

PROPOSAL FOR THE RECOGNITION OF THREE AUSTRALIAN-DEVELOPED BREEDS

Submitted by Dogs Queensland

For Consideration by Dogs Australia

Early 2026

Supporting Documentation:

- **Appendix 1 – Compliance Table**
 - **Appendix 2 – Breed Standard** - Australian Cobberdog
 - **Appendix 3 – Breed Standard** - Hartwell Retriever (formerly Labradoodle)
 - **Appendix 4 – Breed Standard** - Dickens Retriever (formerly Groodle)
-

1. Executive Summary

Dogs Queensland submits this proposal requesting that Dogs Australia evaluate three Australian-developed breeds for progression through the national recognition pathway. These breeds, developed over multiple generations for family, therapy, and assistance roles, now demonstrate sufficient structure, health oversight, and breed stability to warrant formal consideration under the Dogs Australia Regulations.

The breeds included in this submission are:

- **Australian Cobberdog** (unchanged name) – recommended for **Main Register** eligibility (F5+)
- **Hartwell Retriever** (currently known publicly as the Labradoodle) – recommended for **Main Register** eligibility (F5+)
- **Dickens Retriever** (currently known publicly as the Groodle) – recommended for entry to the **Breed Under Development Register**, with a structured pathway to the Main Register

All three breeds have established, multi-generational breeding populations, mandatory health screening programs, and parent breed organisations supporting the ongoing development, transparency, and welfare standards expected within the Dogs Australia framework.

2. Background and Rationale

Australia has a strong history of contributing to canine development through welfare-driven, purpose-bred innovation. The three breeds proposed here have evolved beyond initial crossbred origins and now exhibit consistent type, predictable temperament, and documented multigenerational pedigrees.

Globally, these dogs are increasingly recognised for their role in therapy, assistance, and family companion settings, reflecting modern community needs for stable, trainable, low-shedding dogs.

Recognising these breeds through a regulated national pathway provides Dogs Australia with:

- **A welfare-first approach** to reducing unregulated breeding
- **Visibility and oversight** of fast-growing Australian-developed populations
- **Improved genetic accountability and transparency**
- **Enhanced organisational relevance** at a time of declining membership and shifting public preferences
- **Preservation of Australian breed development** within a structured, ethical framework

This approach mirrors the historical development of many existing purebred breeds, including the Dobermann, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Bullmastiff, and Irish Wolfhound, all of which originated from planned foundational crossbreeding prior to achieving recognised breed status.

3. Compliance with Dogs Australia Regulations (Section 10.2)

Below is a summarised compliance matrix, followed by detailed sections for each breed.

10.2.1 – Unique Breed Name

- Australian Cobberdog: ✓ Complies
- Hartwell Retriever (formerly Labradoodle): ✓ Complies under new name
- Dickens Retriever (formerly Groodle): ✓ Complies under new name

10.2.2 – Parent Breed Club

Each breed is represented by a national organisation covering all of Australia. ✓

- Australian Cobberdog: ✓ Complies
- Hartwell Retriever (formerly Labradoodle): ✓ Complies under new name
- Dickens Retriever (formerly Groodle): ✓ Complies under new name

10.2.3 – Stud Book Register (15 years)

- Australian Cobberdog: ✓
- Hartwell Retriever: ✓
- Dickens Retriever: ✗ Not yet 15 years – proposal includes an approved transitional pathway

10.2.4 – Breed Standard

All three breeds have a documented Breed Standard. ✓

10.2.5 – Population, Pedigree & Generational Requirements

- Australian Cobberdog: ✓
- Hartwell Retriever: ✓
- Dickens Retriever: ✓ for Breed Under Development pathway; not yet eligible for Main Register

Full compliance tables for each breed will be included in the appendices.

4. Detailed Breed Information Sections

A. Australian Cobberdog

Parent Club: Australian Cobberdog Society Inc. (ABN 679 291 975)

Website: <https://www.australiancobberdogsociety.com/>

Established Studbook: Operational since 2012; 3,300+ traceable dogs with pedigrees and health data over 9+ generations with over 500 entire dogs at the G1 (F5) level (Australia wide)

Generational Status: Structured G1–G3 equivalent to F5–F8

Purpose: Therapy, assistance, emotional support and family companion

Breed Standard: Completed in Dogs Australia format (*Appendix 2*)

Mandatory Health Testing:

The Australian Cobberdog Society (ACS) maintains comprehensive pedigree and health records for all registered dogs

- Hip & elbow scoring
- Full DNA profile
- Cardiac screening

Other Health Testing Programs and Breeding approval conditions:

- Ophthalmic (eye) and patellar evaluations are also performed on many breeding dogs within the ACS program; while not yet mandatory, these assessments are strongly encouraged and are expected to become formal requirements as the breed progresses.
 - Breeding approval is contingent upon meeting these standards, which include:
 - **Hip and elbow scores** within the Society's approved range for breeding. OFA Excellent/Good/Fair and equivalent.
 - **Cardiac screening** clear of abnormal findings.
 - **DNA results** confirming all breeding dogs are clear of testable inherited diseases, or appropriately paired to avoid producing affected offspring.
 - **Coefficient of Inbreeding (COI):** Prior to any mating, a projected pedigree COI must fall within ACS-approved parameters to maintain genetic diversity.
-

- **Generation Registry Criteria:** All litters recorded within the ACS G1–G3 Generation Registry must be produced from health-tested parents whose COI and test results meet ACS thresholds.

Registry Recommendation: Main Register (F5+)

The Cobberdog is the most developed and genetically stabilised of the three breeds, with well-documented pedigree integrity, a health-first breeding framework, and national/international consistency.

B. Hartwell Retriever (formerly Labradoodle)

Parent Club: Australian Labradoodle Association (ABN 921 341 072)

Website: <https://australianlabradoodleassoc.org.au/>

Studbook: Established 1998, maintained via ZooEasy; 650+ entire dogs (Australia wide)

Generational Status: F5 and above

Purpose: Family and therapy companion; stable, low-shedding coat types

Name Reasoning: “Hartwell Retriever” signifies a dog whose steady, intuitive temperament helps make the ‘heart well,’ reflecting the breed’s long history in therapy and assistance roles while aligning fully with Dogs Australia naming requirements.

Breed Standard: Completed in Dogs Australia format (*Appendix 3*)

Mandatory Health Testing:

- Hip & elbow scoring
- Full DNA profile including mandatory testing for PRAprcd, DM, EIC and NEEN from Orivet

Other Health Testing Programs and Breeding approval conditions:

- Breeders must submit **Hip and Elbow Testing** which falls within the ALA’s acceptable limits from at least one of the following and following the standard submission requirements. This has been required since circa 2003
 - CHEDS- hips and elbows read by ANKC accredited radiologists (less than 15 in total for hips, only 0 acceptable for elbows)
 - Pennhip- optional -submitted to ANTECH- score of .60 or less on either hip
 - OFA- hips and Elbows- read by OFA- excellent or good preliminaries, fair, excellent or good finals. Elbow scores of normal accepted.
- Breeders must submit a **full breed profile** for each dog upgraded for breeding purposes including mandatory testing for PRAprcd, DM, EIC and NEEN from Orivet. This was compulsory from 2007 since DNA testing became available.
- All health testing results are stored on ZooEasy which is the ALA’s pedigree and health registry managed by a registrar

Registry Recommendation: Main Register (F5+)

The Hartwell Retriever meets all structural and generational requirements for Main Register entry and represents a breed with more than 25 years of documented development.

C. Dickens Retriever (formerly Groodle)

Parent Club: National Groodle Association Incorporated

Website: <https://nationalgroodleassociation.com/>

Studbook Status: Parent club established 2022; individual breeder registries documenting up to 6 generations (Australia wide)

Generational Population: Approximately 80 dogs F5+

Purpose: Family, therapy and assistance functions

Name Reasoning: “Dickens Retriever” reflects a breed defined by warmth, connection, and family companionship, drawing on both symbolic heritage and functional temperament, while fully meeting Dogs Australia naming requirements for a unique, non-hybrid breed identity.

Breed Standard: Completed in Dogs Australia format (*Appendix 4*)

Mandatory Health Testing:

- Hip & elbow scoring (or PennHIP)
- Full DNA profile including known hereditary conditions

Other Health Testing Programs and Breeding approval conditions:

Whilst not mandatory the Association is working towards the inclusion of the following health testing requirements:

- Eye Examination by a qualified veterinary ophthalmologist
- Cardiac Examination

Testing is conducted through accredited veterinary specialists and recognised, NATA-approved (or international equivalent) DNA laboratories.

Registry Recommendation: Breed Under Development, transitioning to Main Register once centralised studbook and population thresholds are met.

This approach ensures strong oversight while supporting a modern Australian breed through early stabilisation.

5. Proposed Registration Pathways

Australian Cobberdog

→ Eligible for **Main Register** immediately for F5+ dogs with DNA parent verification.

Hartwell Retriever

→ Eligible for **Main Register** immediately for F5+ dogs with DNA parent verification.

Dickens Retriever

→ Entry to **Breed Under Development Register**

→ Movement to **Main Register** contingent on studbook maturity, population growth, and ≥F5 consistency.

6. Governance, Welfare and Health Oversight

All three breeds commit to:

- Mandatory DNA profiling and parentage verification
- Hip & elbow scoring for all breeding animals
- Adherence to the Dogs Australia Member Body Code of Ethics

This aligns all three breeds with contemporary welfare expectations and strengthens Dogs Australia's leadership in responsible breed stewardship.

7. Strategic Benefits for Dogs Australia

Recognising these breeds under Dogs Australia:

- Strengthens national welfare outcomes by regulating large existing populations
 - Reduces unregistered, unregulated breeding activity
 - Responds to community demand for stable, purpose-bred companions
 - Increases membership and organisational sustainability
 - Positions Dogs Australia as a global leader in ethical breed development
 - Celebrates Australian innovation in canine breeding
-

8. Requirements for these breeds to be transferred to the Dogs Australia Main Register

The following process will be utilised to transfer eligible dogs to the Dogs Australia Main Register. (This is the current process used for the Murray River Retriever).

1. Must provide original pedigree from the nominated Parent Club
 2. Must Provide letter from nominated Parent Club approving the transfer of the dog to the Dogs Australia main register
 3. Owner/s must be a financial member of a Dogs Australia State or Territory Member Body
 4. Transfer between registers fee must be paid
 5. Dog will keep the registration name and number that it holds with the Parent Club
 6. On application by the owner/s, a dog that is currently on a Dogs Australia Sporting Register will be transferred to the Dogs Australia Main Register if all other conditions of Mains registration is met.
-

9. Closing Statement

Dogs Queensland submits that the Australian Cobberdog, Hartwell Retriever, and Dickens Retriever meet the requirements—and strategic intent—of Section 10.2 of the Dogs Australia Regulations.

By progressing these breeds through the Dogs Australia recognition pathway, the organisation has an opportunity to improve welfare oversight, enhance genetic transparency, and future-proof its relevance within the modern Australian dog community.

Dogs Queensland remains available to provide any further information, documentation, or clarification required.