



Breeds with exaggerated features in marketing and at AVA events Policy and Procedure

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Approved On	1 June 2023
Next Review	1 January 2025

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1. Policy Statement

AVA does not include breeds with exaggerated features, or images of these breeds in:

- a. Any form of advertising in print and digital AVA products
- b. Exhibits at AVA conferences and events (either as 'models' or in photographic images)
- c. Any other form of marketing undertaken under the AVA brand

2. Purpose

Certain dog and cat breeds have serious health and welfare problems because they've been bred with exaggerated features, to achieve a particular look. These exaggerated features include brachycephaly (shortened heads), dwarfism (shortened limbs), and excessive skin folds. This policy aims to remove the use of these animals from:

- a. All forms of advertising in print and digital AVA products
- b. Exhibits at AVA conferences and events (either as 'models' or in photographic images)
- c. Any other form of marketing undertaken under the AVA brand
- d. Any images in event presentations of these breeds unless they are being used to raise awareness of the health and welfare issues associated with their exaggerated features.

3. Background

In recent years there has been a rise in the popularity of certain breeds with exaggerated features. The syndromes of concern include:

- **Brachycephaly** – examples in dogs are the Pug, French Bulldog, British Bulldog and Boston Terrier breeds; and in cats, the Persian, Himalayan, Exotic Shorthair, Scottish Fold and Burmese breeds.
- **Dwarfism** – examples in dogs are Corgis, Dachshunds, and Scottish Terriers; and in cats, Munchkin (Napoleon and Muniel breeds).
- **Excessive skin folds** (the best example being the Shar-pei dog breed).

With this rise in popularity, we've seen a parallel increase in the use of these breeds in advertising. Unfortunately, these exaggerated features lead to serious health and welfare problems, which the veterinary community are faced with managing, to try to give these animals a more comfortable life. It is important that advertisers move away from using these breeds, as this drives their popularity without addressing the animal welfare and health implications.

In 2016, the AVA partnered with RSPCA Australia to develop the [Love is Blind](#) campaign which aims to raise awareness of the animal welfare issues associated with particular exaggerated features and encourage breeders to change their breed standards to select for more normal, healthy features.

In keeping with this campaign, the AVA will no longer use certain breeds in marketing associated with the AVA brand.

The only exception to this rule will be advertising which draws attention to health issues associated with a particular breed (eg use of a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel in an advertisement for medication to treat Mitral Valve Disease). These are reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

4. Procedure

The AVA will provide this policy to sponsors, exhibitors and advertisers when they make a booking for an AVA Event sponsorship, exhibition or advertising at an AVA event, AVA publication or member communications.

The AVA will not accept artwork (still or video) that displays images or outlines of animals with exaggerated breed characteristics.

Artwork will be submitted for review and approval a minimum of 2 weeks prior to print deadline or exhibition stand build deadline. The artwork will be reviewed by a veterinary staff member.

Veterinary Staff members:

- Dr Cristy Secombe – Head of Veterinary and Public Affairs
- Dr Meredith Flash – Head of Education
- Dr Melanie Latter – National Manager – Policy and Veterinary Science

If approved, the artwork can proceed with development or will be sent back to the submitter for revision.