

Vale Don Chipp – The GSD Loses a Great Australian Friend

It was with great sadness that the German Shepherd Dog Club of Victoria noted the passing of Donald 'Don' Chipp. Don Chipp was a long serving patron of the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia (GSDCA) and his loss was felt by all long term members of the affiliated member clubs across Australia. We have never had a politician in this country that has been such a great friend to our breed.

Don Chipp was born in Melbourne in 1925. Around this time graziers and pastoralists in Australia began to express concerns that the German Shepherd Dog was dangerous and the Australian Government subsequently responded to their fears by commencing an importation ban on non de-sexed German Shepherds into Australia.

Don Chipp entered federal parliament as the Liberal member for the seat of Higinbotham in 1960 (later transferring to the seat of Hotham in 1969). He held the position of Minister for the Navy between 1966–69 and was then appointed minister for Customs and Excise until the historic Labour party victory in 1972. "It's time" was the slogan and it certainly was for various social, economic and political changes.



Through various lobbying of the Australian Government a one year trial lifting of the ban on importing GSD's into Australia commenced during 1973. Don Chipp provided great support by raising this issue with the relevant ministers and was instrumental in getting the required political support for overturning the ban. The then Customs Minister, Mr Lionel Murphy, was able to be convinced that the ban was ludicrous, and through the continued help of Don Chipp and some other politicians, they were able to allay the fears of the farmers and graziers. The trial was a success and in 1974 the import ban was permanently lifted. At last breeders were allowed to bring in new blood lines from Europe which allowed great advancement and improvement in the quality of the breed in Australia.

In recognition of his efforts in getting the ban lifted and his genuine interest in the well being of our breed Don Chipp (after the GSDCV put forward a motion to the GSDCA) accepted an invitation to become patron of the GSDCA in 1976. Don Chipp also owned a number of GSD's as loved family companions and had continued to keep a keen interest in our breed whilst patron.

Don Chipp left the Liberal party in 1977 and became the principal force behind the foundation of the Australian Democrats. When he was elected to the senate in 1977 he vowed to 'keep the bastards honest'.

In further recognition of his ongoing work as patron of the GSDCA, Don Chipp was awarded the GSDCA Service Award at the 2005 Main Breed Exhibition at Melbourne.

As noted at his state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne on Saturday 2nd of September 2006, he was a man who was widely respected across the political spectrum and social classes. He did his very best as a politician to improve the lives of all Australians.

The GSDCV remembers a truly great Australian, a good friend to us and patron of our breed.

