

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL LTD



Extended Breed Standard of **THE AUSTRALIAN TERRIER**

Produced by
The Australian Terrier Club of New South Wales Inc
The Australian Terrier Club of Queensland Inc
The Australian Terrier Club Victoria Inc
and in collaboration with the
Australian National Kennel Council Ltd

Standard adopted by the ANKC Ltd 1961
FCI Standard No:8 adopted 1995
Breed Standard Extension reconfirmed by ANKC Ltd 2011

Country of Origin – Australia

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HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN TERRIER

Although produced from British ancestors, the Australian Terrier is one of the few breeds in the terrier group to have been developed outside the United Kingdom. It can also rightly claim to be the first breed developed in Australia.

It appears reasonably certain that both the Australian Silky Terrier and Australian Terrier had a common ancestry from stock in Tasmania, New South Wales and Victoria, namely the Broken Coated Terriers. It is assumed this type of dog originated from a mixture of breeds, namely:

Skye Terrier for colour and length of coat, shortness of leg, length of body.
Scotch Terrier (Aberdeen) for harshness of coat, shortness of leg.
Dandie Dinmont for topknot.

At intervals the Yorkshire Terrier was introduced, and some say the Irish Terrier was used to stabilise the red colour.

At a late period in the establishment of the breed, the Black and Tan Terrier (Manchester) was used to improve the tan in the blue and tans.

It is reported that in the early 1800's free settlers around Campbelltown and Ross in Tasmania were breeding broken coated dogs of a blue sheen body colour and tan markings. They were renowned for their prowess as watchdogs and weighed about ten pounds.

In 1896 a standard for the Australian Terrier was drawn up and was very similar to the present one with two fundamental differences being weight 8-14 lb (3.6-6.5 kg), with average weight about 10 or 11 lb (4.5-5 kg) and the ears could be erect or dropped.

In 1947 a more detailed standard was adopted and in this the ears had to be erect, blue or blue-black or grey-black, were added to the colours and the weight was 12-14 lb (5.5-6.5 kg)

On 25th March 1961 the Australian National Kennel Council approved and adopted the present standard.

All credit must be given to the breeders over the years for selective breeding in establishing the present high standard of the breed. When one considers the achievements in the show ring of the Australian Terrier, one can quickly perceive the tenacity and intelligence used by the fanciers to attain such a high standard.

The first Australian Terrier Club was formed in Melbourne in the 1890's. This club ceased to exist about the turn of the century.

The Kennel Club (London) officially recognised the breed in 1933. The American Kennel Club in 1960. The world canine organisation the Federation Cynologique Internationale (FCI) officially adopted a standard for the Australian Terrier in 1995 under FCI Standard No:8.

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function with soundness essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be mindful of features which could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed.



Figure 1 - Typical of the breed



Figure 2 Typical head



Figure 3 Outstanding male

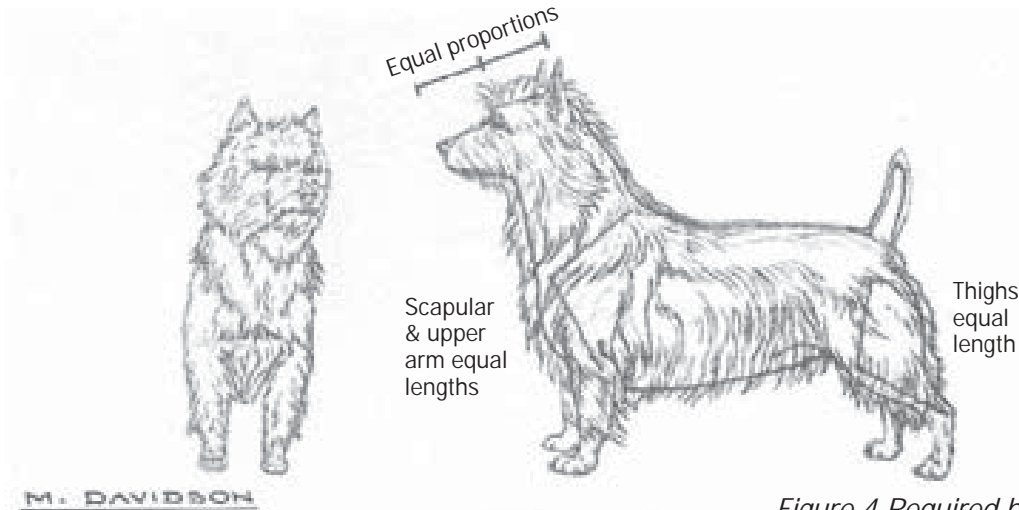


Figure 4 Required balance

! GENERAL APPEARANCE

A sturdy low-set dog, rather long in proportion to height with strong terrier character, alertness, activity and soundness. Its untrimmed, harsh coat with definite ruff around the neck extending to the breastbone and its long strong head assist in developing its hard bitten, rugged appearance.

The general appearance of the Australian Terrier is that of a low set, sturdy, rough-coated terrier whose body should be rather longer in proportion to height. He should have the definite terrier characteristics of being alert, active and with a self possessed manner. His interested expression being imparted through his eyes, which catch the slightest movement, and his ears, which move to follow sound.

The rugged appearance of the Australian Terrier is exaggerated by the definite ruff around the neck, which extends to the backbone and the top-knot covering the top of his skull. Both of these points are characteristic to the breed.

He should impart the distinct impression of a true sporting terrier, built for speed, capable of leaping in the air to whip around in his own length, thus being able to carry out work for which he was evolved.

! CHARACTERISTICS

(Not specified.)

Although not specified under this heading in the standard the following breed characteristics appear in various sections.

- (a) Ruff around the neck, which extends to the breastbone.
- (b) Silky top-knot covering the top of the skull.
- (c) Black leather nose, the leather extending to bridge of muzzle.
- (d) Harsh, dense, double coat, top-coat approx. 6 centimetres (2½") with soft textured undercoat.
- (e) Tail - set on high, carried between vertical and 45 degree angle. Length of tail should be in balance with exhibit.

Although not required in the standard, a thumbprint on the side of the skull, midway between each eye and corresponding ear is considered to be characteristic in the Blue and Tan Australian Terriers by knowledgeable breeders. It does not appear in the Sandy/Red Australian Terriers. It consists of soft black hair similar in texture to head furnishings, and is the size and shape of a thumbprint. It appears in the puppy stage, gradually disappearing in aged dogs to a vestige of black skin pigmentation. It is not obvious after a full top-knot and furnishings develop in the mature dog and falls over the area. Brush, comb up or part the tan furnishings that fall over and hide the area, to see the black thumbprint. As it is not mentioned in the standard, it cannot be a consideration when judging, but is an interesting point. Many of these characteristics may be found in other terrier breeds, but it is only in the Australian Terrier that they all come together to make it unique.

! TEMPERAMENT

Essentially a working terrier, but its loyalty and even disposition make it equally suitable as a companion dog.

A true Australian Terrier will have the courage of a lion. If he is of true temperament he will be putty in the hands of children and young toddlers, yet will put on a great performance when righting the wrongs of his canine relations. He will be completely unaffected as to size, make or shape of other exhibits that stand beside him in the ring and will insist on having the last word. Bad tempered Australian Terriers are almost unheard of. They are exceptionally alert watchdogs but in most cases, once a prowler has crossed over the forbidden threshold the average Aussie will stop barking and "kill him with kindness".

! HEAD AND SKULL

Long with flat skull of moderate width, full between the eyes, and slight but definite stop. The muzzle, strong and powerful, equal in length to that of the skull, which is covered with a soft topknot. The muzzle must be strong and not fall away under the eyes.

Nose black, of moderate size, the leather extending to the bridge of muzzle.

Figure 5 Typical head

Refer to Figure 5.
Note placement of ears, shape of eyes, thumbprint on side of ears, leather of nose, slight stop, teeth and gums, ruff on neck, all desirable hallmarks.



The head should be balanced. The skull and foreface should be of equal length, the skull flat with plenty of width between the eyes and with a slight, but definite stop. The head should show quality without sacrificing biting power. There should be no coarseness about the cheekbones. The jaw should be strong and powerful, the top jaw should fit closely over the lower and the chin should be strong - not snipey.

The nose consists of the nostrils and surrounding moist tissues, which are black, and the leather, also black, that reaches along the upper surface of muzzle (the bridge), from the nostrils to the stop. The leather (pigmented black skin that is hairless - i.e. skin free of naturally growing hair, not to be confused with skin free of hair due to shaving, trimming or plucking) is widest at the nostrils and diminishes in width along the bridge to the stop. The leather is obvious in pups and becomes more leathery looking and prominent in older dogs. Nostrils and leather are a definite black - always.

! EYES

The eyes shall be small, oval, with keen expression, and of dark brown colour, set well apart and not prominent.

Light coloured eyes do not contain the expression of dark brown coloured eyes, neither does a very dark, almost black eye. The Aussie is quick to notice the slightest movement and must be capable of this alert vision to fit him as the rodent catcher we know him to be. The rims around the eyes should be black in colour and of an almond shape.

! EARS

The ears are small, erect, pointed, well carried, set on moderately wide, free from long hair and sensitive in their use (puppies under six months excepted).

The ear size must be in relation to the size of the head. The ears may sometimes have leather showing through. The leather ears years ago, were extremely fine and caused problems keeping them erect - we would prefer not to see them come back again. The use of ears is rather different to that of other terriers in that the Aussie tends to flatten them back or to the side of the head in a sign of friendship or adoration. This is not a sign of attack as in other breeds. Being sensitive in their use the Aussie tends to follow sounds and frequently may be in an alert position but the ears will twist and turn, sometimes independently of each other, to follow a sound or movement. A dog tends to be lacking in alertness if he does not use his ears. Correct ears, combined with correct use, are typical of the Australian Terrier.

! MOUTH

Jaw strong and punishing, teeth large and evenly spaced, the upper incisors fitting closely over the lower (scissor bite), lips black, tight and clean. The length and strength of muzzle are essential to give the strong, punishing jaw.

For this jaw to be strong and punishing we do not want it to be "snipey", nor do we want a shortened muzzle. A level bite may be acceptable in an older dog - where this is due solely to wear.

! NECK

The neck is of good length, slightly arched, strong and flowing into the well angulated shoulders.

A typical characteristic is the graceful, slightly arched neck. In a first class specimen this arched neck can do much to enhance the proud carriage of the head. A short, stuffy neck does not belong to the Australian Terrier.



Figure 6 Well proportioned male

! FOREQUARTERS

The forechest is well developed, brisket relatively deep with forelegs well boned, straight and parallel when viewed from the front. Pasterns are strong, without slope and slightly feathered to the knee.

The elbows should be held securely in place by strong pectoral muscles. If these muscles are soft and flabby the elbow appears slack and this is referred to as "out at elbow".



Figure 7 Correct front

! BODY

Long in proportion to height, strongly constructed, with well sprung ribs and chest of moderate depth and width. The topline is level with loins strong and deep flanks. In considering the body, attention must be paid to the opening description, "a sturdy low set dog, rather long in proportion to height".

When considering the body attention should be paid to the description of a dog that is low set and longer from the withers to the root of the tail, than from the withers to the ground. The length should be obtained by the depth of ribbing rather than by the length of loin. The ribs should be well sprung, neither slab-sided nor barrelled, deep at the brisket, giving plenty of heart room. The loins should be strong and muscular with plenty of width in the pelvis to enable the weight of the longer body to be carried without much strain on the rather shorter legs. There should be very little tuck up.

! HINDQUARTERS

Moderate length of quarters, broad with strong muscular thighs. Stifles are well turned with hocks well bent and let down. Viewed from behind they should be parallel from hock to feet, neither too wide nor too close.

The well turned (curved) stifles give drive. If the stifle is well bent and the pelvic girdle is at the correct angle combined with hocks that are well let down, strength and forward propulsion is maximised.

! FEET

Small, round, compact, well padded, toes closely knit and moderately arched turned neither in nor out, with strong black or dark toenails.

Pads should be black in colour. The feet should be free of long hair and catlike in appearance. Toenails must be kept short as long nails will neither enhance the appearance of a foot nor help reduce the problem of splay foot. The colour of the toenails should not be pink or flesh coloured.

! TAIL

Docked: Set on high and well carried, but not over back.

Undocked: Set on high, well carried, as straight as possible, may curve over back, well covered with hair but free of fringing.

Note: When judging all importance must be placed on the set on of tail.

The length of the tail should be in balance with the dog. It should be carried between vertical and 45 degree angle. An Australian Terrier with its tail down is not typical of the breed.



Figure 8 Typical undocked tail

! GAIT/MOVEMENT

The action to be free, true, springy and forceful. When viewed from the front, the forelegs should move truly without looseness of shoulder, elbows or pasterns. The hindquarters to have drive and power, with free movement of stifles and hocks. Viewed from the rear the legs from the hocks to the ground to be parallel, neither too close nor too wide.

There should be no tendency to plait or weave with the forelegs. Rear movement should reveal hindquarters giving great drive and power, flexing well at the stifles and hocks. Side movement should reveal same hindquarter thrust being correctly transmitted to the forequarters. The topline should be level. To obtain the correct stance of the Aussie he should be handled entirely by the lead, not "topped and tailed", this confirms the description of alert, active and self-possessed.



Figure 9 Movement

! COAT

The body coat consists of a harsh straight dense top coat approximately 6 centimetres (approximately 2½ ins.) long with short soft textured undercoat. The muzzle, lower legs and feet to be free from long hair.

There is a definite ruff around the neck extending to the breastbone, and a softer topknot of more silky hair on the head. These are two points that are distinctive characteristics of the breed. The outer coat is harsh to the touch – not harsh like the feel of a wire haired terrier, but more like the feel of coarse human hair. This outer coat must be straight to be typical. A curly or wavy coat would be inappropriate. The front legs are slightly feathered to the knee.



Figure 10 Mature Blue/Tan



Figure 11 Mature Red



Figure 12 Young Blue/Tan



Figure 13 Young red

! COLOUR

Blue, steel blue or dark grey blue, with rich tan (not sandy) on face, ears, under body, lower legs and feet and around the vent (puppies excepted). The richer the colour and more clearly defined the better. Smuttiness is objectionable. Top knot blue, silver or a lighter shade than head colour. Clear sandy or red, any smuttiness or dark shadings objectionable, with a topknot of a lighter shade acceptable. In any colour, white markings on chest or feet must be penalised.

Blue. The blue can often be described as a mixture of whole black hairs with a sprinkling of grey, grey-blue or black tipped hairs. In some dogs this is most noticeable around the neck, on the flanks and at the base of the tail. White hairs are not to be confused with grey. Tan smut in a blue/tan coat, whilst not desirable, is a fault and not a disqualification.

Sandy Red. The colour may range from the palest of light sandy to the deep red of an Irish Terrier. Whilst one shade of sandy or red may be more appealing than the other this should not be an influence on making awards. The colouring must, however, be one true overall colour and not a variety of shadings. Whole black or whole white hairs are undesirable, but again are a fault and not a disqualification. Topknot again should be silky and a lighter shade than head colouring.

! SIZE

Height: *Dogs approx. 25 cms (approx. 10 ins.) at the withers
Bitches slightly less.*

Weight: *Dogs approx. 6.5 kg (approx. 14 lbs)
Bitches slightly less.*

Height: There have been varying differences of opinion over the years as to the actual length in proportion to height. However, as long as one remembers the "rather long in proportion to height" rule the height must be classed as approximate with preference being given to the balanced dog. A slight tendency to oversize should not be taken too seriously.

Weight: In looking at weight one must remember that an overweight dog can cause structural problems, whilst an underweight dog cannot fully carry out the job he was built for.

! FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect on the health and welfare of the dog.

Faults which interfere with the functions of the dog, must be severely penalised.

! NOTE - Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.



Fig. 14 Excellent specimen

DESCRIPTION OF THUMBPRINT

Blue and Tan Australian Terriers

A characteristic: The thumbprint on the skull
Size: the size of an adult thumbprint
Shape: round to oval
Colour: black
Position: midway between each eye and corresponding ear.

Description: Consists of soft black hair similar in texture to head furnishing. Appears in the puppy stage, gradually disappearing in aged dogs to a vestige of black skin pigmentation. It is not obvious after a full topknot and furnishings develop in the mature dog and falls over the area.

Brush, comb up or part tan furnishings that fall over and hide the area, the black thumbprint.

Remarks: The thumb-print has not been, to date, **a judging point** of the coat or furnishings. There is no similar characteristic in sandy/red Australian Terriers.



**TYPICAL
AUSTRALIAN
TERRIERS**

Figure 15



DESCRIPTION OF LEATHER ON NOSE

Australian Terrier Standard. Nose: Black, of moderate size; the leather extending to bridge of muzzle.

Comment: The nose consists of the nostrils and surrounding moist tissues, which are black, and the leather, also black, that reaches along the upper surface of the muzzle (the bridge), from the nostrils to the stop.

Terms:

Muzzle; all that section of the mouth, jaws and nose in front of the stop.

Stop; the slight but definite demarcation midway between the skull and the muzzle.

Leather; pigmented black skin that is hairless – skin free of naturally growing hair.

The leather is widest at the nostril and diminishes in width along the bridge to the stop.

Comment: The leather is obvious in pups and becomes more leathery looking and prominent in older dogs. Nostrils and leather are a definite black, always.

JUDGING THE AUSTRALIAN TERRIER

When judging the Australian terrier you must be able to recognise and evaluate the various qualities of the dog in relation to the requirements of the breed standard as laid down by the Australian National Kennel Council. Breed type and character are most essential. If he lacks the distinguishing features which stamp him clearly as a typical Australian Terrier, then he cannot be regarded as a “typey” dog, one truly depicting those features which make him a really good specimen of the breed.

At the outset let us use the word “type” in the correct sense in which it is meant to be used. We do not mean the type of Australian Terrier that a particular breeder or breeders like to breed, but a dog possessing those qualities and characteristics laid down in the standard. A “typey” dog will catch your eye immediately.

He must be a balanced dog. By that we mean a dog with his various features being in correct relation to each other, for example, correct head balance, correct height to length etc. What are the special characteristics of the Australian Terrier, the features that make him different from other terriers?

We look for a sturdy, low set dog, one that is rather long in proportion to his height, one that is strong in terrier character, an alert and very active dog with a coat of good length and harsh texture, his small, pointed ears carried erect and his skull covered with a soft silky topknot which extends right down his neck and chest forming a frill and apron. He must have a hard bitten, and to use the words of the standard, “rugged appearance”.



Fig. 16 Excellent body proportions

Don't let the words "rugged appearance" mislead you into thinking we want a dog that is shaggy and unkempt in his appearance. Remember we are talking of the dog in terms of judging him and therefore expect to see a well groomed dog that is capable of standing up alongside other terriers and for this reason must be presented in the best possible manner to enhance him and his prospects of winning. He is not a dog which looks at you with a soft and mild expression seen in some other breeds, his small dark eyes assist greatly in giving him that hard bitten look and by virtue of the fact that he is a terrier he must show that alertness and sharpness associated with terriers and this, along with his harsh, dense coat gives him that rugged appearance called for in the standard.

We now know just what his general appearance is so let us summarise this as being a low set, sturdy dog with a good dense harsh coat, one that has a definite frill or ruff around his neck and a head which has a soft silky topknot, small pricked ears, and one that looks every bit the true terrier.

Let us now look at the various balances that we expect to see as we handle the dog. Firstly his head – we want a balanced head, one with a strong muzzle. The distance from his occiput to stop being the same distance as from his stop to tip of his nose. His skull is flat with the ears small, pointed at the tips, carried erect, set moderately wide apart and free from long hairs. His skull is covered with a soft silky topknot and remember, this is one of his main characteristics. It is usually of a softer and lighter colour than the hair on his foreface and muzzle. It blends in with the frill around his neck and forms an apron down the chest. His muzzle must be strong and free from long hair.

Being a terrier he is bred to kill rodents and vermin and must possess strength of muzzle to kill such rodents. A weak or snipey muzzle will mean a lack of strength in his ability to fulfil his purpose in life. He must have a good scissor bite and for his size his teeth are large and strong. His lips must be tight and black. His nose is black and here we come to another characteristic of the breed, the length of leather on his nose, and this must extend well up the bridge of the nose.

His neck is long and slightly arched and blends into his well-laid shoulders. His forelegs are straight with good round bone, which extends right down to his feet, which are small, well padded, with black toenails.

Looking at him front on, his legs must be perfectly straight and clean down to the feet. His chest is moderately deep and wide and he must show a good forechest underneath his apron or frill. This blending-in of the topknot with the frill around his neck, right down to his chest which give him his apron, which are perhaps the most important features of the breed.

Looking at the dog side-on, we see a dog with a body that is long in proportion to height, with a good level back. The standard calls for him to stand 25cms (10 inches) at the shoulder and to weigh 6.5 kg (14 lb). His ribs extend well back and his loins are strong and his flanks deep. His tail is high set, well carried, as straight as possible, may curve over the back. Well covered with hair but free of fringing. All importance must be placed on the set on of tail.

His hindquarters are very strong and his thighs very muscular. You will be surprised just how muscular his thighs are. Any weakness in his hindquarter development will take away from him the strength that this well built little terrier must have. If he is weak in his quarters he will lack the driving force behind to propel him along and help him in his work as a working terrier. He must have a good turn of stifle with his hocks well-bent and well let down. When viewing him from behind, his rear pastern must be parallel.



Figure 17

Figure 18



He is a double-coated dog – he has a soft undercoat and a harsh, dense weather resistant topcoat, which must be approximately 6 cms (2½ inches) long on an adult dog.

There are two distinct colours called for and they are blue and tan and the all-red or sandy variety. Except for coat colour there is no variation in the two-coated dogs. In the reds the colour must be quite clear and not carry any shading or smuttiness. In the blue and tans we look for a blue, steel-blue or dark grey-blue coat with good rich tan markings on face, ears, under body, lower legs and feet and around the vent. The richer the colour and more clearly defined the better. The topknot can be blue, silver or a lighter shade than the dog's head colour.



**TYPICAL
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TERRIERS**



Figure 19



Wirrind Teddy Bear and Wirrind Snooky Bear, aged 9 weeks

In judging baby puppies and puppies up to around nine months of age you won't expect to find the correct real blue colour or texture and length of coat. Very often baby puppies will carry a blue-black coat which changes colour when the puppy is around nine months of age when you would penalise him for his black coat and certainly by this time he must possess a reasonable length of coat and certainly one that is starting to take on a harsher texture than his baby coat.

Another problem associated with baby puppies whilst teething is that often they will not carry their ears erect. They may carry one up one down, or half up and the like - this all happens whilst the pup is teething, but once he reaches around seven months of age penalise the puppy that does not carry his ears erect. Experience has found that if his ears are not right up by this age then it is very doubtful if he will ever get them right up.

No puppy should be awarded a Challenge Certificate that does not conform to the above requirements for both colour and ears.

We expect him to move - very briskly and smartly, very true both fore and aft with particular drive from his muscular hindquarters.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Original script prepared by the Australian Terrier Club of New South Wales Inc

"History" and "Judging the Breed" from Dogs of Australia published by the Kennel Control Council (Victoria).

Illustrations prepared by M Davidson, Sydney NSW.