



Steve Austin
Canine Behaviour and Training

A division of Glentoe Pty Ltd
ABN 64 003 896 142

29 June 2020

Dr Sean Turner
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Enquiry into an Australian Standard for the training and use of privately contracted security and detection dogs.

Dear Dr Turner

With over 30 years experience in detection dog training, I have established a highly respected and recognised name throughout Australia and overseas for my knowledge and expertise in training detection canines.

For over 10 years, I have trained handlers for the previously named Australian Quarantine Service where I was the National Canine Trainer and have continued to train canines and handlers for many organisations and applications in Australia and overseas. The list of target odours includes biosecurity, narcotics, explosive, endangered species, feral animals, truffles, noxious and endangered plants, effluent and water and I am also currently training dogs for tracking poachers of rhinoceros horn and elephant ivory to work in Zimbabwe.

The training for each conservation dog is specific for the work it will be doing and therefore the training and performance indicators for each of those areas vary immensely. The training becomes quite stringent for all target odours in particularly for the detection of endangered species.

The standards and procedures for conservation detections canines, vary immensely from the current training methodology for the training of narcotics, and explosives detection canines. I have travelled widely around the world and visited and worked for many organisations and I have found Australia's procedures for training narcotics and explosive detection canines are very outdated and many organisations in this country have not kept up with the modern detection methods for training in these areas.

Steve Austin CPDT-KA
Director. Canine Training and Behaviour
Specialising in K9's for Conservation and all forms of K9 Detection

The scientific methods that I use for training conservation detection canines today, are formulated from my experiences and information I have obtained from all over the world.

Detection canine training includes an intensive structure and obedience training, target odour imprinting, non-target extinguishment training and aversion to risks such as snakes and poison baits. This is imperative to ensure the safety of the canine, and both the target and non-target species.

Several years ago, I was becoming aware of an increase of pet owners who wanted to train their pet dog or working dog such as a pig dog, to become a conservation detection canine to locate species such as Koalas and endangered species. This was most concerning because of the high risk of harming or stressing species as a result of a poorly trained canine and handler.

Simultaneously, there was an increase of enquiries from government departments, ecologists and other businesses to use a detection canine. However, many did not know what breed of dog would be best to use, what training the dog should have, or what skills the handler should demonstrate.

A conservation detection canine must be selected and trained for the work it will undertake and be validation tested prior to working in the field.

It became apparent to me for the necessity for a formal standard of performance and a minimum skills standard for conservation detection dogs. After many discussions with other canine detection teams, a platform for assessment and certification was created.

The Canine Detection Certification of Australia (Conservation) is where dog handlers can be assessed and then qualify to their client that their dog has the necessary skills for their project and that it had been trained at a high level to ensure it would not harm or stress species.

Equally it would provide assurity to the users of conservation detection canines with a simple method of qualifying their suitability for a project.

It is irrelevant who trains the canines to be assessed, as long as the canine can pass the specific practical skills and anyone wanting to work in the conservation canine detection industry can have their dog assessed.

To achieve the high standard for the Canine Conservation Detection Certification assessment, the canine must be trained in obedience, and the handler must also be knowledgeable in canine health and welfare maintenance, detection signals and motivation training techniques, odour characteristics, canine behaviour and problem solving.

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Equally so, the handler must be deemed fit and suited to the terrain where the canine will be performing. The handler must be validated by the assessor whilst handling the conservation detection canine prior to approval to work in the field.

In some environments a conservation detection canine would risk injury if it was to have the same standards that applies to another form of detection canines.

Whilst there are many ways a canine can be trained to indicate the presence of a target odour its training must be specifically aligned to the target odour to ensure it is not creating a danger to itself, the species or the surrounds.

One overall standard for canines in the detection and security fields will endanger lives of canines and species and has the propensity to create a litigious environment and I will therefore not support it.

I am available for further discussions.

Yours sincerely
Steve Austin CPDT-KA
Director
Canine Training and Behaviour



STEVE AUSTIN
CANINE TRAINING AND BEHAVIOUR

Board Member
Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT)



Certification Council for
Professional Dog Trainers

Attachment: Steve Austin Resume

Steve Austin **CPDT-KA**
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Steve Austin

Canine Training and Behaviour



Steve Austin. CPDT-KA

Steve Austin has been a leading and charismatic figure in the professional canine industry for over two decades.

Steve has recently earned a highly recognised certification through the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), joining over 2000 certificants worldwide.



In 2019 Steve was appointed as Board Member of the CCPDT.

Until the creation of the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers in 2001, there was no true certification process for canine professionals. Many schools teach dog trainers and offer certifications for their specific programs. These certificates, therefore, reflect the teachings and quality of a specific school. Other organisations offer take-home tests for

“certification”. Those canine professionals are not monitored to ensure they are completing the test without any assistance or collaboration, nor is the testing process standardised.

The CCPDT however monitors certificate holders regularly to ensure their skills and knowledge is maintained at superior world standards.

Steve earned this unique world recognition by passing an exam and now earns the title Certified Professional Dog Trainer – Knowledge Assessed. (CPDT-KA)

Renowned worldwide, he’s lectured at American Law Enforcement Agencies, trained Australia’s first truffle detector dog, taught animal training at Sydney’s Taronga Zoo and Mount Everest Kennel Club in Katmandu.

His greatest achievement to date was his work on Macquarie Island. It was a huge task! Steve trained handlers and canines for the scent detection of feral animals of 22 square kilometers of Macquarie Island to achieve the status of the island being feral animal free.

There is no one in Australia with the same high level of expertise, professionalism and determination to succeed. He is results orientated and this has been proven in many situations over the last 30 years, which has been demonstrated whilst working for government and professional organisations. Steve’s services and consultant services are highly utilised by both Australian and International government and professional organisations.

Formal Qualifications

- CPDT-KA. Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (worldwide)
- Certifying Official Californian Narcotic and Explosive Detector Dog Association
- Gun License NSW Class A and B
- Firearm OEH Level 1 and 2 Training
- Licensed Temperament Assessor NSW Dept of Local Government - License Number 0007
- Certificate IV in Workplace Learning and Assessment
- Certificate III Dog Behaviour and Training NDTF
- Certificate IV in Companion Animal Services
- Licensed Judge under the Australian National Kennel Control (ANKC) in both Field Trials and Gundog Obedience Tests.

Recent and Ongoing Clients

A large proportion of Steve's work is in the areas of conservation for the protection of endangered species and detection and eradication of feral animals. His work with Government departments dominates and has earned him a reputation of success and reputation. Steve also works with various organisations in Australia and overseas for the detection of narcotics, explosives, agricultural products and wildlife trafficking.

Lord Howe Island, World Heritage Listed Island

In 2017 the Lord Howe Island Board announced their intention to eradicate introduced rodents, which have been causing a huge environment impact to the island. Stage one commenced with Steve setting up of a new biosecurity department utilising two detection dogs to monitor incoming passengers, baggage and freight for fruit, meat and plant as well as rodent. Steve continues to conduct this program to ensure the success of the long-term project.

The Plains-wanderer Conservation Detection Dog Project with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

The Plains-wanderer is a threatened ground-nesting grassland bird, whose numbers are rapidly declining with the risk of extinction imminent. Steve has trained a detection dog to locate this critically endangered bird for the purpose improve the accuracy and efficiency of existing monitoring programs, locate the birds to bring into a captive breeding program and efficiently locate nests and breeding birds.

Turtles Forever Project with various NSW Government Departments

Steve is on the Steering Committee and the Head Trainer for project which commenced in 2016 has developed processes to find and protect the declining population of the vulnerable Bells Turtle. Utilising a detection dog, the efficiency to locate eggs is greatly enhanced to ensure protection from predators.

The Macquarie Island Project for Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service

Eradicating the entire 22 square kilometers of World Heritage-listed Macquarie Island from pests by canine detection is undoubtedly the largest project ever undertaken by Steve Austin. This enormous project that took over a period of 7 years, required Steve to train 7 of the 12 canines for feral animal detection for the entire island. In April 2014 the Tasmanian government declared the island to be pest free. In September 2014, Australia Post released a series of stamps dedicated to the "Dogs Who Saved Macquarie Island".

Japanese Government

Steve's services to the Department of Agriculture in Japan is ongoing and includes the provision and training of canines and handlers for quarantine detection services. Progress and expansion of this program is ongoing. As required, the Japanese Government sends new handlers to Sydney for one on one training with Steve and returning to start work handling Steve's dogs in Tokyo.

Moreton Island, Brisbane

Noxious Cane Toads are not welcome on Moreton Island so Steve deploys his dogs on a regular basis to scour the island to determine if any Cane Toads have hitched a ride with a 4-wheel-drive vehicle. Moreton Island is the third largest sand island in the world comprising 170 square kilometres with lagoons, sand dunes, abundant wildflowers and pristine beaches. Whilst on the island Steve also conducts a demonstration of the dog's skills for the resort's guests.

NSW and ACT Corrective Services as well as New Zealand

Steve regularly conducts accreditation processes for Corrective Services in Australia and New Zealand. This training was conducted for handlers and canines for detection of narcotics and explosives.

Australian Army

Over the years Steve has trained and supplied explosives dogs to the Australian Army.

Smoky Mouse Project - Office of Environment & Heritage, NSW

The Smoky Mouse program is part of the NSW's Government Saving Our Species initiative. Steve trained two dogs as a double barrel impact with Dottie tracking feral cats and Maggie locating the Smoky Mouse. Both are working in the field with outstanding success.

Eastern Bristlebird Recovery - Department of Environment & Heritage, NSW

This canine and canine handler project has just been completed and required Steve to train one canine for use by four handlers, for the recovery of the Eastern Bristlebird. Handler training was conducted initially at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and then in the field in remote areas around on the NSW and Queensland borders. This is an ongoing project with Penny the detection dog continuing to find the birds in new areas.

Department of Primary Industry, Victoria – Noxious Weed Detection

The Orange Hawkweed is a highly invasive plant costing loss of agricultural production and 1.8 billion dollars in weed control and it is almost impossible to identify when it isn't in flower and even more difficult when it is covered with snow. Steve trained two dogs to work with handlers from The NSW Office of Environment & Heritage and the Department of Primary Industry, Victoria to work in the Snowy Mountains at Kosciusko National Park. This project has been a huge success with the departments ordering more dogs for this important work.

Recently Steve was requested to train another dog for the detection of another noxious weed being Alligator Weed. This project has commenced and is also proving successful.

Biosecurity, Dept of Primary Industries, Tasmania

Steve has worked closely with Biosecurity for many years to provide and train 15 detection dogs for the Hobart airport, as training of 15 handlers. In addition Steve, has provided 6 detection dogs and trained handlers specifically for fox detection.

Biosecurity, Dept of Primary Industries, Perth, WA

There have been multiple projects with the West Australian Biosecurity Department with the most recent being provision and training of two new detection dogs for the Perth airport and training handlers in 2016. Previously we have provided 6 biosecurity dogs and other detection dogs for both State and Federal Departments. And we have just received a request to provide another biosecurity dog for the early part of 2017.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

Detection of feral cat and fox.

Cheetah Conservation Fund, Namibia, Africa

Training dogs for scent detection to find cheetah scat for vital genetic research.

Phillip Island Nature Reserve, Victoria

Training of canines and handlers for fox scat detection and fox tracking and ongoing accreditation of new handlers and canines.

Port Macquarie and Hastings Council.

The Koala protection program is a pilot project to teach community dog owners to ignore Koalas to prevent Koala attacks. This 12 month project has never been done in Australia and currently there are two other government departments keen to also roll this out.

Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula, South Australia.

For the last two consecutive years, Steve has travelled to Venus Bay Conservation Park to conduct detection for feral cat for the purposes of Bilby protection.

Taronga Zoo and Zoos Victoria. Canine services for the detection and eradication of feral animals.

Department of Primary Industries and Water, Resource Management, Tasmania

The conservation Fox eradication program, Tasmania commenced in 2007 and is still current.

NSW Parks and Wildlife

Detection of endangered bird species and detection of feral animals such as fox and feral cat. Training dogs to detect cane toads, which are having a devastating impact on native fauna.

Training and Assessment Courses

Austins Dog Training Education

Together with his wife Vicki, Steve has launched online and practical training for many aspects of dog training. The courses feature self-paced online training, webinars and practical hands on days of training. www.austinsdogtrainingeducation.com.au

TAFE Course - Statement of Attainment in Canine Training and Behaviour

This TAFE course commenced in 2011 and is conducted 3 times per year. It is a standalone qualification in canine training is conducted at TAFE College, Ultimo, NSW. It consists of four units that can be applied for attaining the Certificate IV in Companion Animal Care and Management certification. This course provides a broad spectrum of education for handlers to understand canine behavior to result in a greater understanding of the relationship between human and canine, as well as various strategies to enhance it.

TAFE Course – Dangerous Dog Handling

Every year a minimum of two courses are held at TAFE Ultimo for instruction on handling and assessing dangerous dogs. This is attended by a variety of people who are required to engage or come across dogs in their work, eg: postal workers, vet nurses, council workers.

New Caledonia Agricultural Detector Dog Unit.

For a period of 10 years, Vicki and Steve Austin founded and expanded this unit and continues to perform annual validation tests and update training

Various police forces in the USA.

Various levels of training are conducted for handlers and canines for detection of narcotics and explosives. As a result, Steve is regularly invited to present at the Californian Narcotics Canine Association conferences.

Japanese Government

Steve has conducted four training courses for the Department of Agriculture in Japan to date. These courses involved the training of the canine and the training of the handler. It also required Steve to perform the induction of the canine teams into various airports and mail centres throughout Japan.

Various Councils through Australia

Dangerous Dogs Assessment and Handling workshops are conducted around Australia and targets individuals who need to interact with dogs during the execution of their work duties, such as postal works, meter readers, veterinary staff, kennel hands, police officers, rangers, ambulance offers, dog trainers.

Trainer Work

Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS)

1996 – 2006 National Trainer, Detector Dog Unit – Federal Government of Australia.

For ten years, Steve single-handedly provided the Australian Government with teams of handlers and dogs to protect Australia's agriculture. The teams were installed in all major airports and inspected courier and Australia Post items.

Steve has trained over 150 teams with a success rate of 98%.

Steve was involved in all aspects of team training from selection of dogs and instructing handlers (theory and practice) to ensuring teams were fully operational in their working environments.

International Training – 32 countries

Steve has been judging and validating handlers for the International Drug Searching Championship in Europe on 3 occasions and was been invited back to judge at the 2015 Championships in Czech Republic.

Trainer, Western Australian Quarantine Inspection Service, Detector Dog Unit

Steve has provided the Western Australian Quarantine Inspection Service training of handler/dog teams.

Trainer, Japanese Agricultural Detector Dog Unit

Trained the original two teams of handlers/dogs for the Japanese Government.

Initiated a process to ensure language barriers were not obstacles to success.

Trainer, New Caledonia Agricultural Detector Dog Unit

Contracted by the French Government of New Caledonia for almost ten years to train its Quarantine Detector Dog Unit.

Steve founded and expanded unit and still performs annual validation tests and update training.

Trainer for Fox Task Force, Tasmania Department of Primary Industries and Water

Successfully trained Labradors to locate fox scat (droppings) as part of initiative to eradicate foxes. Until recently, foxes (not native to Australia) were restricted to the mainland. Consequently, many Australian native animals have been able to flourish in Tasmania while becoming extinct on the mainland.

Lecturer, Presenter and MC Work

Lecturer and Judge, Czech Republic Customs Detector Dog Unit (International event)

Served as judge in 2006, 2007, 2016, 2016 events which brings together 21 countries to compete in canine narcotics and explosives detection.

Lecturer, California Narcotic and Explosive Detector Dog Association

A keynote speaker at the prestigious annual Californian Police Narcotic and Explosive Detector Dog Association which brings together dog trainers from across America and around the world.

Lecturer at GAP conferences: Taronga Zoo and Rockhampton Zoo

2015 and 2016 Guest speaker at the “Animal Training and Conditioning Workshop” conducted in 2015 at Sydney’s Taronga Zoo and in 2016 at the Rockhampton Zoo. This conference is attended by Zoo Keepers and Trainers from all over Australia and New Zealand. Whilst at the conference Steve trained The Colonel, the resident large crocodile, to come when called.

Trainer and presenter, Movie World, Gold Coast, Australia

Presented hugely popular animal show.

Steve was contracted by Warner Bros Movie World to script and train animals for an animal show.

Trainer and presenter, Colleges throughout Japan

Guest lecturer at Japanese colleges and also trains large student groups from Japan at his facilities in Australia.

Presenter at the Hobart Weed Conference, 2015

Validator for NSW Police Detector Dog Unit (narcotics and explosives)

Australia Zoo

Demonstrations of detection dogs and training their dingo’s

Key Contractors

Department of Environment and Heritage, NSW
Department of Primary Industry Invasive Species, Victoria
Department of Parks and Wildlife, NSW
Department of Parks and Wildlife, TAS
Department of Parks and Wildlife, NT
Department of Parks and Wildlife, SA
Phillip Island Nature Reserve, NSW
Canine Association of USA
Department of Local Government, NSW, Australia
TAFE NSW, Sydney Institute
NSW Fire and Rescue and NSW State Emergency Services
Australian National Kennel Control (ANKC)
Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS)
Western Australian & Tasmanian Quarantine Inspection Service
Japanese Agricultural Detector Dog Unit
New Caledonia Agricultural Detector Dog Unit
Tasmania Department of Primary Industries and Water
Czech Republic Customs Detector Dog Unit
California Narcotic and Explosive Detector Dog Association
Sydney's Taronga Park Zoo
Movie World, Gold Coast, Australia
NSW Police Detector Dog Unit
Corrective Services in several Australian states
Moreton Island Tangalooma Resort
Multiple Local Councils and Shires around Australia

Achievements

National Trainer, Australian Quarantine Inspection Service

- Appointed 1996 to 2006.
- Training in excess of 50 dogs and handlers

State Trainer, Quarantine Inspection Services, Tasmania

- Appointed 1996 to current.

Certified Official of the California Narcotics (and Explosives) Canine Association of USA

Steve is one of only two non-Americans to have received certification to validate scent detector dogs for the US government.

The certification recognises Steve's advanced expertise, which he shares regularly with the Californian Narcotics and Explosives Canine Association of United State of America. This certification is recognized around the world.

Approved Temperament Assessor (TA0007) for the Department of Local Government, NSW, Australia

Consultant to NSW's "Dangerous Dog" legislation, which passed in 2005.

Nominated as a state approved Dog Temperament Assessor.

NSW Fire and Rescue and NSW State Emergency Services.

- Steve was the Director of Canine Training and Lead Coordinator of the volunteer search and rescue canine teams.

Awarded two Australian Field Trial Champions

Steve trained winning dogs for Field Trials, involving following the handler's directions for the search of game; flushing the game; remaining steady to gun; and finally locating and retrieving fallen game.

Active in competing and judging Field Trials throughout Australia.

Achieved Australian Obedience Champion (AOC) title of ANKC

The AOC is the highest accolade in Australia, awarded to dogs trained to an advanced level.

Winner of Sydney Royal Dog Obedience Utility Dog section of the prestigious Sydney Royal Agricultural Show.

Media and Press

Steve regularly receives requests to appear on TV shows, conduct interviews for newspapers and magazines.

Some of these include:

Wall Street Journal
Chinese TV Show
Better Homes and Gardens with Dr Harry
The Living Room
ABC Landline
60 Minutes
Channel 7 News
ABC Radio
Insight Program on SBS
National Geographic
Australian Geographic
Outback Magazine
Sunday Telegraph Newspaper
Television commercials and series
Movieworld
Various radio station programs around Australia

Charity Work

Steve is the Director of Defence Community Dogs that provides service and assistance dogs to combat stress and physical and mental illness of soldiers. After development of the program, Steve continues to oversee the growth of this important program.

Each Defence Community Dog is carefully assessed before being accepted into the program and is then trained to the level of 'Advanced Companion Therapy Dog'. Once a dog has reached this advanced level, they are partnered with a suitable veteran. Each dog will remain in the program for at least 6 months. The cost to train and maintain the dog is significant and runs into the thousands of dollars for each dog. The dog is supplied to the veteran at no cost to them.

Steve is regularly invited to present at charity and community days around NSW and also sometimes presents at local high schools for conservation and environmental subjects.