



A Guide to Judging the Australian Terrier

BY DIANE RILEY
"TASDALE"

Key elements of the Australian terrier

- ❖ **Sturdy, low set, rather longer in proportion to height**
- ❖ **Essentially a working terrier, should be even tempered, outgoing and alert.**
- ❖ ***Hard bitten rugged appearance***
- ❖ **Distinctive ruff and apron and a soft silky topknot**
- ❖ **Keen expression, with small dark brown eyes set well apart**
- ❖ **Movement is free, springy and forceful**
- ❖ **A big dog in a small parcel**

History

The Australian Terrier is descended from the rough coated type terriers brought from Great Britain to Australia in the early 19th century. The ancestral types of all of these breeds were kept to eradicate rats and mice. The Australian Terrier shares ancestors with the Cairn, Skye, Dandie Dinmont, Yorkshire and Irish terriers.

Development of the breed began in Australia about 1820, and the dogs were at first called the Rough Coated Terrier. The breed was officially recognised in 1850, and later renamed as the Australian Terrier in 1892. The Australian Terrier was shown at a dog show for the first time in 1906 in Melbourne.

Purpose

The Australian terrier was bred to eradicate rats, mice, rabbits and snakes around the homestead, and also acted as a guard, warning of any strangers approaching, by barking to let owners know someone or something “New” was about, or approaching. The “Aussie” as he is affectionately known. Needed to be tuff, sturdy, quick and alert.

The Purpose of the ruff, apron and topknot was to assist with protection from nasty bites from his prey.

The Aussie is a small versatile dog that will work all day, and then happily sit on your lap or at your feet making a great companion dog as well.

General Appearance



A sturdy low set dog, rather long in proportion to height with Strong Terrier Character, alertness, activity and soundness *A shy, timid dog is NOT ideal*

Note: There is no stipulation in the standard as to ratios of height to length. But the dog must look balanced

It's untrimmed, harsh coat with Definite ruff around the neck extending to the breastbone and it's long strong head assist in developing its hard bitten Rugged appearance

Hard Bitten meaning -- **tough and callous by virtue of experience.** hard-boiled, pugnacious. tough - not given to sentimentality; "a tough character".

Temperament

Essentially a working Terrier, but
Loyal and even disposition make it
equally suitable as a companion
dog



Head & Skull

Long, with flat skull of moderate width, full between the eyes, and slight but definite stop. The muzzle, strong and powerful and equal in length to the skull. (*lay your hand flat on the skull to feel for flatness and the texture of the topknot, and hold jaw to feel the strength*)

The skull is covered with a SOFT SILKY topknot. Muzzle must be strong and not fall away under the eyes



Dog Head side on, Note the correct planes and correct strength of muzzle



Bitch Head front on, Note Top knot and Ruff, correct black nose and small oval keen eye

Head Continued

- ❖ EYES: Small, Oval with **Keen Expression**, **dark brown** in colour and **set well apart** (*an Aussie that has close set eyes does not show the correct expression and is foreign*)
 - ❖ EARS Small Erect pointed and well carried, **set on moderately wide**, free from long hair and **sensitive in their use** (*Aussie terriers will often throw their ears back when moving, they're also as it says, sensitive in their use, often seen moving in different directions to take in all they can around them, this is why they make good warning dogs*)
 - ❖ Puppies under 6 months ears allowed to be dropped
- (Note: in past history both pricked and dropped ears were allowed)*



❖ **NOSE:** black, of moderate size, the **leather extending to the bridge of the muzzle**

(The leather is a bald “V” shaped patch on the bridge of the nose that appears in Mature dogs. There is no known reason for this breed feature, but it is desired)

❖ **MOUTH:** Jaw strong and punishing, teeth Large and evenly spaced, Scissor bite. Lips black tight and clean. The **length and strength of muzzle are essential** to give the **strong punishing bite**

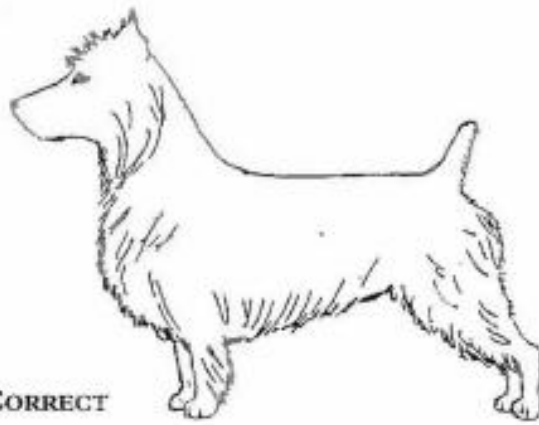
Neck, Forequarters and body

- ❖ The neck is **slightly arched**, strong and flowing into well laid shoulders
- ❖ The forechest is well developed, and **brisket relatively deep with forelegs well boned, straight and parallel when viewed from the front**. Pasterns are strong, without slope, Legs slightly feathered to the knee.
- ❖ Body is 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**” (*this statement is mentioned several times in the Australian terrier standard. So a **Square dog is NOT acceptable***)

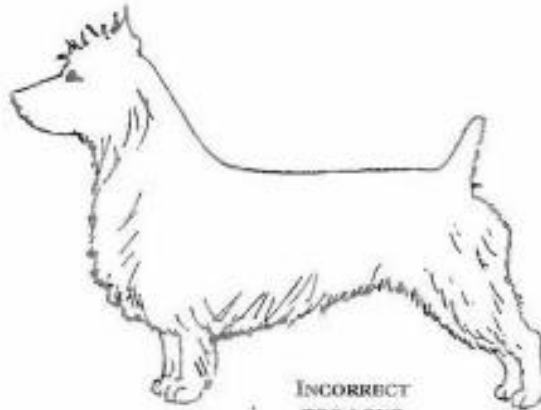
Proportions

Body length comes from the rib cage,
rather than the loin.

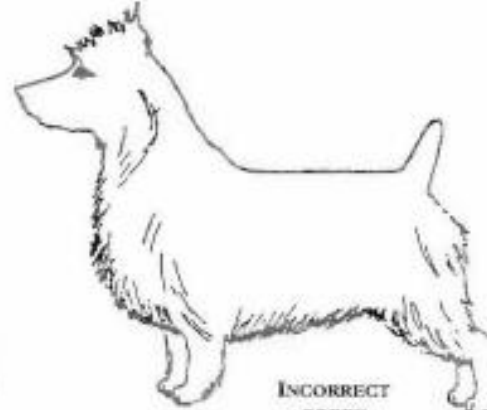
CORRECT



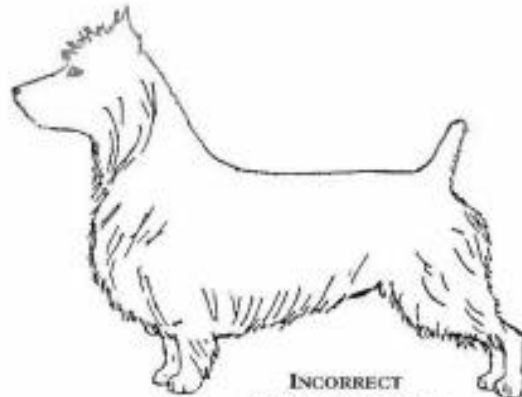
INCORRECT
TOO LONG



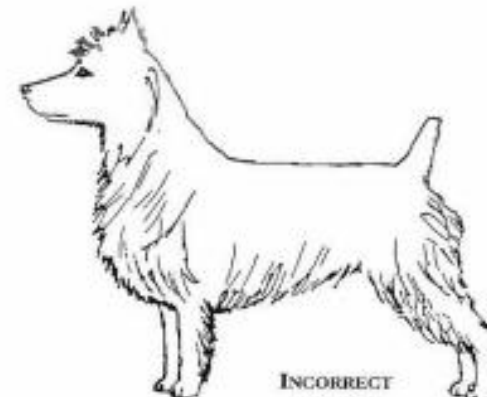
INCORRECT
COBBY



INCORRECT
TOO SHORT ON LEG



INCORRECT
TOO TALL



This bitch is an excellent example of the breed, being longer in proportion to height but keeping in balance, showing the correct arch to her neck flowing into well laid shoulder, excellent topline. Correct strong bone. All-round an excellent bitch with correct Blue & Tan markings



Hindquarters and Feet

- ❖ 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**
- ❖ Feet are **small, round and compact**. Well padded and toes closely knit and moderately arched. Turned neither in nor out, with strong black or dark nails.



CORRECT



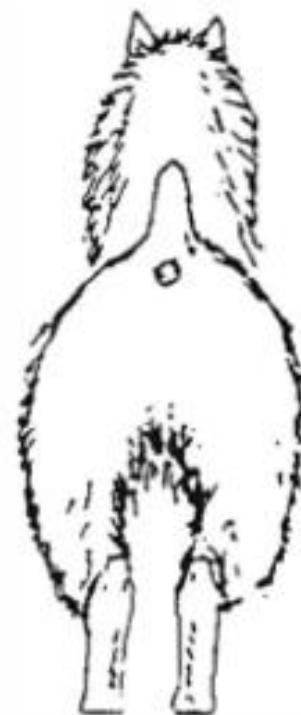
**INCORRECT
TOO WIDE**



**INCORRECT
TOO CLOSE**



**INCORRECT
COW HOKED**



**INCORRECT
BOWED REAR**

TAIL

The Tail **WAS** customarily docked, it should be set on high and well carried, but not over the back. The set can range from being set from 12 to 1 O'clock position. The correct natural tail tends to be straight for at least the first third of the tail and generally tends to curve slightly toward the head, as shown here in the second photo. A good guide is, as long as the tail up to the point where it was historically docked is straight then the tail is acceptable.



Excellent Tail



Very Good Tail



Incorrect Tail

Movement

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

If the dog is constructed well, good movement will follow

Coat & Colour

-
- ❖ The body coat consists of a harsh straight dense top coat, approximately 6cm (2.5”) long, with a short soft textured undercoat. The muzzle, lower legs and feet to be free from long hair.
 - ❖ COLOUR : The Aussie terrier comes in **3 colours**.
 - ❖ **Blue, Steel blue, or dark grey blue** with rich tan (not sandy) on the face, ears, under the body, lower legs and feet, and around the vent. (Puppies excepted) **The richer the tan and more clearly defined the better.** Smuttiness is objectionable. **The Topknot may be blue, silver or a lighter shade of than the head colour.** (*smuttiness - The state or property of being smutty. The state or property of being soiled or smutted; dirt from smoke, soot, coal, or smut.*)
 - ❖ **Red** and **Sandy** – Should be a clear red or sandy colour. The top knot should be of similar or lighter shade of the body colour. **Any dark shadings or smuttiness is undesirable.**
 - ❖ White of chest or feet should be penalised.



Blue and Tan with correct markings note the steel blue colour comes down the shoulder and hindquarters



This is an example of Poor markings in a Blue & Tan – note the “blue” is basically confined to a “saddle” as in the Norwich Terrier. This is not desirable. (an otherwise excellent dog)



An excellent example of a correct Red. But remember there can be a wide range of reds, from pale to dark. But dark is preferred.



An excellent example of a Sandy



Here are examples of Smutty coats. Top is a Blue & Tan Smut (note the Brown/Tan through the body coat. Don't mistaken this for Blue, look closely when Judging. And on the bottom shows a slight smutty Red coat, (dark hair showing thorough rather than a clear red.)

This Aussie shows a definite NO NO! As it has been scissored!, note the underline! The Australian terrier standard says, "It's untrimmed harsh coat"

Now don't get me wrong the Australian terrier should not be presented ungroomed, they do require stripping out about twice a year, and the feet, face and tail should be tidied for presentation, but scissoring of the body coat should not be done.

I also wish to emphasize the Aussie has a Harsh coat, NOT a wire coat. The texture is comparable to that of harsh Human hair.



Size

- ❖ Height – Dogs approximately 25cm (approx. 10")
- ❖ Bitches slightly less
- ❖ Weight – Dogs approximately 6.5kg's (14lbs)
- ❖ Bitches slightly less

Recap on important points

The Australian Terrier IS

- ❖ **Sturdy, low set, rather longer in proportion to height**
- ❖ **Essentially a working terrier, should be even tempered, outgoing and alert.**
- ❖ ***Hard bitten rugged appearance***
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THANK YOU

