



## GROUP VII: HERDING DOGS

# AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD

RECOGNIZED: 1991

Effective: January 2004

*The breed standard outlines the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance of a breed, and ensures that a dog can carry out its original purpose. Breeders and judges should be mindful to prioritize dogs that are healthy and sound in both mind and body.*

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Australian Shepherd is a well-balanced dog of medium size and bone. He is attentive and animated, showing strength and stamina combined with unusual agility. Slightly longer than tall, he has a coat of moderate length and coarseness with colouring that offers variety and individuality in each specimen. An identifying characteristic is his natural or docked bobtail. In each sex, masculinity or femininity is well defined.

### TEMPERAMENT

The Australian Shepherd is intelligent, primarily a working dog of strong herding and guarding instincts. He is an exceptional companion. He is versatile and easily trained, performing his assigned tasks with great style and enthusiasm. He is reserved with strangers but does not exhibit shyness. Although an aggressive, authoritative worker, viciousness toward people or animals is intolerable.

### SIZE

**Height at the withers:** Dogs, 50.75 to 58.5 cm (20 to 23 in); bitches, 45.75 to 53.25 cm (18 to 21 in). However, quality is not to be sacrificed in favour of size.

### COAT

Of medium texture, straight to slightly wavy, weather-resistant, of moderate length with an undercoat. The quality of undercoat varies with climate. Hair is short and smooth on the head, outside of ears, front of forelegs and below the hocks. Backs of forelegs are moderately feathered; breeches are moderately full. There is a moderate mane and frill, more pronounced in dogs than bitches. Atypical coats are severe faults.

### COLOUR

All colours are strong, clear and rich. The recognized colours are blue merle, red (liver) merle, solid black and solid red (liver) all with or without white markings and/or tan (copper) points with no order of preference. The blue merle and black have black pigmentation on nose, lips and eye rims; the red (liver) merle and red (liver) have liver pigmentation on nose, lips and eye rims. Butterfly nose should not be faulted under one year of age. On all colours, the areas surrounding the ears and eyes are dominated by colour other than white. The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the point of the withers.

### HEAD

Clean-cut, strong, dry and in proportion to the body. The **top skull** is flat to slightly rounded, its length and width each equal to the length of the muzzle, which is in balance and proportioned to the rest of the head. The **muzzle** tapers slightly to a rounded tip. The stop is moderate but well defined. **Teeth:** A full complement of strong, white teeth meet in a scissors bite. An even bite is a fault. Teeth broken or missing by accident are not penalized. **Disqualification:** Undershot bites; overshot bites exceeding 3.25 mm (0.125 in). **Eyes:** Very expressive, showing attentiveness and intelligence. Clear, almond-shaped, and of moderate size, set a little obliquely, neither

prominent nor sunken, with pupils dark, well-defined and perfectly positioned. Colour is brown, blue, amber or any variation or combination including flecks and marbling. **Ears:** Set on high at the side of the head, triangular and slightly rounded at the tip, of moderate size with length measured by bringing the tip of the ear around to the inside corner of the eye. The ears, at full attention, break slightly forward and over from one-quarter to one-half above the base. Prick ears and hound-type ears are severe faults.

#### NECK

The neck is firm, clean and in proportion to the body. It is of medium length and slightly arched at the crest, setting well into the shoulders.

#### FOREQUARTERS

The **shoulder blades** (scapula) are long and flat, close set at the withers, approximately two fingers width at a natural stance and are well laid back at an angle approximating 45° to the ground. The **upper arm** (humerus) is attached at an approximate right angle to the shoulder line with forelegs dropping straight, perpendicular to the ground. The **elbow** joint is equidistant from the ground to the withers. The **legs** are straight and powerful. **Pasterns** are short, thick and strong, but still flexible, showing a slight angle when viewed from the side. **Feet** are oval shaped, compact, with close-knit, well-arched toes. Pads are thick and resilient; nails short and strong. Dewclaws may be removed.

#### BODY

The body is firm and muscular. The **topline** appears level at a natural four-square stance. The **chest** is deep and strong with ribs well-sprung. The **loin** is strong and broad when viewed from the top. The bottom line carries well back with a moderate tuck-up. The **croup** is moderately sloping, the ideal being 30 degrees from the horizontal.

#### TAIL

The tail may be docked, bobtailed or naturally long.

#### HINDQUARTERS

Width of hindquarters approximately equal to the width of the forequarters at the shoulders. The angulation of the pelvis and the upper thigh (femur) corresponds to the angulation of the shoulder blade and upper arm, forming an approximate right angle. **Stifles** are clearly defined, **hock** joints moderately bent. The metatarsi are short, perpendicular to the ground and parallel to each other when viewed from the rear. **Feet** are oval-shaped, compact, with close-knit, well-arched toes. Pads are thick and resilient; nails short and strong. Rear dewclaws may be removed.

#### GAIT

Smooth, free and easy; exhibiting agility and movement with a well-balanced, ground-covering stride. Fore and hind legs move straight and parallel with the centre line of the body; as speed increases, the feet, both front and rear, converge toward the centre line of gravity of the dog, while topline remains firm and level.

#### FAULTS

Any departure from the aforementioned ideals shall be considered faulty to the degree in which it interferes with the health and well-being of the dog and the breed's traditional purpose.

#### DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Monorchidism and cryptorchidism
- Other than recognized colours
- White body splashes
- Dudley nose
- Undershot bite; overshot bites exceeding 3.25 mm (0.125 in)