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TRAINING FOR TRIUMPH

By Eve

The Agility Classes in the Canine Competition at the Ekka require commitment and dedication from both the dogs and their owners.

Chloe, aged 11, the youngest handler in the class, believes that focus is the main quality a dog must have to succeed. Successful dogs have to know exactly what to expect on competition day. Every jump over every hurdle requires focus, speed and accuracy.

Chloe and her Border Collie, Leeroy, placed second in the Novice Agility Competition.

"I wanted to come here to show people that kids can do this," Chloe said.

Chloe and Leeroy go to club training and put a lot of time and effort into their practices at home.

Initial training concentrates on foundation skills, where dogs are required to heel and listen to

commands from their owner. No equipment is involved. Chloe eventually started to use jumping equipment.

Rebecca, the owner of another competing Kelpie, believes that the most difficult aspect is teaching the dogs new skills.

"Preparation is very important to ensure the dogs enjoy the show and do not get frightened. The trickiest part is blocking out the audience," she said.

The time spent on training can vary, depending on the show. All of the different aspects of agility require constant practice.

Rebecca said that it takes a couple of months to get a dog prepared for showing and a couple of years to train them for the agility competitons.

All of the training and preparation before every show demonstrates the dedication the dogs and their owners put into each event.