

The Australian Dog Breeds

This outline was done for a match day for trainee judges some years ago held by the Australian Dog Breeds Association – now non-existent. It was designed to give candidates an outline of the hallmarks and essentials of the breeds as a 'quick' way of assessing the dogs before examining them in detail.

We have 5 native Australian breeds: - the Australian Cattle Dog, the Australian Kelpie, the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog, the Australian Silky Terrier, and the Australian Terrier. The "Stumpy" is in fact the first and therefore oldest of our Australian breeds.

As Australia is its Country of Development, we also accept the (Scottish) Border Collie as an Australian breed.

The pictures have been selected as good representatives of their breeds and thanks go to the breeders and owners for ensuring we have good representatives to learn from.

-- SUMMARY - POINTS TO NOTE --

Each of these breeds has a "**working**" function and the construction and features of each breed were developed to make the breed as efficient at its task as possible. You can be sure that if a breed's standard calls for a certain feature, there is a reason in relation to its task and purpose that this must be so. Above all, we as judges along with breeders are responsible for ensuring that the features of each of our Australian Breeds are retained, particularly in those characteristics specific to our breeds. The Silky and Aussie T are hunting terriers; the Cattle Dog and Stumpy are working cattle dogs and the Kelpie and Border are working sheepdogs. The native Australian breeds have all been developed according to the needs of our climate, terrain and stock while the Border was found to be ideal for its use in this country.

Because these breeds are all "working" breeds, each **MUST be sound in construction and movement** to be able to carry out its tasks efficiently. All must be strong in movement and cover the ground efficiently and well. Any feature of construction or movement which detracts from the dog's ability to perform its function is foreign to the breed and should be regarded by its degree. The "Stumpy" will not, by virtue of its more moderate angulation, cover as much ground as the other working breeds, but it must not be restricted in any way. All will have strong propelling power or drive from behind and should have good extension in the front. There should be a **flexibility and suppleness** in all the breeds. They should all **hold their topline firmly and smoothly** as they move around the ring, with **tails carried in the position appropriate to the breed**. The handlers should move all these breeds at a steady speed, not fast. They are not breeds that work at full speed although each should be very capable of it should the need arise. They are all, regardless of their function **agile** and can twist and turn suddenly.

As these breeds are all "working" dogs, they should be "**strong in temperament**". Although the Cattle Dog and Stumpy are suspicious of strangers, there should, as with the other breeds be no sign of nervousness or reluctance to being handled, provided they are approached and handled correctly. Be firm but not rough with all breeds in handling. Don't "come down" over the top of any. Approach them from the front or at an angle and do not approach any of these breeds from the rear, or in fact the side if they don't know you are there. You may find the Cattle Dog and Stumpy will turn suddenly and confront you if you do.

All of these breeds are intelligent and should be **alert and active**. This will be reflected in their attitude. They will have a keen expression in their eyes. Don't expect any of these breeds to show their ears continually. This is not typical of any dog, and in fact a few of the breeds, particularly the Aussie Terrier and Kelpie will work and therefore often move with its ears laid back. The Cattle Dog, Stumpy and Aussie Terrier by virtue of their function all need to be able to **lay their ears right back**.

Feet on all these breeds should be **sound and compact** with strong, deep pads. Dark, strong nails although not necessarily spelled out, are also an advantage. Good feet are **essential** in any working breed. They all have small feet, the shape depending on the breed. Make sure that you

do not bypass looking at the feet of "working" breeds.

Each of these breeds has a scissor bite. All but the Kelpie and Border Collie as part of their function use their jaws and teeth. It is essential therefore, that these breeds have muzzles and heads of the correct proportions with **large, strong teeth and strong muzzles and underjaws**. The Border Collie and Kelpie, although they work in a different manner, still need the strength in jaw and teeth to meet their requirements.

Necks should be in overall balance with the proportions of the dog and mostly of a **moderate** length, but generally longer rather than shorter and held and carried in the position appropriate to the breed. Do not expect the working breeds to carry their heads as high in movement as the toys and terriers, as they will typically lower them to accompany free and easy movement. The Border Collie is likely to lower its head more than the other working dogs. Necks should be strong, well set and have a crest or arch to varying degrees depending on the breed.

Ribcages on all breeds should be deep and carried well back with a good spring and shape appropriate to the breed, but in all to allow plenty of heart and lung room.

Please take this opportunity to learn about ALL of our Australian breeds. Breeders, exhibitors and judges are usually willing to help 'sort out' your queries – take the opportunity to do this.

**** AUSTRALIAN SILKY TERRIER ****

PURPOSE - Hunts and kills domestic rodents.

GENERAL APPEARANCE - Compact, moderately low set, medium length, refined structure but of sufficient substance to suggest the ability to hunt and kill domestic rodents. Parted, straight silky hair presents a well-groomed appearance

HEAD/MUZZLE - Strong, Terrier character, fine silky topknot

Proportions - moderate length; muzzle slightly shorter than skull

Planes - parallel, flat

Shape - moderately broad between ears, flat skull without fullness between eyes

EYES - small, round, dark

EARS - Small, "V", set high, pricked

MOUTH - strong jaw, even teeth, scissor

BODY - [compact]

Proportions - moderately long [slightly longer prosternum to buttock]

Topline - level

ANGULATION - Well angulated both ends; hocks well let down

TAIL - preferably docked, high set, carried erect

COAT - long on body, short on legs, feet, muzzle & cheeks [well-groomed appearance]

Texture - flat, fine, glossy, silky

Length - 13-15cm (5"-6")

COLOUR - Rich colours [richer the better]

Blue & tan, grey blue & tan; silver blue or fawn topknot;

blue by 18 months, darker acceptable in younger dogs

SIZE - Dogs - approx. 23cm (9"); Bitches slightly less; 3.5 - 4.5 kg (8-10lbs)

MOVEMENT - free & true; strong propelling power of hindquarters; [parallel], [sound]



**** AUSTRALIAN TERRIER ****

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PURPOSE - Hunts and kills rodents, snakes, other small vermin

GENERAL APPEARANCE - sturdy, low set, rather long in proportion to height, strong Terrier character, alert, active, sound. Untrimmed, harsh coat, definite ruff; long, strong head; hard bitten, rugged appearance

HEAD/MUZZLE - Soft topknot; [slightly wedged]; strong, punishing jaw

Proportions - long; skull & muzzle equal

Planes - parallel

Shape - skull flat, moderately wide; full between eyes

Stop - slight but definite

Muzzle - strong, powerful; length and strength essential

EYES - small, oval, dark, well apart

EARS - small, erect, pointed, moderately wide apart

MOUTH - Strong, punishing jaw; large, even teeth; scissor

BODY - strong

Proportions - long in proportion to height [prosternum to buttock]

Topline - level

ANGULATION - Well angulated both ends; hocks well let down

TAIL - preferably docked; set high; well carried.

COAT - longer on body, short on legs, feet, muzzle, cheeks

Texture - topcoat harsh, straight, dense; soft, short undercoat

Length - approx 6cm (2.5")

COLOUR - the richer and more clearly defined the better

i) blue, steel blue, dark grey blue with rich tan; topknot blue, silver or lighter than head.

ii) clear sandy or red; topknot lighter

SIZE - Dogs approx 25cm (10"); 6.5kg (14lbs); bitches slightly less

MOVEMENT - free, true, springy, forceful; [parallel]



**** AUSTRALIAN CATTLE DOG ****

PURPOSE - Control and movement of cattle in wide-open and confined areas. Often works in dry and rugged country with untamed cattle. A guardian of stock. Works behind cattle and uses mouth to bite and move cattle on; can drop instantly to the ground if a beast kicks

GENERAL APPEARANCE - strong, compact, symmetrically built working dog; ability and willingness to carry out allotted task however arduous. Substance, power, balance, hard muscular condition; impression of great agility, strength, endurance

HEAD/MUZZLE - strong

Proportions - muzzle medium length [slightly shorter]

Planes - parallel; skull slightly curved between ears flattening to stop

Shape - broad skull; [wedged]

Stop - slight but definite

Muzzle - broad, well filled under eyes; strong underjaw, powerful; tapering

EYES - oval, medium, dark brown; warning or suspicious glint characteristic

EARS - moderate; pricked; pointed; wide apart inclining outwards

MOUTH - scissor; sound, strong even teeth very important for biting

BODY - strong

Proportions - 10:9; prosternum to buttocks

Topline - level

ANGULATION - well angulated both ends; not too closely set at withers; hocks well let down

TAIL - moderately low set; approx to hocks

COAT - rain resisting

Texture - Outercoat close, straight, hard, lying flat; short, dense undercoat

Length - 2.5 - 4cm (1-1.5")

COLOUR i) Blue, blue mottled, blue speckled; can accompany tan markings; permissible head markings are evenly distributed black, blue or tan

ii) Even red speckle all over; even red head markings desirable

SIZE - Dogs 46-51 cm (18-20"); Bitches 43-48cm (17-19")

MOVEMENT - True, free, supple, tireless. Soundness of paramount importance; can converge at faster speeds; stands foursquare



**** AUSTRALIAN KELPIE ****

PURPOSE - Works sheep both in open country and in the yard. Often works in very hot and dry conditions. They will jump onto and run over the backs of sheep

GENERAL APPEARANCE - lithe, active; great quality; hard muscular condition; great suppleness of limb; capable of untiring work

HEAD/MUZZLE

Proportions - muzzle preferably slightly shorter than skull; cleanly chiselled and well defined

Planes - parallel; forehead in straight profile towards stop

Shape - skull slightly rounded and broad between ears; chiselled; shape and contours produce a rather fox-like expression

Stop - pronounced

EYES - almond; medium; brown, harmonising with coat colour

EARS - pricked; fine point; wide apart; inclining outwards; moderate

MOUTH - strong, sound, evenly spaced teeth; scissor

BODY *Proportions* - 10:9 prosternum to buttocks

Topline - firm, level

ANGULATION - well angulated both ends; shoulder blades set close at withers; fairly well let down hocks

TAIL - [fairly low set] blending with sloping croup; approx to hock

COAT - rain resisting

Texture - outercoat close, straight, hard, lying flat; short, dense undercoat

Length - 2-3cm (.75-1.25")

COLOUR - black, black and tan, red, red and tan, fawn, chocolate, smoke blue

SIZE - dogs 46-51 cms (18-20"); bitches 43-48cms (17-19")

MOVEMENT - perfectly sound; free, tireless; ability to turn suddenly at speed; tends to converge at speed; stands four square



**** BORDER COLLIE ****

PURPOSE - all round sheepdog for herding and yard work; originally used on grassy, rolling hills and semi-mountainous areas in the Borders region of Scotland. Here, it is an all round sheepdog used on pastureland. Works equally well in flat or hilly country of varying terrains

GENERAL APPEARANCE - well-proportioned, smooth outline showing quality, gracefulness, perfect balance; sufficient substance to ensure it is capable of enduring long periods of active duty as a working sheepdog

HEAD/MUZZLE

Proportions - muzzle and skull equal

Planes - parallel

Shape - skull broad, flat between ears, slightly narrowing

Stop - pronounced

Muzzle - tapering, strong

EYES - wide apart, oval, moderate size; darker preferred but harmonising with coat colour.

EARS - medium; set well apart; semi-erect.

MOUTH - sound, strong, evenly spaced teeth; scissor.

BODY *Proportions* - moderately long [prosternum to buttocks]

Topline - loins only slightly arched

ANGULATION - well angulated both ends; well let down hocks

TAIL - moderately long; set on low

COAT - weather resisting

Texture - moderately long, dense, medium textured topcoat; short, soft, dense undercoat

Length - longer on body; shorter on legs, feet, head

COLOUR - black and white, blue and white, chocolate and white, red and white, blue merle and tri-colour; basic body colour predominates

SIZE - dogs - 48-53cm {19-21"}; bitches 46-51 cms (18-20")

MOVEMENT - free, smooth, tireless; minimum lift of feet; impression of the ability to move with great stealth. Converge at speed, stands foursquare



**** AUSTRALIAN STUMPY TAIL CATTLE DOG ****

PURPOSE - Working and control of cattle in wide-open and confined areas. Often works in dry and rugged country with untamed cattle. Works behind cattle and uses mouth to bite and move cattle on; can drop instantly to the ground if a beast kicks.

GENERAL APPEARANCE - well proportioned working dog; rather square in profile; hard-bitten, rugged appearance; sufficient substance to convey impression of ability to endure long periods of arduous work under whatsoever conditions may prevail. Suspicious of strangers

HEAD/MUZZLE

Proportions - foreface moderate length

Planes - parallel

Shape - broad skull and flat between ears, narrowing slightly to eyes

Stop - slight but definite

Muzzle - blunt; strong; moderate length, well filled under eyes; deep powerful jaws.

EYES - oval; moderate; dark brown; suspicious expression

EARS - moderately small; pricked; almost pointed; set high, well apart

MOUTH - strong, sound, regularly spaced teeth; scissor

BODY *Proportions* - equal - prosternum to buttocks

Topline - level

ANGULATION - [moderately well angulated both ends - not straight]. Front legs straight to ground. Well let down hocks

TAIL - undocked; natural length not exceeding 4"; set high

COAT *Texture* - outercoat moderately short, straight, dense, medium harsh texture; undercoat

short, dense, soft

COLOUR - i) Blue, blue mottled, whole coloured; head may have black markings; black body markings permissible.

ii) good even red speckle all over; with or without darker red markings on head; red body patches permissible

SIZE - dogs - 46-51 cm (18-20"); bitches 43-48cms (17-19")

MOVEMENT - soundness of paramount importance; true, free, supple, tireless; capability of quick and sudden movement essential

