

# AUSTRALIAN STUMPY TAIL CATTLE DOG CLUB OF NSW

## Breed Information Brochure



### The Stumpy

The Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog (ASTCD) or 'stumpy' was developed in Australia during the 19th Century as a drover's or working dog. In particular, breed traits were selected to produce a dog with immense stamina, resilience and tenacity in order to deal with wild cattle, rugged terrain and vast distances. These dogs had to be biddable, but also had to make quick decisions on their own, with very large and dangerous mobs of wild cattle. Their job would also have been to protect the drover's horse and belongings, and the drover himself if he was confronted by a rogue animal or worse. While there is no longer a need for a dog to drive large mobs such vast distances, it is useful to remember why the breed was developed.

So what is the Stumpy's place in the 21st Century? After some years of uncertainty in the 1980s when the breed was on the verge of extinction, a redevelopment scheme spanning two decades has ensured its survival. The redevelopment scheme closed in 2007 with the establishment of a viable gene pool over the preceding twenty years, making the infusion of graded (unregistered) dogs no longer necessary.

The breed now has a place in the pure bred dog world across all disciplines, including show, obedience, agility, herding and endurance. It is of course still a highly respected working dog and much loved by pet owners as an active, intelligent companion.

#### A note on the 'Smithfield' and 'Queensland Heeler'

The Smithfield is not a breed but a 'type' and is ancestral to many breeds, including the Old English Sheepdog which it resembles closely. The Smithfield inherited its name from the Smithfield Markets in London in the 19th Century, and it may have been one of the early colonial dogs infused with the dingo in Australia. The only thing common to the Smithfield and the Stumpy is the natural bob tail.

The Stumpy is sometimes referred to as a 'Smithfield' or 'Queensland Heeler'. The breed possibly owes its early development to the properties owned by Thomas Hall in Queensland and Northern NSW. You can read more about the heritage in 'A Dog Called Blue' by Noreen Clark, see the back page of this brochure.

#### Who should own a Stumpy?

The ideal stumpy owner is a committed, experienced dog owner. **This is not a part-time breed.** They are intelligent, active, affectionate and very loyal. They will not tolerate isolation or neglect, they crave family, activity and training—they need to use their brains or they will become destructive and unruly. Early socialisation with dogs and people is recommended for a well-rounded companion. Training and firm leadership is essential. As a thinking dog, the Stumpy will compensate for any weakness in leadership by taking the place at the top of the pack. 'Firm' does not mean 'hard', however, as Stumpies can be particularly 'soft' and their eagerness to please you means that consistency and reinforcement will get you much further than punishment.

#### Choosing a Stumpy

After doing some research on the breed and deciding that you might be 'owned' by a Stumpy, the next step is to find a registered breeder.

A registered breeder is bound by the rules and regulations and Code of Ethics of their state controlling body, which in turn is governed by the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC). See the back of this brochure for the organisation in your state. A registered breeder has a membership number and, in some states including NSW, must complete a written examination before becoming registered.

Puppies can only be registered by a registered breeder out of parents on the main register. In some cases puppies can be registered from 'A' Grade parentage (see reference to redevelopment scheme).

This means that both parents and progeny have 'papers' and a pedigree. There are two types of registration that the puppy buyer needs to be aware of: Main and Limited registration. Limited registration is for pet owners that have no intention of breeding or showing their Stumpy in the future. In most states you will be asked to sign a form that indicates your consent to your understanding of the conditions of the Limited Register.

After you have assessed the breeder it is important to assess the parents and then the puppies. They should be clean, healthy and sociable (see 'Temperament').

#### Temperament

It is important to note that the ASTCD Breed Standard which outlines the type and temperament of the breed, states that the stumpy is 'reserved towards strangers'. The Stumpy exhibits his true, loyal and affectionate nature often only to his owner, so don't be concerned if puppies are 'stand offish'. However extreme timidity and suspicion should be avoided at all costs.

Stumpies are quick to learn and eager to please. Firm, consistent leadership is essential. Stumpies will become timid and wary with hard treatment.

## Health

All pure bred and cross bred dogs carry the genetic traits that they inherit from their parents. Most breeds are affected in some measure by inherited health conditions.

Some common conditions can be easily avoided by buying from a registered breeder that can give a health guarantee against the following, identified conditions for which testing is available.

1. **Progressive Retinol Atrophy:** This disease causes blindness in grown dogs. The most common form of PRA is prcd-PRA and there is a simple DNA test available to breeders who do test their breeding stock and in turn can give a guarantee to their puppy buyers that that their puppy will not be affected by the known form of the disease. Buyers should ask to see test results of both parents. Bi—annual eye certificates issued by a canine ophthalmologist help breeders to identify any other eye anomalies. If you are considering becoming a breeder you should also ask for an eye certificate history.
2. **Deafness:** the Stumpy shares this hereditary condition with many breeds. Puppies are born deaf in one or both ears and they are difficult to detect at 8 weeks without a BAER (Brain Auditory Evoked Response) test. This is not a test that is conducted by a regular vet, it requires specialized equipment. Many breeders will be able to furnish you with certified evidence of the test. If you are considering becoming a breeder, you should ask to see a certificate for the puppy, both parents and preferably from previous generations. To date there is no genetic test available.
3. **Hips and Elbows:** Hip and elbow dysplasia create crippling pain and shortened lives for dogs and depending on the seriousness of the condition can appear at an early age. Again, this can be easily avoided as most reputable breeders have their breeding dogs x-rayed and scored by a specialised veterinarian, which identifies affected individuals and therefore reduces the occurrence in breeding programs. Most commonly x-rays in Australia are sent to a specialist in Western Australia. X-rays can only be taken of dogs over 12 months of age, so the incidence in parents is used to control the incidence in progeny. This condition is not commonly reported in the ASTCD so a minimum acceptable breed average for hip and elbow scores for the breed is yet to be established. A low combined hip score is preferable and elbows should be zero. Scores on individual hips and elbows should not have a large difference.

## Handy Resources

### Web Sites

Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog Club of NSW  
[www.australianstumpytailcattledog.org](http://www.australianstumpytailcattledog.org)

Dogs New South Wales  
[www.dogsw.org.au](http://www.dogsw.org.au)

Canine Control Council of QLD  
[www.cccq.org.au](http://www.cccq.org.au)

Victorian Canine Association  
[www.vca.org.au](http://www.vca.org.au)

Dogs South Australia  
[www.dogssa.com.au](http://www.dogssa.com.au)

The Canine Association of WA  
[www.cawa.asn.au](http://www.cawa.asn.au)

Tasmanian Canine Association Inc.  
[www.tasdogs.com](http://www.tasdogs.com)

North Australian Canine Association  
[www.users.bigpond.com/nac1](http://www.users.bigpond.com/nac1)

The Australian Cattle Dog Social Club of North Queensland  
[www.wolfweb.com.au/acd](http://www.wolfweb.com.au/acd)

Dogz Online  
[www.dogzonline.com.au](http://www.dogzonline.com.au)

The Cattle Dog & Kelpie Club of Queensland Inc  
[www.geocities.com/acdakclub](http://www.geocities.com/acdakclub)

### Books

*A Dog Called Blue*

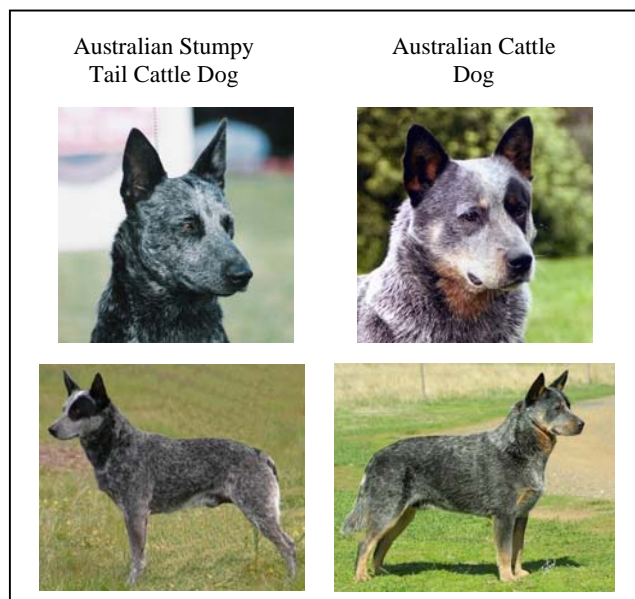
The Australian Cattle Dog and the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog 1840-2006 [www.adcb.au.com](http://www.adcb.au.com)

## Breed Features

The Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog is sometimes confused with an Australian Cattle Dog. Although they may share common origins in the dingo and possibly some imported dogs, they are very different breeds—with different physical traits and temperament. What are the differences?

1. The Stumpy has a natural bob-tail, although long tail puppies also occur. A Stumpy born with a tail is NOT an Australian Cattle Dog.
2. The Stumpy is a 'square' dog—the length of the dog is the same as the height. The Australian Cattle Dog is longer than it is tall. The Stumpy appears a leggier, finer dog and the ACD heavier, more thick-set.
3. The Stumpy head is very distinct, with ears are set high on the head a skull that is broad and flat between the ears, tapering to the muzzle, giving the overall impression of a 'wedge' shape. Eyes should be dark brown.
4. Both the Stumpy and the ACD come in blue and red, mottle or speckle, however the blue Stumpy must NOT have tan points or markings. The Stumpy can have head *and* body patches—black on blue or brown on red dogs. Nose and toenails must be black on both blue and red dogs.
5. The Stumpy is aloof, agile and sensitive and is not prone to aggression. Stumpy owners report quirky, interesting and larrikin personalities.

The Stumpy and the ACD are two separate breeds, this means that crossing them produces a cross-breed, not a pure breed. See the breed comparison below:



## More Information

This brochure has been prepared in order to answer commonly asked questions. For more information please contact the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog Club of NSW or your state kennel control organization (above).

[www.australianstumpytailcattledog.org](http://www.australianstumpytailcattledog.org)  
[astcd@australianstumpytailcattledog.org](mailto:astcd@australianstumpytailcattledog.org)  
PO Box 24 North Richmond NSW  
Phone: 01 2 6775 2233  
(Sarah Wilson - Publicity Officer)

Author:  
Sarah Wilson, Publicity Officer ASTCD Club of NSW  
Photos courtesy of:  
Kombinalong ACD Kennels [www.kombinalong.com](http://www.kombinalong.com)  
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Alkina ASTCD Kennels