In reviewing the UK and FCI bulldog standards alongside the current NZ bulldog standard I wish to raise the following points:

* The wording of the UK and FCI standards are very similar. It is apparent that the intent of these standards is removing what has been suggested as “extreme breed features”. The issue I again raise is that it is apparent that the understanding of the purpose of the breed’s features is sadly lacking and so in order to ensure that judges do not misunderstand the description and only select healthy unexaggerated dogs in the ring, we want to have a “modified” standard. Again the issue is one of educating these judges – to judge the bulldog requires an understanding that *Form follows Function.*  The current NZ standard in its introduction clearly states “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 ….. “no point should be so much in excess of the others as to destroy the general symmetry, or make the dog appear deformed, or interfere with its power of motion etc”
* The UK and FCI standards state that the head is “fairly large in proportion” and then goes onto use the same wordings in the NZ standard “*no point should be so much in excess of the others as to destroy the general symmetry, or make the dog appear deformed, or interfere with its power of motion ” .* The UK and FCI standards also state that the “skull should be relatively large in circumference” as opposed to the NZ standard which states “ the skull should be very large – the larger the better and in circumference should measure (round in front of the ears) at least the height of the dog at the shoulders.”

**The concern about the wording of the NZ standard “head strikingly massive and large in proportion”** and **the “ skull should be very large “ clearly is about not understanding the purpose of this strikingly massive head and very large skull to be able to allow the dog to do the function it was designed to do. Let me explain:**

1. **The skull had to be large to contain the powerful muscles which activate the jaw**
2. **All the weight of the dog is in the cranial regions, including its large head, muscular and strongly boned front. Therefore, the Bulldog’s centre of gravity lies very heavily in its front end unlike other breeds. The advantage of having a greater cranial mass as compared to a lighter rear, became apparent when the dog was being shaken about by the bull.**
3. **The large skull therefore has its place in the standard in that its’ form directly relate to the original function of the bulldog. And the NZ standard already states “ no point should be so much in excess of the others to destroy the general symmetry, or make the dog appear deformed, or interfere with its powers of motion etc”**
* Both the UK and FCI standards state that “the skin on the forehead is slightly loose and finely wrinkled without excess, neither prominent nor overhanging face” and with regards to the wrinkles on the face “ the skin may be slightly wrinkled” and omit to include the description in the NZ standard of the projections of the frontal bones needing to be very prominent, broad, square and high, causing a deep and wide indentation between the eyes termed the “stop”. **Again the movement away from the NZ standard words of “ very loose and well wrinkled” on the forehead and “deeply and closely wrinkled” on the face is about not understanding the purpose of the wrinkles. Let me again explain:**

The wrinkles, prominent frontal bones, furrow, stop, chops and nose all have their purpose. When the bulldog got hold of the bull’s nose and the bull begins to bleed, it runs down these fine “well wrinkled skin” to the furrow in the centre of his head between the frontal bones as these project well above the eyes, it is impossible for the blood to run into his eyes. Then it runs down to the stop which has a roll ( a full or split) running over it ( note the stop is deep and much lower than the tip of the nose) making it impossible for the blood to run to the nose and cut off his breathing. With the layback from the top of the lip of the underjaw to the top of the nose being 45 degrees, when the bulldog’s mouth is on the bull, his nose is about ¼ inch away from the bull. This 45 degree layback allows the dog to breathe as he can’t breathe through his mouth when it is full of bull! Now when the blood has run down the wrinkle, past the frontal bones to the stop, it then runs down the deep chop which is hanging well over the bottom jaw, stopping the blood running into his mouth and congealing. After the blood has run down the chops, it runs down the dewlap and onto the ground.

Coming back to the standard, the use of the words “loose and well wrinkled” does not mean grossly wrinkled but form is fit for purpose / function.

* In the description of the neck both the UK and FCI standard, again when describing the skin, say “some loose, skin about throat, forming slight dewlap on each side”, differing from the NZ standard that says “ with much loose, thick and wrinkled skin about the throat, forming a dewlap on each side, from the lower jaw to the chest”. Again, a lack of understanding of purpose – as already stated the dewlap is there to guide the blood of the bull to the ground and not back into the mouth of the bulldog. Now the skin around the bulldog’s neck needs to be loose, so that when the bull rolls him around on the ground (whilst the bulldog is holding onto the bull’s nose), the skin rolls too, and so stops him getting cuts.

I say again, “form for function / fit for purpose”.

* Both the UK and FCI standards when describing the bulldog body shape omit the description of the hindquarters as “rather lightly made in comparison with its heavily made foreparts”.

The fine hindquarters are part of the four features that gives the bulldog its pear-shaped body. It is impossible for the bulldog to roll and gait perfectly unless he has a pear-shaped body made up of 1. Big shoulders . 2. Roach. 3. Back and fine hindquarters. 4 Cut up of loin.

Also with regards to the fine hindquarters, referring to fit for purpose again: the bulldog was designed with a lighter hindquarters as it is the front of the bulldog – its bigger front and large skull, along with its deep brisket ( for balance) where the power of the dog comes from. The hindquarters are there for balance and that is why when watching a bulldog move, the hindquarters appear to just skim across the ground, following the powerful front of the dog. Also when the bulldog is locked onto the bull, a finer hindquarters along with the good arch of neck, tuck up of loin and turn of stifle, and roach of back allows the bulldog to turn himself into a complete ball. Why? So when the bull throws him around it is impossible for him to break his neck, back or legs. Again, all these parts fitting together, being “form for function or fit for purpose”

**In conclusion:**

* I maintain that the NZ Bulldog standard takes into account the peculiarities that make the bulldog the distinctive breed that it is. The problems do not lie with the standard but rather with the lack of knowledge of the breed and its peculiar characteristics.
* When judging the bulldog the breeder and judge need to be mindful of TYPE, BALANCE and SOUNDNESS. The bulldog, even though its original purpose – baiting bulls – is now obsolete, it is the very reason that the bulldog existed and so when breeding and judging it, you have to ask yourself, is this specimen able to do what it was designed to do?
* In breeding and judging the bulldog, the responsibility lies with both breeders and judges to understand and correctly interpret the standard, not change it so that those who do not take the time to understand the breed. The current NZ Bulldog Standard gives descriptives on different aspects of features to help guide the interpretation. The UK and FCI standards have removed such descriptives from their standards.
* I maintain that the current NZ Bulldog standard is the best of the three being tabled, being the one that is the best representative of the Bulldog and its design for purpose.