# Issues paper: Review of the Dog Control Act 1996

## Consultation feedback form

Thank you for providing feedback on the Issues Paper: Review of the Dog Control Act 1996.

- Please provide responses in the spaces provided (these can be expanded when typing or by dragging the box down). You do not need to answer every question. We welcome feedback on the questions most relevant to your organisation's expertise and experience.
- Where possible, please provide examples, evidence, data or operational experience to support your views.
- You may attach additional pages or supporting documents if you require more space.
- Please return this form to dogs@mcert.govt.nz by 2 November 2026.
- The Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport may use information provided in submissions to inform policy development relating to the review of the Dog Control Act 1996. Submissions are subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and may be released if requested, unless there are grounds for withholding the information under that Act. Please identify any information that you consider commercially sensitive or that should otherwise be treated in confidence.



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# Response form

Please provide your submission details to support our record keeping.

| Submission details | |
|---|---|
| Contact name | Richard Hopkins |
| Position/title | Manager Environmental Standards |
| Organisation | Kāpiti Coast District Council |

# Consultation questions

- Question numbers correspond to the consultation questions contained in the issues paper.
- Page references are provided to assist navigation.
- References to the DCA mean the Dog Control Act 1996.

## Part 1: What should dog control in New Zealand achieve?

| Question 1 | Page 11 |
|---|---|
| Are the following proposed outcomes right for a modern dog control system? What, if anything, should be added, removed or given greater priority?<br>1. Prevent and reduce harm<br>2. Promote responsible dog ownership<br>3. Manage the dog population<br>4. Support shared public spaces<br>5. Improve public understanding | |
| Response | |
| Council agrees with the outcomes listed but would suggest getting number 2 right would facilitates the other outcomes and as such is perhaps the most important priority. | |
| **Question 2** | **Page 12** |
| Are responsibilities appropriately allocated across dog owners, councils, central government and other organisations? If not, what should change? | |
| Response | |
| Council considers it appropriate for local government to retain responsibility for dog control. However, dog owners do not always understand their responsibilities, particularly younger people taking on dog ownership. Council supports introducing a form of licence to own a dog. As noted in the attached letter, responsible dog ownership is inconsistent. | |
| **Question 3** | **Page 12** |
| Which aspects of dog control should be set nationally, and where should councils retain flexibility through local dog control policies and bylaws?<br>You may wish to consider whether there are areas where current variation between districts creates problems. | |

| Response |
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| Fees should be consistent across the country, perhaps within a set range to recognise local differences in cost drivers, particularly for impounding. However, if set nationally, they must be indexed to inflation, or very regularly reviewed. |

## Part 2: Is the current regulatory system fit for purpose?

| **Question 4** | **Page 14** |
| --- | --- |
| What changes would most effectively support responsible ownership and prevent non-compliance or harm before it occurs?<br><br>You may wish to consider barriers to understanding and meeting owner responsibilities, education, training or competency requirements, and how to reach owners who are not engaged with the registration system. | |
| Response | |
| Encouraging more compliance from people by having a good ownership versus bad ownership status with higher fees for bad ownership status. Such a tiered system could be based on compliance history of owners. It would require an updated and current National Dog Database to work effectively. A one off 'new owner' fee may be helpful in testing motivation and responsibility of new owners. | |
| **Question 5** | **Page 15** |
| What changes are needed to address repeated roaming and improve containment where a dog repeatedly escapes or is impounded?<br><br>You may wish to comment on owner accountability measures, containment requirements, intervention powers and barriers to compliance. | |
| Response | |
| Introduce fencing requirements, perhaps in the Building Code, similar to those for swimming pools, to reduce dog roaming, and require mandatory desexing where dogs repeatedly roam. | |
| **Question 6** | **Page 18** |
| What role, if any, should the DCA play in managing unintended breeding and the wider consequences of unwanted dogs? | |
| Response | |
| Strengthen powers under the DCA to seize dogs involved in unintended breeding and mandatory desexing and include powers to remove these dogs where their owners are not registered breeders. | |
| **Question 7** | **Page 19** |
| To what extent do current arrangements hinder the identification of dogs and owners, particularly those who are unregistered? How can they be improved?<br><br>You may wish to comment on registration, microchipping, information accuracy and dogs moving between districts. | |
| Response | |

An effective and current National Dog Register is foundational to the dog control system being effective.

**Question 8** **Page 21**

How should the dog control system identify and manage dogs or owners presenting an elevated risk of harm? sharing of Information across districts. Mandatory GPS and ownership microchipping would support dog and owner identification.

You may wish to comment on owner-classification thresholds, previous incidents, compliance history, and the types of controls that should apply once elevated risk has been identified.

Response

Alerts could be captured on NDD to alert risk or harm associated with a particular dog. This requires solid identification requirements.

**Question 9** **Page 22**

What role, if any, should breed or type play in identifying dogs that present an elevated risk of harm?

You may wish to comment on behaviours or physical characteristics that are associated with specific breeds and the practicality of applying and enforcing classifications before harm has been observed.

Response

The classified dogs register needs review with some further breeds considered for addition, for example, from our experience, Shar Pei and XL Bully should be added to the list of classified by breeds.

**Question 10** **Page 23**

How should objection and appeal processes balance procedural fairness with timely risk management?

Response

As outlined in the attached submission letter, a broader and better graduated enforcement pathway would overcome these issues.

**Question 11** **Page 23**

Which requirements, if any, should remain in force while an objection or decision is under review?

Response

At the very least, that the dog is appropriately contained at the owner's expense. This may include temporary surrender of the dog.

**Question 12** **Page 25**

How could the infringement framework provide proportionate and effective responses to different levels of non-compliance and harm?

You may wish to comment on particular offences, fee levels, deterrence, proportionality and any gaps in the current enforcement pathway.

Response

See comments in attached letter.

| Question 13 | Page 26 |
|---|---|
| What changes are needed to councils' investigation, information-gathering, seizure or impoundment powers so they can identify and respond to emerging risks while still protecting owners' rights? | |
| Response | |
| **See comments in attached letter.** | |

| Question 14 | Page 27 |
|---|---|
| What changes would improve decisions and processes relating to the retention, release or destruction of impounded dogs?<br>You may wish to comment on statutory holding periods, applications for release, appeal rights, whether consistent assessment criteria are necessary, owner interests, public safety, animal welfare and the grounds for destruction. | |
| Response | |
| Consistent assessment of dogs across the country, and that assessment captured in a current National Dog Database. | |

| Question 15 | Page 28 |
|---|---|
| What dog control risks arise from imported dogs and what changes would help manage those risks before and after entry into New Zealand?<br>You may wish to consider breed or type verification, responses to observed aggressive behaviour, the inclusion of additional breeds and information sharing to identify imported dogs after entry. | |
| Response | |
| Mandatory for DIA/MPI to check that the dog's history prior entry to New Zealand, and for them to proactively monitor international breeds assessments. All dogs imported into New Zealand should have a certified statement from the local dog control organisation of the country and locality that it comes from. | |

| Question 16 | Page 30 |
|---|---|
| What changes would improve the credibility, oversight, accessibility and operation of the disability assist dog regime without creating additional access barriers for disabled people?<br>You may wish to comment on statutory versus sector-led standards, verification of certification, identification requirements, monitoring of authorised organisations, arrangements when an organisation is removed, and whether particular issues are more appropriately addressed through the DCA or through wider disability-support, service-delivery or funding settings. | |
| Response | |
| No comments here, we use the same certified places. | |

## Part 3: How can information, capability and system stewardship be improved?

| Question 17 | Page 32 |
|---|---|
| What information is needed to understand dog control activity, risks and outcomes, and how could its quality, consistency, accessibility and sharing be improved? | |
| Response | |
| Within the National Dog Database, a sub-register of recorded noncompliance against repeat offending owners. | |
| **Question 18** | **Page 33** |
| What aspects of the NDD provide the necessary information to support effective dog control administration and policy development? What improvements could be made to the collection and use of the service and information? | |
| Response | |
| NDD has everything relevant for what we need, but it must be kept current with input from all DCAs. | |
| **Question 19** | **Page 33** |
| How can notification of significant dog-related injuries be improved, and what implementation, privacy or workload issues would need to be addressed?<br>You may wish to comment on how notification could function, who would be responsible for notifying and to whom, and how notification could be utilised. | |
| Response | |
| In cases of injury, dog and owner/handler information should be public; victim information should have privacy preserved. Mandatory reporting to Police/local authority of dog bite and injuries. | |
| **Question 20** | **Page 34** |
| Where do information-sharing gaps affect the management of dog-related risks, and how could these gaps be addressed?<br>You may wish to comment on which organisations need information, the purposes for which it is needed, and appropriate privacy safeguards. | |
| Response | |
| Efficient and timely access to the NDD and information needs to be maintained. | |
| **Question 21** | **Page 35** |
| How should councils balance cost recovery, affordability, compliance incentives and the wider public benefits of dog control? | |
| Response | |
| While there is a public interest in being safe from dogs, dogs only roam or behave dangerously due to lapses in owner/handler control. Therefore, the cost of the control and management of dogs | |

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| including through record keeping on the National Database should fall predominantly on dog owners. |
| **Question 22** **Page 35** |
| Are there dog control functions that should be supported through alternative funding or shared services? |
| Response |
| Note comment above for small national levy to fund the National Dog Database. Rates funding of the dog control activity should be minimal. See attached submission letter. |
| **Question 23** **Page 36** |
| What workforce and capability challenges have the greatest impact on dog control outcomes and on councils' ability to enforce the DCA? |
| Response |
| No comment. |
| **Question 24** **Page 37** |
| Are current national stewardship arrangements for dog control effective? If not, what changes would improve coordination, oversight and system performance? |
| Response |
| No comment |
| **Question 25** **Page 38** |
| Which issues identified in this paper should receive the highest priority, and why? What are some necessary transitional provisions to consider?<br>You may also identify any statutory definitions or terminology that create material uncertainty or practical difficulties. |
| Response (you may use the table below) |
| As noted in Question 1, promoting responsible dog ownership is the foundation and most cost-effective element of the rest of the dog control system working. |

Please identify the three issues that should be prioritised for future work and briefly explain why.

| Priority | Issue |
|---|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |

| **Other - Provide any other relevant comments here** |
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