

WORKING DOGS





WORKING DOGS

- ▶ There are more than 270,000 stock-herding dogs working across rural Australia.
- ▶ Their enormous contribution ensures the efficiency of livestock management in Australia's large agricultural sector.
- ▶ The \$ value of the work these dogs perform in Primary Production is undefined but would run in to the \$millions annually.





ORIGIN OF THE WORKING DOG

- ▶ Large English bobtail dogs called Smithfields were the first working dogs to arrive in Australia during colonial times. But stock managers soon found the breed unsuited to the conditions and set about creating a local dog.
- ▶ In 1832 Thomas Hall imported some of his family's blue-speckled drover's curs from Northumbria and supposedly crossed them with dingoes, creating the Hall's heelers.
- ▶ Hall's heelers were an early version of the Australian cattle dog, and by the 1880s the kelpie had also been developed. Kelpies, Australian Shepherds and border collies have since become our most popular working breeds.

TRAINING A WORK DOG

- ▶ On properties the working dog is the stockman's constant companion and a highly valued assistant. In most cases it would be impossible to manage livestock without them.
- ▶ They Possess a wide variety of working styles and temperaments; they are different from many other types of common household dogs because they are born with their working instincts and are then trained to use these on command. With this strong genetic desire, the greatest reward for a Livestock Working Dog is to be allowed to work. Breeds like the kelpie and border collie don't just have the ability but an instinctive desire to work, they love it.
- ▶ Working dogs were critical to the day-to-day running of farms. From managing stock to guarding stock and guarding properties, working dogs can do it all. Farmers see their dogs as more than just a pet or companion. They are also a work colleague; it's an intimate, trusting relationship.
- ▶ Training a working dog is a long expensive process, but the returns are more than worth it. The average cost of owning a herding dog is under \$8,000 over its lifetime, with the value of its work being around \$40,000.
- ▶ Trainers look for dogs that instinctively take an interest in sheep at a young age. Around 3-4 months old. From there it's a long process to train a sheepdog, but once you get them started, most kelpies and border collies instinctively know what to do. Sheepdog have very strong hind legs making them great jumpers. They can jump onto the back of a quad bike, over fences and jump over the backs of sheep in the yard. Sheepdogs can bark on command.



KELPIE

- ▶ The Australian Kelpie was originally bred to have the energy, intelligence, and independence to herd livestock all day in the hot Australian climate without much need for supervision, and the breed retains those qualities to this day.
- ▶ Australian Kelpies are still used across Australia for their herding instincts, and that suits these dogs just fine, as they are happiest when they have a job to do.
- ▶ Australian Kelpie's make a great pet for very active people only, as a bored Kelpie may make their own fun by acting out and engaging in destructive behaviour. The good news is that these dogs are easy to train for almost any task, so long as they have a confident, competent trainer who can give positive reinforcement without being too harsh.
- ▶ Australian Kelpies are fully capable of performing many dog sports, search and rescue work, nose work, service dog duties, and more. They have high energy and high exercise needs, and while they can handle doing a job with little supervision, they need human companionship and direction.
- ▶ Leaving them home alone for long periods of time can spell disaster. Their natural herding instincts need to be contained and used properly from an early age, or they may end up nipping at the heels of children and other pets, but with time and training, they can make loyal companions who excel as watchdogs and work tirelessly at any task they're given.
- ▶ The average Lifespan of an Australian Kelpie is 10-15 years.



CATTLE DOG

- ▶ The Australian Cattle Dog was developed in Australia during the 19th century as a working or drover's dog. Breed traits were selected to produce a dog with immense strength, resilience and persistence, which could deal with untamed cattle, rugged terrain and the vast distances of the very large ranches.
- ▶ These dogs had to be obedient, but also had to make quick decisions on their own, with large and dangerous mobs of wild cattle. Their job included protecting the drover's horse and belongings, and the drover if necessary.
- ▶ Years of breeding to suit droving needs has produced a dog with superb ability as well as a general-purpose dog of excellence. The Australian Cattle Dog is an extremely intelligent, active, and sturdy dog breed. They are still used today as a herding dog. They thrive on having a job to do and being part of all family activities.
- ▶ They are loyal and protective of their family, though wary of outsiders. Besides herding work, the Australian Cattle dog does well at canine sports, including agility, obedience, rally, flyball, and flying disc competitions.
- ▶ The average lifespan of a Cattle dog is 12-15 years





BORDER COLLIE

- ▶ The Border Collie originated in Scotland and can be traced back for 350 years. The name is derived from the area of its origin - the border of Scotland and England.
- ▶ It was first imported into Australia in 1901 and recognised as an Australian Working Dog breed in 1953. Although it isn't an Australian Breed, its contribution to the Australian sheep industry and unique Australian heritage has led Border Collies to receive a form of breed nationalisation.
- ▶ Australia is also regarded as the Country of Development for the Border Collie in the conformation ring.
- ▶ Border Collies have all the characteristics of a working dog: it is an intelligent, athletic, faithful dog with an inherent desire to please. Borders are agile, active dogs and while it is a breed capable of covering the ground at great speed and executing sudden, sharp turns, it can also display great patience and control, often characterised by the famous Border Collie 'creep' and the motionless stance whilst giving stock the 'eye'.
- ▶ The average lifespan of a Border Collie is 12-15 years



AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD

- ▶ The Australian Shepherd where actually developed in America, but their early ancestors can be traced back to France in the late 1800's and early 1900's.
- ▶ They arrived in America with the importation of Australian sheep, hence the name Australian Shepherd.
- ▶ The Australian Shepherd Club of America was established in 1957, but the breed was not officially recognised by the American Kennel Club until 1991.
- ▶ Australian Shepherds were reintroduced into Australia in 1990. On the 1st January 1994, the Australian Shepherd was officially recognised by the Australian National Kennel Council and it is now one of the largest breeds in the working dog group.
- ▶ The average lifespan of the Australian Shepherd is 12-15 years

HEALTH CARE, PESTS & DISEASES



- ▶ Animal health, welfare and biosecurity are all important stages of the livestock production chain. If managed poorly each can have adverse impacts on productivity.
- ▶ Biosecurity programs for farming industries are designed to prevent the spread of infectious disease and contain disease outbreaks when they occur.
- ▶ Parasites and disease impact on all animals, including Alpacas. Animals affected by disease may not always show obvious clinical signs.
- ▶ Biosecurity is important at the national, regional and property level.
- ▶ Producers are governed by Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines. State and territory governments are responsible for animal welfare laws and their enforcement. These are enforced through animal welfare or prevention of cruelty to animals' legislation.



RISKS & CHALLENGES

- ▶ Like any primary production enterprise there are risks associated with commercial production. Some will be outside of a producer's control however experienced producers are usually able to manage these risks.
- ▶ Risks include the loss of vital export markets. The COVID-19 outbreak had a massive impact on a lot of our export markets.
- ▶ Disease and pests, it is extremely important that we maintain Australia's freedom from major diseases through strict quarantine laws and procedures.
- ▶ Here in Australia weather events such as drought, fires and flooding take a huge toll on our farming communities. They really need our support.



POP QUIZ

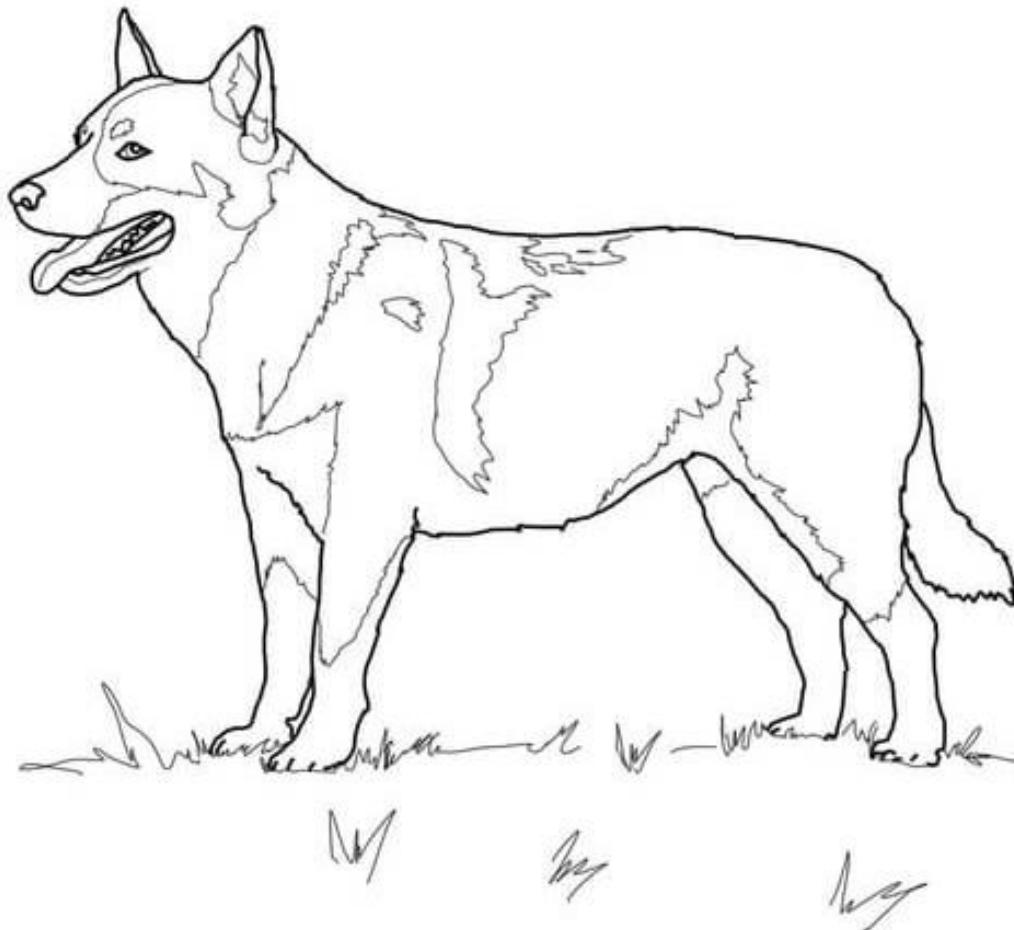
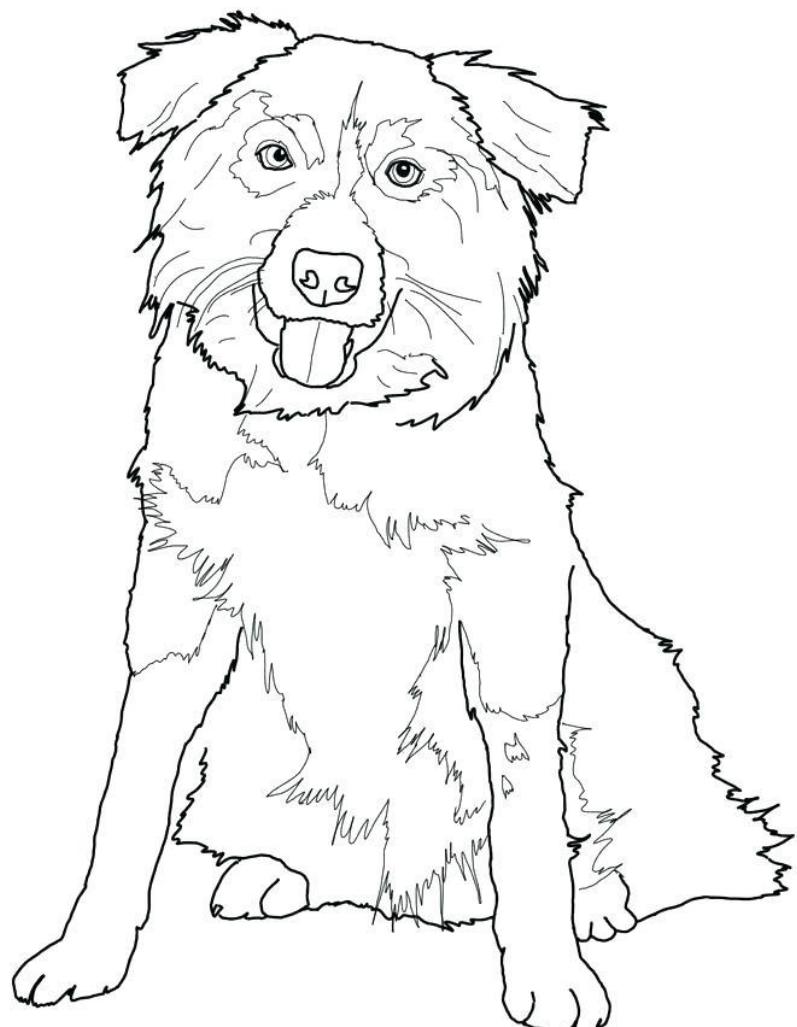
- ▶ There are over _____ working dogs in Australia.
- ▶ Three popular breeds of Australian working dogs are _____, _____ & _____.
- ▶ The Border Collie was first imported to Australia in 1901 TRUE/FALSE
- ▶ A Kelpie's average lifespan can be up to _____ years.
- ▶ Why do you think working dogs are so important?

- ▶ Working dogs are born with great instincts for work such as herding TRUE/FALSE
- ▶ Working dogs don't require a lot of exercise and prefer to just lay around the house TRUE/FALSE

NOTES



AUSTRALIAN WORKING DOGS





RESOURCE

ABC, Australian Geographic,
dogtime.com, dogsnsw.org.au