plenty to say for herself. Gossip is also confident and breezy, likes to work a mob closer than she should but never getting flustered – sometimes she's more interested in running commentary on the muster than precisely herding the mob.



Spice is a tan female pup who is partnered with CJ. Spice is a bouncy, determined and at times mischievous pup who is eager to please. She has an incredible natural instinct but sometimes spooks herself. She's a two-steps forward, one-step back kind of pup. She knows where she wants to go and what she wants to do and once she masters her confidence – a little bit like CJ – she will be unstoppable.



Annie is a black and tan female pup who is partnered with Frank. She is sleek, stylish and regal. Spoilt by Frank, she is an elegant, clever and poised pup that glides through life with precision and perfection under the steady and unwavering support of Frank.



MEET THE PARTICIPANTS



JONI ROSE HALL

**LEADER OF THE PACK:
RESILIENT, HEADSTRONG AND LIKEABLE**

Joni has been training dogs and cattle for 15 years. The cocky cowgirl thought she knew it all and was unstoppable until she nearly died. While mustering on a quad bike, she was in an accident, rolling the bike onto herself. Pinned for seven hours in extreme pain, Joni almost lost her leg. This was a life changing experience and she went searching for a better way.

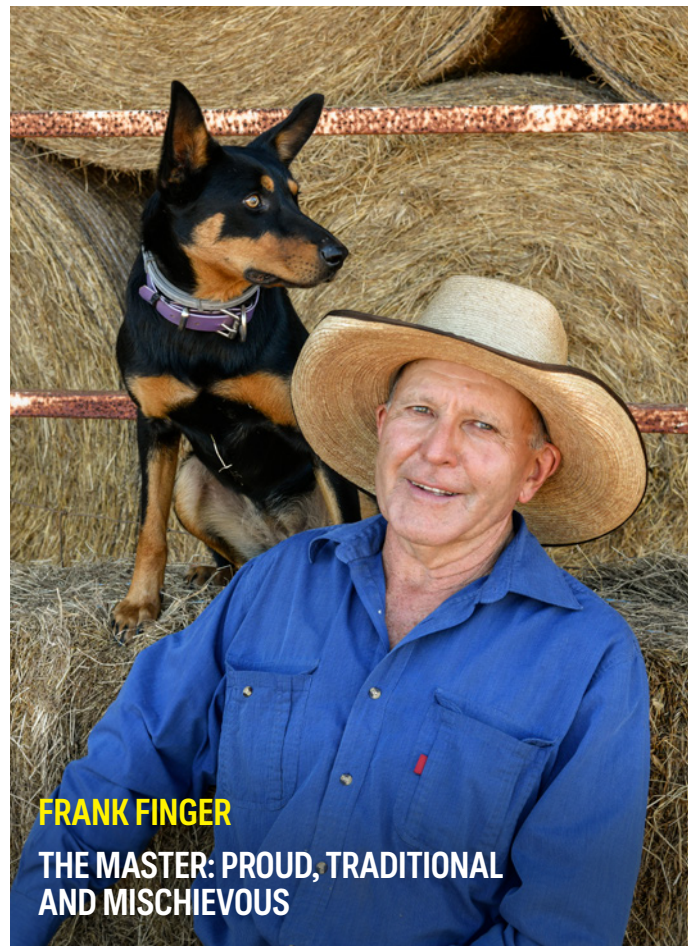
Joni discovered Neil and his philosophy of stock and dog handling and is now arguably Australia's most in demand ringer.

What's at stake for Joni: her entire livelihood. Joni relies on thriving working dogs for her employment. The cattle stations she works for are large and ruthless, if she can't move stock into yards on time, in a stable and safe condition it costs her employers hundreds of thousands of dollars. Getting her training right – and finding the time to fit it in – is essential.

Frank Finger and his family have been a staple in the remote town of Clermont for three generations. Life on the land is not easy and farming successfully across multiple generations takes grit and determination.

Mustering cattle with Kelpies was new to Frank, introduced to him around 25 years ago by his daughters. Prior to that the Finger family always mustered on horseback and it was an epic event to organise. Since converting to working with dogs Frank has never looked back. He finds it stress-free, safer and far more efficient.

What's at stake for the Finger Family: Frank is preparing to hand the family business to his son. A succession plan that has been written for generations. Frank's hoping his children and grandchildren can continue to grow and master the dog and stock handling techniques so as to secure their future.



FRANK FINGER

**THE MASTER: PROUD, TRADITIONAL
AND MISCHIEVOUS**

MEET THE PARTICIPANTS



ROB TUNCKS

**THE RECENT CONVERT:
PROGRESSIVE, SMART AND OUTSPOKEN**

CJ is an Indigenous station owner and gifted animal trainer who grew up working horses and cattle with her grandparents. Through her grandparents, CJ learnt a philosophy for environmentally friendly land management.

But it wasn't till 2005 when she started working with dogs that she realised there was a smarter, more humane way to farm this country.

In 2009 CJ and her husband Joe decided to take on their own property. Going into huge debt and taking a massive risk, CJ and Joe have taken the biggest risk of all our participants, they're doing it alone, while raising a family. It's a lot of work and getting the balance right is a constant struggle.

What are the stakes for CJ? Self-doubt could derail progress. CJ has overcome many hurdles to achieve what she has, but a lack of confidence at times derails her. CJ must overcome her insecurities and have faith in her own abilities in order to achieve her goals.

Just 15 years ago Rob Tuncks walked away from a successful corporate career to pursue his real passion, to live off the land. Rob admits it was the hardest task he'd ever faced. Rob spent many years using motorbikes to muster his stock as his patience and understanding of working dogs grew. Today Rob only uses working dogs on his properties with a true belief that the end result is good for the stock and, in return, good for business.

Rob hasn't completely shaken the fix he gets from taking high risks that was embedded in his psyche during his stock market career. This season he's rolling the dice big time gambling against the environment in the hope he will get faster and larger returns. Rob's secret weapon is his stock handling that relies on his dogs.

At stake for Rob is unmitigated failure. If the pup does not fall into line, it could disrupt his pack of dogs and his gamble for this season could break him.



CATHERINE 'CJ' SCOTNEY

**ONE PEOPLE, ONE LAND: GROUNDED,
RESOURCEFUL AND INSTINCTIVE**

MEET THE PARTICIPANTS



ATICIA GREY

**BUILDING A LEGACY:
SASSY, COURAGEOUS AND AUTHENTIC**

Growing up with red dirt in her veins, Aticia was born to and has experienced all aspects of station life in the harsh terrain of the Pilbara.

Working on her family's property, Aticia didn't settle for just keeping up – her natural ability to connect with the working dog saw her setting the pace.

A passionate dog trainer who dabbles in boutique breeding for overseas clients, she is also a talented photographer and has stunning photo journals of her work and life on the remote WA station. Currently Aticia is going through succession planning with her family.

What's at stake for Aticia? She is determined to carry on a farming tradition but at what cost? The conditions she lives and works in are extreme and she needs to make her sustainable model work. She is backing herself and her new ideas but will her resolve be enough to take on climate change and the export market hits yet to come?





An Ambience Entertainment production for the ABC with production investment from Screen Queensland and financed with support from the ABC. Original Concept by Michael Boughen. Series Director Monica O'Brien.

Directors: Michael Boughen, Sally Browning and David Wallace.
Producers: Monica O'Brien and Michael Boughen. Co-producer John Unwin. ABC Executive Producer Rachel Robinson. ABC Manager, Screen Jo Chichester. International Distributor ABC Commercial.

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