The Auckland Bulldog Club

31 October 2018

The Executive Council

Dogs NZ

By Email

**British Bulldog Breed Standard: Proposed Dogs NZ changes Purpose**

The Auckland Bulldog Club is submitting the following document in response to the proposal to change the NZ British Bulldog Standard (DogsNZ Proposal). Dogs NZ have asked the Bulldog Clubs to respond and we are doing this submission within the extension of time allowed for completion of submissions following consultation.

**Comment**

Our view is consistent with those of the Combined Bulldog taskforce and we have read the submissions of the other Clubs and by several members who have or will make individual submissions including British Bulldog Breeders; President of the Wellington Bulldog Club Frank Muncey and President of the Southern Bulldog Club; Kathy Brown. Our submission supports the concerns raised by these clubs and members. Further, we argue that the assumption that the breed standards are responsible for the ill health of the breed is an assumption that needs challenging at its core. The breed standard if interpreted correctly, promotes the health of the breed. So, to alter the standard based on subjective interpretation or ignorance is at root a move that will potentially cause more damage to the breed without addressing the very issue that you wish to address.

The DogsNZ letter proposed that the changes to the British Bulldog Breed Standard were to be made on the basis of format. It is clear this was not the case, we hardly think that the Canine Health and Welfare Committee would seek change for an easier more readable document. Fonts and readability seem to obscure other reasons for promoting change.

We reiterate the point made by the taskforce that the Clubs with the assistance of the Taskforce have sought to provide enough information to members to allow them to consider the DogsNZ Proposal and have discussed it with the international Clubs who have been affected by the changes to the UK Breed Standard in 2011 or had those changes proposed to them.

The Auckland Bulldog Club believe that like the other bulldog clubs and Taskforce that there is strong support of the Clubs view that:

1. a. The United Kingdom (**UK**) should be retained as the country of origin for the NZ British Bulldog Breed Standard. The transfer to the FCI standard is not supported and format is not a sufficient
2. reason to turn away from the history of the “British” Bulldog Breed Standard within New Zealand connected to the UK.
3. b. Further as stated in Kathy Brown’s submission given the many regulatory changes to the detriment of brachycephalic breeds happening in FCI countries why would we support a change to an FCI standard? The rationale for such a change is not well enough explained and greater consultation on whether change should occur should be done in focus groups or interviews with clubs and breeders in New Zealand.
4. c. While the UK standard was amended in 2011 (**2011 UK Standard**), it was not supported by the UK Bulldog Clubs or Bulldog Council. Given the perception that the purpose of the changes was a response to negative commentary, the 2011 UK Standard has done nothing to appease the push by animal activists to undermine the British Bulldog in the UK, nor the pedigree dog for that matter. It will not stop it here. The Auckland Bulldog Club believe that DogsNZ should be backing our breeders and clubs and pushing back at the excessive and divisive accusations and nature of animal rights groups who are using scaremongering and negative attacks.
5. As other submissions have noted -all the DogsNZ Proposal will do is allow DogsNZ to say they have responded to the negativity. This is not a sufficient reason to approve the DogsNZ Proposal and change the NZ Standard. It is not a sensible or intelligent response either. We believe that education and the examination of data should be the base of change and not based on ignorance.
6. d. Further an attempt to bring the 2011 UK Standard into Australia was strongly opposed and prevented by the Australian Bulldog Clubs. Those Clubs support the NZ Clubs in their opposition here.
7. e. The NZ Clubs and members support the views of their fellow UK and Australian Bulldog Clubs and oppose the change of the NZ British Bulldog Breed Standard to the 2011 UK Standard. Preferring the retention of the current NZ British Bulldog Standard which reflects the UK British Bulldog Standard pre-dating the 2011 changes.
8. f. Finally, as identified in Frank Muncey’s submission the changes were they to be implemented will have a significant effect on the conformation of the British bulldog in contrast to its original purpose. This submission was the subject of significant written support by members and as stated above is supported by the Taskforce. It is our belief that greater use of consultation and dialogue will do more for breed health than regulation.

The Auckland Bulldog Club with the other Clubs remain focused on a range of activities including their Health Schemes, education and advocacy. As with the UK where health testing has been provided by the UK Bulldog Council for many years we consider that this emphasis will bring further improvement in NZ British and French Bulldogs for generations to come as breeders make better informed decisions, more so then an arbitrary change to the breed standard. We note there has been considerable take up of the Health Schemes here since they started.

We understand that in discussions with Trademe and insurance companies these groups acknowledged that they too recognize that a package of changes is necessary with emphasis on health and education of both breeders and the public. They acknowledged that the Clubs have a voice and role to lead this work for their members, directly involved and with a vested interest in improvement of the health and perception for the British and French Bulldogs. The Auckland Bulldog Club takes this role seriously and is working with the other clubs and the Taskforce to achieve positive change.

The Auckland Bulldog Club along with the other Clubs and Taskforce also mindful of the need for DogNZ requirements including the Breed Standards to be seen to be part of breed health and improvement.

Earlier this year the Taskforce put forward proposed changes to the French Bulldog Breed Standard. Those changes were not supported because they did not reflect the FCI (as the country of origin for the NZ French Bulldog) or other international standards. The offer was made by DogsNZ for Clubs representatives to meet with the Breed Standard Committee to discuss options other than amendment of the French Bulldog Breed Standard to enact mechanisms to meet the concerns and changes needed to ensure that breeder, judge and public alike understand what is required for a French Bulldog compliant with the breed standard. The Clubs accepted that offer of engagement.

The Auckland Bulldog Club with the other clubs propose that rather than making the changes proposed, DogsNZ do the same with the perception of issues with the NZ British Bulldog Standard and that the Clubs work with the Breed Standards Committee to consider options both within the current Dogs NZ regulations and overseas options such as addendums to provide further clarification and education. Those changes could then be consulted and discussed with members and form part of the package of work the Clubs are working on for the breed.

**Conclusion**

We strongly ask that DogsNZ listen to the views of the Clubs and their members and not change the British Bulldog Standard. Rather we propose that DogsNZ support the Clubs in their work and agree to their engagement with the Breed Standards Committee. This support would reflect the statements of the DogsNZ president and the Executive Council members who attended the meeting with the Southern Bulldog Club last year that DogsNZ would support the clubs in their work. Work that it was acknowledged that they would lead. We ask that DogsNz work actively with the clubs and taskforce to promote health and not alter the standard as you have proposed.

If you have any queries or comments please contact us.

Yours sincerely



Dr Sarah Baker

Secretary

Auckland Bulldog Club