

ABN 15 211 513 464

CLAIRE WADE
*Professor*Room 301
RMC GUNN B19
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 9351 8097
Email: claire.wade@sydney.edu.au
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

**COMMENCING IMPLEMENTATION OF A GENETIC EVALUATION SYSTEM
FOR LIVESTOCK WORKING DOGS
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study looking to improve the selection process of livestock working dogs to better suit the needs of the farmer and working dog breeding community.

The contribution of stock working dogs to the rural economy is significant but poorly understood. While figures regarding the size of Australia's working dog population are available, these are only estimates. For example, based on Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics data, the 'Contribution of the Pet Care Industry to the Australian Economy' report compiled by the Australian Companion Animal Council assumed that every farm with sheep has two working dogs; concluding from this that there were over 83,000 dogs working on Australian farms in 2005.

The breeding and training of successful farm dogs is a complex enterprise, not least because they are selected for at least two different contexts: station work and trials. Behavioural attributes have considerable impact on the success of young dogs in the training program; the length of the dog's working life and whether it is ultimately chosen as a breeding animal. Similarly, health considerations have profound economic impact on the individual dog's working life. With assistance from Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and the Working Kelpie Council of Australia (WKCA), this project will, for the first time, measure and record both behavioural and health attributes in farm dogs. Modern canine genomic technologies will allow us to identify genetic markers that are predictive of working dog trainability and success in dogs. This will save money by increasing the aptitude of dogs entering training and assessment programs.

This project will measure and record behavioural attributes in farm dogs.

This data will be used in combination with modern canine genomic technologies to allow us to identify genetic markers that are predictive of working dog trainability and success in dogs.

This technology has the potential to save money by increasing the aptitude of dogs entering training and assessment programs.

Outcome Goals:

For breeders:

Results of the study should assist in identifying potential breeding matches to allow outcrossing without losing the working attributes you value.

For working dog buyers:

Assist purchasers in evaluating and sourcing the right dog for the job they have.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By participating in this study through filling out the web-based form you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

Professor Claire Wade BSc (Hons) PhD, UNSW GCertEd UQ, *Chair of Computational Biology and Animal Genetics, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Member of Sydney Institute of Agriculture*, The University of Sydney.

This study is being funded by the Working Kelpie Council and Agrifutures Australia.

Financial disclosure: We foresee that data collected through this mechanism will be available to assist livestock dog breeders and handlers for many years. In order for this to be possible, it is likely that we will ask the working dog organisations to pay a nominal fee to enable the data collection and processing to continue in the future.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

You will be asked to fill out a web-based form that asks about the working attributes of dogs that you own.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

The study will take about 15 minutes of your time but may take a little longer if you have more than one dog.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

Participation will be sought from owners and handlers of livestock herding dogs. The participants should be older than 16 years. People from all racial and cultural backgrounds are welcome to participate.

(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney or Working Kelpie Council.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by emailing Professor Claire Wade, claire.wade@sydney.edu.au

Submitting your completed questionnaire is an indication of your consent to participate in the study. You can withdraw your responses if you change your mind about having them included in the study, up to the point that we have analysed and published the results.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Information provided by you will be used to ascertain the genetic value of related working dogs. This may influence dog buyer behaviour. If you are a dog breeder, it may increase or decrease your client load depending on the perceived value of your dogs to people seeing the results of the work.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

The data that you contribute will help us to better understand the science of canine working behaviour and will help working dog breeders to better select breeding stock.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

Your name and postcode will be stored on a computer that has secure access. They will enable the database to recognise you when you return to add dogs or to correct the data for your animals. If you add your email address we may use this to seek clarification as to your responses if necessary. Submission of an email address is voluntary and we will never use this for any purpose unrelated to this study.

Data relating to animals that is collected in this study may be shared in a de-identified form with other researchers or be used in future projects that help us to understand the behaviour and ability of working dogs.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(11) What if I would like further information about the study?

If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Professor Claire Wade, School of Life and Environmental Sciences. Email: claire.wade@sydney.edu.au. Phone: +61 2 9351 8097

(12) Will I be told the results of the study?

General results that do not identify participants may be published as scientific research articles and papers. We will also provide regular lay summary updates to stakeholders and on the website itself. In the meantime you are welcome to contact us for feedback.

(13) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney **2018/182**. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)