
**Dog policy, bylaw and
regional park access rules 2025**

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

**Regional Organisation
Volume One**

Date published: Monday, 7 April 2025

Sub #	Organisation Name
724	Paws on Tour Ltd
5000	Canine Industry Standards Association NZ
5776	Companion Animals NZ
6364	Animal Justice Party Aotearoa New Zealand
6845	Birds NZ Auckland Regional Branch
6868	Friends of Regional Parks
6890	Blind Vison NZ
6903	Professional Dog Walkers Association
6913	Safe Kids
6950	Safety Collective
6954	SPCA
6970	Dog Friends Auckland
7296	Dogs Out and About



Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#724

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Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Paws on Tour Ltd

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

Do not support

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Other (please explain below)

Tell us why

I am currently employed by a pack walking company that provides a professional service to our clients that has a positive impact on their daily lives and benefits the local community. By providing a safe environment and walking all dogs responsibly and following all bylaws we allow dogs to live happy and healthy lives by being well exercised. Without our service there would be a sharp increase in the number of noise complaints and roaming dogs in Auckland suburbs.

With only 0.7% of all complaints to Animal Management being in regard to multiple dogs in the same incident and no way to ascertain if these complaints are in regard to pack walkers, our industry is currently not a problem and in fact should be seen as a solution to the problem. Reducing the number of dogs able to be walked at any one time will further reduce the number of clients we can service in any one day and risk further increasing the number of dogs roaming and with noise complaints due to lack of exercise and fulfilment in their daily lives. We also believe that by mandating the number of dogs that have to remain on lead can increase the risk of injury for handlers by creating pent up energy within the dogs off lead while other dogs within the pack are able to swim and run around.

Animal Management is currently stretched to the limit with current complaints on roaming dogs, it would not seem prudent to add further workload to this team and take them away from the main problem within Auckland. In fact we believe that this risks increasing the length of time between call outs and further endangering members of the public, to “police” well behaved and under control packs of dogs under the supervision of an industry professional.

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carpark and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Mataitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why



Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#5000

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Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Canine Industry Standards Association NZ

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

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Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

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1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

Do not support

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Other (please explain below)

Tell us why

I am writing on behalf of the Canine Industry Standards Association (CISA) to provide feedback on the proposed new bylaw limiting dog walkers to six dogs at a time, with only three of those being off lead.

We understand the importance of ensuring safety and wellbeing for both dogs and the community. However, we would like to highlight our association's code of conduct, which currently allows for a maximum of twelve dogs under professional care.

Our Code of Conduct was developed based on extensive research and input from canine industry experts to ensure the highest standards of care for all dogs in professional walking settings. The limit of twelve dogs aligns with internationally recognised best practices, ensuring adequate supervision, training and safety protocols.

We believe that this well structured guideline ensures that dog walkers can manage groups effectively, with the necessary resources and experience to handle larger groups of dogs.

By reducing the limit to six dogs, we feel that the bylaw may inadvertently disrupt professional services, reduce available opportunities for dog owners and place unnecessary constraints on experienced dog walkers who adhere to strict safety standards.

In conclusion, we respectfully ask that the council consider adopting a higher dog limit, in line with our Code of Conduct, while maintaining appropriate off lead regulations.

We are happy to offer further insight into our industry practices and would welcome an opportunity to discuss how we can best balance safety, well being and operational needs for all parties involved.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Luke

President, Canine Industry Standards Association of New Zealand

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Clarify how dog access rules are set:

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Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

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Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

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Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

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A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

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Tell us why

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What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

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What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

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Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

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1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

Support

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

See attached

Summary of Attachment:

Support for Responsible Dog Guardianship:

CANZ supports the council's initiative to encourage responsible dog guardianship and enhance access to educational resources for dog guardians.

Promotion of Microchipping and Registration:

CANZ strongly promotes microchipping and registration of all dogs on the New Zealand Companion Animal Register (NZCAR) to increase the likelihood of reuniting lost dogs with their guardians.

Use of Qualified Professionals for Behavioural Assessments:

CANZ recommends using qualified and accredited professionals for behavioural assessments of dogs, emphasizing humane and ethical standards.

Limiting the Number of Dogs in Public Spaces:

CANZ supports the proposal to limit the number of dogs a person can walk in a council-controlled public place to ensure safety for both dogs and the public.

Promotion of Longlines for Exercising Dogs:

CANZ recommends allowing the use of longlines in dog exercise areas to provide dogs with more freedom while maintaining control, which benefits their physical and mental well-being.

Educational Resources:

CANZ offers various online resources, including articles, webinars, and videos, to educate dog guardians on responsible guardianship and the use of ethical training aids

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Tell us why

20 February 2025

Auckland Council (via email)

Dog Policy and Bylaw

Victoria Street West

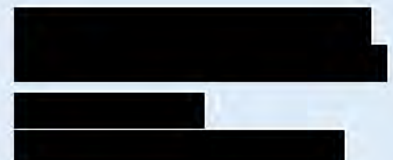
Auckland 1142

dogsbylawreview@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Submission regarding the Auckland Council's proposed changes to the Policy on Dogs and the Dog Management Bylaw.

Companion Animals New Zealand (CANZ), formerly the New Zealand Companion Animal Council, is a respected animal welfare organisation committed to advancing A Good Life for companion animals. We own and manage the New Zealand Companion Animal Register (NZCAR) and actively promote the importance of permanent identification and traceability through microchipping and registration. The New Zealand Companion Animal Register (NZCAR) is NZ's leading microchip database for pets with more than 1.4 million pets registered and over 1000 approved users nationwide, such as vet clinics, SPCA and rescues. We connect companion animals to their guardian details to ensure swift repatriation in case of separation and we offer a lost and found service. Through our 'Good Life for Animals' research, community engagement and education work we promote improved standards for welfare and responsible companion animal guardianship in New Zealand. Our mission is that all companion animals in New Zealand should enjoy 'A Good Life'.

CANZ welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on Auckland Council's proposed changes to the Policy on Dogs and the Dog Management Bylaw.





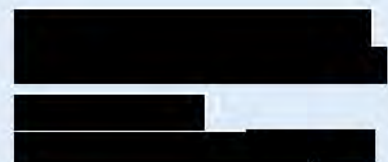
We support the council's initiative to encourage responsible dog guardianship and enhance access to educational resources for dog guardians.

Companion Animals NZ strongly promotes microchipping and registration of all dogs in New Zealand on the New Zealand Companion Animal Register. Lost dogs are three times more likely to be reunited with their guardians if microchipped and registered on the NZCAR. We would like to point out, that we offer a variety of online resources designed specifically to educate dog guardians on the topic of responsible guardianship. These include an online library of evidence-based articles, free webinars, and videos on topics like dog behaviour modification training and the use of ethical training aids such as longlines.

- Online library: <https://www.companionanimals.nz/articles-and-advice>,
- Free webinars and videos: <https://www.youtube.com/@companionanimalsnewzealand341/featured>

Further to this, we recommend that where behavioural assessments of dogs are required, the Auckland Council emphasise the importance of using qualified and accredited professionals who adhere to ethical, humane standards, particularly those who are members of our CANZ Accreditation scheme: <https://www.companionanimals.nz/canzaccreditation>.

CANZ Accredited professionals have demonstrated that they meet the rigorous CANZ Accreditation standards and follow the CANZ Code of Ethical Conduct. They provide humane, effective science-based training methods grounded in an understanding of animal behaviour and learning processes. Promoting accredited behaviour professionals who follow these principles would contribute to more positive outcomes for dogs with challenging behaviours.





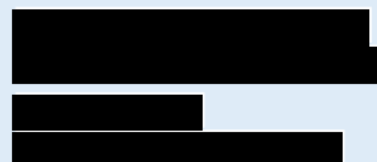
Companion Animals New Zealand's perspective on the proposed changes to the maximum number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public space.

We support the proposal to limit the number of dogs a person may 'walk' in a council-controlled public place at any one time (i.e. maximum of six dogs of which no more than three may be under control off leash at any one time). This measure is beneficial for ensuring the safety of both dogs and the public. The handling of several dogs at once by one person can quickly become overwhelming, especially if the dogs are large or prone to reactivity. We believe that, depending on the circumstances, even six dogs may be too many for one person to manage safely at any given time. Conflicts between dogs and difficulty controlling them in busy environments increases the risk of aggression injuries. Limiting the number of dogs a person can walk at any one time, will help ensure a safer environment for both dogs and the community.

Companion Animals New Zealand's recommendation related to use of longlines for exercising dogs in parks and on beaches.

Good welfare relies on dogs being in good physical and mental health. Promoting exercise through providing dogs (and their humans) with safe, appropriate spaces to walk contributes to better overall health and behaviour and prevents obesity in dogs (Hurley et al., 2011). With research indicating that over 40% of New Zealand's dog population is overweight or obese, it's clear that dog walking spaces are crucial for pet dog welfare, offering outlets for exercise, social interactions, species-specific behaviours, and enriching activities. Dog parks are popular venues for outdoor exercise and socialisation for dogs, with proximity to these parks linked to increased use and satisfaction among dog owners (Lee et al, 2009). New Zealand's Code of Welfare for Dogs emphasises the importance of exercise for canine physical and mental well-being, warning that insufficient activity, or space for exercise can lead to behavioural and health issues, that may be problematic for humans, other animals and the community.

Lead pulling can be a significant welfare issue, with negative effects on a dog's health and behaviour (Townsend et al., 2022). A 2021 study found that popular on-leash activities often



overlook the individual walking pace needed for dogs' physical, physiological, and cognitive well-being (Foltin & Ganslosser, 2021). The research also highlighted that providing dogs with off-lead freedom, while maintaining effective control, and using longer leashes (such as longlines) can help address behavioural concerns by allowing dogs to release energy, explore, and engage with their environment. This supports natural behaviours like sniffing, roaming, and interacting, which in turn enhances a dog's sense of safety and overall satisfaction.

For the reasons mentioned above, we recommend that Auckland Council implement measures that protect wildlife, natural habitats and minimise risks to people, while also addressing the welfare and exercise needs of dogs. One approach to ensuring that dogs benefit as needed for their health and welfare, is to allow dog guardians to use long leash/lines in Auckland Region's dog exercise areas and provide/promote educational material for dog owners on the proper use of longlines. By giving dogs more freedom while ensuring control, their wellbeing is significantly improved. CANZ supports an educational approach to promote the use of longlines, providing dogs with greater freedom whilst still being under control.

For more info on longline use: <https://youtu.be/lzdfQWDYDqw?si=n5WMeBJGfKnXsHdt>.

CANZ is happy to support Council initiatives that make this information more accessible to dog guardians, helping to foster better outcomes for both dogs and their communities.

Many thanks for considering our feedback. If you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to contact me.

Ngā mihi

[Redacted]
Veterinarian & Animal Welfare Operations Officer
Companion Animals New Zealand
welfare@companionanimals.nz
[Redacted]

References:

Foltin, S., & Ganslosser, U. (2021). Exploration behavior of pet dogs during off-leash walks. *Journal of Veterinary Science Medicine*, 9(9), 1-9.

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Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6364

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Animal Justice Party Aotearoa New Zealand

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Support

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Support

Tell us why

We strongly recommend that the Council implement mandatory desexing requirements for dogs classified as menacing, along with their household companions, and dogs in general. The current voluntary approach to desexing dogs is inadequate. Uncontrolled breeding remains a fundamental driver of many dog-related issues in Auckland, including roaming, aggressive behaviors, and attacks on people, other dogs, and wildlife. The growing trend of off-leash and roaming dogs suggests a concerning loss of awareness about existing regulations, highlighting the need for a comprehensive public education campaign about responsible dog ownership.

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Support

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

I don't know

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Support

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Support

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Support

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Support

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Support

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Support

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

The Animal Justice Party is a registered political party amplifying animals' voices in politics in Aotearoa.

We urge the Council to consider these amendments primarily through the lens of dog well-being and evidence-based practices that benefit both dogs and our community.

Of particular concern is the current kill rate in Auckland Council pounds, which stands at 48% - significantly higher than comparable jurisdictions such as New South Wales, Australia, where the rate is just 8%. This stark difference suggests there is considerable room for improvement in our approach to dog care.

To address these issues, we propose the following recommendations:

First, implement monthly reporting requirements for pound euthanasia rates rather than annual reporting. More frequent reporting will allow for better tracking of trends and more timely interventions when needed. This increased transparency will help identify problem areas and measure the effectiveness of Council initiatives.

Second, allocate funding specifically for desexing programs and owner education/support services. Evidence shows that accessible desexing programs and better owner education

significantly reduce unwanted breeding, abandonment rates, and behavioral issues that often lead to pound admissions.

Third, introduce specific regulations regarding the chaining and tethering of dogs. Extended tethering can lead to physical and psychological distress in dogs, including increased aggression, anxiety, and social isolation. We recommend implementing maximum tethering time limits and minimum standards for tethered dogs' living conditions, including shelter, water access, and regular exercise requirements.

These evidence-based measures would align Auckland's dog control practices with leading international standards while prioritising animal well-being. Such improvements would benefit not only our dogs but also create a safer, more humane community for all residents.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations and would welcome the opportunity to discuss them further.

It's worth noting that our Executive President Rob McNeil applied to speak at the February Regulatory Committee meeting, but this request was declined and we were asked to submit through this process instead.

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Mātaitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

The Animal Justice Party is a registered political party amplifying animals' voices in politics in Aotearoa.

We urge the Council to consider these amendments primarily through the lens of dog well-being and evidence-based practices that benefit both dogs and our community.

Of particular concern is the current kill rate in Auckland Council pounds, which stands at 48% - significantly higher than comparable jurisdictions such as New South Wales, Australia, where the rate is just 8%. This stark difference suggests there is considerable room for improvement in our approach to dog care.

To address these issues, we propose the following recommendations:

First, implement monthly reporting requirements for pound euthanasia rates rather than annual reporting. More frequent reporting will allow for better tracking of trends and more timely interventions when needed. This increased transparency will help identify problem areas and measure the effectiveness of Council initiatives.

Second, allocate funding specifically for desexing programs and owner education/support services. Evidence shows that accessible desexing programs and better owner education significantly reduce unwanted breeding, abandonment rates, and behavioral issues that often lead to pound admissions.

Third, introduce specific regulations regarding the chaining and tethering of dogs. Extended tethering can lead to physical and psychological distress in dogs, including increased aggression, anxiety, and social isolation. We recommend implementing maximum tethering time limits and minimum standards for tethered dogs' living conditions, including shelter, water access, and regular exercise requirements.

These evidence-based measures would align Auckland's dog control practices with leading international standards while prioritising animal well-being. Such improvements would benefit not only our dogs but also create a safer, more humane community for all residents.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations and would welcome the opportunity to discuss them further.

It's worth noting that our Executive President Rob McNeil applied to speak at the February Regulatory Committee meeting, but this request was declined and we were asked to submit through this process instead.



Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6845

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Birds NZ Auckland Regional Branch

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

Do not support

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Maximum four dogs, with no more than two off-leash unless licence obtained

Tell us why

This achieves a good balance. Professional dog walkers can then either obtain a licence or should use private land if they have more dogs. This ensures more responsible use. More than 2 dogs off lead could be difficult to call back as there is less likelihood of a pack-mentality occurring.

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park, Pākiri Regional Park, Te Ārai Regional Park

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

I support the proposed change

Tell us why

This is much clearer wording.

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

I support the proposed change

Tell us why

Prohibition is a long time coming. Local dogs are regularly roaming on the south section of the beach (supported by their owners) which prevents the dotterels from successfully breeding there (many pairs try each year). This will also reduce shorebirds being disturbed near the Pākiri rivermouth and in the dunes. Note this will only be successful if surveillance and enforcement is regularly undertaken.

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

I support the proposed change

Tell us why

In particular, Forestry Beach has too many dogs which makes it difficult to enjoy the beach without being met with feces on sand and roaming dogs disturbing beachgoers.

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Matakaitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Surveillance and enforcement must be targeted to include times of high recreational use and when shorebirds are roosting and foraging.



Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6868

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Friends of Regional Parks

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the **Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat** and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Mātaitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wendellholme Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakaneuwha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Overview

Prohibition: Dog access to all regional parks should be prohibited unless specifically permitted in management plans, with exceptions for working dogs and guide dogs.

Ranger Service: Propose forming a trained honorary park ranger service to educate and enforce compliance, alongside professional rangers for serious noncompliance.

Wildlife Protection: Emphasize the need for greater protection of wildlife and stricter enforcement of dog rules.

Detailed Submission

Regional Park Management Plan: Policies should come from this plan, focusing on protecting natural, cultural, and landscape values.

Population Growth: Regional parks are becoming more like local parks due to Auckland's population growth, necessitating stricter dog access rules.

Dog Ownership: Dog access to public land is a privilege, not a right, and must be managed to protect ecosystems.

Threats to Wildlife: Greater action is needed to enforce dog access rules and protect wildlife, livestock, and park visitors.

Ranger Input: Clarify the role of rangers in educating park users and enforcing dog regulations.

Recreation with Dogs: Recognize the importance of dog recreation but manage conflicts and congestion.

Inconsistent Rules: Address different dog rules within regional parks and associated beaches to protect wildlife.

Ranger Powers: Advocate for greater powers and resources for rangers to enforce bylaws.

Roaming Dogs: Address the issue of roaming dogs and the damage they cause to livestock and wildlife.

Dog Control Act: Recommend changes to the Dog Control Act to include stricter penalties and controls for noncompliance



Friends of Regional Parks Submission

21 February 2025

Dog Policy Bylaws and Regional Parks and Local Park Access Rules

To Auckland Council Dog Policy and Bylaw team
dogsbylawreview@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Introduction

Friends of Regional Parks, Auckland Inc., (FOR Parks) was formed by residents in 2010 as a non-profit organisation to work alongside Auckland Council and volunteer groups in our regional parks. We act as supporters and guardians of the regional park network in Auckland, providing vision and education, continuity, protection and a citizen's voice for the regional parks.

Those creating FOR Parks recognised the importance of the regional park network in defining the quality of Auckland and the role regional parks have in protecting our rural landscape, biodiversity and heritage and providing low impact recreation for people in Auckland.

Our members include large conservation, civic and recreation organisations, such as tramping clubs and open sanctuaries as well as individuals and families, many of whom have long associations with and are volunteers in regional parks across Auckland.

Overview of our submission on the dog bylaws

We are pleased regional parks get more prominence in the proposed dog bylaw review, however the following need to be included.

- As a general rule we submit, dog access to all regional parks is prohibited except where it is specifically permitted in management plans. This should not apply to working dogs, guide dogs etc.

- We encourage Council to form a trained honorary park ranger service to operate in an education role and bring in professional regional park and dog rangers when there is serious noncompliance. Signs are not enough and there are countless examples of signs being ignored. We believe the bylaws will be more effective with additional trained people patrolling the parks and associated beaches.
- Much greater attention needs to be given to roaming dogs and dog owners not complying with dog rules.
- Put greater focus on the protection of wildlife.
- Integrate beaches into regional parks for the purpose of dog bylaws where the main access is through regional parks to foreshore areas.
- We wish to speak to the Auckland Council Dog Policy and Bylaw team and make representation to the appropriate committee on the above.

Detailed Submission

1. We are concerned that the guiding policies for regional parks should come from the Regional Park Management Plan that makes a clear distinction from local parks. Regional parks are *to protect their intrinsic, natural, cultural and landscape values and to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the enjoyment and benefit of the people ...and... protect and enhance diverse indigenous ecosystems, cultural heritage and landscapes, and provide Aucklanders and visitors with free access to nature, on land and to the coast and are held in perpetuity for that purpose.*
2. With the growth of Auckland's population, regional parks such as Shakespear, Long Bay, Omana and Ambury become more like local parks especially with regards recreation use involving dog access.
3. Recreation with a dog is a popular activity with the dog part of the family group but in order to "*protect and enhance diverse indigenous ecosystems*" the integrity of regional parks has to be protected. While dogs are treated as part of the family by many people it must be emphasised that dog ownership and dog access to public land are a privilege and not a right.
4. We are very concerned about the threats of dogs to wildlife, livestock and other park visitors and greater action needs to be taken to enforce dog access rules especially in remote regional parks, with stiffer fines for noncompliance.
5. It would be good to know the input rangers and regional parks staff have had into the proposed bylaw review and to clarify whether they have the ability to educate the park users and enforce dog regulations?

6. We acknowledge visitors coming with their dogs to regional parks are an important recreation activity and provision for this needs to be made. However, as stated in the management plan “*accommodating diverse and sometimes conflicting visitor activities within the same area*” may necessitate “*use demand management tools where necessary to manage congestion or conflicts*”. The practical ability to manage dog bylaws and the burden on the park ranger needs greater consideration.

7. A major problem is that there are different rules within the regional parks and associated beaches. E.g.

- At Muriwai, off leash dogs under control are permitted on the beach but not in the park.
- While track access to Whites Beach is for dogs on a leash it remains prohibited on other tracks. Many visitors have dogs off leash on this remote beach where birds are nesting.
- At Ambury the associated esplanade foreshore is a bird roosting and feeding area and reports indicate the dog bylaws are hard to enforce due to the divided dog rule areas that have been designated to satisfy local dog walkers.

More local discussion is needed with greater attention to protecting wildlife. At the same time many dog walkers show responsibility and immediately bring their dog to heel if feeding or nesting birds are around. Such behaviour can be reinforced by having simpler rules and more rangers and additional honorary rangers on the ground.

Overall, the management focus in the RPM Plan is “*to minimise potential conflicts between recreational use and environmental impacts*”, therefore a precautionary approach needs to be taken to protect wildlife and limit dog access in all regional parks.

8. As covered above, and possibly beyond the scope of this Dog Bylaw Review, we strongly recommend provisions be made for greater powers for regional park rangers. We also argue for the provision of trained certified honorary rangers who will operate in an education role and back up full time staff. Overall, Auckland Council must dedicate more resources to staffing compliance with the bylaws and must back this up with stiff fines for noncompliance. Elaborate signs are only a part solution to gaining compliance and it is the people to people contact that is so important.

9. We are very concerned with the issue of roaming dogs and the damage they cause. The 200 plus sheep recently killed in southern regional parks is not only a large financial loss to the Council but is an emotional and financial cost on regional parks’



farming staff and volunteers who have to deal with the aftermath. More needs to be done by Council to support these front-line workers. These photos of sheep recently mauled by dogs at Mutukaroa/ Hamlins Hill Regional Park, highlight the need for greater control of roaming dogs and support for Council workers who have to deal with the mauled livestock.

10. We advocate changes to the Dog Control Act and Amendments.

- Greater penalties and controls if a dog cannot be immediately brought to heel in those off leash and under control areas.
- Limit the number of dogs one person can walk with at one time to a maximum of 3 dogs with no more than 1 off leash. Strictly licence commercial dog operators and limit the number of dogs being walked. Ensure that these activities are subject to management plan reviews in both local and regional parks.

11. In answer to your question “who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications?” we suggest that a more powerful assessment committee be formed to advise Council. This to be made up of qualified animal behaviourists but also representatives of rangers and those who have to deal with roaming dogs, dog owners and breeders at the operational level. Such a group needs to be independent of dog lobbyists.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. We wish to speak to the appropriate committee on this proposed bylaw and rule change.

Signed

[REDACTED], Friends of Regional Parks, Executive Committee Member
[REDACTED], Friends of Regional Parks, Chair

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6890

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Blind Vison NZ

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

See attachment

We would like to see:

Any signage prohibiting dog access should have a blurb that affirms the rights of disability assist dogs to access the area under the Human Rights Act, and the Dog Control Act. Our clients and their guide dogs are constantly confronted and refused access to places they have the right to access. Adding a blurb about the rights of disability assist dogs would help spread awareness and ensure that blind and low vision New Zealanders can live their lives independently.

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Mātaitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why



21/02/2025

Blind Low Vision NZ Submission on the Dog policy, bylaw and regional and local park access rules

Blind Low Vision NZ, overall, supports the proposed changes to the Dog policy, bylaw and regional and local park access rules.

Recommendation

The following is Blind Low Vision NZ's recommendation for the review of Auckland's Dog Bylaws and policies.

We would like to see:

Any signage prohibiting dog access should have a blurb that affirms the rights of disability assist dogs to access the area under the Human Rights Act, and the Dog Control Act. Our clients and their guide dogs are constantly confronted and refused access to places they have the right to access. Adding a blurb about the rights of disability assist dogs would help spread awareness and ensure that blind and low vision New Zealanders can live their lives independently.

About Blind Low Vision NZ

Blind Low Vision NZ is the operating name of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind. Our organisation was founded in 1890 and has been serving New Zealanders who are blind, deafblind or have low vision for over 130 years. We are motivated as a 'for purpose' organisation guided by our [mission, values, and strategic plan](#).

Blind Low Vision NZ exists to empower our approximately 16,000 clients who are blind, deafblind, or low vision to live the life they choose. We estimate that 193,000 New Zealanders live with vision loss^{i, ii}, and expect that number to grow to 225,000 by 2028ⁱⁱⁱ. Some common eye conditions include Age-related Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy, Glaucoma and Cataracts.

Blind Low Vision is New Zealand's leading provider of vision rehabilitation services. The services we provide are as follows:

- Orientation and Mobility Services



- Community and Support
- Guide Dog Services
- Library Services
- Accessible Formats Service
- Daily Living Skills
- Adaptive Technology
- Vision Store
- Sport and Leisure
- Emotional Support
- Employment and Youth Transition
- Deafblind Services
- Children's Services
- Support Grants

These services ensure everyone in our community has the support they need to thrive.

Blind Low Vision NZ Guide Dog Services

Guide dogs provide more than mobility- they also provide companionship, enhanced independence and improved confidence. Choosing to live and work with a guide dog is a big decision, and we are committed to helping our clients work their way through the entire process.

What we do

At Blind Low Vision NZ, we believe that people who are blind, deafblind, or have low vision should have a choice when it comes to getting around independently. As New Zealand's sole provider of professionally trained Guide Dogs, we breed, raise and train our dogs to meet the individual needs of Blind Low Vision NZ clients who choose guide dog mobility.

What Blind Low Vision NZ Guide Dogs provide

Guide dogs give people who are blind, deafblind or have low vision, freedom and independence. They help people to get around safely and confidently. They also make wonderful companions.

Breeding and Early Development

We're very selective when it comes to our breeding dogs. We only select those most likely to produce healthy pups with the temperament necessary to succeed as guide dogs. We produce in excess of 100 puppies per year at the Guide Dogs Breeding Centre.



Pregnant females return to our centre one week prior to whelping (giving birth) and remain there with their litters until the puppies are ready for placement into Puppy Raising homes, at about 9 weeks of age.

The Breeding Centre staff (Dog Care Specialists) are responsible for looking after pregnant broods and their litters from birth to 9 weeks. During this time, staff work hard to maintain a high level of biosecurity in order to protect the puppies from disease. The staff also provide enrichment and exercise opportunities for the broods, and follow a detailed early development protocol to begin preparing our puppies for life as guide dogs.

Guide Dogs Healthcare

The Guide Dogs Health Manager looks after the health and nutrition of each puppy, training dog, and working guide in the Guide Dogs programme. The Health Manager manages relationships with vets, food and pharmaceutical providers in order to maintain the health and wellbeing of each dog throughout its life. The role also provides health and nutrition advice and support to guide dog handlers, puppy raisers, breeding stock guardians and staff.

Puppy Placement and Development

The aims of the Puppy Placement and Development Programme is to place puppies into appropriate volunteer raiser homes and provide ongoing support to the raisers throughout the pup's first year of life.

The Puppy Development Advisor provides one-to-one tuition and support to puppy raisers, ensuring that each puppy receives the training and exposure required to succeed on the guide dog training programme.

Using STEP (Successive Training and Enrichment Programme), the advisors help our raisers to develop solid relationship building skills with their pups while training good home behaviour, good manners, and exposing the pups to all of the situations and environments that will prepare them for training and working as a Guide Dog.

Kennelling Services

The role of the kennel staff (Dog Care Specialists) is to care for our dogs while they are in kennels. Dogs come into kennels for a number of reasons, whether during formal training, while in season, or for early exposure to the environment while still on the puppy programme. During their stay, dogs are given daily opportunities to run in our extensive free run areas, spend time with a staff member or volunteer in the canine enrichment room, and of course ample time with trainers learning the important work of becoming a



guide dog. The kennel staff spend much of their day keeping the facility hygienic, as well as feeding, grooming, and bathing the dogs. They also support the guide dog training staff by ensuring dogs engage in appropriate behaviour while in the kennels.

Guide Dog Training

The Guide Dog Trainer is responsible for training dogs that have returned to the Guide Dog Centre at approximately one year of age. Trainers work with six or more dogs at a time over a 4-month period, teaching the dogs to respond to commands, stop at kerbs, avoid obstacles, and ignore distractions (food, people, and other dogs). In the more advanced stages of training dogs learn to locate pertinent destinations, take on the responsibility of guiding a totally blind person, and to make safety decisions on the fly.

Guide Dog Mobility Instructor

The role of the Guide Dog Mobility Instructor (GDMI) is to provide ongoing support and tuition to guide dog teams throughout the life of each partnership. The GDMI is responsible for assessing potential applicants, matching trained guide dogs with BLVNZ clients on the wait list, and providing one-to-one tuition for clients with new guide dogs. The GDMI acts as the primary contact for the guide dog handlers in their region, as well as providing advocacy and technical support for the team throughout their working life.

Disability Assist Dogs and the Right of Access

Refusing access or treating someone unfairly because they rely on a disability assist dog may breach the Human Rights Act 1993 and/or the Dog Control Act 1996.

Human Rights Act 1993

[Human Rights Act 1993 section 21 h Prohibited grounds of discrimination](#)

1. For the purposes of this Act, the prohibited grounds of discrimination are

h) disability, which means

vi. reliance on a disability assist dog, wheelchair, or other remedial means

Dog Control Act 1996

[Dog Control Act 1996 section 75 Disability assist dogs](#)

1. Any disability assist dog accompanying and assisting a person with a disability, or accompanying a person genuinely engaged in the dog's training, may enter and remain—



a) in any premises registered under regulations made under section 120 of the Health Act 1956; or

b) in any public place.

2. However, the person whom the dog is accompanying must comply with any reasonable conditions imposed by the occupier or person controlling the premises or place in relation to the entry or presence of the dog.

3. This section overrides any enactment prohibiting or regulating the entry or presence of dogs in relation to the premises and places referred to in subsection (1).

What are disability assist dogs?

Disability assist dogs are certified service dogs that have been specially trained, or are being trained, to help people with disabilities and enable them to be as independent as possible.

Where are disability assist dogs allowed?

In New Zealand disability assist dogs have the right to access any public place and private business – including supermarkets, health facilities, shops and malls, food outlets, motels or hotels, movie theatres and restaurants. Disability assist dogs are entitled to travel on all forms of public transport, including in taxis. Permission may be needed to enter a marae or church.

How do I know it is a disability assist dog?

Disability assist dogs are trained and certified by organisations authorised under [Schedule 5 of the Dog Control Act 1996](#). Disability assist dogs must be certified by one of the following organisations:

- Assistance Dogs New Zealand Trust
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People New Zealand
- K9 Medical Detection New Zealand
- Mobility Assistance Dogs Trust
- New Zealand Epilepsy Assist Dogs Trust
- Pawsible Service Dogs
- Perfect Partners Assistance Dogs Trust
- Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind Incorporated (trading as Blind Low vision NZ).



Each organisation issues a coat for the dog to wear with the organisation's name on it, and some form of identification for the handler.

It is ok to ask what organisation the disability assist dog is certified under. It is not ok to ask questions about the person's disability.

After conferring with the Minister for Disability Issues, the Minister of Local Government can recommend new organisations to be authorised under the Act.

Organisations who want to be authorised under Schedule 5 must apply via the Department of Internal Affairs.

More information on the process and requirements is contained in the [Guidelines for authorisation to certify disability assist dogs](#).

You can contact the Department via dogs@dia.govt.nz

ⁱ Thornley SJ, Gordon K, Shelton C, Marshall R. The prevalence of visual impairment: a capture-recapture study in three urban regions of New Zealand. Available at: <https://blindlowvision.org.nz/news/new-study-vision-rehabilitation-new-zealand/>

ⁱⁱ Original numbers were obtained from: New Zealand Disability Survey 2013. Available at: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/disability-survey-2013> .

ⁱⁱⁱ Moore, David; Rippon, Rebecca; and Niemi, Malin. *Vision Rehabilitation in New Zealand*. 27 February 2019. Sapere Research Group. Page 14, Section 4.4.





Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6903

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Professional Dog Walkers Association

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

Do not support

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Other (please explain below)

Tell us why

See attachment

Summary of attachment:

Opposition to Proposed Limit: PDWA opposes the Auckland Council's proposal to limit the number of dogs walked at one time to six, with only three off-leash.

Lack of Data Support: PDWA argues that there is no data showing that walking more than three dogs causes issues, with only 0.7% of complaints involving multiple dogs.

Enforcement Concerns: PDWA doubts the proposal will be effectively enforced due to already stretched Animal Management resources.

Licensing Alternative: PDWA suggests a licensing system for professional dog walkers, similar to Wellington's, allowing up to 12 dogs per licensed walker.

Petition: PDWA has collected 3,456 signatures opposing the proposed limit and supporting their licensing alternative.

Key Arguments Against the Proposed Limit:

No Evidence of Issues: The data does not support claims that multiple dog walkers cause significant problems.

Enforcement Challenges: Limited resources make enforcing the proposed limit impractical.

Impact on Dog Owners: The proposed limit would unfairly impact responsible dog walkers and their clients, increasing costs and reducing service availability.

PDWA's Licensing Proposal:

Annual License: Professional dog walkers would pay an annual fee and display identification.

Competency Test: Applicants would need to pass a test or course to ensure they can operate safely.

Practical Assessment: An in-person assessment to confirm practical skills, reassessed annually.

Benefits: Licensing would provide accurate records, additional enforcement powers, and maintain affordable services for dog owners.

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

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Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

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We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

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What do you think of this proposed change?

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Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

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What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

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Tell us why

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What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Matakaitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

22 February 2025

Auckland Council
Dog Policy and Bylaw
Freepost Number 190198
Private Bag 92300
Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142

By email: dogsbylawreview@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Submission - Dog policy, bylaw and regional and local park access rules

This submission is made by the Professional Dog Walkers Association Incorporated (**PDWA**) in response to the proposal to change the Auckland Council (**Council**) Policy on Dogs and Dog Management Bylaw (**Bylaw**) as set out in the Statement of Proposal: Dog policy, bylaw and regional and local park access rules (**Proposal**).

Who is PDWA?

PDWA is the largest member-run organisation representing the dog walking community with over 100 members. Our members represent the majority of professional dog walkers operating in the wider Auckland area and walk over 5,000 dogs on average every week. PDWA members are united in our passion for the dogs that we service and for all dogs and their owners in Auckland. Our members are rule following Aucklanders, our clients are ratepayers and all of our members are small businesses.

About professional dog walking

A large proportion of PDWA members offer group or "pack" dog walking services in which they pick up dogs from their homes around Auckland, transport them to a walk location (typically a beach or forest) and take them for a group walk. The number of dogs walked by our members varies between 7 and 15 dogs per group which reflects the range of skills and services in the industry. Group walks of this manner are hugely beneficial to dogs' training, socialisation and their positive association with other dogs. Many clients of PDWA members have benefited from these walks and many of them struggled to walk their dog in public before they started sending their dog with a trained professional dog walker.

Safety is a primary concern of all professional dog walkers and is why professional dog walkers have onboarding processes and assessments for every dog they take out. Professional dog walkers know that you cannot simply pick up a group of random dogs and take them for a perfect walk. Competent professional multi-dog walking requires each dog to be trained and have a relationship with the handler. This is why professional dog walkers have induction processes to assess dogs before they come out, teach them the behaviours they will need for walks and have a gradual process to give new dogs greater freedom as each dog consistently meets the expectations and boundaries set by the handler. Professional dog walkers will tell you that it can take months of regular walks and training before a new dog is allowed off leash on a walk and handlers will

regularly not let a dog off leash when they have before if the dog is misbehaving or showing signs that they will not follow commands on that day.

In addition to processes, professional dog walkers are acutely aware of the environments they walk in. Professional dog walkers actively research the locations they walk and most dog walkers will physically scout locations before they walk client dogs there to assess if it would be suitable. This is why many professional dog walkers do not walk in suburban parks or streets (less than 9% of PDWA survey respondents ever walk in suburban parks) and instead most PDWA members prefer more open spaces and spaces that are not commonly used during their walk times (typically between 9-3pm) like wide forest tracks (30%) and beaches (29%).

Our submission

PDWA wishes to submit on Section 1 of the Proposal: Walking multiple dogs. Our members may have feedback on the other sections and have been encouraged to submit on all topics directly to Council.

PDWA and our members **strongly disagree** with the Proposal to limit the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. PDWA **does not support** the proposed maximum number of dogs that can be walked of six dogs with a limit of three off lead (**Proposed Limit**) and we do not support any of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024. These responses are repeated in the Council feedback form in *Appendix 1* to this submission.

The key reasons why we strongly disagree with the Proposed Limit are:

1. To date no data that has been presented by Council staff which shows that people walking more than three dogs are creating issues. Complaint data analysis shows that only 0.7% of complaints reviewed related to multiple dogs (two or more) with an owner. Other data relied upon to show that an issue exists is created from a "People's Panel" survey of 2,000 civically minded individuals who were asked vague questions that Council staff have 'interpreted' to create hard facts.
2. We have concerns that, if implemented, a Proposed Limit will not be enforced. Animal Management staff are already stretched dealing with large numbers of roaming and aggressive dogs and this should be the priority not multiple dog walkers. If Animal Management staff cannot enforce a Proposed Limit then it would be ineffective and would fail to address its suggested purpose to minimise nuisance and distress to the public.
3. Council has discounted the option of licensing professional dog walkers without consulting with the industry. We think that licensing in a format similar to that implemented by Wellington City Council in 2022 would be most appropriate for Auckland. We also think that there are ways to improve on the Wellington system that would reduce Council costs. We detail how licensing could work below.

We expand further on these key reasons below.

Petition

In addition to this submission and encouraging our members and the public to submit on the Proposed Limit independently, PDWA has run a petition through change.org to collect signatures from people who oppose the Proposed Limit. Between 18 January 2025 and 21 February 2025 this petition received **3,456 signatures**. A copy of the text on the petition page, the names of all signatories and the 145 comments left by signatories in support of the petition are included in *Appendix 2* to this submission.

Licensing: PDWA's proposed alternative

PDWA strongly supports the introduction of a license for professional dog walkers which could involve:

1. an annual licence with a fee paid to Council;
2. a form of identification each licensed dog walker must display so the public can identify licensed dog walkers (such as vehicle stickers);
3. a test or course to confirm the person applying for a licence is competent, can operate safely, has appropriate processes in place and follows all Bylaws (which could be run by Council or another body approved by Council); and
4. a practical in person assessment to confirm the individual has the practical skills required, which would be reassessed annually (which could be run by Council or another body approved by Council).

PDWA and our members support a limit of twelve dogs applying to licensed professional dog walkers. We think that a limit of twelve dogs per person balances safety concerns and acknowledging the skills and experience of licensed professionals.

Some of the benefits of a license over the Proposed Limit are:

- Council would have accurate records of professional dog walkers making identification of possible offenders easier for Animal Management staff when complaints are received;
- licenses would provide Council with additional enforcement powers, such as being able to suspend a licence, reduce the number of dogs a licensed walker could walk or cancel a licence, all of which could occur without costly court action being required;
- Council could appoint other people or organisations, who are not Council, to administer parts of the licensing process which would reduce the Council's costs in administering the licensing system;
- professional dog walkers with the necessary skills can continue to operate with the appropriate licence; and
- dog owners would still have access to professional multi dog walking services at an affordable cost.

PDWA does not believe that a blanket limit on the number of dogs that a person can walk at one time is an effective way to address any nuisance or issues caused by multiple dog walkers (though we also do not believe there is data to support that there is an issue which we elaborate on below). We believe the Proposed Limit is overly restrictive, disproportionately impacts responsible dog owners, and fails to address the current significant issues related to dogs in public areas (being roaming and aggressive

dogs). Instead of a blanket ban, we are advocating for a more balanced approach that focuses on education, enforcement of the existing Bylaw, and targeted solutions for specific problem areas.

PDWA notes that the the Dog Control Act requires those in control of a dog to “*ensure the dog is kept under control at all times*”¹ and the existing Auckland Dog Management Bylaw defines control as “*the [person in possession of the dog]² being able to obtain an immediate and desired response from the dog*”³. We fully support the existing rules in the Dog Control Act and Bylaw and would fully support this being more strictly enforced.

PDWA acknowledges that the professional dog walking industry in Auckland is currently unregulated. Unregulated industries often have issues and participants who do not follow the general rules. We think that considered and collaborative regulation through licensing would create a sustainable professional dog walking industry while ensuring safety and harmony with the general public.

We think that by having appropriate training and processes for induction and location selection (as we explain above) professional dog walkers can ensure that their walks are safe for the dogs and the general public. We think these processes can be assessed as part of any licensing process to ensure appropriate processes are established and followed in practice. Such an approach is adopted in other industries and we see no reason why it can’t work for professional dog walking also.

Irrespective of what the limit is there will always be some who are unable to control one or two dogs on a lead and some who have put the time, energy and dedication into training their dogs and their own handling skills such that they are able to walk many more than an arbitrary number of dogs.

Detailed reasons why PDWA does not support the Proposed Limit

Our detailed reasoning in support of our submission on the Proposed Limit is as follows:

1. Data supporting that there is an issue

The data does not support the position presented by Council staff that people walking more than three dogs off lead are creating a problem. When complaint data was reviewed it found that only **0.7% of complaints**⁴ reviewed related to multiple dogs with an owner with “multiple dogs” being defined as two or more. As complaint data is unable to filter by number of dogs there is no way to know whether there is an issue in Auckland with people walking three or more dogs.

Initial data presented by Council in the 2024 Review Findings Report⁵ presented to the Regulatory and Safety Committee in July 2024 as evidence of a possible problem relied upon a “People’s Panel” survey of 2,000 civically minded Aucklanders and drew conclusions about the number, type, frequency and expected frequency of incidents

¹ Dog Control Act 1996, [Section 5\(1\)\(b\)](#).

² The Bylaw refers to an Owner which is defined in the Dog Control Act as every person who has the dog in their possession (Dog Control Act 1996, [section 2](#)).

³ *Ture a Rohe Tiakina Kuri 2019, Dog Management Bylaw 2019, [clause 5](#)*.

⁴ 2024 Review Options Report: Auckland Council Policy and Bylaw on Dogs 2019 (December 2024, Version 1), [page 46](#).

⁵ [2024 Review Findings Report: Auckland Council Policy and Bylaw on Dogs 2019](#) (July 2024, Version 1).

from vague questions that asked respondents to “*select all that apply*”. From the reports presented by Council we do not see any robust evidence that there is an issue with multiple dog walkers. The data from the People’s Panel has a number of issues which can be summarised as:

- a. A small data set (2,184 respondents) Aucklanders who have actively signed up to be part of surveys (presumably as they are civically minded) which had no adjustment to ensure cross representation of areas or demographics leading to the survey being skewed towards European older females.
- b. Data on the issues created by multiple dogs being walked was created by combining two incompatible data sets (“*In the last 12 months, have you experienced or witnessed any of the following dog-related problems while out in public, **or at a home (your home or someone else’s home)? Please select all that apply***” and “*In the last 12 months, have you experienced or witnessed any of the following problems because of people walking **more than one dog at a time? Please select all that apply***”) and excludes the majority of respondents (55%) who responded “*None of the above - I have no problems*”.
- c. Auckland Council staff created a proxy from the People’s Panel survey respondents which purports to be the expected level of issues caused by multiple dog walkers. The data used to create this proxy is irrelevant to the expected level of issues as the question only asked survey participants how often respondents saw multiple dogs in public spaces and only used responses of “*Always*” or “*Most of the time*”. This assumes that every time a multiple dog walker was seen an issue would be expected which is simply incorrect. If Council staff had included responses for “*Some of the time*” then the data would have shown that “issues” involving multiple dogs are underrepresented.

We have raised these issues in detail with Council and councillors and have received no reply. Full details of the data issues can be read in *Appendix 3*.

2. Enforcement

We have serious concerns that any Proposed Limit won't be enforced. Auckland dog owners know that Animal Management staff are stretched, and it takes days for them to respond to serious issues. Animal Management staff already struggle to proactively monitor known dog walking hotspots and the Proposal will not change this. The fact that the Waitakere Ranges Local Board had to fund a dedicated park ranger to monitor and enforce dog rules at west coast beaches over the 2024/25 summer period is an example of this under resourcing.

Statistics from the most recent Auckland Council Animal Management Report shows that complaints relating to roaming dogs increased 19% in the 2023/24 year and dog attacks have increased 16.7%, with both forecast to increase.⁶ We understand that Auckland Council is attempting to increase the number of Animal Management staff and we support this. While more staff will help to curb increases over time this trend has occurred over a number of years (since 2021) and it will take years of sustained enforcement before the trend reduces. We believe that the Council should focus its resources on enforcement in this critical area.

⁶ Auckland Council Animal Management Annual Report 2023-2024, [page 13-14](#).

We are concerned that if Council do focus on roaming and aggressive dogs over the next few years then a Proposed Limit would go largely unenforced. As the trend in roaming dogs shows, when Bylaws are not enforced strictly enough a culture of rule breaking can develop. Examples in other areas of rule enforcement such as policing shows that whenever a new law is introduced a period of focus is required by the enforcement agency to embed the rule and ensure it is effective. This would mean that a Proposed Limit would require resources dedicated to it for a period of time in order for it to be effective. We do not think that Council can afford to allocate resources to enforcing a Proposed Limit given the significant issues currently being caused by roaming and aggressive dogs.

If the Proposed Limit is not enforced then the only people who will be impacted will be those that already follow all the rules, meaning rule breakers will continue to break the rules and issues will continue.

3. Unfairly targeting rule following walkers

The Proposed Limit unfairly targets professional dog walkers only and will have no impact on those causing a nuisance. The vast majority of professional dog walkers are responsible and follow the current Bylaw. Professional dog walkers pride themselves on ensuring the dogs they walk are well-behaved, socialised and trained to not pose a nuisance to other users of public spaces. The Proposed Limit will fail to stop the very small minority of dog walkers who do not act in this way and already don't follow the Bylaw.

Our own review of the complaints manually reviewed by Council staff to reach the 0.7% statistics we refer to on page 4 shows that most "multiple dog" complaints relate to two or three dogs being walked at one time and the Proposed Limit would not apply to these cases. As Council data systems are unable to filter for complaints or incidents related to professional dog walkers there is no evidence to prove or disprove that the Proposed Limit is needed or would have any detectable impact.

4. Impact on Auckland dog owners

By targeting professional dog walkers, dog loving Aucklanders who use their services will be unnecessarily punished. A number of Auckland dog owners use and rely on the services provided by professional dog walkers to keep their dogs exercised and well socialised while they are at work. Many clients of professional dog walkers rely on these services during the busy work week. Professional dog walkers also have clients who have physical impairments or medical illnesses which limit the amount of exercise they can do. By having a professional dog walker these clients get to continue to have the companionship and affection of their dogs which is critical for their wellbeing and have a trained professional come and meet their dogs exercise and socialisation needs that would otherwise exclude them from dog ownership.

If the Proposed Limit is introduced then we expect that professional dog walkers will have to either hire more staff and increase prices accordingly or dramatically change their service. We think that the significance of this impact on small professional dog walking businesses and on their rate paying clients is out of proportion with any nuisance professional dog walkers may cause, of which there is no data to quantify.

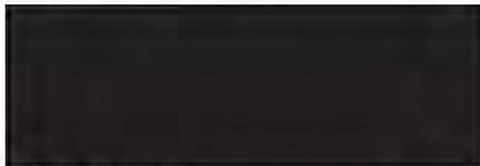
Conclusion

We strongly urge councillors, the Bylaw Review Panel, the Regulation and Safety Committee and the Auckland Council Governing Body to fully consider the Proposed Limit and the licensing alternative we have proposed. This Proposal will have a significant impact on Auckland dog owners and professional dog walkers. We hope that Council will seriously consider our proposal for licensing and engage with us on how this can be crafted and implemented to address Council's requirements.

The professional dog walking industry is frustrated that they and PDWA have not been engaged during the current Bylaw review process to discuss an industry response or possible solutions to the proposed problem. We find this incredibly disappointing and an example of poor consultation as Council attempts to regulate an industry blind to that industry's views. We hope that our submission will be read and given the consideration and respect that our industry, members and their clients deserve.

PDWA would be happy to discuss the above with councillors, local boards and Council staff further or answer any questions. To arrange a discussion please contact [REDACTED] Chairperson, on [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully



Chairperson
Professional Dog Walkers Association

Appendix 2 - Petition

This appendix 2 includes personal information about individuals who have signed the petition run on change.org by PDWA, as such if this submission is published the names of signatories should be redacted to protect their personal information.

Petition page

<https://www.change.org/p/support-auckland-s-professional-dog-walkers-let-s-find-a-better-solution-together>



Support Auckland's Professional Dog Walkers - Let's Find a Better Solution Together!

Why this petition matters

The Auckland Council is proposing harsh and blanket regulations for all dog owners and the dog walking industry without talking to the very people these rules will impact most: professional dog walkers.

The proposed rules would limit any dog walker—professional or not—to handling a maximum of 6 dogs with only 3 allowed off-leash at a time. However, the council's own data shows that **just 0.7 % of dog-related complaints involve multiple dogs being handled**. Of this number, Auckland Council can't distinguish between professional dog walkers and regular multi-dog owners.

We agree that the industry could benefit from regulation, however, these proposed rules are unlikely to have a meaningful impact on the real issues affecting the dog community. Instead, they would place unnecessary restrictions on professional dog walkers and others who care for multiple dogs responsibly and divert resources from the major problems.

Why This Matters:

- o **Professional dog walkers provide a valuable service to dog owners**, ensuring dogs receive the exercise, proper structured socialisation, and care they need.
- o If professional dog walkers are unable to operate as they currently do, there will likely be an increase in barking complaints and roaming dogs.
- o Overwhelmed shelters could also see more dogs as busy owners, unable to hire dog walkers, may struggle to provide appropriate care for their pets.
- o Professional dog walkers also play a key role in training dogs and educating owners by sharing their knowledge and skills. If they can't operate as they currently do, it will become more difficult to find dog trainers, inevitably leading to a rise in the cost of services. With dog attack and aggression complaints rising by 20% in 2023-24, the need for experienced and skilled dog trainers in Auckland is greater than ever.
- o Current practices by professional walkers already include leash training, recall training, and improving dogs' overall manners—all while providing safe group exercise.
- o It will take resources away from other areas and be another rule that will not be effectively enforced (dog control resources are already stretched).
- o This change will primarily impact those who are already following the current bylaw, while those who currently do not comply are unlikely to adhere to the new rules.

Our Solution:

The Professional Dog Walkers Association has attempted to work with the council to develop a fair and effective system for licensing and educating dog walkers, and we remain ready to collaborate whenever the council is. A well-regulated industry benefits everyone—dog owners, their pets, and the wider community. Unfortunately, the council has not acknowledged or acted on our input.

We are asking for your support to urge the council to:

1. **STOP the implementation of these new rules.**
2. **Consult with the Professional Dog Walkers Association** and other stakeholders to develop practical, data-driven solutions.
3. **Work with P.D.W.A to create a licensing agreement for professionals.** Our aim is to set standards and enforce best practices.
4. **Focus on education for all dog owners.**
5. **Address the real issues**, such as roaming dogs and excessive barking, which make up the majority of complaints.

Why Support Professional Dog Walkers?

- o We ensure dogs are healthy, happy, and well-behaved members of the community.
- o We reduce stress on families who cannot always meet their dogs' daily needs due to work, family, health, or other commitments.
- o A well-exercised dog is less likely to exhibit problem behaviours that could impact neighbours or public spaces.

Let's work together for fair regulations that truly address the needs of our community. Please sign this petition to stand with Auckland's professional dog walkers and ensure our voices are heard!

Comments from signatories

"I believe in walking dogs"

"Any dog walker I have met are respectful, kind and work with firm boundaries when dogs are in their care."

"My dog walker is responsible and can handle more than 6 dogs at a time."

"We need the services of dog walkers"

"Support our professional dog walkers!"

"I don't believe council should be suggesting changes without talking to the people they represent. Tired of the over-reach, tired of implementation of Agenda 2030 SDG's, tired of the expenditure on smart cities without telling us what the real agenda is, do we live in a democracy or not?"

"I thoroughly support this."

"A lot of Auckland's dogs would not have the opportunity to run, play, socialise and exercise with others off lead if the service was extinguished by restricting numbers."

"I'm a professional dog walking in west Auckland. Although I walk small groups 4-6 dogs this bylaw would drastically change the way I run my business, removing the fun, and controlled freedom, the dogs enjoy in these social groups. Its completely impractical and doesn't resolve the real issues in the industry, or with the public."

"My family uses the services of a responsible and experienced dog walker. The proposed changes would negatively impact her business, us personally, and our community."

"I am a dog walker"

"I am writing in opposition to the current proposed change to the bylaws in respect to walking multiple dogs at once. My dog is currently walked by a professional pack walking company who perform their duties with the utmost professionalism and care ensuring all dogs are well looked after and return happy. The company that I use ensures that all dogs are under control when on or off lead and all current council bylaws are followed. I am benefitted by using the service of my pack walking company: If my pack walking company had to make significant changes as a result of this proposed changes to the bylaw, this would affect me"

"I think professionals would know their limits"

"Dog Walkers know what they're doing so why restrict their methods? Please concentrate on the real dog issues in our communities such as people who can not afford to take care of their dogs, who are ignorant of correct dog management and care, do not desex their dogs nor exercise or socialise them correctly, if at all. This element of wilful neglect surmounts to roaming dogs that are hungry, bored, unapproachable and/or aggressive. Barking dogs and chained up dogs are also suffering from this blatant human ignorance."

"I believe the proposed changes will penalise professional people who are skilled and responsible. Professional dog handlers provide an essential service and this legislation would limit their ability to provide this service. The dogs that are causing problems are not those being handled by professionals."

"My two dogs benefited tremendously from their walks with City Pets once a week. It was fantastic for socialisation and our combined mental health. I believe there could be some form of regulation associated with these pack

walkers. City Pets is a professional organisation with stringent safety standards. Don't let the good work and important service this company provides be impacted by a very small portion of the population where there might be an issue. Focus on the problem, not applying a blanket solution that negatively impacts livelihoods and happy dogs (and their owners)."

"My dogs go on regular pack walks with connected companions. I trust her completely. We have had other less trained and unsafe walkers. I believe there should be a licence for trained businesses"

"Pack walks have been essential for socialising my dog. A responsible walker will complete assessment of a dog prior to joining the pack and maintain connection and authority over the pack for the duration of the walk. One or two dogs alone being walked could be dangerous with the wrong walker. An arbitrary reduction in dog numbers will not assure public safety."

"Auckland council is trying to enforce a regulation that a makes no sense."

"Limits don't make a difference - 6 dogs under the control of an inexperienced dog walker doesn't solve the issue. Professional well trained dog walkers that have the opportunity to get accredited and upskilled is a much better approach. The council is proposing a lazy blanket approach with no resources to actually enforce it. Surely the council wants to actually deal with the underlying issues here - roaming dogs, bored under exercised dogs and providing education to owners and dog walkers that need it that actually changes things in the long term. By limiting numbers all you are doing is increasing the cost of dog walks in a cost of living crisis, and adding to the problem."

"Consultation and considered and appropriate guidelines around dog handling is what is required. Most dog owners and dog handlers control their dogs well, these enforcements will not actually tackle the real problem and just make it harder for the majority of owners and handlers whilst not finding a solution for where the actual problem lies."

"I agree there should be rules, but to catch the cowboys not the professionals. Put rules in place on who can do it not numbers - those not qualified can cause issues with one or any number of dogs if they are not capable. Ditto a qualified professional can handle multiple dogs."

"Absolutely Council should first and foremost work together with the dog 🐕 association industry before implying regulations. Two heads are better than one it would come out with a fair positive and a good understanding relationship outcome for both sides... Kiwis working together makes a better Country... nga mihi Chris Rawiri"

"Very very few nuisance dogs are being walked in large or small groups under the guidance of an owner or trained dog walker. Therefore the limits are arbitrary, make no sense and will achieve nothing."

"Blanket rules, don't work, case by case, most dog walkers have exceptional control and recall with their clients dogs, also pack walks are huge for socialisation for dogs of all breeds."

"I would like dog to be able to go out on pack walks. I feel it is beneficial for her health and well being."

"I believe dog walking groups are not the problem"

"This bylaw is not targeting those that need restrictions. I urge the council to talk and engage with advocacy groups to ensure their rules are targeting those that it is meant to target!"

"Without dog walkers the dogs will stress if left at home and so will the owners more dogs given up for adoption more stress for people mire damage to the health system more unemployed dog walkers and carers more stress on the tax payers"

"I support dog walkers"

"This doesn't solve the problem of inexperienced handlers and untrained dogs. All pack walkers I see have highly trained dogs who are well behaved, with handlers who know what they are doing."

"Multiple dogs with responsible owners under good control are not an issue. Roaming unregistered out of control and abused dogs with owners who don't care need to be addressed."

"As a professional dog walker I agree that the industry needs to be regulated but the answer is through training, certification and a regulatory board to handle incidents where there is unsafe practice or breach of conduct."

"Because it's not okay to take away someone's job and passion. There is no logical reason as to why this should stop."

"My two dogs receive essential training and exercise while pack walking. Pack walking with a trainer has improved their obedience and I have learned so many skills as a dog owner. This law change will destroy the business of park walking and take away a much needed service for responsible dog owners"

"this decision will have a big financial impact on dog-walking businesses and also on dog-owners who rely 100% on this service"

"The proposed regulations do not address the real issues and will negatively impact those dog walkers who are responsible and safe."

"I support professional dog walkers"

"Why are restrictions being put in place when nobody working in the industry has been consulted? Do better Auckland council."

"My dogs lives would be negatively affected if this goes through."

"Short sighted. Professional dog walkers are not the problem"

"My dog benefits significantly from her pack walks. She is well mannered and well behaved and a lot of this is due to her pack walks and the socialisation it has provided."

"Professional dog trainers provide such an important safe environment for dogs to interact."

"Professional dog walkers provide a safe and valued service"

"This makes no sense at all . Dogs that are exercised are happy and contented and not barking, therefore not causing distress to neighbours or the dogs, This is an overreaction and overreach by the council."

"I have a dog and professional dog walking is a great opportunity for dog owners to socialize and exercise their dogs. This new council law will ruin the ability for professional dog walkers who know what they are doing, to make money."

"Packwalking is such a vital role for society in so many ways. Dogs are apart of our family units and giving them a day a week out on a pack walk with a trained professional allows them to socialise, learn how to behave around other dogs and interact with people and new spaces in a controlled environment."

"Effective communication is key. Knowledge is powerful and it is important that the council engage with the Professional Dog Walking Association to seek input from the very people who lead best practice in the industry and help so many dogs and owners be the best they can be! Please engage, please listen."

"In my opinion professional pack dog walkers provide a essential service"

"The new rules are totally anti dogs and unreasonable. As long as dog owners are picking up poos and acting responsibly they are utterly unfair and biased. Presumably someone on the council has a problem with dogs in general!"

"Professional dog walkers assess a dog for its suitability to be part of the pack. They train them while socialising and the dogs have a fantastic time. We believe this is a essential service. Our boy know the day of the week that he goes out with his group and is waiting at the top of the stairs to be picked up. It would be devistating if we lost this service."

"Such a knee-jerk reaction from the powers that be that know nothing! You are penalising the wrong people. Why not go after the people that own the dogs roaming, killing livestock, attacking people? Oh, that's right, too hard basket, easier to go after responsible business owners"

"I meet quite a few dog walkers out west when walking my own dogs, they are always very professional and considerate. I find the worst dogs are people who come out at the weekends and let their untrained aggressive dogs off lead . It's definitely not the dog walkers !"

"Because I know that as an ex-farmer and dog owner of over 65 years experience,trained dogs with experienced handlers are not a danger to any to the public or stock. The issue is not numbers the issue is inexperienced and careless dog owners."

"Collaboration needed with proper professional dog handlers"

"Dog walkers provide an amazing service and the skilled ones are more than capable of managing multiple dogs"

"Auckland Council –I strongly object to this proposed bylaw. It will only hurt law-abiding, responsible dog owners, instead of targeting the much more pressing issue of unregistered, aggressive and roaming dogs. Please consult with the Professional Dog Walkers Association and other stakeholders to develop practical, evidence-based solutions. At a minimum, I suggest; - Work with P.D.W.A to create a licensing agreement for professionals to set standards and enforce best practices. - Focus on mandatory education (and potentially mandatory licensing) for all dog owners - Address the real issues, such as roaming dogs and excessive barking, which make up the majority of complaints. Our dog walker/trainer is a professional, highly educated, responsible and caring leader, who has brought about a massive change in our dog's confidence, behaviour and manners. Our dog has blossomed from a scared little rescue into a happy, confident, well-mannered, healthy girl who is getting close to bulletproof in terms of her recall. We would not have been able to achieve this without our dog walker/trainer. Life is only getting busier, with more and more competing demands piled on responsible dog owners. Ensuring professional pack walkers can continue their current efforts will enable us to meet our dogs' daily needs. Pack walking is such a vital role for society in so many ways. Dogs are an integral part of our family units, and giving them a day a week out on a pack walk with a trained professional allows them to socialise, learn how to behave around other dogs and interact with people and new spaces in a controlled environment. Restricting professional dog walkers' abilities to lead pack walks will have a detrimental effect on so many dogs' socialisation, obedience, confidence, manners, and physical wellbeing. Let's work together for FAIR regulations that TRULY address the needs of our community."

"These new rules will have a huge negative affect on not only my dog but her walker and their business. There has to be a better way."

"Dog walkers provide a great service for caring owners....council should concentrate on the roaming, vicious, unregistered dogs and leave the good owners and dog walkers alone! You are punishing the wrong people."

"Work with the professionals, register, license and control via regulations for the industry."

"Because it is a ridiculous proposal"

"Stop these rules & listen to the professional dog walkers"

"I am friends with dog walkers, and the service they provide is 100% necessary and they need to have a voice with the Council."

"Dog walkers provide an amazing service for responsible dog owners who understand the need to stimulate the lives of dogs including off-lead time. The issue is stray dogs, irresponsible owners and inadequate legislation allowing dogs to not be neutered, allowed to wander or worse to be chained."

"I am very disgusted with this Caleb and Melissa have been part of my dogs life for her whole life Caleb was so helpful when she moved from my nephew to me when she was one year old She goes to pet adventures twice a week No dog is accepted at pet adventures into a pack without an assessment or training There is a need to stop people just setting up a dog walking business who know nothing about training or pack behaviour but the professionals should not be punished"

"I know professional dog walkers personally and know they are committed to ensuring the animals in their care and instruction are well behaved. They take their job seriously. If the numbers were restricted the professional dog trainers and walkers would go out of business. This bylaw needs to be more carefully thought through."

"Quality, trained, professional dog-walkers know what they are doing and ensure public/clients are educated for best practice."

"Auckland council should not make a rule without Professional consultation with dog walkers and real people's voice who needs dog walkers . Auckland council should discuss issues with positive way for everyone who works these industries. Rather than small complaints. Trained dogs and Professional dog walkers are not the problem here. Problem is more the owner who doesn't take care their dogs and keep their dog not socializing or kept dogs not exercises. Many people who really need dog walkers and this rules is not possible to continue their business ."

"This is a baby/bathwater approach. It is clear that we want our community dogs to be well trained and have the right social skills and a good dog leader/trainer is doing just that. Weed out the cowboys and let the professionals continue to perform a valued service."

"I can understand the urgency for regulations in all industries being a groomer and how just anyone can pick up the claim to being a dog walker or a groomer without a qualification, there needs to be a proper look into it not just a number limit because if numbers were limited you'd charge more for less and people would take risks letting inexperienced people walk their dogs."

"My dog walkers are amazing and have excellent control of their packs."

"Putting the focus on numbers instead of skill will never solve anything. It would be far better to get people who wish to walk multiple dogs to get a permit or sit a licence. We need skilled dog handlers! Limiting numbers of dogs without taking into account skill of handler, disproportionately penalises the more skilled handlers."

"Our dog walker is a professional and very good at her job. The dogs, whether on or off lead, are always under her control. My dog isn't good on neighbourhood walks with me, especially when dogs off lead come running up to her barking. Having a dog walker enables my dog to get the exercise and socialisation that she needs. Limiting to 6 dogs limits dog walkers' ability to earn, will increase the costs of the service so that not as many people can use it, and is not based on any true data. My cat was mauled to death by dogs that

had "escaped" from their own yard four times over the weekend. The last time, they killed my cat. The council did nothing to the owners. Maybe council time could be better sent on removing dangerous dogs rather than interfering with something that isn't actually a problem? This seems like it is a bit of a bureaucratic exercise for no good reason to me. Maybe an alternative could be ensuring dog walkers are licensed? That may cut down on the cowboys who walk far too many dogs. Although, those kinds of people probably won't play by the rules anyway."

"I am one of many "responsible dog owners" on your own register. The extra socialisation, exercise, training my boy gets from his dog pack and walker is invaluable. Agree that this is a heavy handed measure."

"I don't believe a n appropriate solution can be found without the input of the Professional Dog Walkers Association."

"The professional dog walkers I know have great control over their animals. The issues are more with the individual dogs being walked by inexperienced persons, or the dogs not being properly trained."

"I believe these dog walkers provide a great service and the ones I see are responsible and their dogs are well behaved"

"I support my two good friends Cara and Jeff who are both professional dog walkers. The new laws would greatly effect their lively hood and hinder their ability to provide their service to the public."

"Professional dog walkers are wonderful, kind and knowledgeable people, an essential part of Auckland life. My dog just adores her walker and loves her weekly outing."

"Animal welfare. Dog walkers provide an essential service How many many actual complaints are received about dogwalkers?"

"This is a valuable service and placing restrictions does not solve the problem. a better solution needs to be found in collaboration."

"Less than 1% of complaints to Auckland council involve people walking multiple dogs. By far the main issue Aucklanders face is with with aggressive and roaming dogs wreaking havoc, particularly in South Auckland communities. So imposing limits on the number of dogs that can be walked at the same time will NOT fix the main problems Aucklanders face. The experience and knowledge of the dog handler matters. Talented professional trainers who operate well behaved packs provide an important service to the public. One inexperienced owner of a "friendly" offleash dog with no recall is potentially more dangerous than an experienced handler with 6+ impeccably trained and controlled dogs. More education is needed for the average everyday dog loving owners! Especially those with multiple infractions of their dogs running loose off-property. PLEASE create bylaws that have the most impact to curb our dog problems, rather than introducing bylaws that essentially handcuff true professionals who offer a valuable and much-needed service."

"I Support Professional Dog Walkers"

"Please don't persecute all dog walkers because a small few are "cowboys". If a dog walker has their dogs under control, then leave them be."

"If this regulation were put into effect, responsible, professional dog walkers would have to close down."

"A lot of people with dogs rely on professional dog walkers to look after their beloved pets while they're at work. We must look after our dogs to ensure they get the best possible care. We need to make things easier, not harder. There are plenty of dog free zones for people who don't wish to be near dogs. Let them play and run and sniff freely rather than take away more freedoms and opportunities."

"I am a professional dedicated pack walker and take pride in my beautifully behaved , well adjusted and very social dogs. I am constantly complimented on myself and my packs."

"Hey Auckland Council, I strongly oppose the proposed dog walking bylaw changes limiting how many dogs one person can walk at a time. This would hurt professional dog walkers, reduce exercise and socialization for dogs, and unnecessarily restrict responsible owners. There's no real evidence that this improves safety—better enforcement of existing rules would be a smarter approach. Instead of punishing responsible dog owners and businesses, let's look at solutions like licensing for professional walkers or more designated off-leash areas. Please reconsider and work with the community on a fairer solution!"

"My two tiny dogs love their dog walker, and if this restriction comes into place the cost of hiring more dog walkers to cover our 'Small Dogs Farm Adventures' day would greatly increase and likely lead to owners of 2+ dogs like me to become unable to afford a dog walker anymore, thus destroying my dogs', dog walker's, and my livelihood."

"The number of dogs with a professional dog walker is not the issue, the issue is ensuring dog walkers are appropriately trained and experienced to handle, train and socialise dogs in a structured way. Dogs that are mal-socialised or walkers who are not experienced are where the problem lies and the proposed council by-laws increase the risk. Auckland Council should work with PDWA to find an appropriate solution that is in the best interests of dogs and the community."

"Professional pack walkers are the solution. They provide enrichment, training and socialisation for dogs that otherwise would not get this because their owners are working. These dogs learn how to behave beautifully in public social settings and is therefore better for the community and the dogs. The council could work with PDWA and support them as away to find ways forward and also educate the public to be responsible caring dog owners."

"I have a good dog and want her & other dogs safe"

"I'm feeling this is a knee jerk reaction. Clearly there has been no consultation with stakeholders"

"This is people's livelihood puts food o. the table pays their rent..And these people know what they are doing"

"I strongly object to the councils proposed bylaw. Councils should be working with the likes of PDWA to bring about registration and licensing of individual dog/pack walkers and their businesses with the aim setting reputable standards and enforcing them. Opposing these proposed bylaws and directing resources to better deal with the actual issues (roaming, aggressive dogs, noise complaints and better education of owners)."

"1. Legitimate dog walkers have the utmost control over their dogs and we have full confidence in their ability to keep the public, other dogs, and our dogs safe. 2. The ratio increase will result in higher fees and less people able to afford appropriate care during the day. Dogs of Auckland will lose their socialisation leading to more dogs not knowing how to behave in public settings, dogs stuck at home, dogs escaping from backyards due to boredom and roaming the streets. This will decrease safety, not increase it. 3. Create a middle ground. Allow legitimate businesses to earn the right to walk dogs on and off leash through meeting requirements. This will stop those who don't know what they are doing and increase incentive to correctly learn how to manage multiple dogs both on and off lead."

"The issues are unsupervised and off lead dogs"

"This is ridiculous. Assess the people and their packs. I can guarantee more of them have better trained dogs than casual public members."

"The current dog walking service is so important for the mental and physical health of my sister's dog and for it to remain affordable for families."

"It makes sense to"

"Allowances should be made for. Responsible, professional dog walkers, perhaps accredit them."

"The problem lies in a lack of availability of wide open spaces that dogs are permitted on not in reducing services that offer the responsible supervision of dogs."

"This is a ridiculous policy, people who walk multiple dogs are some of the most responsible dog walkers as often are helping others who aren't able to walk their dogs due to work etc"

"Professional dog walkers are very important to dog owners. They allow us to go to work in the knowledge that our dogs are being exercised and in our case, trained. As usual, Auckland Council being useless and not having a clue what they're doing."

"Full support"

"Pack walkers are professionals who know how to care for dogs and keep them happy, stimulated and controlled. We need MORE pack walkers! The actual issue is roaming dogs and uncaring owners , which has nothing to do with pack walkers who get paid by caring owners."

"Pack walks are something we live by, it socialises our dog, she has the best adventures and we know she's safe when out and about with skilled walkers who have done the professional training to be a pack walker."

"I think a professional dog handler will know how many dogs they and there staff can handle"

"I totally agree that the industry should be regulated/licensed & Councils should work closely with PDWA to do so. But the proposed restrictions to 6 dogs with 3 on leads defeats the whole purpose of pack walking. Dogs benefit hugely from pack walks. They develop their social skills, learn how to deal with all the various temperaments of other dogs in their pack, get great exercise & have so much fun together, while being trained at the same time. From what I have experienced you end up with a pack of very well behaved, well balanced, happy dogs & their pack walking days are the absolute highlight of their week. Professional pack walkers are a vital part of our community. It is the dog owners who don't have time to walk, socialise or train their dogs adequately that lead to problems. Pack walkers can help alleviate that issue & are a god send to many busy dog owners. It would be sad to see the Council ruin such a great thing."

"I have used a fantastic dog walker. She can handle more than 3-6 dogs very well and i believe this change would significantly impact her and her clients. This law would punish the skilled dog walkers that are not causing problems as well as the dog owners that rely on them. A better way should be found"

"I am industry focused."

"Problem is with unregistered and stray dogs. Resources should go there."

"I feel very strongly in favour of the top people who devote their time to exercise dogs. And i know the dogs appreciate it too."

"I believe there needs to be a consultative process. I have been using professional Dog walkers as know they are safety conscious, know how to read and manage dog behaviour. Focus needs to be on dangerous dogs, wandering dogs and unruly dog walkers."

"I DO NOT agree with what Auckland Council are proposing and we need to stop it happening. Registered Dog walkers have the dogs under control before, during and after their walks, if they have issues, muzzles are added and long leads for training. If it goes through that means our dogs will lose their rights to socialize in the pack groups like usual, making it very awkward for their fun excursions at the beach, forest etc. Especially if two packs meet up during that time. It's all the roaming, unneutered dogs and their owners that constantly have been warned by council that this is whom should be aimed more at as it's those ones that ruin it for everyone! 😞"

"Changing the number of dogs per walker will destroy the service provided by good dog walkers as they will become uneconomic whilst doing nothing to address the behaviours of those who are causing the issues."

"A professional dog walker with training should not be looped in with people looking to make a quick dollar.."

"The limit is too low, but it also needs to be regulated and only for dog walking professionals who's job is it to walk multiple dogs."

"Dog walker's do such an amazing job and get little thanks... I'm all for 6 ❤️"

"We so value the wonderful work that our Dog Walker does and marvel at the amazing way she is able to manage the packs she takes regularly both on and off leash. The dogs all love her and listen intently. I strongly oppose these proposed restrictions."

"Dog walkers aren't the problem! Roaming dogs are! Focus efforts where they are needed!"

"What is trying to be solved here? This broad sweeping limitation isn't the solution to the problem - you are lacking appropriate problem analysis, once defined it should lead you to a more precise effective solution. If limiting numbers of dogs on walks/training was the answer then you should be seeing the problem situation occurring every time there are large numbers of dogs. You need a cost benefits analysis and consider the benefits of dog pack walks/socialisation training but find a way to regulate this in order to make sure it is safe, like any other service."

"My dogwalkers are professional and my dog has been going on outings with 10 + dogs for more than 7 years. He has always been safe and the dogs are well trained and competently managed by the walker."

"It's not fair that the council who we paid our rates for. Have come up with rule change without speaking to the people involved."

"This madness Fix the real problem which are irresponsible owners. These are the ones that don't pay dog registrations and certainly don't pay for dog walkers!!"

"I don't think this solution fixes the problem at all!"

"The problem isn't dogs the problem is owners, let the responsible owners and professional dog walkers have a license. Penalise the bad owners properly, notice I said owners not dogs."

"If a dog is well integrated and behaves off lead then this is an unnecessary implementation. It impacts businesses who take dogs on pack adventures under the current guidelines of 8 off leash and unnecessarily causes distress for animals who are used to being off leash. Suggest the person who is recommending this change to go and walk six dogs and keep three dogs on a leash and see the distress and impact it causes to those who are socially

integrated and used to this kind of pack adventure. Focus on the actual problem which is not from pack adventures for integrated dogs and look to those who haven't trained their larger breeds into these environments. That is where the issue lies!"

"The council needs to focus on the actual dog problem and not tinker with something that doesn't need to be tinkered with. The need to focus on the roaming, uncared for dogs and those that back yard breed. Owners should be registered and all dogs unless a registered ethical breeder or a farmer should be allowed to breed, all other dogs should be desexed. Dog walkers aren't the problem."

"More laws won't stop the rogue dog walkers. I absolutely trust most dog walkers are capable of controlling their packs."

"We need these honest and professional dog walkers as long as they are fully registered business."

"I am signing because it is unfair for the dogs to limit their exercise and training opportunities even more - and totally disregard the qualifications and skills of the person training/ walking the dog, especially professional trainers. Accidents happen because irresponsible owners don't exercise, nor train or socialize their dogs, and this regulation will cause even MORE dogs to be not exercised and under socialized, as the costs will become prohibitive."

"This service is important for the dogs and makes the dog owners lives easier. Limits don't solve the issue instead it's important that these dogs in good hands"

"Where is the evidence that this restriction is necessary"

"This new rule will impact professional dog exercise businesses financially. Increased priced will lead to some dogs not getting the exercise they need to be for their physical and mental health."

"Because we have 3 dogs and often have more when visitors come so are caring dog lovers and owners"

"I care for animals and believe the walkers do a great job and also helps the owners if they are busy"

"I believe the industry needs to be given the opportunity to present a better strategy. Rather than a knee jerk solution being imposed on them which will not deliver the right outcomes ."

"I value the role professional dog walkers provide to responsible dog owners and their pets"

"There are some very professional and skilled dog walkers who would lose their jobs if this goes ahead."

"Off leash parks are just that. Dog walkers provide an essential service for owners and registered dogs. Any issues should be dealt with case by case rather than blanket restrictions."

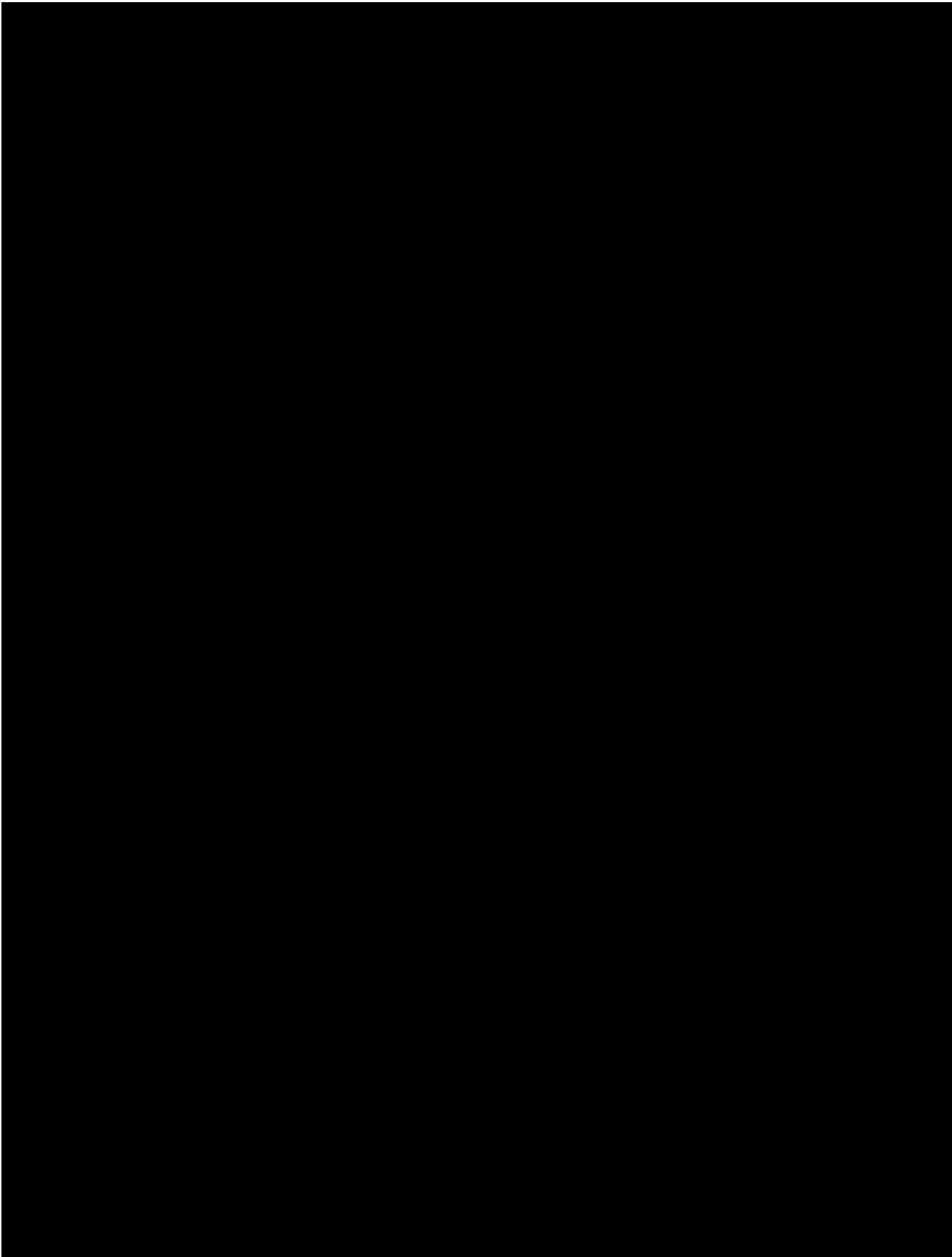
"The responsible owners always get penalized for the few irresponsible. Only dogs will suffer with this change with people not being able to afford them to be in care and having long days at home alone."

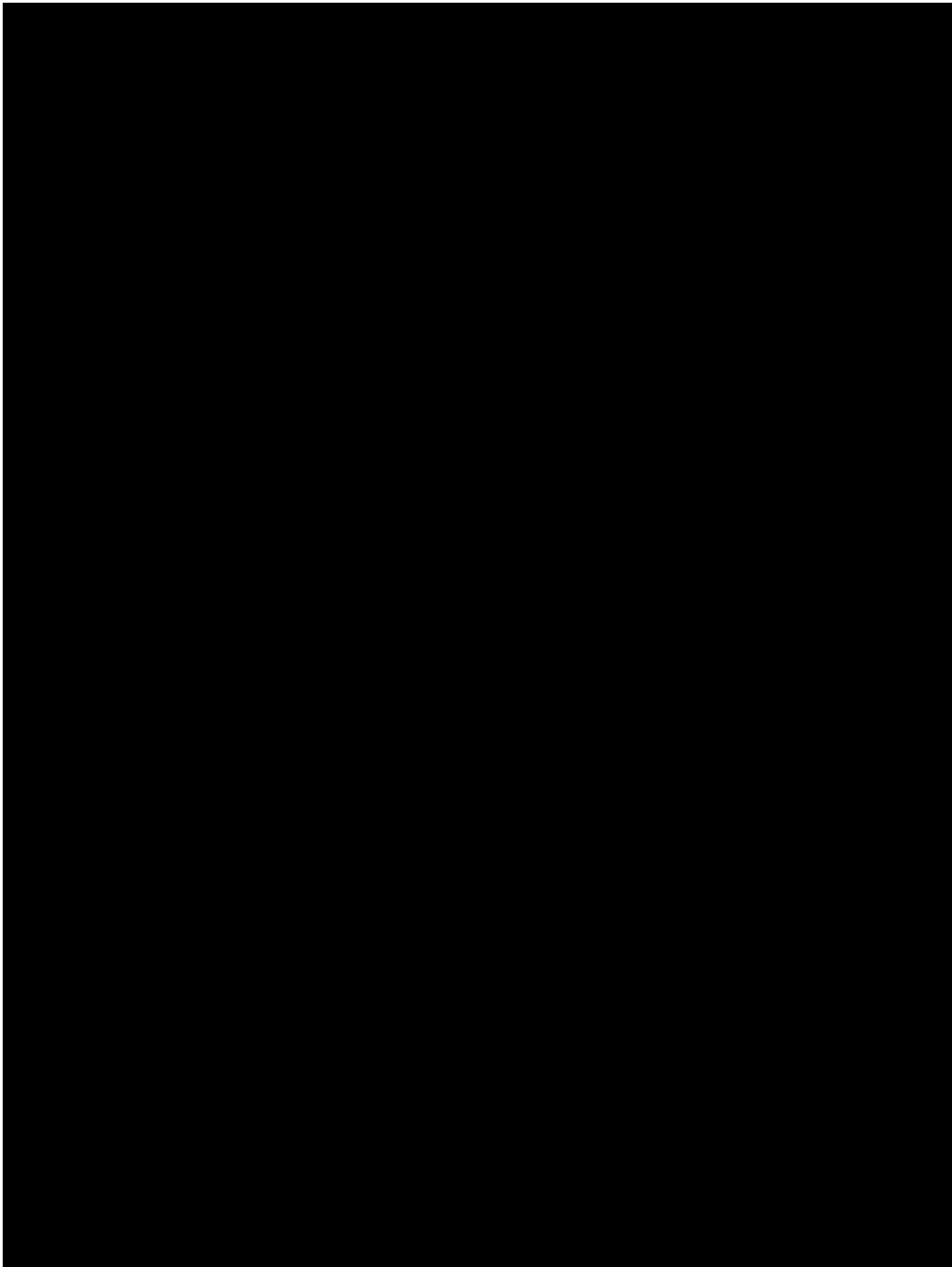
"Limits don't solve anything, focus needs to be on skills and capability. Even 2 dogs in the wrong hands can be a massive problem."

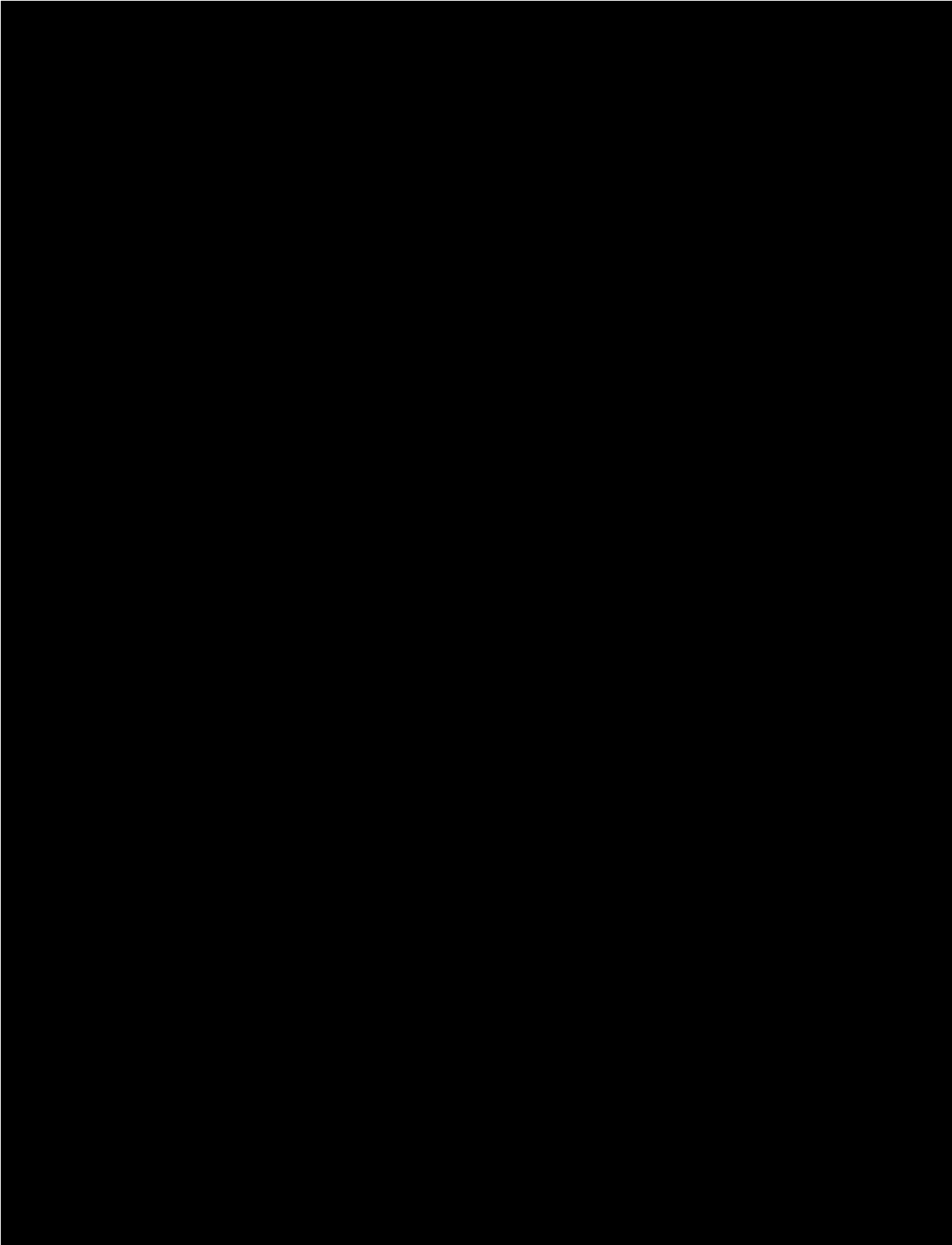
"Professional Dog Walkers do a fabulous job."

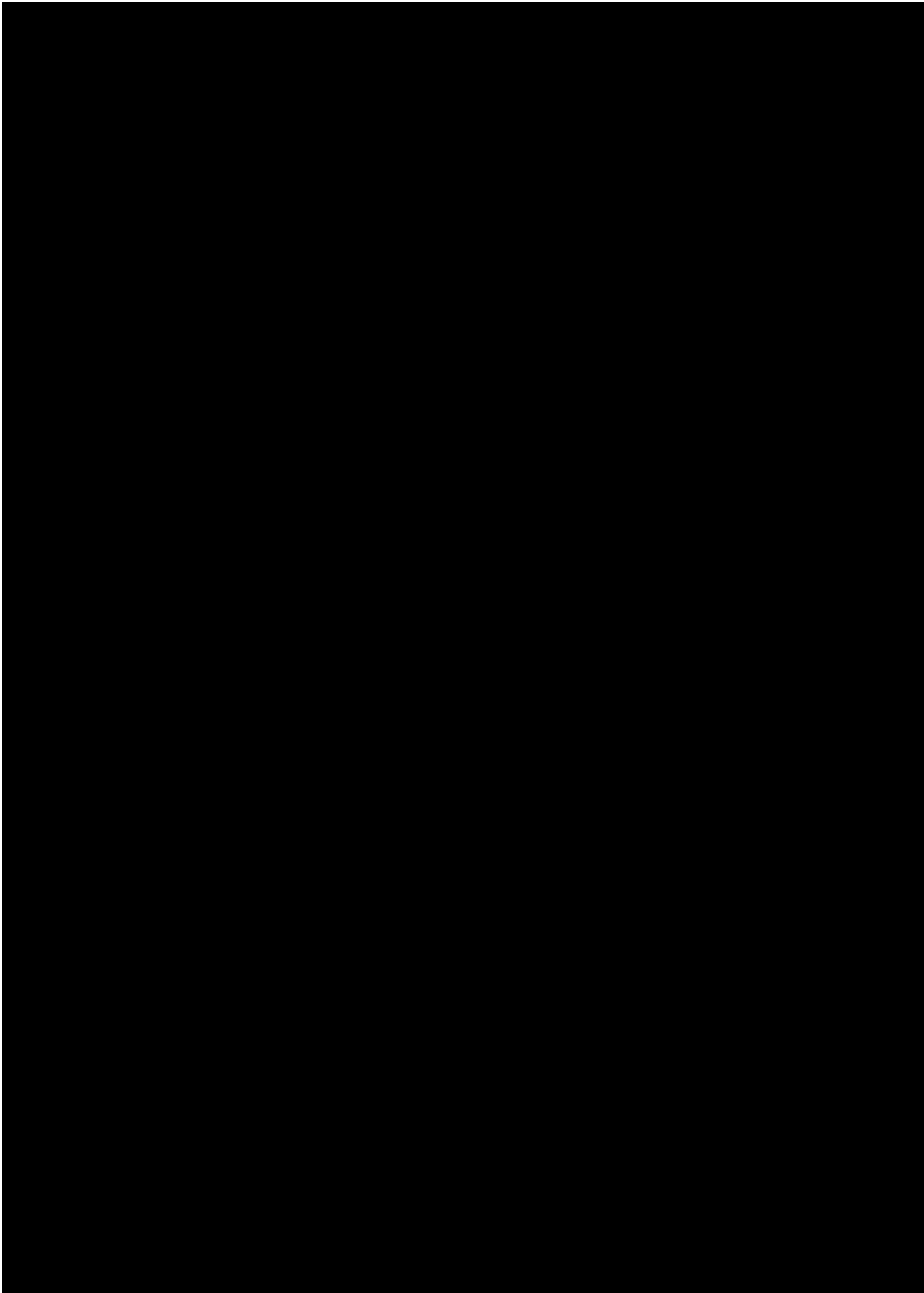
"Dog walkers are responsible worker for responsible dog owners."

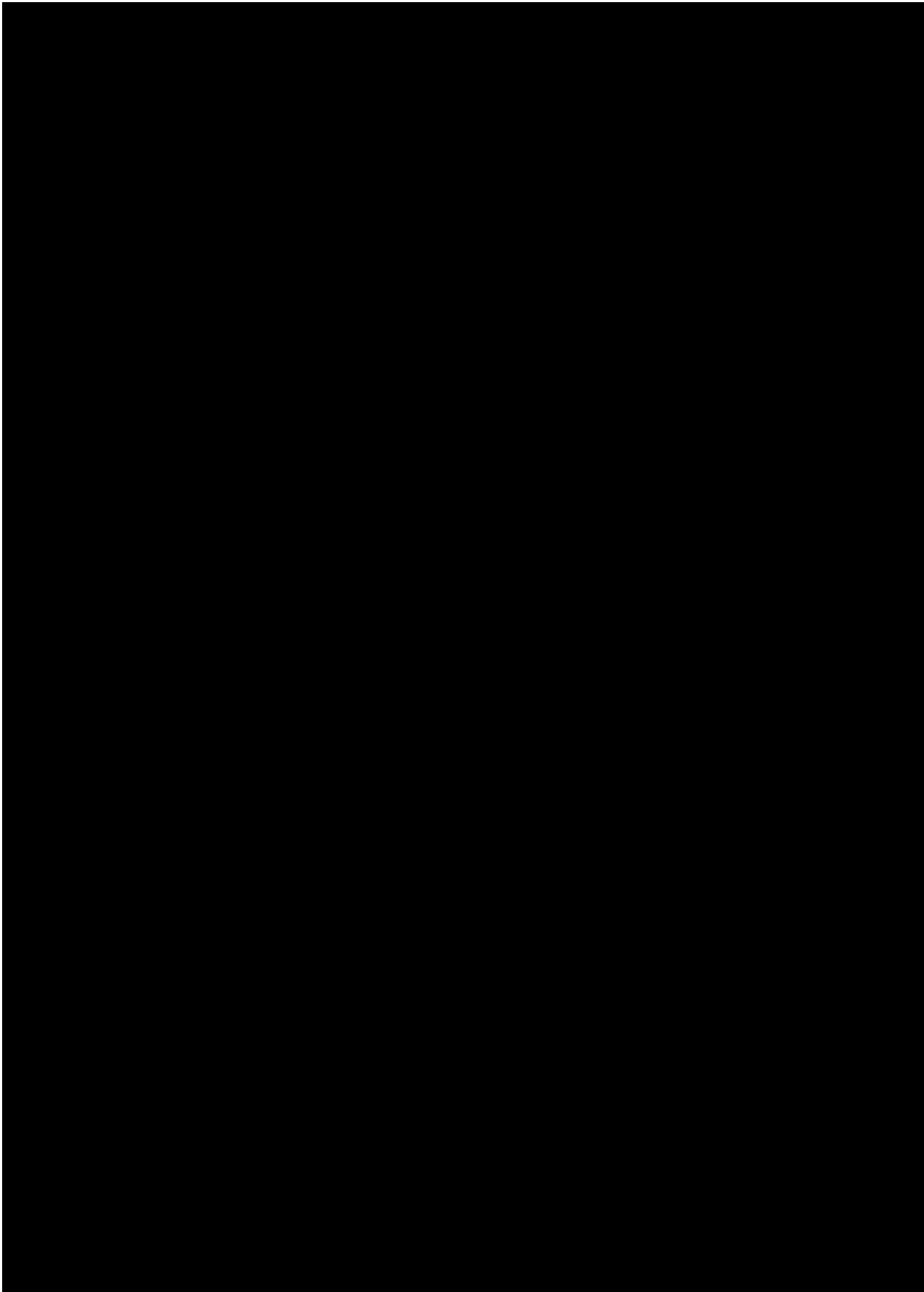
Signatories

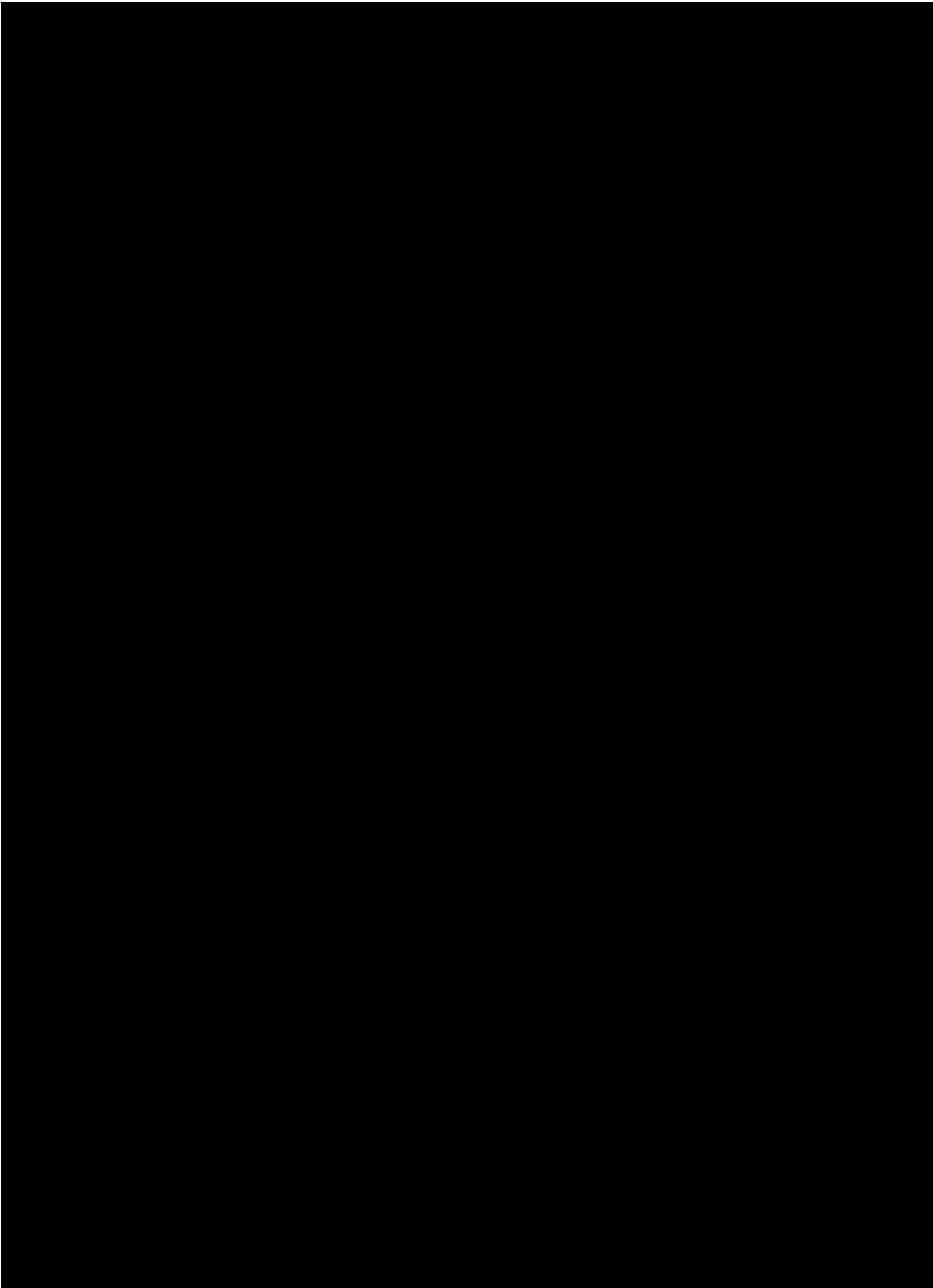


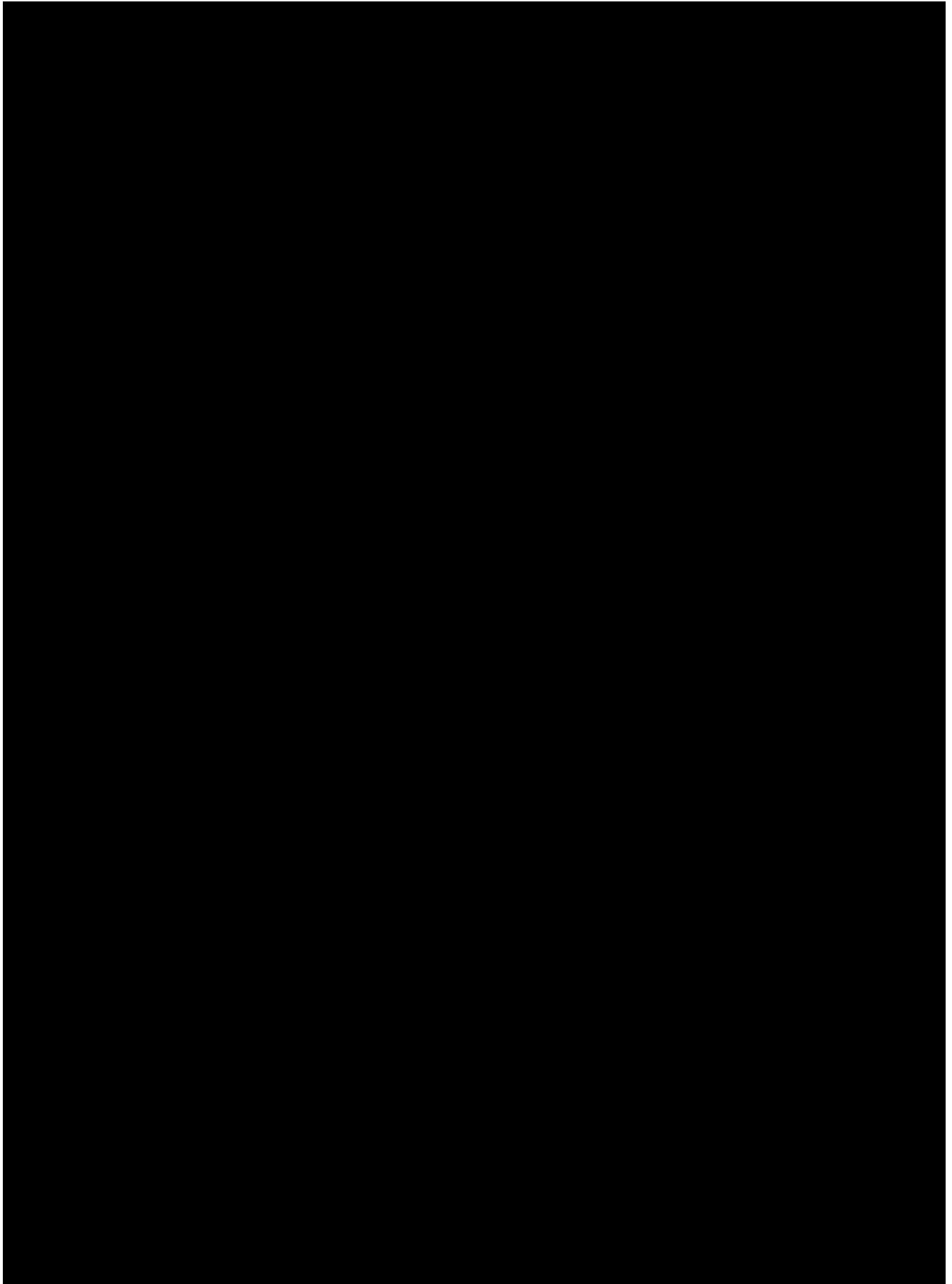


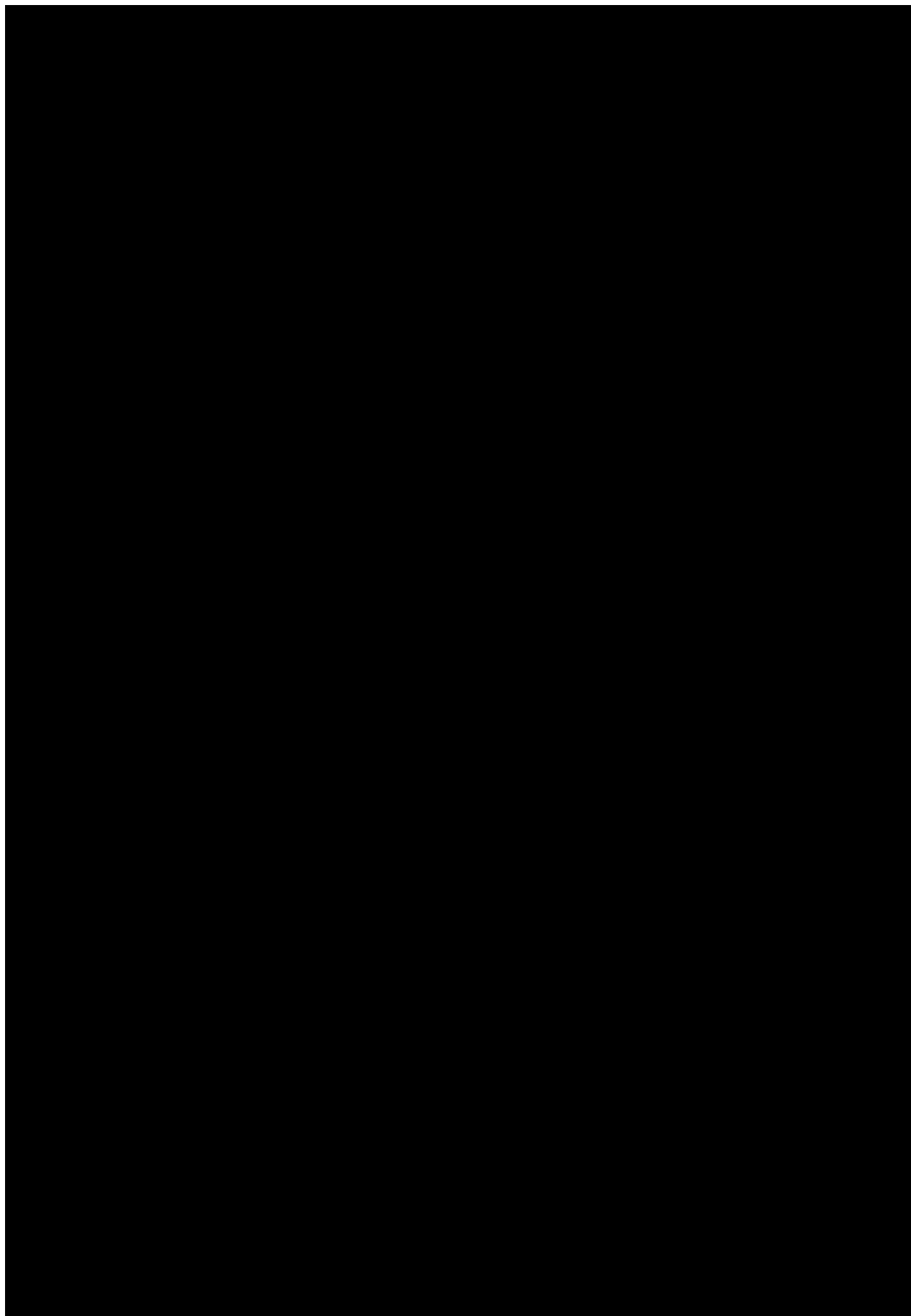


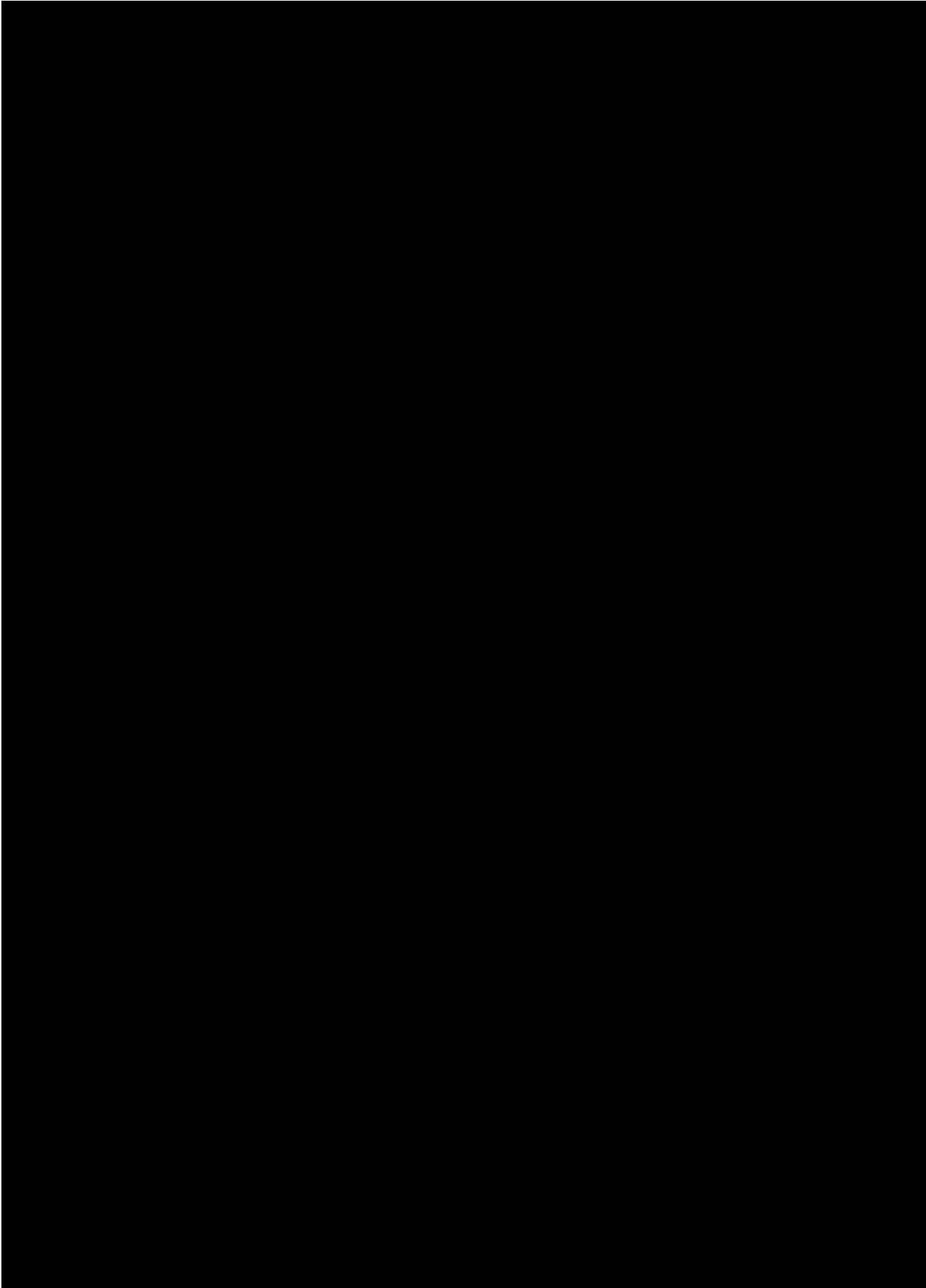


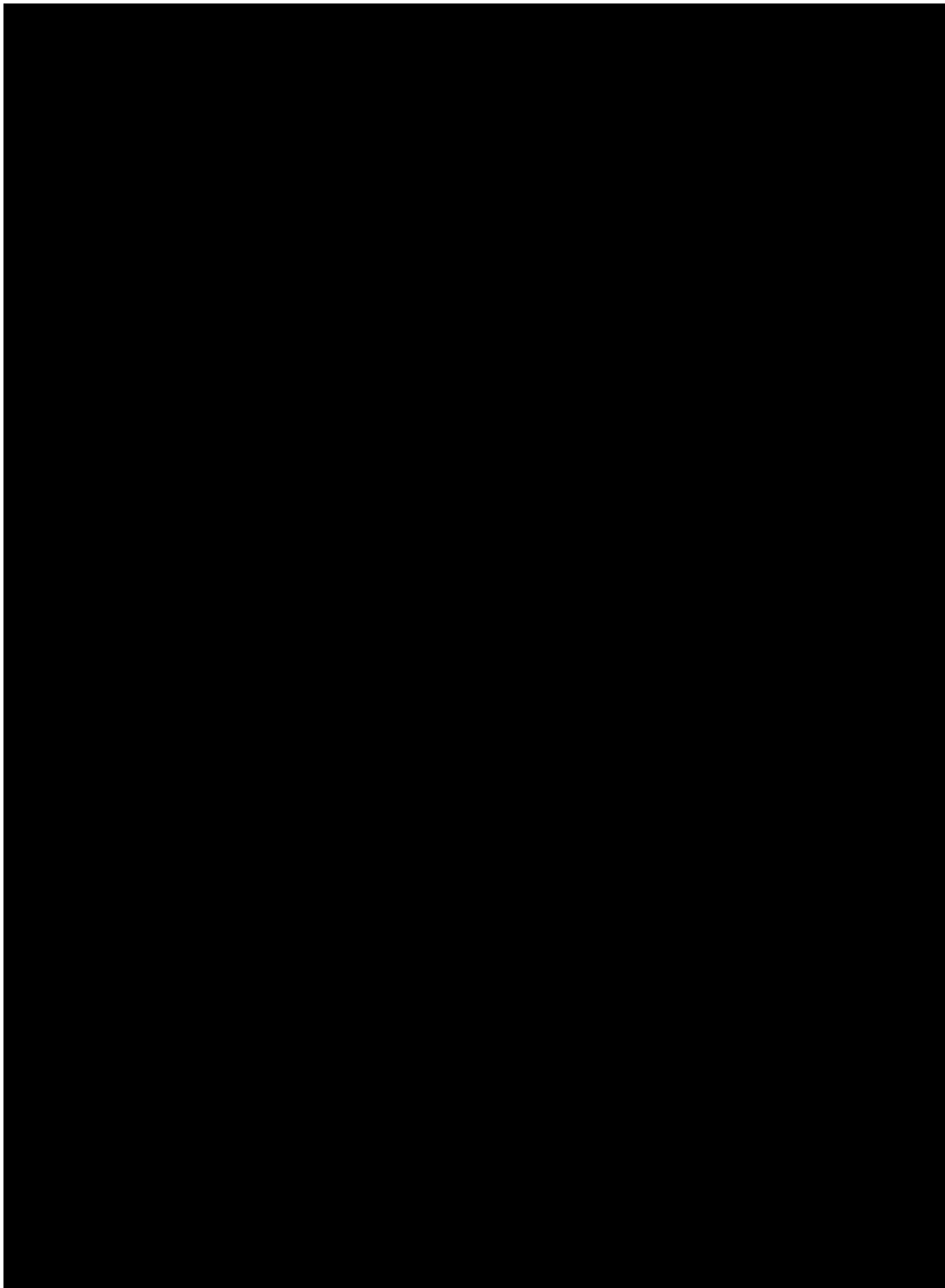


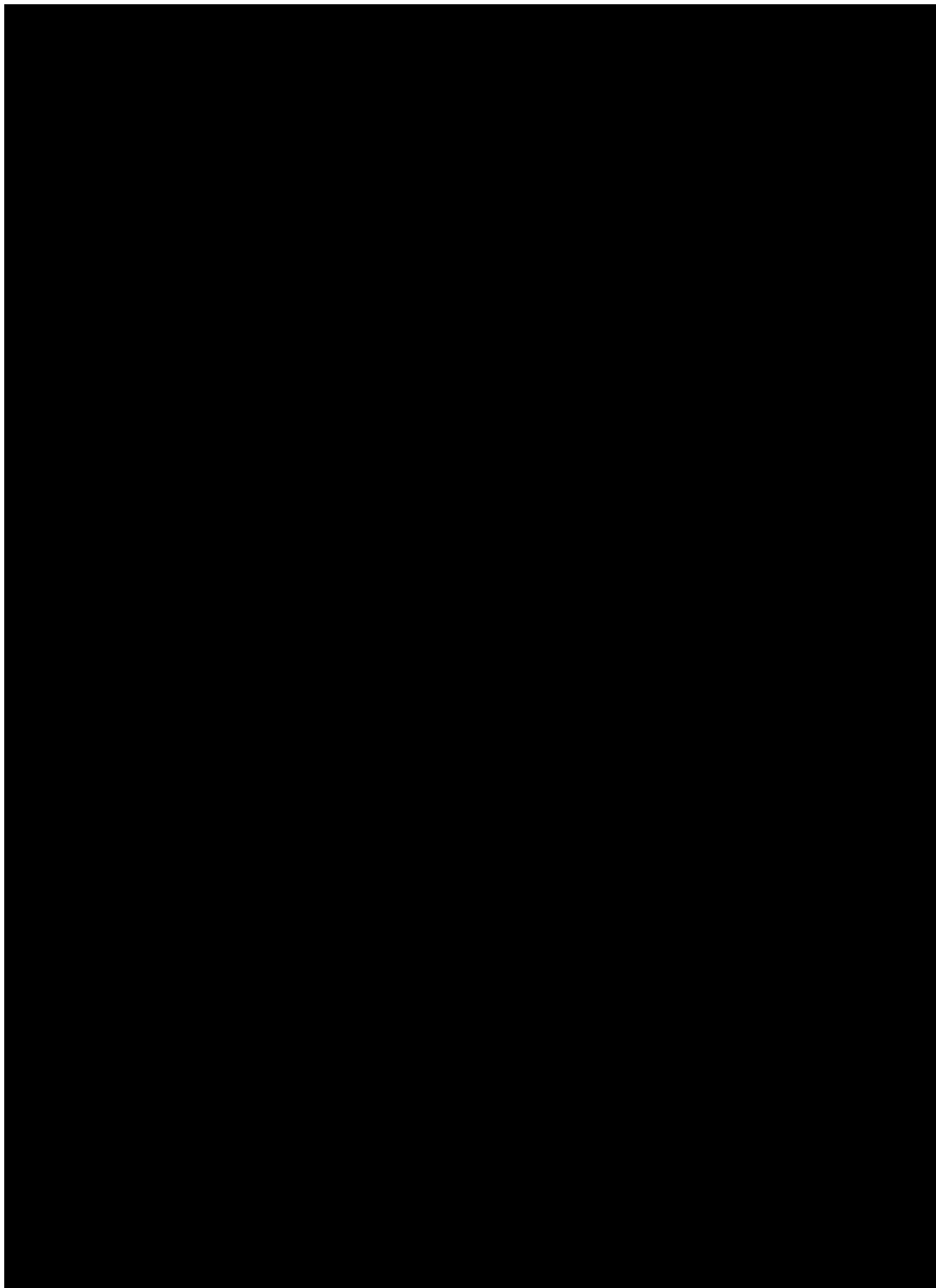


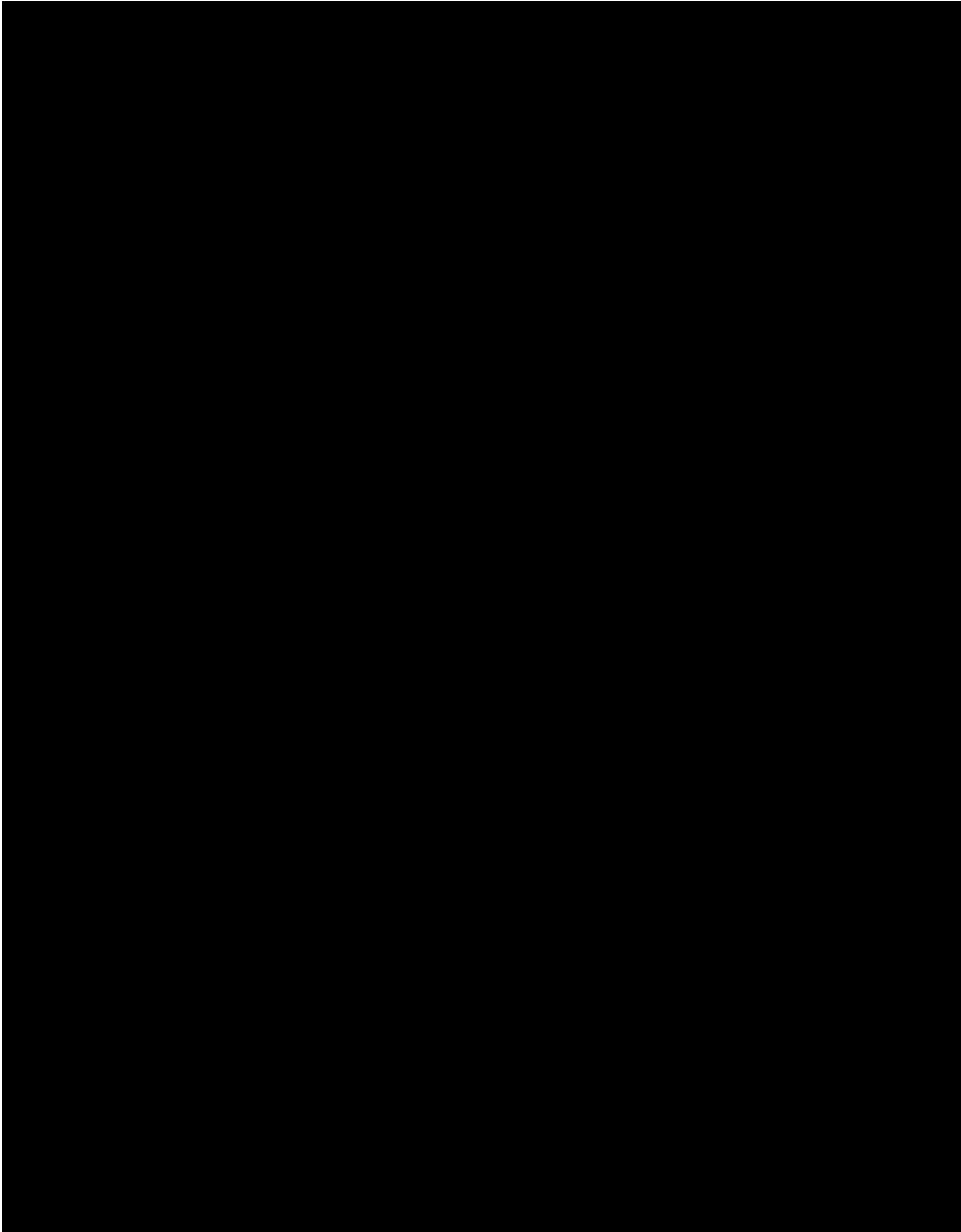


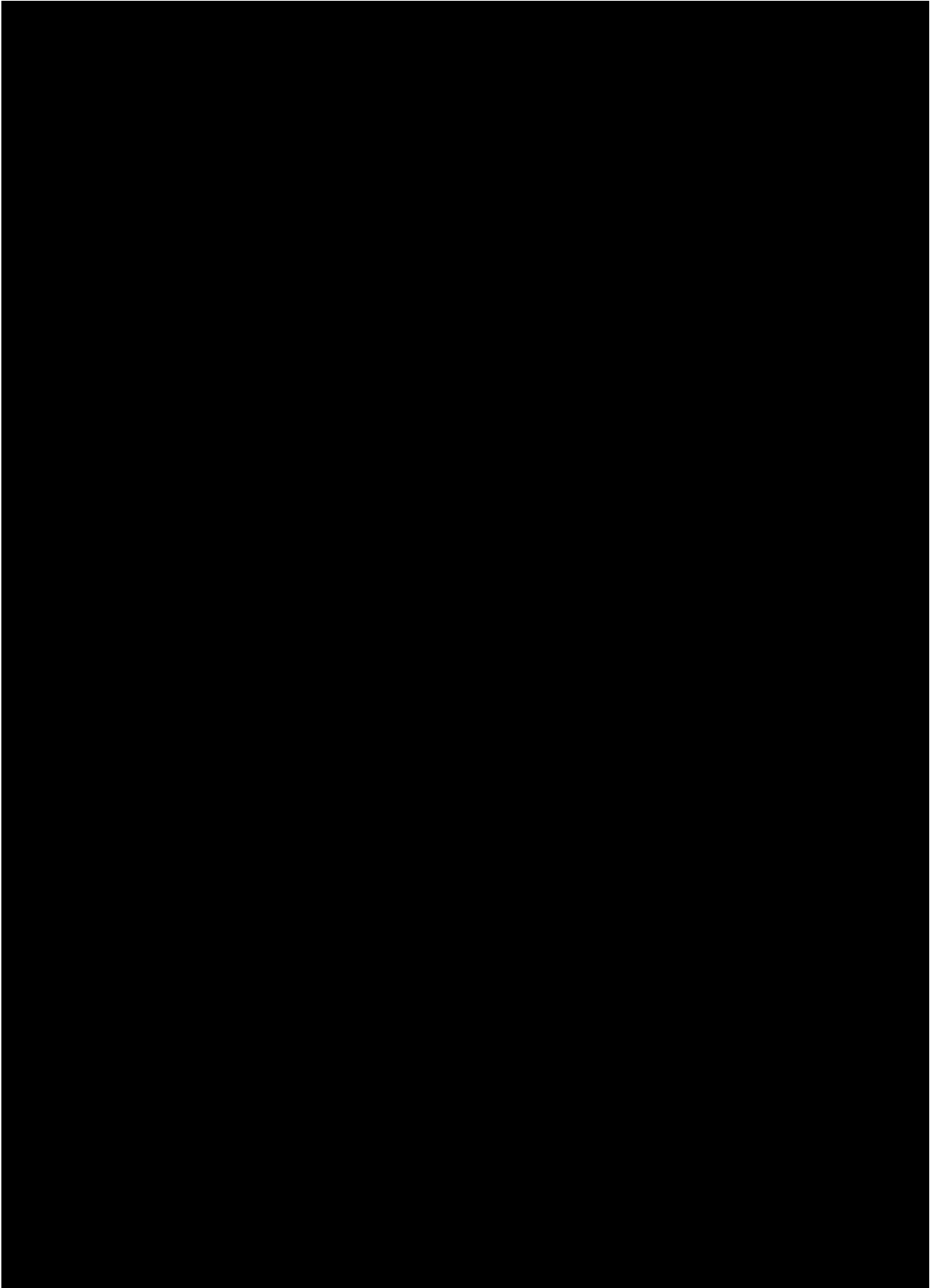


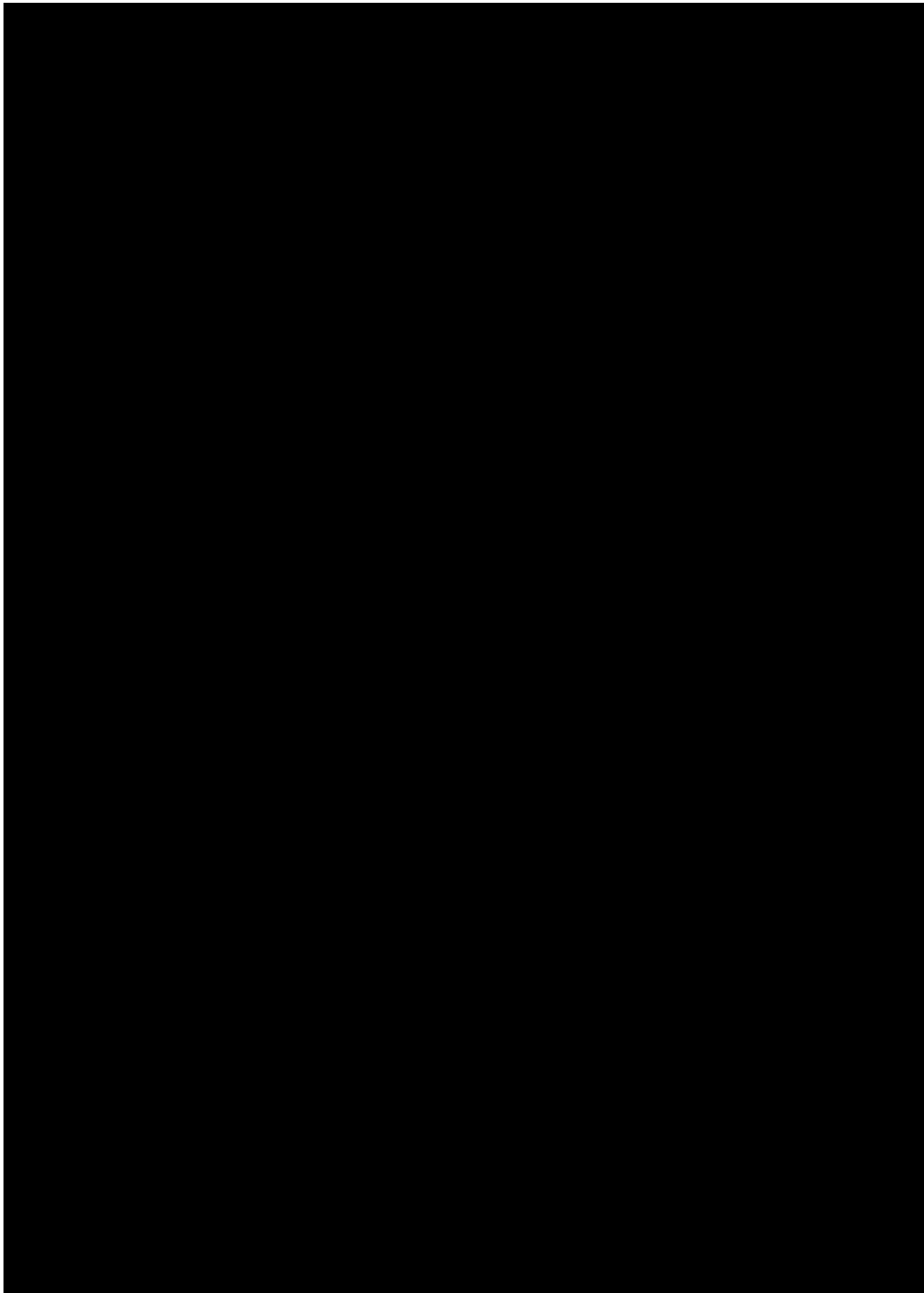


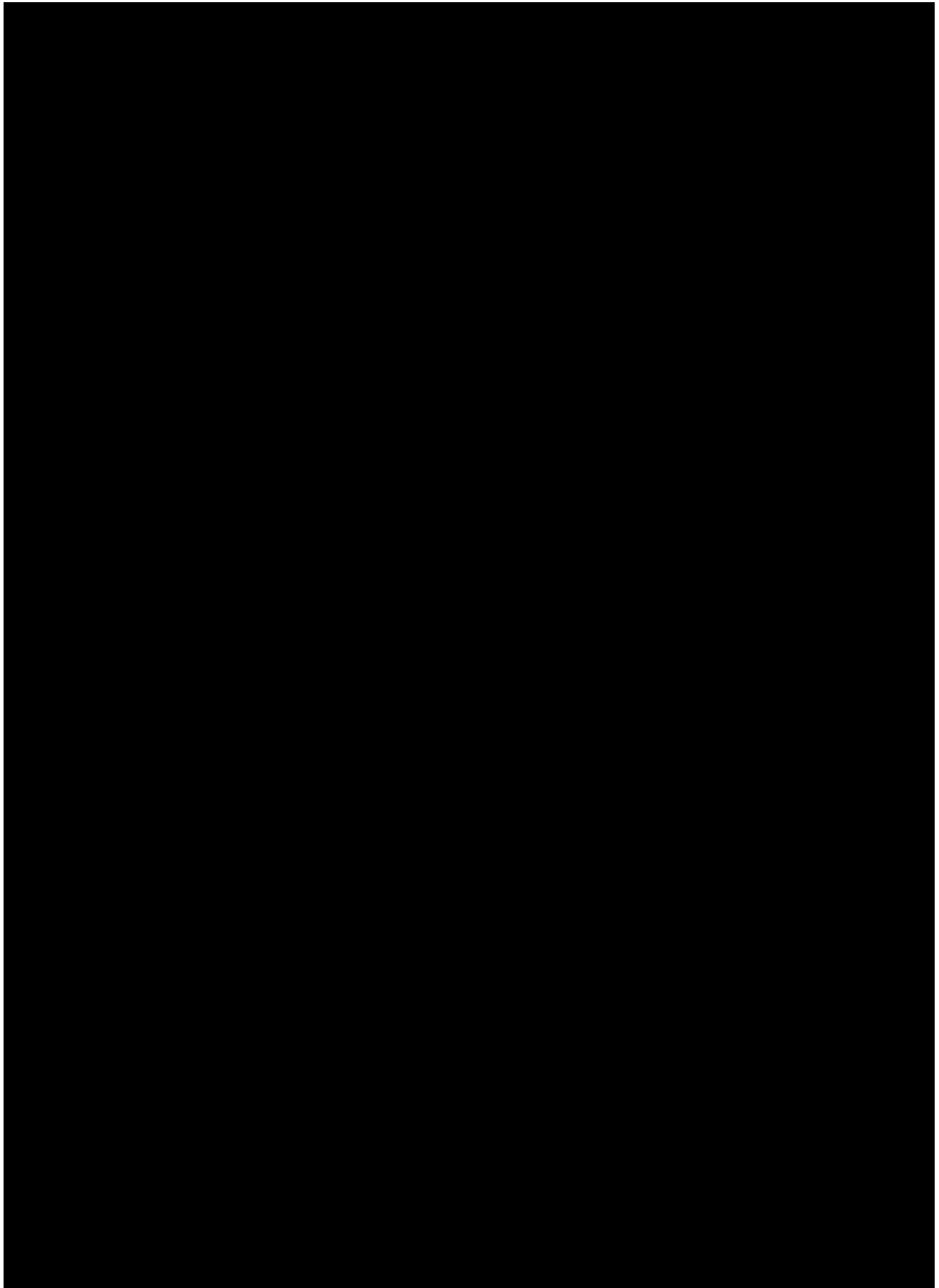












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Appendix 3

Detailed explanation of data issues



2 February 2025

Dear Mayor Wayne Brown and Phil Wilson,

We are writing to you to formally complain about the data and conclusions reached in the 2024 Review Findings Report: Auckland Council Policy and Bylaw on Dogs 2019 (July 2024, Version 1) (the **Report**). This Report was presented to the Regulatory and Safety Committee (**Committee**) on 2 July 2024 (Agenda Item 9) and is recorded as being endorsed by the Committee (Resolution number RSCCC/2024/47).

Our complaint is that the data and evidence presented to the Committee is not complete and therefore the Committee could not reach a lawful decision because decision makers could not make an informed decision about the options available to them. This breaches the fundamental requirements of section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002. We believe the only conclusion available given the errors in the Report is that the Committee had predetermined that walking multiple dogs in public was an issue requiring regulation. We believe that the decision to progress regulation of this issue is therefore a breach of the principles of natural justice and must be held to be invalid.

Issue Summary

Overall, the analysis in the Report is seriously flawed to the extent that it is misleading and draws incorrect conclusions. In key sections it combines two incomparable data sets, misuses the number of respondents to a question option as a proxy for the number of incidents, and ignores fundamental survey flaws like small sample sizes, participant selection bias, lack of data corroboration, and uses responses to ambiguous questions for purposes to which they do not relate.

The key issues raised below are:

1. The "People's Panel" Survey with 2,184 respondents has been portrayed by Auckland Council staff to decision makers as robust data when there is no corroboration of this Survey data and the questions asked in the Survey are vague and cannot be logically interpreted to provide the data that Auckland Council staff promoted as fact.
2. Data on the issues created by multiple dogs being walked was created by combining two incompatible data sets and excludes the majority of respondents (55%) who responded "*None of the above - I have no problems*".
3. That Auckland Council staff created a proxy from Survey respondents which they purport to be the expected level of issues caused by multiple dog walkers. The data used to create this proxy is irrelevant to the expected level of issues as the question asked only how often respondents saw multiple dogs in public spaces and only used responses of "*Always*" or "*Most of the time*". This assumes that every time a multiple dog walker was seen an issue would be expected which is simply incorrect.

The People's Panel Survey

Specifically, our formal complaint relates to the methodology and statistical validity of information presented on page 13 of the Report when describing the scale and impact of the problem relating to walking multiple dogs (topic 5) which we reproduce below for completeness:

5. Walking multiple dogs	... from the inherent conflict between people walking multiple dogs at a time and other users of shared spaces in Auckland.	Problems low to moderate frequency and mostly low impact. However, people walking multiple dogs (particularly three or more) are disproportionately represented in several dog-related problems. For example, interfering with activities (46 per cent), approaching other people when they didn't want them to (42 per cent), being aggressive (36 per cent), and chasing wildlife (31 per cent).
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Extract 1: Summary of findings on topic 5

Extract 1 above is a summary of analysis presented in Appendix One to the Report. The data referenced was produced by Auckland Council staff following a 'People's Panel' Survey (**Survey**) conducted in June 2024. We raise the following issues with this 'People's Panel' Survey and relying on it as a robust data source for decision making:

1. The Survey was sent to a closed list of civically minded individuals who have previously responded to consultation topics and have actively opted to take part in surveys. It is not representative of Auckland residents and is skewed towards European older females in the Auckland area.¹ No adjustment has been made to ensure that all regions of Auckland or the diversity of Aucklanders are appropriately represented. In addition the Survey has only 2,184 respondents or 0.0013% of all Aucklanders.²
2. The Survey is an opinion survey asking respondents what they think with no secondary data to back up its claims. Importantly, when secondary data was investigated by Auckland Council staff, namely actual complaints made to animal management, this shows no correlation between walking multiple dogs and increased complaints. Importantly, when complaint data was reviewed, this found 0.7% of all complaints analysed related to more than two dogs with an owner.³
3. None of the Survey questions asked respondents about issues they had observed with people walking three or more dogs. All questions in the Survey relating to walking multiple dogs in public asked respondents about situations they observed with "more than one dog" which is not the same as "multiple dogs" which must naturally be interpreted as two or more. The phrasing of the questions in the Survey mean none of the conclusions or data in Extract 1 can be drawn from the Survey using conventional mathematics or statistics, making Extract 1 incorrect and misleading.
4. The Survey questions are ambiguous and lack clarity, for example Question 18 ("*How frequently do you see people walking more than one dog at a time in public places*"), provided respondents with five vague response options: "*always*", "*most of the time*", "*some of the time*", "*rarely*" and "*never*". These terms are not defined and could have been interpreted differently by respondents. This ambiguity makes it

¹ See page 87 of the Report.

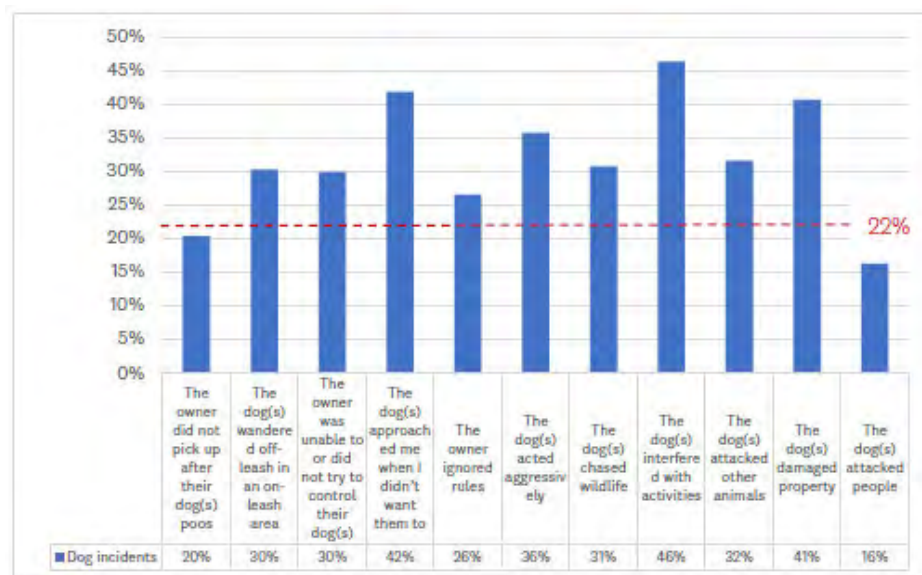
² Statistics New Zealand, Auckland population as measured in the 2023 Census.

³ 2024 Review Options Report: Auckland Council Policy and Bylaw on Dogs 2019, page 46, Table 1, "Manual search - multiple dog incidents with owner, in a public place".

impossible to derive data about the actual number of times a respondent saw multiple dogs. However, Auckland Council staff used this question to derive a proxy for the number of incidents you might expect from multiple dogs being walked in its analysis.

Data supporting the position that multiple dog walkers are disproportionately represented in the data

The percentages referred to in Extract 1 are pulled directly from the graph on page 49 of the Report, reproduced below:



Extract 2: Graph purporting to display multiple dog incidents from page 49 of the Report

We raise the following issues with Extract 2 above and data on page 49 of the Report:

- When analysing the data from the Survey, Auckland Council staff have used responses to Question 18 "How frequently do you see people walking more than one dog at a time in public places" to create a proxy or estimation of the number of incidents you would expect to see from multiple dogs being all those respondents who answered "Always" or "Most of the time" totalling 22%. There is no correlation between Question 18 of the Survey and the rate you would expect to see incidents involving multiple dogs.
What we would "expect" to see should reflect multiple dogs being walked as a percentage of total dogs being walked. It is a misrepresentation to use data around how often respondents to a survey see multiple dogs being walked as an estimate of the frequency or volume of multiple dog walks, as to get this you need a reference of total dog walks so you can understand the relative size of multiple dog walks compared to single dog walks. The 22% is said to provide an indication of the proportion of walks that involve multiple dogs but it is not; it is just a count of respondents to a Survey.
- The presentation of Extract 2 is misleading as a reader would wrongly look at the bars above the line and assume that multiple dogs on walks are a problem when in fact the data displayed is fundamentally flawed and cannot show this. See our issues with page 48 of the Report below to further illustrate this point.

7. To further aggravate the matter of misinformation, the data used to determine the 22% dotted line omits the 57% of respondents who answered "*Some of the time*" to Question 18 making the graph misleading as the data has been cherry picked to omit an answer that shows a completely different conclusion, which is that multiple dogs are in fact under represented in incidents. It is unclear why the 22% figure has been chosen. For reference, Question 18 of the survey and responses is reproduced below:



Extract 3: Responses to Question 18 of the Survey extracted from page 99 of the Report

We note that Auckland Council staff highlight 79% of respondents as the relevant number in Extract 3, however have chosen to omit the "*Some of the time*" responses to get a line that "fits" the narrative of multiple dog incidents being higher than would be expected in the primary findings reported in Extract 2.

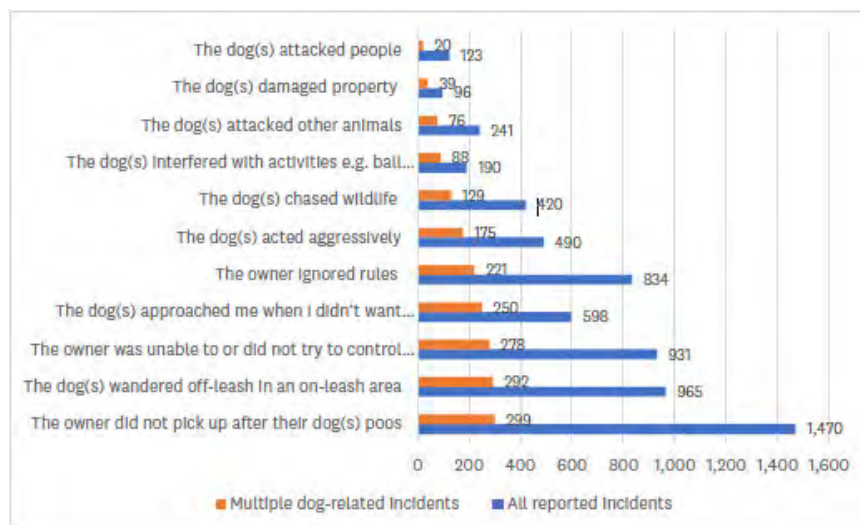
8. There is also evidence that personal opinion has interfered with the Report the reporting of data on page 49 which states:
- Multiple dog walking also accounts for 32 per cent of all 'dog attacking other animals' incidents. This could be attributed to dogs squabbling within the pack during walks.

Extract 4: Statement from the final bullet point on page 49 of the Report

The statement in Extract 4 has no supporting evidence, data or information to support it that would provide insights into the cause of "dog attacking other animal" incidents. This personal opinion further discredits the Report.

How the data in Extract 2 was created

The blue bars shown on Extract 2 are a product of a graph on page 50 of the Report, reproduced below:



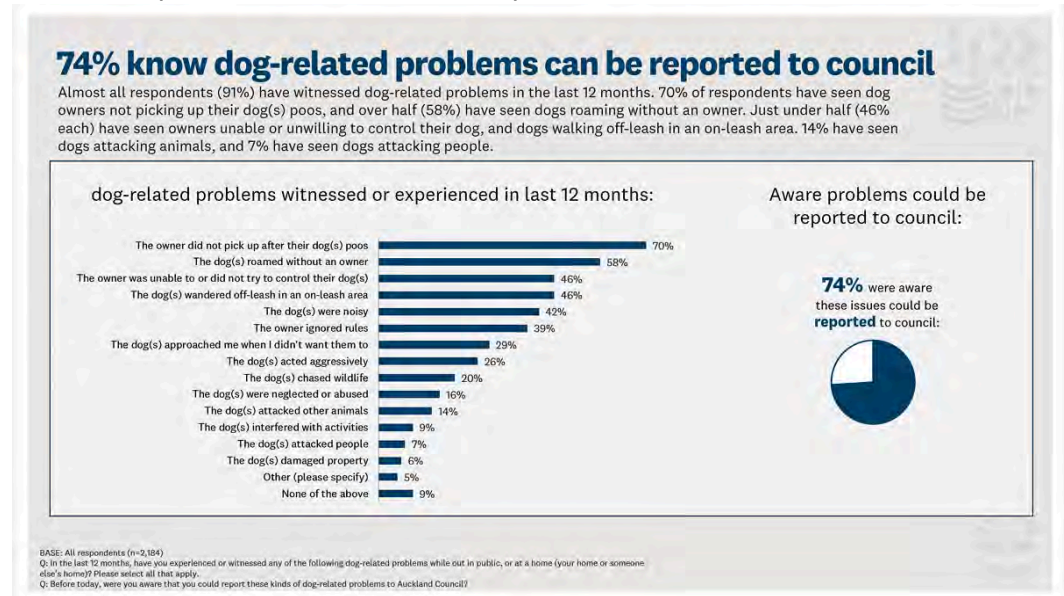
Extract 5: Graph purporting to display multi-dog incidents compared to all incidents respondents saw extracted from page 50 of the Report.

We raise the following issues with Extract 5 and data on page 50 of the Report:

9. Extract 5 purports to compare the number of people who answered 'yes' to Questions 13 and 20 of the Survey. From analysing the Report Question 13 and 20 of the Survey appeared as follows:

- a. **Question 13:** "In the last 12 months, have you experienced or witnessed any of the following dog-related problems while out in public, or at a home (your home or someone else's home)? Please select all that apply"

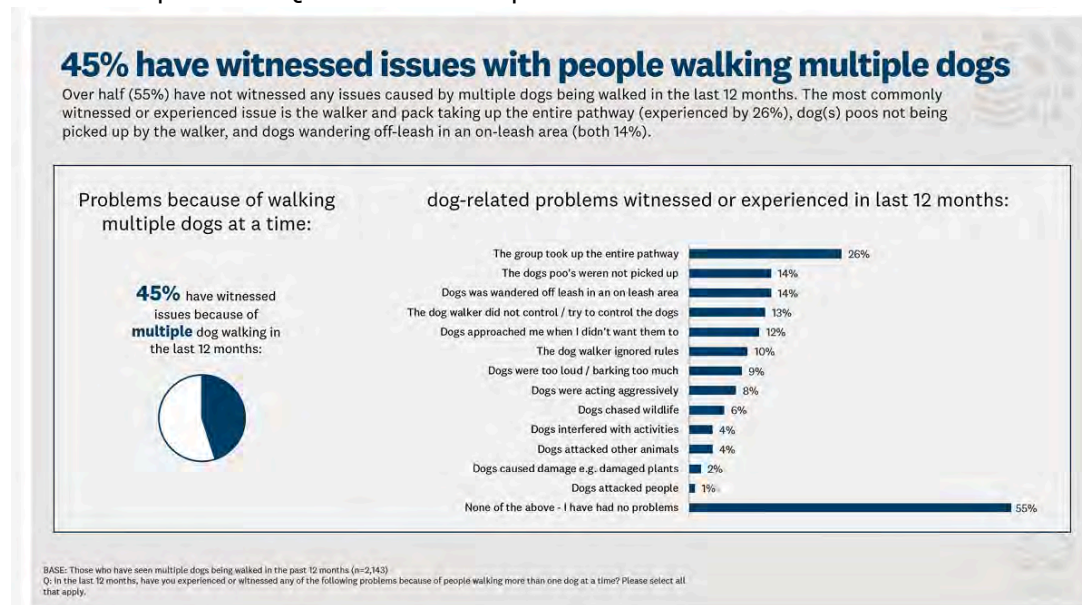
The full response to Question 13 is reproduced below:



Extract 6: Survey responses for Question 13, extracted from page 99 of the Report

- b. **Question 20:** "In the last 12 months, have you experienced or witnessed any of the following problems because of people walking more than one dog at a time? Please select all that apply"

The full response to Question 20 is reproduced below:



Extract 7: Survey responses for Question 20, extracted from page 100 of the Report

Attempts to compare incidents related to all dogs (Question 13) with incidents related to multiple dogs (Question 20) are flawed. For both Questions, a 'yes' response to a type of incident cannot be used to estimate frequency i.e. number of incidents, as each response provides no information about the number of times the incidents had been seen.

What responses to Questions 13 and 20 provide is a count of respondents, and that count is used incorrectly by Auckland Council staff in Extract 5 as a count of incidents, which it is not. One respondent could have seen 20 incidents, none involving multiple dogs, another could have seen 2 incidents, both involving multiple dogs. Likewise, one respondent may have seen a single incident where multiple dog-related problems were witnessed and answered Question 20 accordingly and being overcounted when such an incident would indicate an issue with the dog(s) involved rather than a blanket problem to be applied to all dogs. This data cannot be used to estimate a number of incidents involving multiple dogs, nor an estimate of the total number of incidents.

10. In addition to the above issue, responses to Question 13 includes all dog-related incidents witnessed anywhere, including in the home, while Question 20 is specific to incidents involving multiple dogs being walked in public. Therefore, the data sets are incomparable, akin to comparing apples with oranges.
11. Finally the footnote on page 50 fundamentally misrepresents the wording of Question 13, misleadingly suggesting the data sets are comparable. The footnote excludes the words **or at a home (your home or someone else's home)? Please select all that apply**. The omission of this key information meant that a decision maker reading the report was unable to identify that the data presented was incompatible and suggests that it was deliberately excluded. The footnote to page 50 is reproduced below:

15 Q13 "Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following dog-related problems while out in public?" is under the assumption that it talks about all incidents anyone has seen anywhere, which could include incidents where the owner is absent, whereas Q20 "Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following problems because of people walking more than one dog at a time?" is under the assumption that the owner is present as the dog is being walked.

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Extract 8: Footnote from page 50 of the Report

Conclusion

The above issues clearly show that Auckland Council staff failed to present truthful and objective information to decision makers and manipulated data to find an issue rather than presenting the evidence discovered. Auckland Council staff also presented the Survey and its results as evidence of a serious issue worthy of addressing when the Survey has significant issues with its methodology, questioning and analysis.

We remind Auckland Council of its obligations under the Local Government Act 2002 and Bill of Rights Act 1990 which require that public bodies, including local councils, act fairly and provide accurate information when making decisions that affect people's rights, obligations, or interests. Auckland Council has not met this obligation due to the misleading Report and even worse analysis presented to decision makers.

While one could assume the above issues we have highlighted are just bad analysis, the number of errors and omissions is hard to write off as accidental. To us, this appears to have been an intentional misrepresentation of the data in order to align to a predetermined outcome, a clear breach of the principle of natural justice.

We are requesting that a full investigation into how this data was allowed into the public domain be conducted with urgency. We are also requesting that the decision reached on 2 July 2024 (RSCCC/2024/47) be vacated as invalid and that topic 5 be withdrawn from the current public consultation on Dog policy, bylaw and regional and local park access rules until a factual and accurate report can be provided to decision makers on this issue.

I would be happy to discuss the above with your further or answer any questions. I can be contacted on [REDACTED]

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
Chair
Professional Dog Walkers Association

Appendix: Extracted pages from the Report

Page 49

Council uses a modern regulator approach to compliance

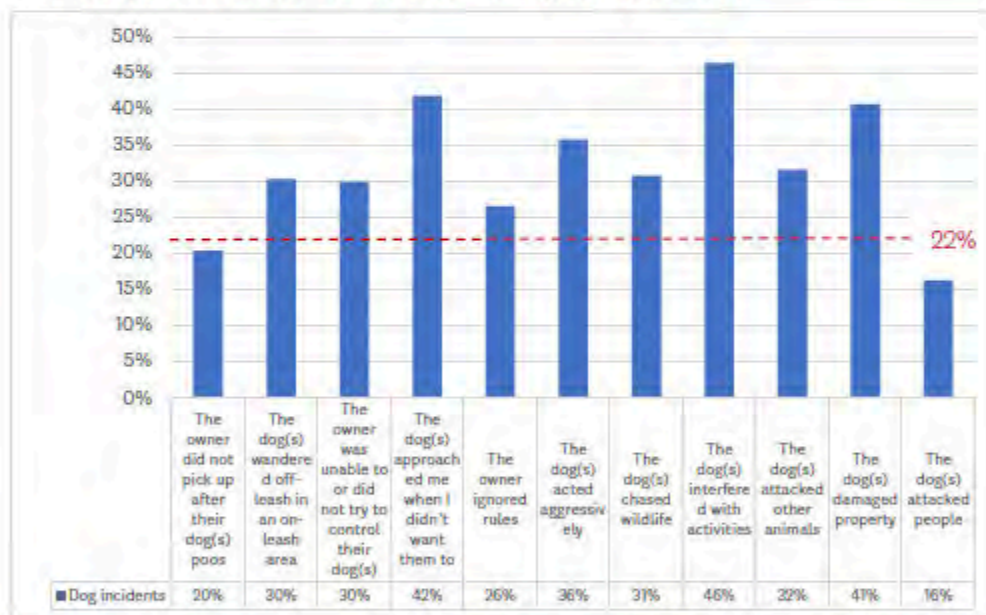
- Animal Management (AM) proactively patrol popular parks and beaches to educate dog owners about access rules.
- Data is limited as AM do not record their work by the number of dogs involved. AM conducted 2,736 public place patrols in 2022/23 and identified 10 complaints between 2021 and 2024 related to commercial dog walkers.

Is there still a problem and is the problem the same?

- ✓ Yes. The problem (as in 2019) continues to be the risk of danger and distress to people, stock, poultry, domestic animals and protected wildlife, nuisance to people, damage to property and environment and not meeting the needs of dogs and their owners from the inherent conflict between people walking multiple dogs at a time and other users of shared spaces in Auckland.

Multiple dog walkers are disproportionately represented in several dog-related problems

- In the People's Panel Survey 2024:
 - 22 per cent of respondents reported seeing multiple dogs (two or more at a time) being walked 'always' (six per cent) or 'most of the time' (16 per cent).¹³
 - Given this, multiple dog incidents accounting for more than 22 per cent of all incidents in public places indicate an overrepresentation (See Figure below).



- Multiple dog walkers are particularly overrepresented in issues such as interfering with activities like ball games or picnics (46 per cent), approaching people when they didn't want them to (42 per cent), being aggressive (36 per cent) and chasing wildlife (31 per cent).¹⁴
- Multiple dog walking also accounts for 32 per cent of all 'dog attacking other animals' incidents. This could be attributed to dogs squabbling within the pack during walks.

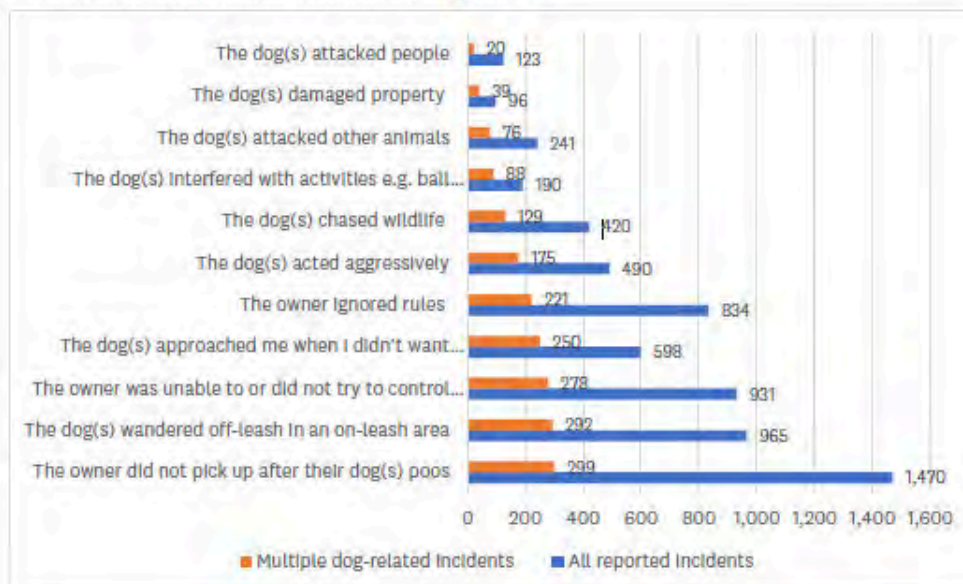
¹³ Q18 "How frequently do you see people walking more than one dog at a time in public places?"

¹⁴ Q20 "In the last 12 months, have you experienced or witnessed any of the following problems because of people walking more than one dog at a time?". The percentage is calculated by dividing the multiple dog-related incidents (Q20) with all reported incidents in public places (Q13, only looking at incidents in public places).

2024 Review Findings Report: Auckland Council Policy and Bylaw on Dogs 2019

However, the problem is generally low to moderate in frequency and mostly low in impact

- Despite the disproportionate representation of multiple dog incidents as a percentage of all incidents, these incidents remain relatively infrequent (for example, out of 123 reported dog attack incidents in public places, only 20 were caused by multiple dogs).
- The Figure below shows the lower total count of respondents affected by multiple dog-related incidents versus all reported incidents in general.¹⁵



- There were mixed views regarding walking multiple dogs in internal and external interviews. While some did not see any issues with walking multiple dogs, some expressed concerns regarding the emerging trend of pack walking as a business:

"There are lots of areas of anxiety around commercial dog walking."

- Interviewees also highlighted the environmental degradation caused by multiple dogs being walked at one time as a business:

"Commercial walkers' heavy use of bush tracks with large numbers of dogs in single packs have degraded the tracks."

- Council data is limited as complaints are not classified by the number of dogs involved.
- AM recorded 10 complaints between 2021 and 2024, all relating to commercial dog walkers with multiple dogs. Most of these relate to harm to protected birds and feeling intimidated by the number of dogs being walked.

¹⁵ Q13 "Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following dog-related problems while out in public?" is under the assumption that it talks about all incidents anyone has seen anywhere, which could include incidents where the owner is absent, whereas Q20 "Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following problems because of people walking more than one dog at a time?" is under the assumption that the owner is present as the dog is being walked.



Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6913

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Safe Kids

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

Do not support

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Other (please explain below)

Tell us why

See attached

Summary of attachments:

Key Recommendations:

Equitable Dog-Free Zones: Establish dog-free buffer zones around tamariki-priority areas.

Dog Walking Limit: Reduce the maximum number of dogs walked per person in public spaces from six to two.

Equity Impact Assessments: Conduct assessments on the distribution of dog-free and off-leash zones.

Clear Enforcement Guidelines: Define 'under control' for off-leash dogs with clear guidelines.

Community-Led Safety Committees: Introduce committees in high-risk areas.

Culturally Responsive Policies: Ensure dog policy rules are translated into Te Reo Māori and Pacific languages, reflecting cultural nuances.

Data and Evidence:

Injury Statistics: Tamariki Māori and Pacific children face higher risks of dog-related injuries, with significant disparities in injury rates.

Geographical Concentration: High injury rates in areas like Manukau highlight the need for targeted interventions.

Cultural Perspectives:

Māori and Pacific Views: Policies must incorporate Māori and Pacific perspectives on dog ownership and safety, ensuring culturally safe and effective interventions.

Strengthened Recommendations:

Tamariki-Centred Safety: Co-design policies with tamariki and whānau, focusing on structured protective environments and community-led safety models.

Equitable Public Spaces: Ensure equitable distribution of dog-free and off-leash zones, with clear guidance and enforcement.

Conclusion:

Prioritize Tamariki Safety: Adopt evidence-based, equity-driven measures to create safe, inclusive environments for tamariki in Tāmaki Makaurau.

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

see attached

Summary of Attachment:

Key Recommendations:

Equitable Dog-Free Zones: Establish dog-free buffer zones around tamariki-priority areas.

Dog Walking Limit: Reduce the maximum number of dogs walked per person in public spaces from six to two.

Equity Impact Assessments: Conduct assessments on the distribution of dog-free and off-leash zones.

Clear Enforcement Guidelines: Define 'under control' for off-leash dogs with clear guidelines.

Community-Led Safety Committees: Introduce committees in high-risk areas.

Culturally Responsive Policies: Ensure dog policy rules are translated into Te Reo Māori and Pacific languages, reflecting cultural nuances.

Data and Evidence:

Injury Statistics: Tamariki Māori and Pacific children face higher risks of dog-related injuries, with significant disparities in injury rates.

Geographical Concentration: High injury rates in areas like Manukau highlight the need for targeted interventions.

Cultural Perspectives:

Māori and Pacific Views: Policies must incorporate Māori and Pacific perspectives on dog ownership and safety, ensuring culturally safe and effective interventions.

Strengthened Recommendations:

Tamariki-Centred Safety: Co-design policies with tamariki and whānau, focusing on structured protective environments and community-led safety models.

Equitable Public Spaces: Ensure equitable distribution of dog-free and off-leash zones, with clear guidance and enforcement.

Conclusion:

Prioritize Tamariki Safety: Adopt evidence-based, equity-driven measures to create safe, inclusive environments for tamariki in Tāmaki Makaurau.

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Mataitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Safekids Aotearoa Submission to Auckland Council: Proposed Updates to the Dog Policy and Bylaw

February 2025

Mō tātou, ā, mō ngā uri ā muri ake nei

For us and our children after us

Tēnā koutou,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Auckland Council Proposed Changes to Dog Policy and Bylaw. Safekids Aotearoa is a national organisation, based in Tāmaki Makaurau and we provide practical advice based on international research, local knowledge and mātauranga, to keep tamariki safe from serious unintentional injuries.

Our Vision: All tamariki and children will be free to enjoy their childhood without being adversely affected by unintentional injury.

Our Mission: To reduce the incidence and severity of unintentional injury to tamariki and children aged 0-14 years in New Zealand.

Safekids Aotearoa is committed to protecting tamariki by promoting equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive public spaces. With tamariki disproportionately affected by dog bites—facing both physical and emotional harm—we urge Auckland Council to adopt evidence-based strategies and collaborate with communities to create safer environments for our tamariki.

Contact for enquiries:

██████████ | Pou Mataaho – Research & Policy Manager, Safekids Aotearoa
safekidsaotearoa@adhb.govt.nz

Mauri ora,

██████████ | Poutokomanawa - Director (Safekids Aotearoa)
Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Kahungunu me Kai Tahu

Executive Summary

This submission by Safekids Aotearoa highlights key recommendations to Auckland Council on proposed changes to the Dog Policy and Bylaw. Grounded in evidence and cultural perspectives, the submission prioritises tamariki safety and community wellbeing. Key recommendations include the creation of equitable dog-free zones, culturally responsive education campaigns, accessible veterinary care, and community co-designed safety policies. The submission advocates for tamariki-centred, inclusive urban spaces that are free from preventable harm.

Summary of Key Recommendations

- Establish equitable dog-free buffer zones around tamariki-priority areas.
- Reduce maximum number of dogs walked per person in public spaces from six to two.
- Conduct equity impact assessments on the distribution of dog-free and off-leash zones.
- Define 'under control' for off-leash dogs with clear enforcement guidelines.
- Introduce community-led dog safety committees in high-risk areas.
- Ensure dog policy rules are translated into Te Reo Māori and Pacific languages, not just as a direct language translation, but in a way that reflects the cultural nuances, values, and lived realities of these communities. This ensures policies are accessible, easy to understand, and resonate with the ways Māori and Pacific whānau interact with dogs and public spaces.
- Prioritise tamariki-centred safety education in public spaces.
- Implement accessible (free or subsidised) neutering and veterinary care in high Māori and Pacific population areas.
- Strengthen enforcement and public reporting of unsafe dog behaviours.

Introduction

1. Safekids Aotearoa is dedicated to the vision of a thriving Aotearoa where all tamariki can experience joyful, safe, and enriching childhoods free from preventable injuries. Grounded in international research, mātauranga Māori, and deep community knowledge, we advocate for policies that create safe, equitable environments for tamariki aged 0-14 years in Aotearoa.
2. Auckland's proposed dog rule changes offer an opportunity to embed equity, safety, and community wellbeing into public space planning. The opening whakataukī acknowledges our collective responsibility to uphold the mana and wellbeing of our tamariki, who are taonga tuku iho (treasures passed down through generations).
3. For whānau, cultural values and communal life shape how safety and wellbeing are nurtured. Ensuring tamariki safety means recognising these realities in ways that are culturally safe, inclusive, and responsive, rather than imposing one-size-fits-all approaches.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi: A Guiding Framework

4. Te Tiriti o Waitangi must underpin all policy decisions affecting tamariki. Auckland Council's proposed changes to dog rules should actively protect and uphold mana motuhake by embedding Māori leadership in policy design and co-developing solutions with iwi and hapū.
5. Tamariki safety is a fundamental obligation under Te Tiriti. Policies that fail to address disparities in injury rates for Māori and Pacific tamariki risk perpetuating inequities. As stewards of public safety, Auckland Council must ensure whānau ora is central to dog safety policies, enabling tamariki to grow up in safe, thriving environments.

Tamariki Dog-Related Injuries: Data and Evidence

6. Recent studies confirm that dog-related injuries disproportionately affect tamariki Māori and Pacific children. Duncan-Sutherland et al. (2022a) found that dog-related injuries remain a critical public health issue, with tamariki aged 0-9 years facing the highest risks. Many injuries involve bites to the face, head, and upper extremities, reinforcing the urgency for child-centred policies.
7. Tamariki in high-deprivation areas experience higher injury rates. Data from ACC and hospital records indicate that:
 - o ACC claims for dog-related injuries are 3.38 times higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas.
 - o Hospitalisations for dog bites are 3.97 times greater in the most deprived communities (Duncan-Sutherland, 2022a).
 - o Tamariki aged 0-9 years have similar ACC claim rates as adults but are more likely to require hospitalisation due to severe injuries.
8. Localised Auckland data from the Safekids Aotearoa Data Book (2024) highlights urgent intervention needs. Between 2017 and 2021, 35% (n=250) of all hospitalisations of tamariki (0-14 years) in Aotearoa due to dog-related injuries occurred in the Auckland Council region, averaging 50 cases per year. Most of these injuries—76% (n=190)—affected younger tamariki aged 0-9 years. Māori and Pacific children were disproportionately impacted, with Māori tamariki accounting for 37% (n=93) of cases and Pacific children representing 33% (n=82) (see Table 1). Notably, 42% (n=106) of these incidents occurred in the former Manukau City area, highlighting a geographical concentration of risk (see Table 2). Furthermore, the majority (57%, n=143) of dog-related injuries happened in a home setting, while 14% occurred in public spaces (see Table 3). These statistics underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve dog safety, particularly for tamariki in high-risk areas and home environments.

Table 1: Number of hospitalisations of tamariki 0-14 years old due to dog-related injuries in the Auckland region by ethnicity, 2017 - 2021

Ethnicity	Number of Hospitalisations	Percentage
Asian	12	5%
European	60	24%
Māori	93	37%
Pacific	82	33%
Other/Unknown	<5	-
Total	250	100%

Table 2: Number of hospitalisations of tamariki 0-14 years old due to dog-related injuries in the Auckland region by former Territorial Authority area, 2017 - 2021

Former Territorial Authority in the Auckland Region	Number of Hospitalisations	Percentage
Auckland	43	17%
Franklin	17	7%
Manukau	106	42%
North Shore	15	6%
Papakura	20	8%
Rodney	15	6%
Waitakere	34	14%
Grand Total	250	100%

Table 3: Number of hospitalisations of tamariki 0-14 years old due to dog-related injuries in the Auckland region by scene of incident, 2017 - 2021

Scene	Number of Hospitalisations	Percentage
Home	143	57%
Public	34	14%
Unspecified place of occurrence	73	29%
Total	250	100%

- Auckland Council must utilise injury data to inform dog safety strategies, ensuring tamariki protection is embedded into urban planning, public space policies and socialised in home environments. Duncan-Sutherland et al., (2022a) review emphasised that children under nine years old bear a significant burden of dog bite injuries. It concluded that protection of tamariki should be a focus of legislation and further investigations, suggesting that prevention strategies should move away from child-directed education and instead invest in structural interventions.

Caregivers' Perspectives on Dogs and Children's Wellbeing

10. Duncan-Sutherland et al. (2025) explored caregivers' perspectives on the role of dogs in children's lives, highlighting both benefits and risks. While many caregivers value dogs as companions and sources of emotional support for children, they also acknowledge safety concerns. Some Pacific caregivers, for example, emphasise the communal nature of dog ownership, which can complicate enforcement of individualised pet control measures. These insights highlight the importance of community co-design in policy development to balance tamariki safety with cultural perspectives and lived realities.

Māori Perspectives

11. In te ao Māori, kurī (dogs) have historically played vital roles as protectors, hunters, and companions. Māori values of manaakitanga (care and respect), kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and whanaungatanga (kinship) inform conscientious dog ownership and safety practices. While modern times have shifted these roles, the relationship between Māori and their kurī still carries elements of reciprocity and respect. Ensuring that Māori-led solutions are embedded in policy design is critical for creating culturally safe and effective interventions.
12. For Māori communities, access to public spaces such as parks and beaches is not only a matter of recreation but also a form of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and connection to whenua (land). Building on traditional values of manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga, policies must not only ensure safety but also foster community engagement through culturally grounded practices.

Pacific Perspectives

13. In many Pacific cultures, dogs are regarded as community guardians and part of the extended family. Dogs are not merely individual possessions but fulfil communal roles such as companionship for the elderly and children. Policies must recognise and support Pacific-led models of education and community safety, ensuring dog management regulations align with communal caregiving practices.
14. For Pacific families in urban settings, dogs often provide emotional support and a sense of connection to their homeland traditions. However, challenges such as limited access to affordable veterinary care or training may affect compliance with rules like neutering or leash restrictions. Policies must consider these realities to avoid unintended harm to Pacific dog owners.

Nurturing Safe, Tamariki-Centred Communities - Local & International Evidence-Based Practice

15. Tamariki are not merely at risk of injury; they are active creators of safe, vibrant spaces where they can play, learn, and explore. A strengths-based approach recognises that tamariki thrive in environments where they feel protected, confident, and valued, supported by whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities who play a crucial role in ensuring their wellbeing.

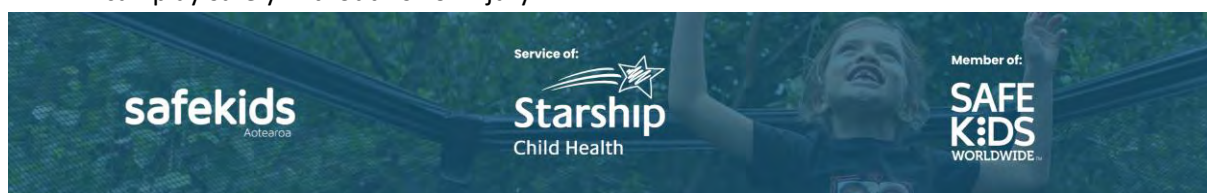


16. Infrastructure interventions, such as those trialled in the *Te Ara Mua – Future Streets* project in Māngere (Thorne et al., 2022), highlight the importance of designing environments that encourage active transport and independent mobility. While the project successfully reduced road safety fears, it revealed ongoing concerns beyond infrastructure—such as roaming dogs and broken glass—underscoring the need for safety solutions that address the lived realities of tamariki and whānau (Thorne et al., 2022; Macmillan et al., 2018). The presence of roaming dogs not only heightens perceptions of danger but can also lead to real physical harm or deter active transport altogether, emphasising the need for holistic safety solutions that address these everyday risks alongside built environment improvements (Thorne et al., 2022; Macmillan et al., 2018).
17. The issue of roaming dogs is not just an animal control matter but a reflection of chronic underinvestment in Māori and Pacific communities. Areas where tamariki feel unsafe due to roaming dogs often experience systemic neglect in public safety funding, limited access to affordable veterinary care, and inadequate pet ownership support. Punitive enforcement disproportionately impacts low-income whānau without addressing root causes. Community-led solutions—such as Māori and Pacific-informed animal welfare initiatives—offer a more effective and equitable path forward. International evidence highlights the value of community co-design in public policy. A 2021 Canadian case study demonstrated that integrating Indigenous perspectives into urban pet management policies improved safety while fostering trust and engagement among First Nations communities (Johnson & White, 2021).
18. Rather than focusing solely on harm prevention, policies must champion tamariki safety, independence, and happiness by fostering environments where they feel empowered and free to explore. A truly tamariki-centred approach enhances trust, agency, and joy in public spaces. Strengths-based solutions—such as mobile vet clinics, subsidised desexing programs, and culturally responsive animal management—offer sustainable alternatives to punitive measures that often fail to address root causes. A systematic review by Duncan-Sutherland et al. (2022b) found that community-based education, responsible ownership laws, and risk-based safety policies are more effective than punitive approaches like breed bans.
19. By adopting culturally responsive policies rooted in whānau ora principles, Auckland Council can create safer public spaces while respecting and integrating Indigenous and community-led solutions (Brown & Green, 2019; Te Puni Kōkiri, 2016). Leveraging national commitments and robust evidence, these measures ensure that tamariki and whānau feel safe, supported, and confident in their access and participation.

Key Revisions and Strengthened Recommendations

Dog Access Rules in Parks and Beaches

20. **Potential Benefits:** Dog-free zones can enhance tamariki and whānau safety, particularly where dogs are prone to aggressive behaviour. For Māori and Pacific families, who often use parks and beaches for communal gatherings, such zones provide reassurance that tamariki can play safely without risk of injury.



21. **Potential Harms:** The inequitable distribution of dog-free zones can disadvantage neighbourhoods with higher Māori and Pacific populations, limiting their access to safe outdoor spaces. Data highlights that dog-free zones are more common in predominantly non-Māori and non-Pacific areas. This disparity reflects broader systemic inequities in urban planning and public safety. Poorly communicated rules may also result in confusion among dog owners from diverse cultural backgrounds.
22. **Recommendation:** Auckland Council must mandate dog-free buffer zones (minimum 15 metres) around playgrounds, schools, daycares, sports fields, and tamariki-priority areas, ensuring clear signage, education, and enforcement. Additionally, Auckland Council must conduct a mandatory equity audit of dog-free and off-leash zones by mid-2025, with results publicly available. If inequities are identified, a redistribution plan must be implemented within 12 months to ensure equitable access to safe, dog-free spaces in high Māori and Pacific population areas.

Limit on Number of Dogs Walked

23. While setting a dog limit aims to enhance safety, the current six-dog limit per person is excessive and should be reduced to ensure effective control in public spaces.
24. **Concerns:** The rule allowing three off-leash dogs under "control" lacks a clear definition, leading to inconsistent enforcement and risks to tamariki. Caregivers have raised concerns that the current rule allowing three off-leash dogs lacks a clear definition, leading some owners to mistakenly believe their dogs are 'under control' even when they are causing distress. (Duncan-Sutherland, 2025).
25. **Recommendation:** Reduce the maximum number of dogs walked per person in high-use public spaces from six to two. Additionally, redefine "under control" to mean:
 - Dogs must be leashed in all child-dense areas, including school routes, playgrounds, and tamariki-priority spaces.
 - For off-leash areas, the dog must respond immediately to commands within one second and always remain within two meters of the owner.
 - Implement a tiered enforcement approach with warnings for first offenses and fines for repeat violations.

Clarification of Existing Rules

26. **Potential Benefits:** Standardising rules around neutering and dog management can improve tamariki safety and reduce dog-related injuries, particularly among Māori and Pacific children.
27. **Potential Harms:** Enforcement must be culturally sensitive to avoid disproportionate penalties for Māori and Pacific dog owners, particularly those facing financial barriers to veterinary care.

28. **Recommendation:** Implement subsidised neutering, registration, and veterinary care in equity-deserving communities to encourage compliance without financial burden.

Strengthening Equity and Social Cohesion in Public Spaces

29. From an Indigenous and social justice perspective, this policy impacts mana motuhake and manaakitanga. Public spaces are crucial sites of whanaungatanga (community connection), and any restrictions must enhance, not limit, accessibility.
30. Duncan-Sutherland et al. (2023) conducted a study on dog control strategies in New Zealand, concluding that equitable access to safe spaces, clear public education, and robust enforcement mechanisms are essential for effective dog management. The study confirmed that dog-free zones and leash-free areas disproportionately favour wealthier communities, leaving Māori and Pacific families with fewer safe play spaces for tamariki.
31. **Recommendation:** Conduct equity impact assessments to ensure any policy changes do not disadvantage Māori and Pacific families. Use disaggregated data to measure policy impacts and reduce disparities.

Additional Strengthened Recommendations

32. At Safekids Aotearoa, we believe that creating safe, inclusive, and equitable public spaces is a collective responsibility. By embedding equity, cultural responsiveness, and partnership into these changes, Auckland Council can create safer, more inclusive environments for all. To achieve these outcomes, we reinforce the following recommendations from our Safekids Aotearoa Data Book (2024):

Tamariki-Centred Safety and Policy Design

33. **Co-Design with Tamariki and Whānau:** Policy changes should be developed alongside tamariki, whānau, Māori and Pacific communities to ensure safety measures align with their lived realities.
34. **Structured Protective Environments:** A Cochrane systematic review found that while educational programmes improve children's knowledge and attitudes towards dogs, there is no direct evidence that such programmes alone reduce dog bite incidents (Davis, Schwebel, Morrongiello, Stewart, & Bell, 2012). Research shows that clear dog exclusion zones and physical barriers are more effective than dog education alone in preventing injuries.
35. **Whānau- and Village-Led Safety Models:** Empower communities to lead safety initiatives that reflect their lived experiences, incorporating Māori and Pacific relational models of collective care and responsibility. For example, develop whānau-led pet education programmes in churches, sports clubs, community hubs, and marae that connect responsible dog ownership to cultural values of manaakitanga (care), vā (relational space), and tautua (service to community).

36. **Implement Mandatory Tamariki-Safety Education for Dog Owner:** Require all dog owners to complete a child-safety module as part of their pet registration process. Develop community-based engagement sessions on accountable dog ownership, specifically covering interactions with tamariki.
37. **Equitable Distribution of Safe and Playful Spaces:** Prioritise areas where tamariki can freely and safely explore their world, ensuring these spaces are designed with culturally relevant safety frameworks. For example, use community-led participatory mapping to identify where tamariki feel safe or unsafe around roaming dogs and co-create culturally grounded solutions that balance playful exploration with conscientious dog management.
38. **Shift to Thriving Environments:** Move beyond risk management to creating joyful, playful, and structurally safe spaces where tamariki flourish. The policy should integrate principles from the *Global Design City Framework*, which advocates designing spaces from the perspective of an 8-year-old to ensure inclusivity and safety for all. This aligns with the *8 80 Cities* philosophy, which asserts that if a space is safe and accessible for both an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, it will be suitable for everyone (8 80 Cities, n.d.). Applying this framework would help ensure that tamariki are not left vulnerable to potential dog-related incidents.

Dog Management and Public Space Equity

39. **Ensure Equitable Distribution of Dog-Free and Off-Leash Zones:** Conduct an equity audit to map the availability of dog-free and off-leash spaces in high-Māori and Pacific population areas. Prioritise creating safer, tamariki-friendly spaces in historically under-resourced communities. Ensure public green spaces in high Māori and Pacific population areas and low-income areas are not disproportionately affected by uncontrolled dog roaming issues.
40. **Vicinity of Playgrounds, Reserves, Libraries, and Parks & Cafés:** There needs to be clear guidance on controlling dogs in shared spaces, especially around tamariki-friendly areas like playgrounds, reserves, libraries, and parks. Current policies are inconsistent in defining boundaries where dogs are allowed or restricted. Stricter enforcement and visible signage can aid community safety.
41. **Define and Standardise 'Under Control' for Off-Leash Dogs:** Auckland Council must define 'under control'. For example, "Under control" means the dog must respond immediately to the owner's verbal or physical command at all times, remain within 2 meters of the owner unless restrained, and must not pose a threat or intimidation to other park or public space users. A definition like this would ensure clarity in enforcement and public understanding.
42. **Tethering Regulations:** The policy must clarify expectations around dog tethering. Prolonged tethering, particularly in public spaces, can be a risk to both dogs and people. The policy should define safe tethering practices.

43. **Dog Parks & Off-Leash Areas:** Discrepancies exist in how the policy defines dog parks and their usage (Policy Page 8, Definition 8). It should be explicit about whether dogs are required to be leashed when a park is empty. This ambiguity needs to be resolved for consistent enforcement.
44. **Ambiguities & Inconsistencies:** Several ambiguities exist within the policy -
- o **Schools:** The policy does not clearly state whether dogs are allowed near school premises.
 - o **Playgrounds as Accessible Safe Spaces for Tamariki:** To enhance tamariki safety and public confidence, ensure councils implement clear guidelines on proximity to playgrounds, specifying a minimum distance (e.g., 10–15 metres) where dogs must be kept on-leash or prohibited.
 - o **Schedule 1 (Default Off-Leash Areas):** The criteria for defining off-leash areas should be left to councils to determine per local needs. Specific references should be updated in Schedule 1, Points 2(1) and 2(2).
 - o **'Responsible' Dog Ownership:** The distinction between 'responsible' and 'irresponsible' dog ownership in policy is misleading. Any dog, regardless of its owner's responsibility, has the potential to bite. Framing dog-related incidents around owner responsibility ignores the unpredictable nature of animal behaviour.
45. **Strengthen Enforcement & Public Accountability:** Deploy a dedicated compliance team of park rangers and community safety officers to monitor high-risk areas (e.g., parks near schools and playgrounds). Establish a public reporting tool (hotline & mobile app) for unsafe dog behaviour, with responses within 48 hours for high-priority cases. Introduce a Tamariki Safety Watch Programme, where trained community champions/volunteers can support awareness campaigns and ensure compliance.

Culturally Responsive Policy Implementation

46. **Policy Clarity & Accessibility for Dog Owners:** The current policy lacks clarity, making it difficult for dog owners to understand their responsibilities. Simplifying language, providing visual guides, and increasing public communication on designated areas (on-leash, off-leash, prohibited zones) would improve compliance. The socialisation of interactive digital maps and physical maps for permitted and restricted areas would be beneficial.
47. **Culturally Connected Public Education Campaigns:** We advocate for designated, fenced off-leash dog areas in high Māori and Pacific population areas, with cultural guidance on placement, signage, and safety messaging that reflects Indigenous perspectives on space, care, and community wellbeing. Provide culturally relevant public education campaigns that go beyond reo Māori and Pacific languages translation to include the lived realities, experiences, and nuances of Māori and Pacific contexts.
48. **Strengthen Culturally Responsive Dog Safety Solutions:** Establish community-led dog safety committees in high-Māori and Pacific areas. Partner with iwi Māori, and Pacific organisations to develop pet safety initiatives rooted in cultural perspectives. Provide free or subsidised



veterinary care, desexing services, and training programmes for Māori, Pacific, and low-income households for equitable access to dog safety education and pet ownership programmes. Work alongside Māori and Pacific-led initiatives to develop culturally responsive dog control measures that align with community realities, ensuring that cost is never a barrier to safer environments for tamariki.

Strengthening Injury Prevention

49. **Equity Impact Assessments:** Regularly assess and address disparities in injury rates and access to safe spaces, ensuring policy does not inadvertently disadvantage Māori and Pacific families.
50. **Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Understanding injury trends will inform better prevention strategies and decision-making. Between 2017 and 2021, Manukau accounted for 42% of dog-related incidents—the highest proportion in the Auckland region. This statistic highlights the need for stricter dog control measures, particularly in equity-deserving communities like Manukau, which have historically faced chronic systemic underinvestment.

Conclusion

51. Tamariki deserve safe, joyful spaces where they can thrive. We urge Auckland Council to prioritise child-friendly environments where all children can explore freely, without fear of harm. By embedding equity, community partnerships, tamariki-centred urban design, and culturally responsive policies, the Council can reduce preventable dog-related injuries and uphold its commitment to tamariki safety. We strongly encourage the adoption of evidence-based, equity-driven measures that safeguard the wellbeing of all tamariki in Tāmaki Makaurau.

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Oral Submission to Auckland Council – Dog Policy & Bylaws

Presented by: Safekids Aotearoa & Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate
Theme: Keeping Our Kids Safe – Stronger Rules, Safer Streets

Setting the Scene – Why We’re Here

This is our first submission, and we’re still learning, so please forgive any mistakes. As we looked into dog policies, we realised how much they impact communities like Ōtara. We’re grateful to be here today—it means a lot. Since there was no oral submission in Ōtara, we wanted to make sure our community’s voice is heard. Mālō ‘aupito, and thank you for your time.

Safekids Aotearoa has partnered with these incredible students not just because they are young leaders, importantly they are Māori and Pasifika youth—the future stewards of Aotearoa. They carry the knowledge, voices, and lived experiences that must be at the heart of decisions impacting equity-deserving communities of Māori, Pasifika, and South Auckland. This partnership is more than a policy presentation; it is a reaffirmation of our ancestral obligations. That we have a collective duty to protect our whānau, challenge outdated notions of time and space, and ensure that our voices find its rightful place in shaping our shared destiny.

Mālō e lelei, talofa lava, kia ora, greetings, Council members. My name is Jeremiah, and I’m here today alongside my peers from Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate. We’ve partnered with Safekids Aotearoa because we believe in speaking up for those who can’t speak for themselves—South Auckland tamariki. Our voices matter because we are the future. We are the ones who will inherit the decisions made today. We are the future stewards of our communities.

We’re here today because our kids are getting hurt. And it’s happening more often in our hood—South Auckland. Between 2017 and 2021, 696 children in Aotearoa were hospitalized from dog attacks, with nearly half being Māori and Pacific kids.

Let’s be real—if this was happening somewhere else, it would have been fixed already. So we’re here to make sure you hear us loud and clear.

The Reality – What’s Really Going On?

Here the statistics reveal a troubling trend in serious dog attacks involving children:

- ✓ Over a third of serious dog attacks on children occur in Auckland.
- ✓ South Auckland is the most affected area, accounting for more than 40% of Auckland’s cases, with Manukau identified as a hotspot.
- ✓ Most attacks happen in the home environment, where children should feel safe.

- 86% of reported injuries involve deep wounds, causing significant tissue damage, including torn skin and muscle injuries.
- 69% of these injuries affect the head and neck, leading to severe consequences such as fractured skulls, shattered jaws, and torn ears. Some children require reconstructive surgery.

The impact of these attacks goes far beyond the physical injuries:

- Psychological trauma: Many children develop long-term fear and anxiety, making them hesitant to play outside.
- Family distress: Aiga feel helpless, struggling with the emotional and financial burden of their child's recovery.
- Community safety concerns: The repeated attacks highlight failures in dog ownership, regulation, and education.

The data makes it clear: we are not doing enough to prevent these attacks. Weak enforcement, unclear regulations, and a lack of education on responsible pet ownership are all putting our tamariki at risk.

If the stats were this bad anywhere else, action would have been taken by now. So why is South Auckland still waiting for a change?

It's time for real solutions—before more kids suffer life-changing injuries.

The Lived Reality – This Ain't Just Numbers

Every morning, we walk our younger siblings to school. It's a normal part of life in South Auckland—older kids looking after the little ones. But for too many of us, there's a real fear on that walk.

Dogs that aren't tied up. Dogs roaming the street. Dogs that run straight at you, barking, teeth out—and all you can do is hope they don't bite.

One of our students, a Year 12, was walking her little brother to the primary school down the road. Out of nowhere, a big dog lunged at them. She threw herself in front of her brother to block it. It bit her on the arm—deep enough to need stitches.

Talofa Lava, my name is Raymond Smith and I am a year 10. She, along with many others, was just trying to get their siblings to school safely.

Now, every time these people walk past those houses, cross the street. They are forced to walk faster. They are forced to hold their breaths. But why should they be forced to do those things?

No one should be scared to take their sibling to school.

We demand change, not excuses, addressing this issue is about safeguarding the children's lack of a choice in this matter.

For us, a normal walk to school should be free from fear, it is a basic right that everyone deserves.

The Role of Community & Collective Responsibility

Education is key—but it's our communities, especially adults, who need it most.

Dog safety isn't just about teaching kids or students how to react before or after an attack. It's about preventing harm in the first place, and that requires a collective effort—from whānau, aiga, neighbourhoods, and local authorities.

We're asking for:

Dog laws and bylaws that are simple, clear, and community-friendly. Māori and Pacific families, like all families, need laws that are easy to understand, accessible, and practical.

Mandatory dog ownership workshops in high-risk areas. Owning a dog comes with responsibility. Workshops should be community-led, incorporating Māori and Pacific perspectives on stewardship and animal care, so dog owners know how to train, care for, and manage their dogs properly.

More fenced, dog-free spaces near schools and parks. Our tamariki deserve safe places to play, walk to school, and live—without fear of being attacked. Safe spaces protect not just our tamariki but also promote collective wellbeing in our communities.

For us, protecting tamariki isn't just a rule—it's a responsibility. In our cultures, we don't just look after our kids; we look after all kids. The safety of South Auckland tamariki should be a shared priority.

What Needs to Change – Our Solutions

We know that good policy is based on evidence. Here's what Auckland Council must do to protect us in South Auckland:

Currently, Māori and Pacific ways of understanding and caring for dogs are undervalued and unsupported. The Council should invest in Māori and Pacific-led solutions to prevent dog-related injuries, using knowledge rooted in mātauranga Māori and Pacific wisdom. These Indigenous approaches can make a real difference in South Auckland, supporting Māori and Pacific communities in culturally meaningful ways.

Second, safer school walkways. Let's enforce leash laws in school zones and create "Safe School Walk Zones" with fenced-off dog-free footpaths.

Lastly, culturally relevant education. Most safety campaigns don't reach Pacific and Māori communities. Let's fund local champions to deliver training in a way that makes sense for our whānau.

Auckland Council has the power to act—so let's act now.

To us, good policies save lives—so let's get them right.

Closing – Will You Back Us?

We've laid it out for you. The stats, the real stories, the solutions.

Now, we're asking you: Are you gonna back us?

Our tamariki should not be twice as likely to get hurt just because they live in South Auckland.

So we'll ask again—will you step up and help us fix this?

To us, we've spoken—now it's your turn to act.

Tēnā koutou, fa'afetai lava, vinaka vakalevu, thank you.



Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6950

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Safety Collective

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Support

Tell us why

see attached

Summary of attachment:

Enhanced Communication and Signage:

Proposes clear, evidence-based signage to inform dog owners of their responsibilities.

Suggests more explicit rules for dog access in public spaces, including playgrounds and beaches

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

see attached

Summary of Attachment:

Importance of Safety:

Emphasizes the need for evidence-based policies to prevent unintentional injuries.

Highlights the disproportionate impact of dog-related injuries on Māori, Pacific, and low socio-economic communities.

Dog-Related Injury Statistics:

High-deprivation areas see more dog bite claims and hospital admissions.

Tamariki (children) are particularly vulnerable, with many injuries occurring in the head and neck region.

Concerns About Roaming Dogs:

Increase in dog attacks and roaming incidents noted in recent reports.

Calls for better control measures to ensure public safety.

Recommendations for Policy Improvements:

Advocates for leashing dogs in public places and creating dedicated off-leash areas.

Suggests clearer definitions and enforcement of “under control” for dogs.

Recommends subsidized dog training and desexing programs, especially in high-risk communities.

Focus on Vulnerable Populations:

Stresses the need to protect tamariki, the elderly, and those with disabilities.

Calls for collaboration with Māori and community groups to develop effective dog control strategies.

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Matakaitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wendellholme Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakaneuwha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

21 February 2025

To: Auckland Council

Auckland Council Proposed Updates to the Dog Policy, Bylaw, Regional and Local Dog Access Rules

Submission from the SAFETY COLLECTIVE TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU

Supported by the following partner organisations – Safekids Aotearoa, Drowning Prevention Auckland (DPA), and Community Action on Youth and Drugs (CAYAD).

The Safety Collective Tāmaki Makaurau is a network of agencies and community organisations which collaborate to reduce unintentional injury harm and its impact on the lives of Aucklanders. Partners include government agencies, social wellbeing, and public health organisations, and mātāwaka entities.

1. As an accredited Safe Community, we know the majority of unintentional injuries are predictable and preventable and advocate for evidence-based policy and practice which keeps Aucklanders safe and thriving.
2. The Collective is hosted by Auckland Council and chaired by Cr Filipaina.
3. We are committed to honouring our collective obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
4. We apply an equity lens across our work, given that harm falls disproportionately and unjustly on Māori, Pacific, other ethnic communities, and lower socio-economic populations.
5. Councillor Filipaina, as Chair of the Safety Collective Tāmaki Makaurau has not formally contributed to the development or review of the submission.

Background and Context

6. We thank you for the opportunity to submit and would like to acknowledge the complexities in redevelopment of the policy and Bylaw, and efforts to date to balance the aspirations of community members with diverse perspectives.
7. We recognise the significance that dogs hold to many across Tāmaki Makaurau, often being termed as 'one of the family'. Dogs hold a trusted, special place, and value within different cultures, whānau and communities locally, nationally and indeed internationally.^{1,2} The health benefits that come from companionship, caring and nurturing of the dog, and opportunities to participate in exercise to ensure the dogs wellbeing, are many and varied. However such trust unfortunately can lead to a degree of complacency on behalf of owners and decision makers, resulting in beliefs that their dog, or other dogs owned by 'responsible dog owners' will not bite or become aggressive. Sadly, this is not always the case.
8. Injuries and deaths sustained from interactions with dogs' impact on all involved, the magnitude of which can be extensive and intangible, both in terms of physical and psychological trauma. The very presence of dogs can be triggering for those who have



experienced dog-related injury. Or have had close calls, or from overexuberant dogs rushing at them, despite reassurance offered from owners that their dog is friendly and safe.

9. National research in New Zealand found:

- People in high-deprivation areas were 3.38 times more likely to file an ACC claim for dog bite injuries. ³
- Hospital admissions were 3.97 times higher in these areas compared to low-deprivation areas (2014-2019). ³
- Tamariki aged 0-9 years were disproportionately affected, with 54% of injuries occurring in the head and neck region. ³
- Māori adults and tamariki are significantly overrepresented in both dog injury hospital admissions and ACC claims. ³
- Between 2017-2021, Tamariki Māori and Pacific children were approximately two times more likely to be admitted to hospital from dog-related injuries than European/other (tamariki Māori: 25.1 per 100,000; Pacific children: 22.2 per 100, 000; and European children: 11.1 per 100,000). ⁴

10. Further analysis of tamariki (0-14 years old) hospitalisations in the Auckland region due to dog-related injuries (2017-2021) show: ⁴

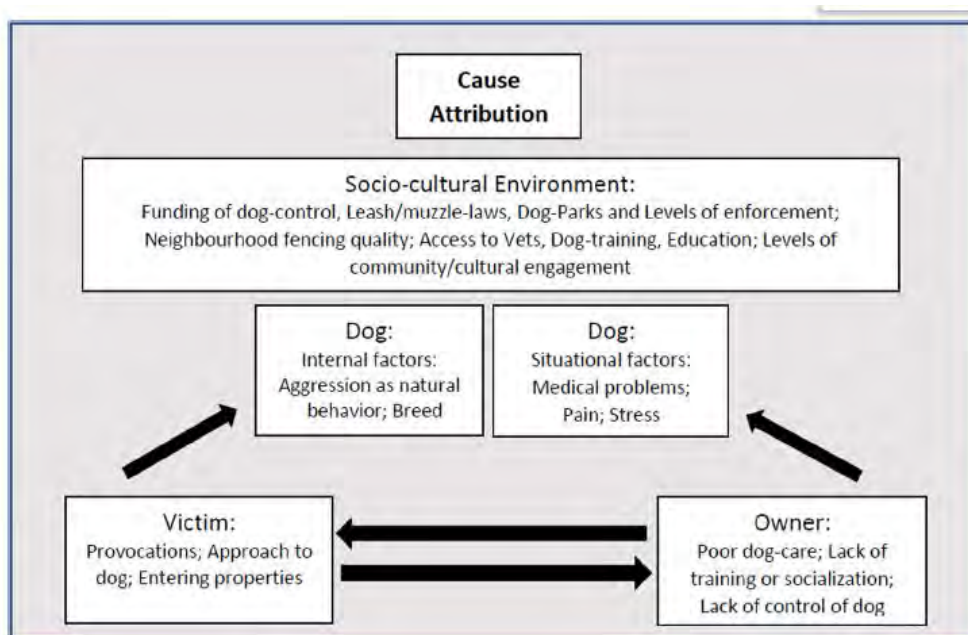
- An average of 50 hospital admissions occurred annually, with 76% being 0–9-year-olds. ⁴
- Tamariki Māori accounted for 37% of these admissions and Pacific children 33%, in comparison to European and Asian children at 24% and 5%, respectively. ⁴
- Notably tamariki residing in the former Territorial Authority area (TA) Manukau accounted for 42% of all hospital admissions, followed by the Auckland TA accounting for 17%. ⁴
- Whist 57% if the injuries occurred in home environments and 14% in public spaces, in 29% of the cases the scene of injury was unknown. ⁴

11. We know that the true extent of dog related injuries, including bites is likely to be underestimated due to non-attendance at a medical centre, under reporting, or from lack of detailed event information. It is acknowledged that the current level of demographic and situational data is recognised to be inadequate to truly guide prevention efforts and accurately identify the place of injury. ⁵

12. We note with concern that the Auckland Council Animal Management Annual Report 2023-2024 ⁶ identified:

- Despite the known dog population increasing by 2.8 % from the previous year – dog attacks had increased by 17% to 2846 incidents. The increase was mainly attributed to roaming dogs.
- Animal Management Officers responded to 15,146 reports on roaming dogs, and 3673 reports of aggressive dogs to either people or other animals – a 21% increase from the previous year.
- A 19% annual increase of high-risk categorised dogs.

13. The Dog Control Act ⁷ states territorial authorities must:
 - Have regard to *“the importance of enabling, to the extent that is practicable, the public (including families) to use streets and public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs”* and also for *“the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.”* ⁷, pg.14
 - that dog owners are obligated *“to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dog does not injure, endanger, intimidate, or otherwise cause distress to any person.”* ⁷, pg.10
14. Additionally specific protection is legislated for the use of disability assist dog’s in both the Dog Control Act 1996 ⁷ and the Human Rights Act 1993 ⁸ to ensure that disabled persons are not discriminated against in their use of disability assistance dogs to enable them to fully participate in society.
15. The New Zealand Veterinary Society ⁹ advocates the complex interweaving of the multitude of factors that contributes to aggressive dog reactions such as dog bites, **must be acknowledged and better understood** to enhance protective mechanisms for both community members, and importantly for dogs themselves. Dogs possess inherent characteristics that may not be fully understood by owners, or community members at large, especially children who are identified to be at high risk of dog bites despite educative efforts to improve understanding.
16. It has been shown that young tamariki under 6 years old have only limited ability to understand dog signals when compared to children 6-12 years old. ¹⁰ They therefore require increased supervision and separation from dogs where possible.
17. Duncan-Sutherland et al’s New Zealand study ¹, utilised a cause attribution diagram to illustrate contributing factors of systemic issues that contribute to dog-related injuries necessary for consideration to inform future prevention efforts. *Figure One:* ¹



18. The study ¹ capturing caregiver perspectives on the value of dogs and their effects on children in private and public settings found:

- 38% of 256 caregivers surveyed, reported feeling less safe in public spaces compared to private spaces.
- Parents frequently reported anger at dog owners' responses to dogs approaching children or being boisterous around them putting children at risk.

"My children get really scared from them just coming right up into their face, they (owners) assume that 'oh it's okay, the dog's just smelling you out, they're just being friendly' but that's not how children see it." ^{1, pg. 38}

"Dog running all over playground and went down slide at same time as four-year-old, scaring her terribly. Owner just said the dog loves the playground. We will leave areas if there are unleashed dogs as our kids are scared and won't play" ^{1, pg. 39}

19. The Te Ara Mua – Future Streets initiative ¹¹ in Māngere sought to *"Reflect cultural identity and to make the neighbourhood safer and easier for people to travel around, especially in active ways like walking, cycling, or scooting."* The presence of wandering dogs was early identified as a barrier to active transportation. ¹² Concerningly post intervention interviews found this was an ongoing barrier to the uptake of active transportation. The following is noted

- Children aged 9-11 years described alleyways, as being *"really long, slim and scary"* (FG mixed gender 9–11 years), and girls stated fear around encounters with aggressive dogs and people you *"don't want to be around"* (FG girls 9–11 years). ^{12, pg. 6}

20. From the education sector, anecdotal evidence suggests that fear of dogs may not only contribute to reluctance to walk or cycle to school but it may affect school attendance.

21. It is not only children who are impacted by the presence of dogs in public. New Zealand research has shown that adults stated:

- *"There's a lot of stray dogs. I used to walk to the shops before, but ah, I just take the car now. But even if I have to walk I take an umbrella or even a stick with me because it's just that bad."* ^{13, pg. 39}
- *"On Saturday, Friday and Saturday the park at night can become dangerous, a lot of young ones ... I don't, I don't think, oh I've had a few afternoon incidents if I stop and think about it. And it would have been about four in the afternoon and I went over there and the young men were drinking and they had dogs that were not on leashes."* ^{14, pg. 465}
- Previous New Zealand research has identified that alcohol use may impact on dog injuries with potential to decrease people's ability to defend themselves against a dog, or conversely adequately provide care for a dog. ¹⁵

22. A New Zealand systematic review of dog bite prevention strategies ¹⁵ recommended multiple strategies be undertaken, with a risk-based focus not just assessed on breed alone. They advocated for education to be directed to adult owners, as they found no evidence to

support child education as an effective preventative mechanism. This approach is further supported in other research.^{10,18}

23. Further New Zealand research¹⁶ exploring dog control strategies regionally across the motu, concluded that higher rates of dog bite injuries could not be explained by the number of registered dog population or dog control strategies alone. Researchers advocated for enhanced environmental structural barriers (such as fencing or leasing), equitable resourcing of animal management prevention services, and enhanced focus on the needs of tamariki.
24. Crucially they identified any efforts to prevent dog related injuries must be in collaboration and partnership with Māori and community groups to implement dog control strategies effectively.¹⁶

Our Response to the Proposal

25. Our response will provide feedback on the importance of the protection of tamariki, clarification of statements in the policy, and recommendations for enhancement of practice to support efforts to minimise dog-related harm.
26. We note the stated intention in updating both the dog Bylaw and dog policy is for *“Keeping dogs a positive part of the lives of Aucklanders”* and the Bylaw needs to balance the needs of *“people, dogs, animals, environment, and property”*. We seek refined practices in spaces and places to support this intent, in response to local ideas; such efforts should not restrict the freedom for people to be able to undertake day to day activities confidently, without fear or threat of injuries or death from dog-related aggressive events. Children in particular, grow, learn and flourish through interactions within their environments.
27. In the context of the review we believe protection of tamariki is paramount. We note frequent reference to the protection of wildlife and birds throughout the policy document. We seek increased identification of the needs for tamariki as our most vulnerable population in public spaces to be protected in the documentation. Additionally, we would like to see specific identification and information on the needs of other vulnerable populations such as those with disabilities, the elderly, representatives from ethnic groups at higher risk such as Māori and Pacific, and those walking or cycling to protect their freedoms and safety. We believe it is incumbent on Auckland Council to acknowledge and demonstrate their duty to ensure protection of at-risk population groups in public spaces through the dog control policies. Accordingly we see it as essential that representatives from these communities collaborate actively with Auckland Council to inform and develop effective strategies to minimise dog related harm.
28. Whilst we acknowledge the need to highlight issues of ‘irresponsible dog owners’ behaviour we believe it is crucial for increased communication that any dog can bite under the right circumstances as identified in the ‘Auckland Any Dog Can Bite campaign’.
29. We recommend dogs are leashed in public places, including parks and beach settings. In the absence of this we see the provision of specifically designed and fenced areas to enable walking of dogs off leash as a key equity issue. This not only protects those more vulnerable to dog related injuries but also ensures a dog’s wellbeing. We hold concerns on the high



number of Local Boards who do not have dedicated separate dog exercise areas. Many of these board areas experience high numbers of roaming dogs. Frequently local parks are used by multigenerational families for gatherings and celebrations, their safety is at risk not only from roaming dogs, but additionally due to no other options for local dog owners to exercise their dogs in such a dedicated area.

30. The consultation documentation defines control as *“Control in relation to a dog, means that the owner if able to obtain an immediate and desired response from the dog”* Given unleashed dogs have the freedom to separate from owners when not on a leash we seek clarification on how it can be guaranteed that a dog is under ‘immediate control’ in unleashed situations.
31. Given dogs are known to be unpredictable, we contend the term "under control" is ambiguous and inconsistently applied across different settings. This pose a challenge to both dog owners and non-dog owners alike to understand. We recommend Auckland Council adopt a clearer definition, such as: "under control" means the dog must respond immediately to the owner's verbal or physical command at all times, remain within two metres of the owner unless restrained, and must not pose a threat or intimidation to other park or public space users." This definition would ensure clarity in enforcement and public understanding.
32. We hold concerns for the example provided on keeping a dog under control. The example suggests when taking a dog to watch their child play sport if the playground is not being used for the owner to *“use verbal commands and a ball toy to ensure their dog does not go onto the playground or sports field.”* ^{17. pg.10} Many dog owners are unable to afford ‘dog training sessions and may not be familiar with effective verbal commands and techniques to apply to maintain control. Likewise, research has shown that owners under-estimate the risk their dog poses, including when off leash. ¹ We note the New Zealand Veterinary Association states *“Measures to avoid predation should be taken (such as leashing).”* ^{2. pg.1}
33. Internationally it is recognised that desexing of dogs is a crucial component to reducing roaming dogs and an over burden of dogs born who are unable to be looked after. ¹⁵ We applaud Auckland Councils’ ‘Any Dog Can Bite’ campaign which offered free desexing and microchipping in high-risk communities. We contend that as well as these provisions, consideration should be given to assist dog owners in high-risk/lower SES communities for subsidised dog training opportunities. This would contribute to building capacity for dog owners to come together to strengthen their ability to undertake effective dog management practices at a local level.
34. A truly tamariki-centred approach enhances trust, agency, and joy in public spaces. However, dog-related incidents in public areas pose safety concerns for tamariki and other vulnerable groups. While we acknowledge the role for enforcement, we recommend strengths-based solutions—such as mobile vet clinics, subsidized desexing programs, and culturally responsive animal management to help address the root causes of roaming and aggressive dog behaviour. These approaches create safer environments for both people and animals.

35. It is incumbent on local authorities to ensure individuals with disabilities who are reliant on 'assistance dogs' are not discriminated against by challenges that can arise in the potential use and/or barriers to the provision of assistance dogs due to the presence of roaming or unleashed dogs. Engagement with disability and senior adult groups is imperative to understand the implications that roaming and unleashed dogs pose for these communities.
36. We recommend provision of evidence based clear signage, which resonates with diverse communities to inform dog owners of their responsibilities.
37. We seek clear identification of local rules at parks, beaches and in other public areas especially where dog access is restricted including:
 - We note that in respect to playgrounds and sports surfaces on council controlled public spaces that *"Dogs are prohibited on any playground or sports surface at all times and must be kept under control on a leash in the vicinity of any playground and sports surface **when in use**"* and applies to any place in the proposed bylaw whether on or off leash. We contend a more definitive description needs to be provided in relation to 'In the vicinity of'. We consider this term is open to interpretation and, the speed at which a dog can run would impact on how close or far a dog should be away from an area. We also recommend that more explicit focus is given to reinforcing this requirement in the local board areas where dog are allowed 'under control off leash'
 - We note the proliferation of dog access rules that restrict the presence of dogs in beaches and public places for restricted calendar months. Given our temperate climate we contend that restrictions to hours of use should be extended and also include public and school holiday periods, with the capacity to make changes for public events being held.
 - We support the requirement for Auckland wide dog access rules for dogs to be kept under control on a leash in private ways, formed roads (including footpaths and car parks), and in boating activity areas. We recommend a concerted public communication effort to increase understanding in this area.
 - We note the breakdown of different areas within the local board areas including beaches, parks and reserves, but are concerned about local board areas where it states at the bottom of the requirements – *"There are no areas where dogs are **prohibited**"* We believe the very presence of this sentence could result in confusion in relation to default regional prohibition requirements in public spaces such as in playgrounds.
38. We recommend enhanced collaborative partnership between organisations to ensure held data collections at both a regional and national level enable both identification of dogs who have caused injuries, and the characteristics leading to such events both in home and public settings. We believe such data is imperative for understanding of the true burden of dog-related injuries.



39. It is imperative ongoing support and prioritisation of working with mana whenua, mātāwaka, and their rōpū due to them carrying the greatest burden of harm from dog bites and dog-related injuries. It is crucial that dog prevention development work draws on mātauranga Māori, tikanga and te ao Māori, in collaborative partnership with Māori moving forward. This includes all work in the policy, strategy, programme development, and social media communication campaign and initiatives realms.
40. Māori-designed and led solutions are crucial for meaningful change. We recommend:
- Establishing a Māori Advisory Panel on Dog Policy, including iwi, hapū, and Māori public health experts.
 - Co-developing Mātauranga Māori-based dog safety guidelines, reflecting tikanga and te ao Māori perspectives.
 - Partnering with Māori and Pacific community organisations to implement community-led dog safety initiatives

Conclusion

41. We have highlighted the need for safe, accessible spaces and places to enable all community members to thrive and prosper. The use of evidence-based policies, strategies, and practices to enable people to go about their day to day lives without fear or risk of injury, is imperative to ensure social inclusion. The Auckland Plan 2050 ¹⁹ seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of Aucklanders by reducing harm and disparities in opportunities. Recognition is given to tamariki “*ensuring children and young people are given the opportunity to reach their potential so that they do not experience disadvantage as adults.*” All people should have the ability to move around freely in an environment that minimises the risk of dog-related harm. The Auckland Plan states a “*focus on equitable investment in the transport realm to ensure that the safety of vulnerable road users, such as people walking or cycling, is always prioritised when making decisions.*” Comprehensive, definitive, and effective policy to minimise dog-related harm has the potential to contribute to these aspirations greatly.

Contact for enquiries:



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On behalf of the Safety Collective Tāmaki Makaurau

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Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6954

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): SPCA

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

Support

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

See attached

Summary of Attachment:

Safety and Control: Limiting the number of dogs ensures better supervision and reduces risks.

Public Safety: Large groups of dogs can pose safety concerns in busy areas.

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Support

Tell us why

See attached

Summary of attachment:

Responsible Ownership: Supports Auckland Council's approach to encouraging responsible ownership for menacing dogs.

Critique of Breed-Specific Legislation: Highlights issues with visual identification and genetic overlap in breed classification

Opposition to Breed-Specific Legislation: Opposes Auckland Council's interpretation of Schedule 4 of the Dog Control Act 1996

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Support

Tell us why

See attached

Summary of attachment:

Clarification of Rules: Supports making existing rules clearer and more user-friendly.

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

See attached

Summary of attachment:

Dog Bite Prevention: Supports evidence-based strategies to reduce dog bites.

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Matakaitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why



Submission by the
Royal New Zealand Society for the
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Inc.

on

Auckland City Council Policy on Dogs and Dog
Management Bylaw

23 February 2025



Executive Summary

- SPCA supports the implementation of reasonable limits on the number of dogs a professional dog walker can manage at one time.
- SPCA supports the aim of clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make documents more user friendly.
- SPCA supports protection of wildlife and balancing the needs of different users through appropriate control of dogs but cautions that removal of any off-leash exercise areas must be balanced with the creation and designation of additional, appropriate off-leash exercise areas to allow dog owners to meet their dogs' physical, health and behavioural needs.
- SPCA supports evidence-based, early-intervention and prevention strategies to reduce dog bites and create safer communities.
- SPCA supports Auckland Council's approach of encouraging owners of dogs classified as menacing due to the behaviour of the dog to take steps towards responsible ownership.
- SPCA opposes Auckland Council's interpretation of Schedule 4 of the Dog control Act 1996.
- SPCA commends the Council's efforts to foster inclusion in this consultation.



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Introduction

The following submission is made on behalf of The Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (trading as SPCA).

SPCA is the preeminent animal welfare and advocacy organisation in New Zealand. The Society has been in existence for over 150 years with a supporter base representing more than 100,000 New Zealanders across the nation.

The organisation includes 28 Animal Welfare Centres across New Zealand and approximately 60 inspectors appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

SPCA welcomes the opportunity to submit on the consultation for the Auckland Council Policy on Dogs and Dog Management Bylaw.

Submission

SPCA advocates for responsible animal ownership of dogs. Below we provide feedback on proposed changes to the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw, additional suggestions for the Council to consider that promote more responsible dog ownership, and background information and research in support of our submission.

Walking Multiple Dogs

SPCA supports the implementation of reasonable limits on the number of dogs a professional dog walker can manage at one time.

Walking too many dogs simultaneously can compromise the ability of a dog walker to provide adequate supervision and control. This can lead to increased stress, potential conflicts between dogs, and a higher risk of accidents or injuries. Limiting the number of dogs per walk ensures



each animal receives the attention and care they need for a positive and safe walking experience.

Large groups of dogs can pose a public safety concern, especially in busy or densely populated areas. Setting a reasonable cap on the number of dogs can help mitigate risks to other dog owners, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, and reduce the likelihood of incidents that could harm public safety.

A limit of 6 dogs for professional dog walkers was adopted in Calgary, as part of their multi-factorial approach to address dog safety. Calgary's dog control approach appears to be effective at reducing dog bites; dog bite levels are relatively low and continue to reduce across time (RSPCA UK, 2024).

Other councils have taken different approaches to addressing safety concerns related to dog walkers. For example, Wellington City Council engaged with professional dog walkers to collaboratively to develop a licensing scheme for commercial dog walkers. This licensing requires completion of a course to demonstrate knowledge of dog control legislation and bylaws and how to be a responsible dog walker or trainer, and a direct observation of the applicant walking dogs by an animal control officer to assess competency (Wellington City Council, n.d.-b). Licenses are renewed yearly based on client references and provided there are no incidents of mishandling reported to the council. The council empowers dog owners by providing a public-facing searchable list of licensed commercial dog walkers (Wellington City Council, n.d.-a).

SPCA encourages council to engage with feedback from professional dog walkers to develop practical requirements and facilitate compliance.

General Policy and Bylaw Matters

SPCA supports the aim of clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make documents more user friendly.

Increased clarity of existing dog rules makes expectations clearer and facilitates compliance.

***Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks, local parks and beaches***

SPCA is concerned that the proposed changes to dog access areas represent an overall restriction of areas available for off leash exercise.

Our organisation recognises the importance of managing the negative impacts that dogs can have on valuable biodiversity areas and supports the protection of areas that are important habitats to native wildlife. However, we are concerned about restrictions to availability of alternative areas available for off leash exercise, particularly given the growing dog population in Auckland (Auckland Council 2024).

Legally, all dog owners must meet the physical, health and behavioural needs of their animals, and providing sufficient exercise is a part of this requirement. Some dog owners may be reluctant to exercise their dogs if they have less flexibility about where they can do this within their local area. There is a legitimate need for safe, appropriate designated off-leash areas to provide alternatives to those areas where the presence of off-leash dogs is potentially detrimental to wildlife, farmed animals and other users of public lands.

Provision of alternative designated dog exercise areas to compensate for those removed, is likely to improve compliance with the introduced restrictions and allow dog owners to meet their dogs' physical, health and behavioural needs. SPCA encourages councils to consult and take on board feedback from local residents regarding adequate provision and locations of appropriate dog exercise areas to balance those areas where dogs are proposed to be prohibited or restricted to on leash exercise.

On-leash exercise is not a substitute for off-leash exercise. Dogs walk faster than people and providing off-leash time allows them to work off excess energy. Research suggests that off-leash dog exercise areas can benefit owners' and dogs' physical and social health, as well as community connectedness (Cutt et al., 2007; Eldering & Martin, 2017; González Ramírez & Landero Hernández, 2014; Toohey et al., 2013). Canine obesity is now considered to be the number one health concern in companion dogs worldwide (Kipperman & German, 2018). Dogs walked less often and for a shorter time are more likely to be obese; this can shorten their life



and put them at risk of health complications such as diabetes and heart disease (German et al., 2017).

Dogs who are not provided an appropriate outlet for their energy can develop problem behaviours such as nuisance barking and destructive behaviours or depression (Instone & Sweeney, 2014). Exercise is an easy, inexpensive, welfare-friendly tool to assist with nuisance barking (Righetti, 2005). Thus, provision of off-leash exercise opportunities is a key component of councils' obligations to prevent or abate nuisances.

Additional feedback

Menacing dogs

SPCA supports Auckland Council's approach of encouraging owners of dogs classified as menacing due to the behaviour of the dog to take steps towards responsible ownership.

SPCA supports Auckland Council's provision of a review pathway for dogs classified as 'menacing by behaviour', provided owners take specific steps to demonstrate responsible dog ownership. Auckland Council's pioneering approach is likely to incentivise human behaviour change and adoption of responsible dog ownership practices and has been successfully adopted by other territorial authorities.

SPCA opposes Auckland Council's interpretation of Schedule 4 of the Dog control Act 1996.

SPCA acknowledges that Councils are required to comply with the Dog Control Act 1996, which currently requires classification of dogs listed in Schedule 4 (as assessed based on visual assessment of the dog's physical characteristics) as "menacing".

SPCA strongly opposes breed specific legislation, such as New Zealand's Dog Control Act 1996. Evidence shows that targeting specific dog breeds or types does not reduce the risk of dog bites, is subjective, may compromise dog welfare, and places additional obligations on responsible



owners (Creedon & Ó'Súilleabháin, 2017; Hoffman et al., 2014; Ott et al., 2008; Schalke et al., 2008; Voith et al., 2013).

The Dog Control Act does not contain a definition of what constitutes an “American Pit Bull Terrier type” and thus it is left up to each territorial authority to determine how they establish reasonable grounds for believing a dog is wholly or predominantly one of the impacted dog breeds or types. SPCA notes that Auckland Council differs from many councils in New Zealand in explicitly recognising American Staffordshire Bull Terriers as a “pit bull type of dog”. This approach impacts a large number of dogs; the Council’s latest report shows a third of dogs classified as menacing due to breed or type (s33c) were listed as American Staffordshire Terriers (n=1429) (Auckland Council, 2024).

While the council does offer a pathway to exemption if owners provide a DNA certificate showing the largest percentage of the breed make up as American Staffordshire Terrier, this approach is fundamentally flawed. American Staffordshire Terriers and pit bulls have significant genetic overlap due to their common history and we are unaware of any evidence that shows DNA tests are able to accurately determine the difference between a mixed breed dog that is predominantly American Staffordshire Terrier vs a mixed breed that is predominantly pit-bull terrier.

Dog owners are also invited to request a visual inspection to determine the main bred of their dog. However, research has clearly shown that visual assessment of mixed breed dogs is highly inaccurate, even when conducted by experts such as shelter workers, veterinarians and dog control officers (Hoffman et al., 2014; Olson et al., 2015; Voith et al., 2013). Classification as menacing has serious consequences for a dog’s welfare and can impact responsible dog owners. SPCA encourages Council to consider these impacts, and the high rates of error in visual identification of cross breeds, when determining their criteria for classifying dogs as ‘menacing’ based solely on appearance.

SPCA supports evidence-based, early-intervention and prevention strategies to reduce dog bites and create safer communities.



The causes of dog aggression and bites are complex and multifactorial. SPCA notes that dog attack and roaming dog trends in Auckland have been steadily increasing. This may in part reflect the growing population of dogs which poses additional challenges and strains on Auckland Council's services.

We encourage Council to examine dog bite prevention models in other jurisdictions that have proven results. For examples see the recent report prepared by RSPCA UK (RSPCA, 2024).

SPCA supports dog-friendly communities. Creating dog-friendly communities facilitates socialisation of puppies and dogs. Dogs which have been adequately and appropriately socialised are less likely to show undesirable behaviours such as barking and aggression (Blackwell et al., 2008). We commend councils which take proactive steps to facilitate adequate early socialisation and foster positive community attitudes and practices at dog-friendly establishments, public transport, and rental properties.

Inclusion and diversity

SPCA commends the Council's commitment to inclusivity in this consultation.

Providing summary sheets in English, Te reo Māori and Simplified Chinese and creating a pathway for submissions to be made in New Zealand Sign Language allows for a diverse range of voices to engage with the process. This approach fosters greater community participation and reflects a genuine effort to make local decision-making accessible to all.

Conclusion

SPCA appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Auckland Council Policy on Dogs and Dog Management Bylaw. Our organisation is happy to discuss this matter if further information is required.



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Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#6970

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Dog Friends Auckland

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the **Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat** and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

I do not support the proposed change

Tell us why

See attached

Summary of Attachment:

Requests to the Local Board

- Maintain Off-Leash Areas: Request to keep certain areas off-leash and to plan new off-leash areas in new subdivisions and growth areas within Rodney

Loss of Access for Dogs

- Impact on Daily Routines: Changes to access can significantly alter local people's daily routines, requiring dog owners to drive to other locations.
- Overcrowding: More dogs in fewer spaces can lead to overcrowding, especially during summer and bird breeding seasons.
- Specific Areas: Removal of dog access in Te Arai and Pakiri Regional Parks means over 24km of Rodney beaches would be off-limits to dog families
- Unnecessary Restrictions: Proposed restrictions in certain reserves are unnecessary due to the low likelihood of kiwi dispersing from Tawharanui Regional Park to these areas.

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

I do not support the proposed change

Tell us why

See attached

Summary of Attachment:

Impact on Daily Routines

- Routine Disruption: Changes to access can significantly alter local people's daily routines, limiting dog exercise opportunities and requiring dog owners to drive to other locations.
- Shift Workers: Close-to-home access is crucial for shift workers.
- Overcrowding: More dogs in fewer spaces can lead to overcrowding, especially during summer and bird breeding seasons.

Regional Parks

- Shakespear & Long Bay: These parks are treated as local parks/beaches by nearby households.

Shakespear Regional Park

- East of Army Bay Boat Ramp: Prohibiting dogs to stop access to the sanctuary area is unnecessary due to cliffs and lack of access to the park.
- Eastern End of Okoromai Bay: Prohibiting dogs due to potential access to the sanctuary area is based on risk, not actual issues. Dogs are accompanied by owners and can be stopped from entering. Access is only available at low tide, making it a good place for people with reactive dogs to avoid other dogs.

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

I do not support the proposed change

Tell us why

See attached

Summary of Attachment:

Requests to the Local Board

- Maintain Off-Leash Areas: Request to keep certain areas off-leash and to plan new off-leash areas in new subdivisions and growth areas within Rodney

Loss of Access for Dogs

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- Unnecessary Restrictions: Proposed restrictions in certain reserves are unnecessary due to the low likelihood of kiwi dispersing from Tawharanui Regional Park to these areas.

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Mataitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

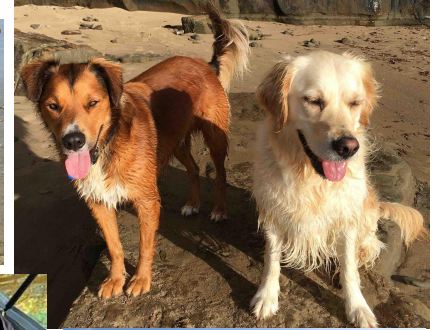
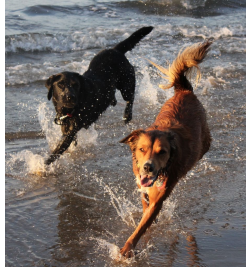
Submission to GB Hearing Panel

6970

Dog Friends Auckland & Hibiscus Coast Dog Training Club - February 2025

We are here representing these dogs & their families, plus many more

Zara, Rusty, Toffee, Shadow, Fluffy, Maia, Banksy, Bruce, Harriet, Max, Billy, Tilly, Millie, Buddy, Lily, Freddie, Raffy, Willow, Bonnie, Holly, Scottie, Chloe, Molly, Lottie, Tyson, Poppy, Monty, Benny, Jet, Maddie, Bella, Rosie, Archie, Lacey, Young Lily, Spike, Chico, Gracie, Alice, Rio, Poodle Molly, Ollie, Rocky, Indie, Kobe, Bear, Bailey, Jack, Billie, Spotty, Shade, Daisy, Mia, Lola, Lucy, Jack, Leo, Floki, Ruby.... Etc etc



Overview

6970

- Since the last Dog bylaw review there are **over 10,000 more registered dogs** (113,343 dogs YE June 2024) in Auckland.
- Since the last Policy & Bylaw of 2019 Dog owners have paid Council approx **\$50 MILLION** in registrations & fines etc.* (YE 2019 - 2024).

* Based on 113,343 dog registrations at average \$79.57 per dog and \$1.1M in infringements etc - \$10 M per anum

Dog Access in Auckland

6970

- Another Dog Bylaw review, another fight to keep the access we already have around Auckland for Dog Families even though there are more dogs.
- Overall there are approx 60 changes proposed for dog access around Auckland
 - 31 are to prohibit dogs from areas
 - 19 change access from off leash to on
 - 10 give new off leash access.

Dog Access in Auckland

6970

- Many of the proposed changes that remove access are being proposed simply to have the same rules throughout Auckland.
 - No analysis has been done on how many dog owners currently use these areas as they are now or where the next area they could obtain the same access would be located.
- Most of the proposals for change are to remove or restrict dog access
 - 50 proposals to do this across Auckland.
- Of the 10 proposals to give OFF leash at all times; in most cases they are allowing OFF leash when they had been **previously ON leash or subject to a time & season rule** and the majority are being offered as a part of another proposal to restrict access. So you lose access, or access is restricted here, but over here (usually a smaller area) you can have off leash at all times.
 - From what we can see these areas are mostly relatively small.

So what does that mean?

6970

NO **NEW** OFF LEASH AREAS in the entire Auckland Region of any decent size for Dog Families since 2019. By the time this review is completed that's a 6 year period.

So all that is happening is more dogs in the same areas.

The need is there. From Council's own 'Dog Walking Assessment' in 2023 for a Local Board it states that ***"Dog Walking is one of the top 5 things done in Auckland parks."***

34% of New Zealand households report having at least one dog, up from 28% in 2015*

Compare Auckland to the WDC and the Wellington City Council# 6970 Animal/Dog Bylaw recent reviews.

Council leads the way so dogs can have a ball

Wellington City Council's Kōrau Mātinitini | Social, Cultural, and Economic Committee adopted the proposed Animal Bylaw, Domestic Animal and Dog Policy today.



There'll be more spaces for dogs to exercise and socialise in Wellington, including the smaller end of Ori Bay Beach during the warmer months – but due to popular demand, Island Bay keeps its status quo.

April 2024 - Wellington City Council - Animal Bylaw, Domestic Animal and Dog Policy

Key changes adopted include:

- Stick with status quo on Island Bay Beach where **dogs are allowed off-leash at all times** in the area from the pier to the western end of the beach.
- **Expand off-leash access** in the CBD by allowing dogs to take a splash on the righthand side of the Band Rotunda in Oriental Bay during off-peak hours in the warmer months. Dogs remain prohibited from the longer section of the beach and Freyberg Beach for people wanting a dog-free experience.
- **Expand off-leash provision across nine suburbs** in Wellington.
- Require the mandatory desexing of cats, which supports Predator Free initiatives and the efforts of local rescues to reduce the stray cat population.

Compare Auckland to the WDC and the Wellington City Council Animal/Dog Bylaw recent reviews. # 6970

October 2024 - Whangarei District Council

Parts of Whangārei are now more dog friendly as new dog rules have come in today, Monday 28 October 2024:

Dogs are now allowed on-leash in Whangārei's city centre and **off-leash year-round at nine beach locations:**

- Whananaki North (foreshore between boat ramps)
- Tūtūkākā Marina beach
- Between Kauakarangi Bay sandspit (Ngunguru) and Whangaumu Bay
- Ngunguru estuary foreshore (village side)
- Waikaraka Beach
- One Tree Point (northeastern side)
- Ruakākā Beach north (between Mair Road and Taotahi Walk)
- Ruakākā Beach south (between surf club and campground)
- Uretiti Beach (Tip Road northwards).

The Whangarei Mayor says **one common theme was a shortage of places to take dogs off-leash in summer.** Another was that the 'no dog' rule in the city centre meant fewer customers visiting the centre of town.

Changes to dog access impact dog families daily lives **# 6970**

- Changes to access can impact many local people's daily routine negatively. Removing or restricting access to local dog owners means that somewhere they go daily with their dog is suddenly not available or limits their dog's exercise opportunity - sometimes just to meet a region wide rule.
- Any changes Council makes can have a massive impact on dog owners. It might mean having to drive to another location rather than walking to their local park or beach. For shift workers, having close to home access is important.
- More dogs in less spaces means that you can have issues with too many dogs in the same spots - especially during the summer season restrictions. (Time & season and bird breeding seasons).

Auckland Council dog bylaw review is 'in house'

6970

- For this Dog Bylaw review Auckland Council, from what we can find in documents, focused on 'in house' inputs with a limited number of external stakeholders which we understand to be;
 - SPCA, Chained Dog Rehabilitation & Homing, 4 Commercial Dog Walkers, Friends of Regional Parks, Forest & Bird and Pest Free Kaipatiki.
- In a business environment that approach is called 'navel gazing' & it's not recommended. Especially when it comes to engagement or connecting with an affected audience outside of the business.
 - 'Navel gazing' - Looking inwards, instead of outwards for direction and inputs.

Compare to the WDC approach for their bylaw review **# 6970**

“In 2023 we asked (the public) what we should change in our dog rules and more than 600 people gave us their ideas,” says Mayor Vince Cocurullo.

“Our teams drafted up changes to our Dog Policy and Bylaw and consulted again. We received more than 800 submissions and then held hearings in July this year (2024).”

He says one common theme was a shortage of places to take dogs off-leash in summer. Another was that the ‘no dog’ rule in the city centre meant fewer customers visiting the centre of town. People also said providing places for dogs to go needed to be balanced against the need to protect the health and safety of people, especially children, as well as wildlife.

<https://www.wdc.govt.nz/Whats-new/News-and-notice/Changes-to-dog-bylaws-20241016>

Whereas Auckland Council isn’t getting any public input until they have already put the proposed Bylaw and Policy changes together, meaning there is no room for any change outside of what they have put together. Any possible changes that aren’t in this SOP will have to wait another 5 years or more.

It doesn’t seem as though Auckland Council staff have a desire to get input from the public to help with developing a policy and looking for opportunities or issues.

We ask that the Governing Body/Regulatory Committee instruct staff to change the process to mirror that of WDC for the next review & go out asking for suggestions BEFORE the review starts. Engage with those like ourselves & others who can activate the dog owning community.

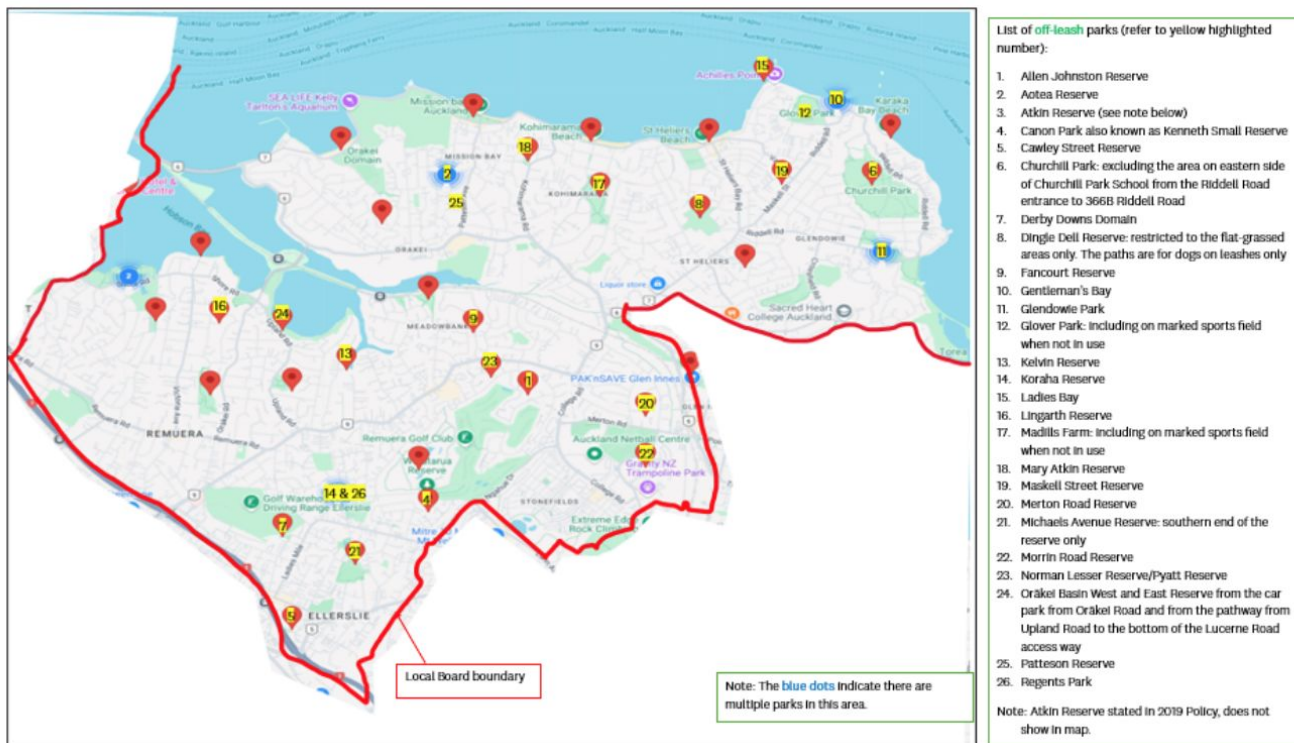
A focus on desktop research rather than local knowledge **# 6970**

- An outcome from an inward approach is 'desktop research'. Where analysis is done by looking on a google map, or a council 'where to walk your dog' map. It isn't involving site visits or locals who are regular users of locations.
- An example of this is with the proposal to move from off leash access to prohibited on dogs in the Orakei area at Madills & Glover Parks Sports Surfaces.
- There was no understanding of how many dog owners are using these two parks currently.
- 'Desktop research' was done in identifying alternative areas;
 - This did not capture the accessibility of the local alternatives.
 - It did not identify how many dog owners are already going to these areas and whether a new population of dogs and their owners would put pressure on these alternatives.
 - It did not review the size, terrain, user safety (something women and older people are concerned with) or ground conditions of the alternatives.
 - No analysis of the distance from Glover or Madills and the time it would take users of Madills or Glover to drive to these alternatives during morning or evening 'rush' hour traffic during the week (when most people are walking their dogs).

From Council documents to Orakei Local Board as part of analysis supporting an access rule change to prohibited from off leash. **# 6970**

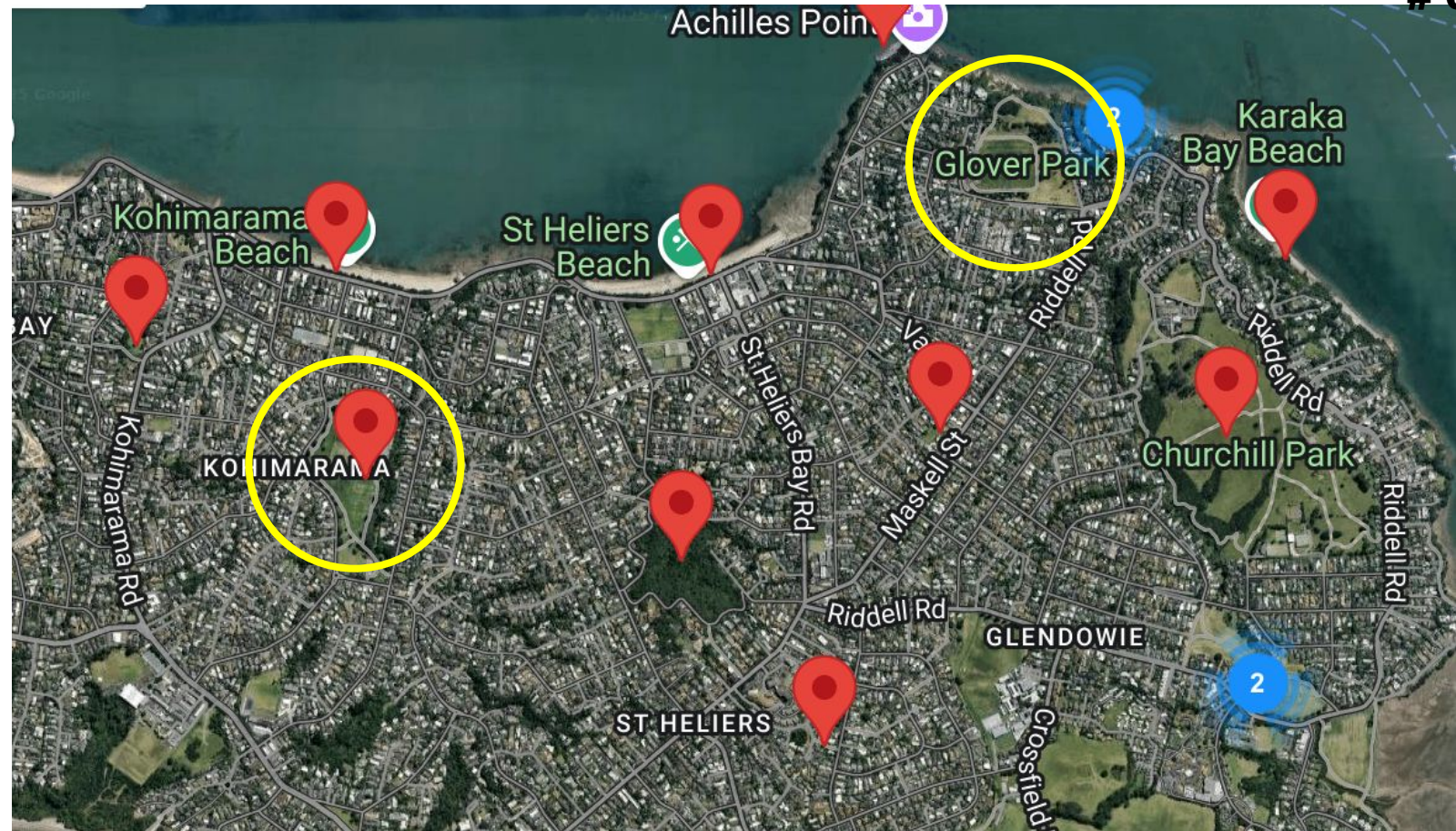
Part 3: Additional information

- Maps and lists of off leash areas in Ōrākei Local Board area



Our analysis of where else local dog owners could go for off leash access in their local area.

6970



Alternative off leash areas in nearby locale

6970

- St Heliers and Kohi beach - subject to time and season rules for both Summer & winter. No off leash access during summer - on leash or prohibited. Restrictions during winter - on leash between 10am and 4pm.
- Dingle Dell bush reserve - not an open space to exercise your dog, terrain not suitable for older owners or pram access for young families.
- Maskell park - small area probably smaller than one sportsfield.
- Ladies Bay/Gentlemens Bay - access issues for many (and dogs) and not family friendly
- Karaka Bay - access issues
- Mary Atkin reserve - small area about the size of one sportsfield

- So that leaves only Churchill Park in Glendowie, so more dogs coming into this space to get off leash access.

Some proposals for access change don't make sense

It's concerning that there are proposals to restrict and reduce dog access that don't seem to stack up when looked at in detail. (3 reserves in Rodney & Shakespear Regional Park).

If we weren't flagging this would anyone notice?

Northern Areas - proposed Access Changes - Rodney Local Board

6970

Vera Reserve Baddeleys Road, Baddeleys Creek Reserve and Pigeon Place Accessway

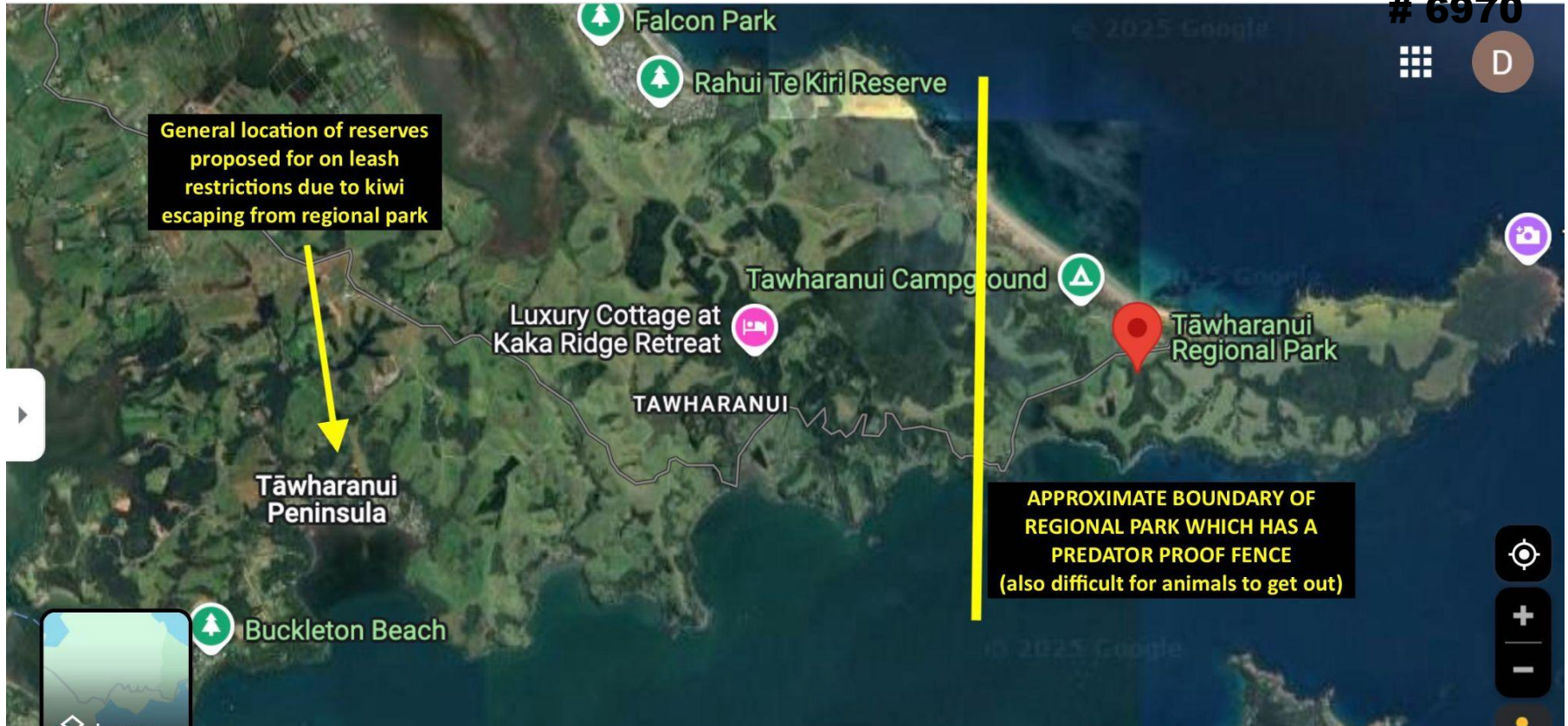
We are proposing to protect kiwi dispersing from Tāwharanui Regional Park into the three associated reserves where they are vulnerable to being disturbed, harmed or killed by dogs by changing the rule from off-leash to on-leash.

Current Policy rules
Dogs allowed under control off a leash at any time (Schedule 2).
Proposed amended Policy rules
Dogs allowed under control on a leash at all times (Schedule 1(4)(a)).

This proposal makes no sense. These reserves are not associated to Tawharanui Regional park. They are miles away. (8 kms by road)
There is no need to restrict access in these reserves due to kiwi dispersing from the Regional park. The number of far worse dangers they would need to navigate to get to these areas and then remain there would be huge.

See maps on following pages.

Northern Areas - proposed Access Changes - Rodney Local Board



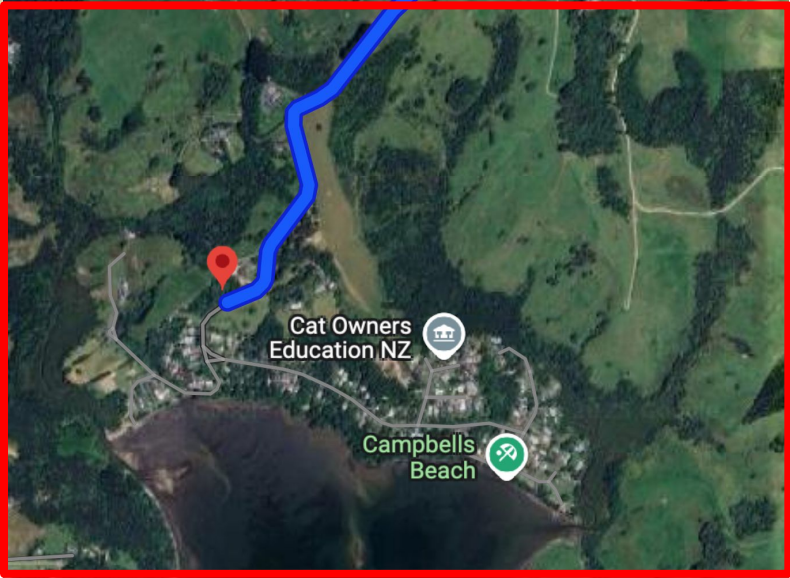
Northern Areas - proposed Access Changes - Rodney Local Board

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Kawau Bay



Below is a satellite view of area reserves are in. More danger from cats & cars than dogs.



How Dog Policy is presented

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We showed a number of dog owners the way the 2019 Dog Policy was laid out for dog owners vs the proposed 2025 Dog Policy and not one of them thought the new proposal was delivering on “more clearly showing its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules.”

The restructure of the new policy certainly isn't laid out in a user friendly way.

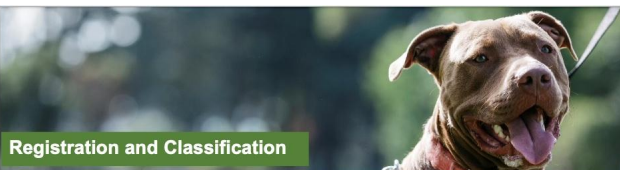
It has also removed the sections within each policy theme of “What does Auckland Council expect of dog owners?” Which was a good way to show responsible dog owners what was expected of them. We don't understand why this has been done?

For a lay person the proposed new layout is not making it better for people to understand council policy.

We DO NOT support the proposed change & would like the 2019 layout to remain.

2019 Dog Policy was laid out in easy user friendly themes - we ask for this to remain

6970



Registration and Classification

All dogs in Auckland, including dangerous and menacing dogs, will be registered with council

What will Auckland Council do?

1. Provide registration administration services including:

- maintain a record of all dogs registered in Auckland, including those classified as dangerous and menacing
- maintain a record of probationary and disqualified owners
- inform and educate dog owners through the registration process
- set fees to cover costs of essential services to support dog management activities to achieve this policy
- provide incentives to promote responsible dog ownership
- follow up on non-registered dogs and non-compliance with local authority bylaws.

2. Provide incentives, information, education and services

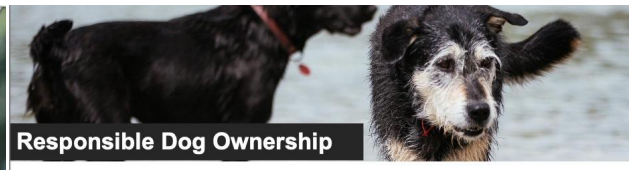
3. Maintain dog compliance and enforcement best-practice that proactively uses Auckland Council's powers¹ to:

- enforce registration (including through the use of seizure powers) and microchipping of dogs
- enforce the de-sexing of uncontrolled dogs
- seize and hold dogs that are a threat to public safety
- classify certain dogs identified in the Dog Control Act 1996, as dangerous or menacing based on the behaviour of the dogs, or the dogs' breed or type
- ensure compliance with classification requirements.

Council must classify a dog as dangerous where:

- the owner of the dog has been convicted of an offence because:
 - the dog has attacked a person, stock poultry, domestic animal or protected wildlife, and the court has not made a destruction order on the dog
 - the dog rushed at any person, animal or vehicle in a manner that was likely to cause a vehicle accident or to endanger, injure or kill a person
- the dog is considered a threat to the safety of any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal or protected wildlife, based on sworn evidence of aggressive behaviour.
- The owner admits in writing the dog poses a threat to any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal or protected wildlife.

¹ powers include issuing warnings and instant fines (infringement notices), powers to seize, destroy, or take custody of dogs and to classify dogs, and to the classify, prosecute and recover costs from owners.



Responsible Dog Ownership

Dog owners will care for their dogs and control them around people to protect wildlife, other animals, property and natural habitats

What will Auckland Council do?

1. Provide services that support promoting responsible dog management, including:

- 24-hour dog management service
- dog education community events and the production of supporting publications
- advice on dog related problems
- emergency assistance with dogs involved in accidents or police operations
- street patrols
- investigation and resolution of incidents of:
 - wandering, barking, fouling, aggressive, and menacing or dangerous dogs
 - impounding and kennel maintenance
 - proceedings against dog owners for offences where all other means have failed
 - livestock concerns
 - abandoned dogs.

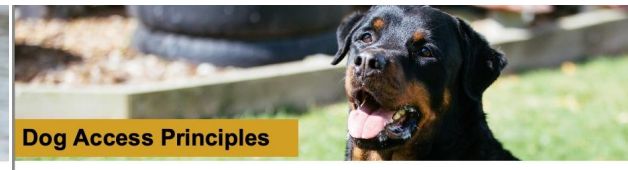
2. Proactively promote the welfare of dogs, as stated in the Code of Welfare for Dogs, Animal Welfare Act 1999. This includes, but not limited to, providing sufficient food, water, shelter and care.

3. Reduce the danger and nuisance caused by dogs by:

- receiving, investigating and resolving dog complaints
- providing community education to increase public awareness on how to be safe around dogs (target children, families and people working in the community)
- promoting dog safe communities through encouraging compliance and undertaking enforcement
- ensuring public safety and comfort, working to change attitudes and behaviours of irresponsible dog owners, and where appropriate penalising irresponsible dog owners.

What does Auckland Council expect of dog owners?

- Know and comply with the laws concerning the management of your dog
- To be responsible for your dog's behaviour
- Provide proper care and attention to your dog, including providing sufficient food, water, shelter and adequate exercise, as defined by the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and Dog Control Act 1996
- Consider neutering your dog at an early age
- Microchip your dog
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure your dog does not cause a nuisance to any other person. Be particularly vigilant near children and closely supervise interaction
- Keep your dog under control at all times, this may include putting your dog on a leash, or a shortened leash in areas where your dog is likely to ignore commands (even if it is an off-leash or designated dog exercise area)
- Respect other people's personal space. Public places are for everyone's enjoyment and not everyone is fond of dogs
- Ensure your dog cannot leave your property by itself



Dog Access Principles

Provide a balanced use of public places for dogs and their owners that is safe for everyone

What will Auckland Council do?

1. Provide dog access rules that are comprehensive, consistent and easy to understand and comply with the following approaches:

- Recognise dog owners as legitimate users of public places and dog access is essential for dog welfare
- Integrate, where practicable, dog owners and their dogs with other users of public places
- Provide opportunities for dog owners to take their dog to public places that are accessible, desirable, and provide diversity of experience for both the dog and owner
- Consider access on a comprehensive region-wide basis, as well as a place-by-place basis
- Promote safe interaction between dogs and people using public places and private ways to ensure that dogs do not injure, endanger, intimidate or otherwise cause distress to any person, in particular, children and vulnerable adults
- Manage the conflict between dogs and protected wildlife, stock, poultry, domestic animals, property and natural habitat.

2. Maintain rules on dog access in public places and private ways (see Schedule 1 and 2)

The types of dog access rules are:

- prohibited area** – a place where dogs are not permitted to be, and other users have absolute priority
- on-leash area** – a place shared with other users, where dogs must be on a leash and under control at all times
- off-leash area** – a place shared with other users, where dogs may be off a leash but must still be under control at all times
- designated dog exercise area** – a place where dog owners are the priority user. Dog owners may take their dogs off a leash (including Dangerous Dogs) but they must be under control at all times
- time and season areas** – a place shared with other users, where the dog access rules will be different depending on the time of day during the summer season. This is to minimise the conflict between dogs and other users of the space during peak hours.

3. Apply default dog access rules to ensure that there is a rule applied to all public places in Auckland

- Dogs must be under control on-leash in council-controlled public places unless otherwise stated in Schedule 1 and 2. This includes:
 - all formed public roads (including any street, highway, access way, service lane, and any footpath, cycle track, bus stop and berm within the boundaries of the road)
 - private ways
 - council-controlled car parks

Council's NEW proposal 2025 - doesn't seem to have ease of use for general public & has nothing about what is expected of dog owners.

6970

3 Our actions

3.1 Provide services and incentives that promote responsible dog ownership

This includes -

- (a) issuing a licence that rewards owners with a discounted dog registration fee
- (b) rewarding dog owners of neutered dogs with a discounted dog registration fee
- (c) advice and events to help and encourage dog owners meet their responsibilities to their dog, neighbours and when in public places
- (d) advice about the welfare of dogs, including their obligations in the [Dog Control Act 1996](#), [Code of Welfare for Dogs](#), [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#).

3.2 Provide community education services

This includes to increase public awareness on how to be safe around dogs and advice on dog related problems.

3.3 Provide registration administration services

This includes to -

- (a) maintain a record of all dogs registered in Auckland
- (b) inform and educate dog owners through the registration process
- (c) set fees to cover costs of essential services to support dog management activities to achieve this policy
- (d) enforce registration (including through the use of seizure powers) and microchipping of dogs
- (e) follow up on non-registered dogs.

3.4 Provide classification administration services

This includes to -

- (a) classify dogs identified in the [Dog Control Act 1996](#), as dangerous or menacing based on the dogs' breed or type, or the behaviour of the dogs
 - (b) maintain a record of dogs classified as dangerous and menacing under the [Dog Control Act 1996](#)
 - (c) maintain a record of probationary and disqualified owners
 - (d) ensure compliance with classification requirements, including that -
 - (i) owners of dogs classified as dangerous or menacing meet the expectations under the [Dog Control Act 1996](#) (section 32 and section 33F)
 - (ii) dogs classified as dangerous or menacing are neutered
- For the purposes of the [Dog Control Act 1996](#) (section 10(3)(ea) and (eb)) the requirement to neuter dogs classified as menacing applies to all dogs classified as menacing by

Auckland Council or by any other territorial authority and relocated to Auckland (even if the other authority that classified the dog did not require it to be neutered).

- (iii) owners of dogs classified as probationary or disqualified meet the requirements under the [Dog Control Act 1996](#) (sections 23, 23A, 24, and 28).
 - (e) allow the owner of a dog classified as menacing due to its behaviour under section 33A of the [Dog Control Act 1996](#), to request a review of the classification after 12 months, if -
 - (i) the owner provides (at their cost) a dog behavioural assessment report that -
 - is conducted by an assessor approved by council
 - contains the assessor's professional opinion on whether the dog's classification should be maintained, revised, or removed
 - contains an evaluation of the dog's behaviour in various settings
 - recommends any conditions under which the dog's classification might be reconsidered (for example training programmes or a regular assessment); and
 - recommends any for further trainings or strategies, if necessary.
 - (ii) the owner has not obtained any infringements in relation to the dog within the preceding 12-month period; and
 - (iii) the owner has obtained a responsible dog ownership licence.
- Removing the classification of the dog is at the council's discretion.

3.5 Provide services that reduce and respond to problems caused by dogs

This includes -

- (a) a 24-hour dog management service
- (b) shelter services, for example safe custody and re-homing
- (c) patrols of public places, for example streets, parks and beaches
- (d) issuing licenses to keep more than two dogs on a property under council bylaws
- (e) emergency assistance with dogs involved in accidents or police operations
- (f) investigation and resolution of incidents, for example dog attacks on people or animals, roaming, barking, fouling, aggressive dog behaviour, abandoned dogs, or dog welfare concerns
- (g) seizing and holding dogs, including dogs that are a threat to public safety
- (h) working to change attitudes and behaviours of irresponsible dog owners and where appropriate, proactively using powers to ensure public safety and comfort and penalise irresponsible dog owners
- (i) issuing warnings, abatement notices and infringement notices (where appropriate)
- (j) requiring the neutering of uncontrolled dogs under council bylaws (where appropriate)
- (k) classifying dogs and dog owners (where appropriate)
- (l) court proceedings against dog owners for offences (where appropriate).

3.6 Provide dog access rules in public places and private ways

3.6.1 Apply the following principles to ensure dog access rules balance the needs of people, dogs, animals, environment and property

- (a) recognise responsible dog owners as legitimate users of public places and that dog access is

essential for dog welfare

- (b) integrate, where practicable, dog owners and their dogs with other users of public places (for example public roads, parks and beaches)
- (c) provide opportunities for dog owners to take their dogs to public places that are accessible, desirable, and provide diversity of experience for both the dog and owner
- (d) promote safe interaction between dogs and people using public places and private ways to ensure that dogs do not injure, endanger, intimidate or otherwise cause distress to any person, in particular, children and vulnerable adults
- (e) manage the conflict between dogs and protected wildlife and environment (natural habitat)
- (f) manage the conflict between dogs and stock, poultry, domestic animals and property.

3.6.2 Consider dog access on a comprehensive region-wide basis, as well as place-by-place basis

- (a) apply default and general rules in Schedule 1 that apply Auckland-wide to ensure there is a rule for every public place and private way in Auckland
- (b) apply rules for specific places in Auckland in Schedule 2
- (c) apply the following terms and definitions when setting dog access rules -
 - (i) **under control off a leash** (off-leash) area - a place shared with other users, where dogs may be off a leash but must still be under control at all times
 - (ii) **under control on a leash** (on-leash) area - a place shared with other users, where dogs must be on a leash and under control at all times
 - (iii) **prohibited** area - a place where dogs are not permitted to be, and other users have absolute priority
 - (iv) **designated dog exercise** area - a place where dog owners are the priority user. Dog owners may take their dogs off a leash (including dogs classified as dangerous) but they must be under control at all times
 - (v) **time and season** area - a place shared with other users, where the dog access rules will be different depending on the time of day and year. This is to minimise the conflict between dogs and other users of the space during peak times.
- (d) use the following time and season definition when restricting dog access to ensure the safe interaction between people and dogs at popular locations:

10.00am to 5.00pm between 1 December to 1 March, inclusive (summer)

Related information about time and season rules

- Different time and season definitions may apply to manage conflict between dogs and animals or natural habitat (for example lambing season).
 - The relevant authority (local boards or delegated council committee) will decide:
 - where a time and season rule applies (location)
 - the type of dog access (prohibited, on-leash, off-leash or designated dog exercise area)
 - what the rule outside of the summer season access will be (including any times).
- For example, a local board may decide that a beach is off-leash before 10am, prohibited between 10.00am and 5.00pm and off-leash after 5.00pm in summer, and off-leash at any time of the year.

3.6.3 Consider the following before making any change to a dog access rule on a park or beach that would provide more dog access

- (a) the current and future usage patterns and behaviours
- (b) the potential conflicts between dogs and people, animals, environment and property

Dog Access principles changes - Time & season

6970

During deliberations, the 2019 Hearing Panel wanted to remove the ‘winter’ time and season restrictions that were in place and varied amongst each other across 6 LB’s (Devonport-Takapuna, Waitemata, Albert-Eden, Orakei, Maungakiekie-Tamaki and Manger-Otahuhu).

Staff advised that they could not do this as the removal had not been consulted on. The Reg chair at the time was noticeably frustrated at this as the panel felt that it had been shown there was no need and the community didn’t want it during the consultation process.

The 2019 Hearing panel then deliberated at length to develop an information note for local boards when changing a ‘out of summer season’ rule that “The policy intends that the outside of summer rule provides more access than the summer season rule that applies in the same area.”

This information has been removed from the proposed Dog Policy. **We ask for it to remain to give Local Boards guidance.**

2019 (Current)

4. Apply the following time and season definition
- (a) 10.00am to 5.00pm between the 1 December and 1 March (summer)

Explanatory Note:

The relevant authority (local boards or delegated council committee) will decide:

- where a time and season rule applies (location)
- the type of dog access (i.e. prohibited, on-leash, off-leash or designated dog exercise area)
- what the outside of summer season access rule will be.

For example, a local board may decide that a beach is off-leash before 10am, prohibited between 10.00am and 5.00pm and off-leash after 5.00pm.

Information Note:

The Policy intends that the outside of summer rule provides more access than the summer season rule that applies in the same area.

2025 (Proposed)

- (d) use the following time and season definition when restricting dog access to ensure the safe interaction between people and dogs at popular locations:

10.00am to 5.00pm between 1 December to 1 March, inclusive (summer)

Related information about time and season rules

- Different time and season definitions may apply to manage conflict between dogs and animals or natural habitat (for example lambing season).
- The relevant authority (local boards or delegated council committee) will decide:
 - where a time and season rule applies (location)
 - the type of dog access (prohibited, on-leash, off-leash or designated dog exercise area)
 - what the rule outside of the summer season access will be (including any times).

For example, a local board may decide that a beach is off-leash before 10am, prohibited between 10.00am and 5.00pm and off-leash after 5.00pm in summer, and off-leash at any time of the year.

Dog Access principles changes -

6970

Council's proposed access principle change around when a rule change is proposed that would provide less dog access is now proposed to have an additional element to it;

- that a 'catchment approach' to consider any gaps in dog access provision that may arise.

We can't find any reference or explanation as to what this 'catchment approach' is and how it works? We can't give any view on whether we think this is a good addition towards dog access evaluation or a hindrance. We would like to get clarification around this and we suspect that local boards may need that too?

2019 (Current)

6. Consider the following before making any change to a dog access rule on parks and beaches that would provide less dog access:

- (a) Consider whether there are practicable alternative solutions to address the conflict between uses of the place³
- (b) Ensure, to the extent that is practicable, that displaced dog owners and their dogs have access to other places or that such access is provided as part of the same decision.

2025 (Proposed)

3.6.4 Consider the following before making any change to a dog access rule on a park or beach that would provide less dog access

- (a) evidence of a significant risk of conflict between responsible dog owners and their dogs and other people, animals, environment or property
- (b) whether there are practicable alternative solutions to address the conflict, such as ways to enable better sharing of the public place.²
- (c) the need to ensure, to the extent that is practicable, that displaced dog owners and their dogs have access to other places or that such access is provided as part of the same decision, including a catchment approach to consider any gaps in dog access provision that may arise.



Proposed 2025 Dog Access Policy still lacks details -

6970

Normally for Dog access rules the areas/place that the rule applies to is listed - example shown

This means that;

- signage of the access rules for off leash, prohibited, time and season or for environmental rules can be erected at the location they apply to.
- The ‘where to walk your dog’ website lists the location and the rules that apply to it
- That dog owners know the rules for a space

But there are still issues with location identification that we raised in 2019 that remain in the proposed 2025 policy.

3 Dogs are allowed in the following areas during the following times and seasons -

- (1) Arkles Bay: headland to headland
- (2) Big Manly Beach: headland to headland
- (3) Browns Bay Beach
- (4) Campbells Bay Beach: including grass area at end of The Esplanade, parts of Campbells Bay Esplanade Reserve adjacent to the beach and wastewater pipeline to Mairangi Bay Beach
- (5) Fisherman’s Rock
- (6) Hatfields Beach: headland to headland
- (7) Little Manly Beach: headland to headland
- (8) Mairangi Bay Beach: including wastewater pipeline to Mairangi Bay Beach
- (9) Matakatia Bay: headland to headland
- (10) Murrays Bay Beach: including wastewater pipeline to Campbells Bay Beach
- (11) Orewa Beach: north headland to estuary bridge southern end
- (12) Red Beach: headland to headland
- (13) Rothesay Bay Beach
- (14) Stanmore Bay: headland to headland
- (15) Swann Beach: headland to headland
- (16) Tindalls Beach: headland to headland
- (17) Waiake Beach: including Rock Isle Beach
- (18) Waiwera Beach: from The Strand roundabout to southern headland.
- (19) Winstones Cove: beach and reserve.

Summer (1 December to 1 March)		Other seasons	
	Under control off leash Morning (Before 10am)		Under control off leash All times
	Prohibited Daytime (10am to 5pm)		
	Under control off leash Evening (After 5pm)		

Proposed 2025 Dog Access Policy still lacks details -

6970

For the 2025 Proposed Dog Policy **Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Board** area is still showing a completely vague description of where dogs are allowed during the Summer and Winter time restrictions **which we raised in 2019.**

We don't see how this can be signposted at the relevant beaches if they aren't named in the policy and we can't see how Council is identifying them on their 'where to walk your dog' website.

Fundamentally, if council can't identify or name them, how are dog owners meant to?

If no beaches can be identified for the rule to apply to then surely the rule should be removed for this LB area?

3 Dogs are allowed in the following areas during the following times and seasons –

All beaches excluding Onehunga foreshore on the southern side of Orpheus Drive between the coastline below 54A Seacliffe Road and the Manukau Cruising Club.

Summer (1 December to 1 March)		Other seasons	
	Under control on leash* Morning (Before 10am)		Under control off leash Before 10am
	Prohibited Daytime (10am to 5pm)		Under control on leash* 10am to 4pm
	Under control on leash* Evening (After 5pm)		Under control off leash After 4pm
	Prohibited At all times from safe swimming areas or lanes marked out by council		Prohibited At all times from safe swimming areas or lanes marked out by council

* Except in the water where dogs are allowed under control off a leash.

Proposed 2025 Dog Access Policy still lacks details -

6970

For the 2025 Proposed Dog Policy **Mangere-Otahuhu Local Board** area is still showing a completely vague description of where dogs are allowed during the Summer and Winter time restrictions which **we raised in 2019**.

“ON BEACHES IN THE FORMER AUCKLAND CITY AREA” - who would know this? This is from 15 years ago!

We don’t see how this can be signposted at the relevant beaches if they aren’t named in the policy and we can’t see how Council is identifying them on their ‘where to walk your dog’ website.

Fundamentally, if council can’t identify or name them, how are dog owners meant to?

If no beaches can be identified for the rule to apply to then surely the rule should be removed for this LB area?

9 Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board area

(2) On beaches in the former Auckland City area:

Summer (1 December to 1 March)		Other seasons	
	Under control on leash* Morning (Before 10am)		Under control off leash Before 10am
	Prohibited Daytime (10am to 5pm)		Under control on leash 10am to 4pm
	Under control on leash* Evening (After 5pm)		Under control off leash After 4pm
	Prohibited At all times from safe swimming areas or lanes marked out or identified by council		Prohibited At all times from safe swimming areas or lanes marked out or identified by council

* Except in the water where dogs are allowed under control off a leash.

4 There are no areas where dogs are **prohibited** in the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board area.

Regional Park proposals - overwhelmingly increasing restrictions and reducing access. # 6970

North:

Mahurangi Regional Park;

- **lose** all access to a track, go **from on to off** at another location

Pakiri Regional Park;

- **lose all off leash access, move to prohibited**

Te Arai Regional Park;

- **lose off leash access** on Forestry Beach, **move to prohibited**

Shakespear Regional Park

- **lose off leash access, move to prohibited** on part of Army Bay and Okoromai Bay
- summer time & season rule on park, **off leash to on leash**

Long Bay Regional Park;

- **lose on leash access** during summer, **move to prohibited**

Whakanewha (Waiheke)

- **gain on leash access** on tracks to access existing on leash area
- Waitawa
- **Lose 75% of current off leash access, move to on leash**

Muriwai, Tawharanui, Wenderholm - no change to access

Regional Park proposals - overwhelmingly increasing restrictions and reducing access. # 6970

South:

Auckland Botanic Gardens

- **lose off leash**, area reduced

Hunua Ranges

- **lose access** from **on leash to prohibited** on named tracks and roads

Tapapakanga

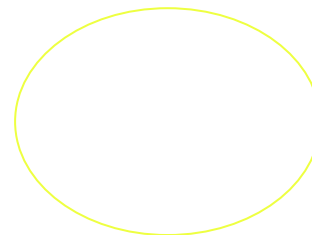
- **gain** on leash **in a carpark** during lambing season

Ambury - no change to access

Regional Parks - Shakespear

6970

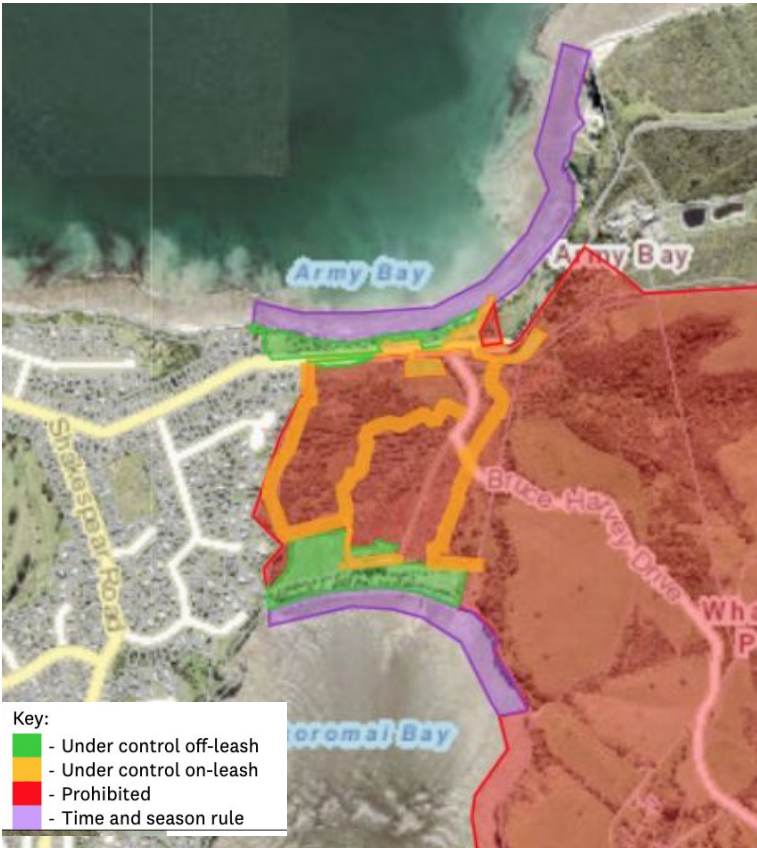
- Council is proposing the following;
 - To apply the regional time and season rule of Dogs on leash on the grass areas next to Okoromai and Army Bay. This would mean current OFF leash access would become ON leash during summer hours restrictions (between 10am and 5pm).
 - To PROHIBIT dogs from east of the Army Bay boat ramp.
 - To PROHIBIT dogs from the eastern end of Okoromai Bay



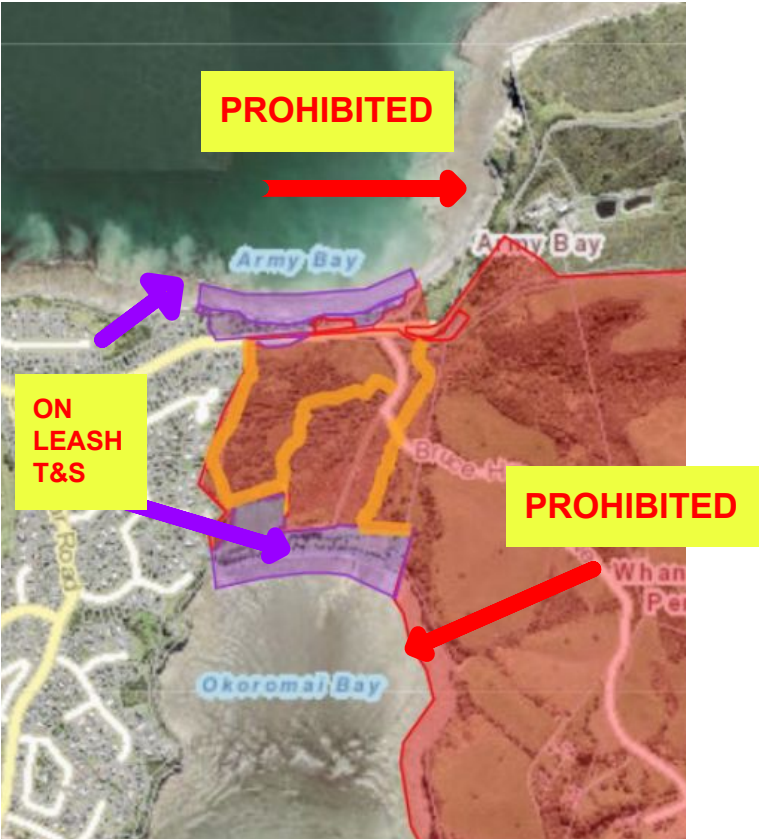
Northern Areas - proposed Access Changes - Hibiscus & Bays - Shakespear Regional Park

6970

Current



Proposed



This map isn't showing the prohibited beach area of Army Bay

It seems as though desktop research has brought this up as an issue

6970

Looking on google maps you might think that dogs could access the Sanctuary area from the eastern end of the beach



Shakespear Regional Park

Prohibiting Dogs from East of the Army Bay boat ramp. The reason given is to stop dogs from accessing the sanctuary area. But there are cliffs here and no access to the park. There is no need to prohibit dogs from the east of the boat ramp at Army Bay beach. These photos clearly demonstrate the lack of access to the Sanctuary in this area of the beach.

This proposal **SHOULD NOT** go ahead as dogs cannot physically access the Sanctuary.

Proposed # 6970



Hibiscus & Bays - Shakespear

6970

Prohibiting Dogs from the Eastern end of Okoromai Bay as there is a chance they might access the sanctuary area. There is signposting saying 'no dogs' beyond X point to stop this. From the findings report it doesn't seem like an actual issue to address, just a risk. Unlike cats, dogs are accompanied by an owner & can be stopped from entering. Access to this area of the beach is only available at low tide so it is not a hugely used area, but for people with reactive dogs it's a good place to be away from other dogs. The photos below show the area in question in both high & low tide

Low Tide



High Tide



Te Arai Regional Park - Forestry Beach

6970

Te Arai Regional Park was originally the Park land and beach north of Te Arai Point

With the gifting of land to Auckland Council through the Te Arai South development council has moved to enlarge the park land of the Te Arai Regional Park area - creating Te Arai North and Te Arai South park - land.

However Forestry Beach, south of Te Arai Point, was not part of this gift and, we believe, remained a beach within the Rodney local board area. It was not identified as an off leash area as part of the 2019 Dog Bylaw review as we believe it should have and has ended up in a grey area with council now wanting to review the rules around dog access and make it part of the Te Arai regional park.

It is the biggest, and main area of dog access for locals & visitors. If council goes ahead with prohibiting dogs from as proposed in this review at Pakiri Beach (adjacent to the Regional Park) and Forestry Beach that will mean that 24km of Rodney coastline will be prohibited to dog families.

Given the plans to tar seal to Te Arai South/Forestry beach from SH1 and the relative quick drive (25 mins currently), it is likely that Te Arai Regional park will get greater numbers of visitors in the coming years, along with locals with the approved 60 home subdivision at Te Arai South and the recent submission by Te Arai South Holdings & Darby Partners for an additional 180 visitor accommodation units and 420 residential and retirement living units at Te Arai South along with sand mining activity..

According to Council's own data, there were 165,000 visitors to Te Arai in 2020 and 130,000 in 2021. The planned northern motorway extension and northern growth and development is likely to increase these numbers.

Te Arai South and Forestry Beach are the logical areas along this 24KM coastline to have dog access as it is also likely to be where more people will be visiting. There is no other area along this coastline that will have intensive development next to it. In fact I can't think of any other regional park beach that has/will have such intensive development fronting it.

Coastline - Goat Island to Te Arai

Removing Dog access as proposed on the beaches bordering the Te Arai South and Pakiri Regional parks means over 24KM of Rodney beaches would be off limits to dog families.



Forestry Beach January 2024

6970



This is likely to be more the norm over summer in coming years

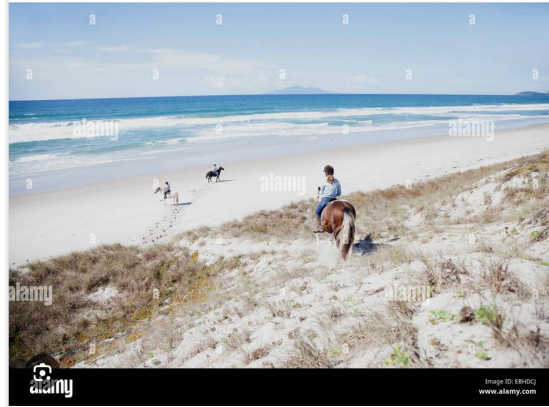
Te Arai Regional Park - Forestry Beach

6970

Council states protection of Sand dunes is a reason to keep dogs off Forestry Beach. However signage, education and maps can achieve this. But people can do more damage. Horse riding on the beach is still allowed & seem to be on the dunes?.



Te Arai Lodge Walks image



[Horse riding, Pakiri Beach, Auckland, New Zealand](#)
Stock Photo - Alamy

Visit >

Pakiri Beach horse riding on dunes



Forestry Beach

6970

Te Arai Links golf course has helicopters coming and going from the beach side - something that will disturb shorebirds. Visitors to the golf course and beach users also use drones.



Dotterel

DOC guidelines for nesting Dotterel.

Surely there can be a compromise rather than simply prohibiting dogs and their families

You can help protect the New Zealand dotterel

- Walk and ride your horse below the high-tide mark on beaches where dotterels are breeding.
- Please stay outside the fenced-off areas with 'birds nesting' signs.
- If you see a dotterel pretending to be injured, or come across eggs or chicks, please leave them alone.
- Please do not take vehicles on beaches.
- Keep your dog on a leash at all times. Remember that some beaches are only open for dog-walking at certain times. Check first with your district council.

Making dogs the bad guy means people think we are the only problem

6970

Auckland Council Staff have referenced the following study in other Dotterel proposals regarding Dogs;

A. Lord et al. / Biological Conservation 98 (2001)

New Zealand dotterels leave their nests if potential **predators (including humans) approach**. It is desirable, although often not practical, to prohibit human access from breeding areas occupied by threatened or endangered species.

Effects of Human Approaches to nests of Dotterel

As part of the field survey sites were rated as receiving high levels of activity if they received between 7-20 visitors per hour (popular beaches with easy access and near housing settlements) - these were identified as busy beaches.

Scenarios tested were; Lone person walking, lone person running, lone person walking a leashed dog. Off leash dog walking was not tested. All of the testing started at 200m out from the nest. All participants walked to within 5 metres of the nest.

Flush distances were observed.

For those deemed to be a busy beach the mean result showed:

- A lone walker would flush a bird off the nest at approx 20m
- A lone runner would flush a bird off the nest at approx 50m
- A lone walker with a leashed dog would flush a bird off the nest at approx 70m

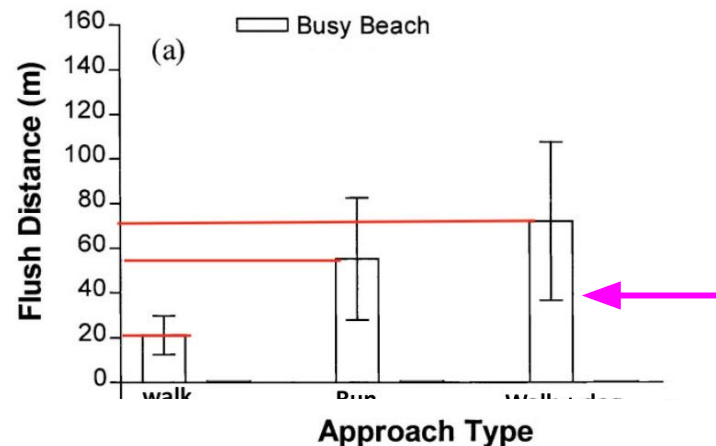


Fig. 2. Effect of beach activity level on (a) flush distance and (b) time spent off nest (back transformed means and standard errors).

A. Lord et al. - Effects of Human Approaches to Nests of Northern NZ Dotterel

Making dogs the bad guy means people think we are the only problem # 6970

After having someone (+dog) come within 5m of the nest & standing there for 1 minute the time spent off the nest on a busy beach was:

- A lone walker kept the birds off the nest for approx 2.5 minutes (150 seconds)
- A lone runner kept the birds off the nest for approx 3 minutes (180 seconds)
- A lone walk with a leashed dog kept the birds off the nest for approx 3.7 minutes (210 seconds). **Only 40 seconds approx longer than a runner.**

Often the gist from Council staff is that the Dotterel spent more time off their nest when approached by a walker with a dog.

The impact of a dog on leash vs a runner is only 40 seconds. A walker will still mean that the birds will be off the nest for approx 2.5 minutes.

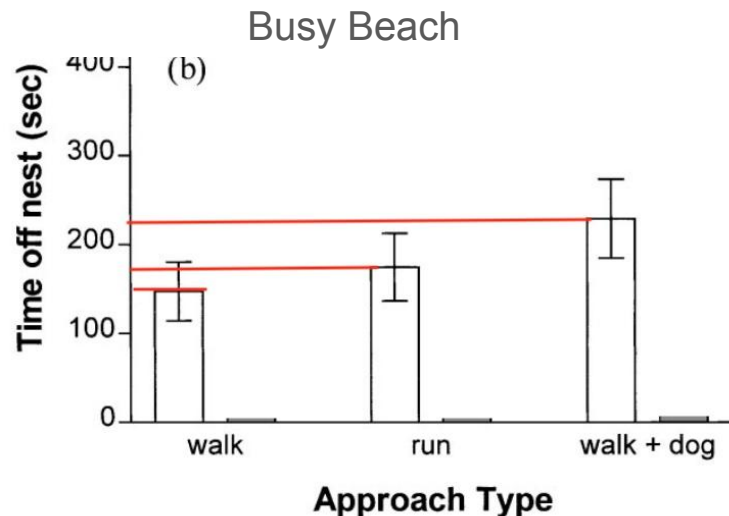


Fig. 2. Effect of beach activity level on (a) flush distance and (b) time spent off nest (back transformed means and standard errors).

A. Lord et al - Effects of Human Approaches to Nests of Northern NZ Dotterel

Dogs aren't the only threat to Dotterels...

...but because the council has a bylaw in place to control dog access they are always the ones to be restricted.

Cats are proving a huge issue at the Dotterel population at Omaha and locals are crying out for council to do something.

People running, kids playing can also cause the dotterels to move off their nest. Kite surfing has been shown to affect breeding dotterel in Auckland.

Manly Dotterel minder group report drones and golf balls are also a disturbance to nesting birds.

But the only ones who have any infringements on their movements are dog owners.

Threats to Dotterels are not limited to Dogs

6970

Kite Surfing - risk to breeding;

Council's own expert witness in a Council Environment Court action¹ - Dr Lovegrove (Auckland Council) - said that an increase in kite-surfing at the Karaka shell banks in the South Manukau harbour had been found to be disturbing migratory species such as godwits and preventing breeding of New Zealand dotterel for whom this was an important site. In addition another expert witness who was supporting Council's position in this action cited "an evaluation of 17 studies from five countries, including New Zealand, Mr Don said that birds perceive kite surfers as large predators and avoid them by taking long flights or leaving a site altogether. In his view, unregulated kite-surfing had the potential to *"significantly degrade the existing habitats of coastal birds as a result of continual disturbance."*

Vehicles on beaches

This has been identified as an issue at Te Arai regional park

Threats to Dotterels are not just from dogs

6970

Predators - cats. Cats have been a major problem for Dotterel breeding sites in the north auckland area but council has no plan in place to limit or control cats



Cat attacks dotterels at Snells

0:12 MON, 24 OCT

Snells Beach cat owners are being asked to keep an eye on their pets, after dotterels were attacked early last Wednesday morning, October 19, forcing...



Omaha dotterel team mourns cat attack

0:12 SUN, 13 DEC

Night photos at the sanctuary, taken after the dotterel died, clearly show a cat on the prowl. A domestic cat is believed to have killed...



Tragic end for dotterel egg

10:10 TUE, 19 NOV

The sole dotterel (tūturiwhatu) egg remaining at Tindalls Bay disappeared overnight on Friday, November 8. Forest and Bir volunteer Derek Kelsey discovered the empty nest...



Council's dithering on dotterels criticised

8:08 TUE, 19 MAR

Auckland Council has been urged to do its job in protecting the seabirds and their chicks on Omaha Spit, which are being decimated by cats...



Council pussyfoots over dotterel destruction

14:02 FRI, 16 FEB

A refusal by Auckland Council to seriously address the cat problem on the Omaha Spit could sound the death knell for the area as a...



Community groups seek more cat control

13:01 TUE, 21 MAR

When cats were first captured on camera on the chenier (shell bank) in the Weiti River, last October, environmental group Friends of Okura Bush (FOOB)...



Stop pussyfooting around – keep cats indoors, pet owners urged

8:08 MON, 27 FEB

Cat burglar – this pet stole several eggs and wrecked dotterel nests this season at Snells Beach. Though their owners might not realise it, pet...

Threats to Dotterels are not just from dogs

6970

Predators - black back gulls

November 2024 - Tindalls Bay Nest egg lost..... *“closer inspection revealed no sign of egg shells, which could have indicated the nest was predated by a black-backed gull, cat or hedgehog.”* Hibiscus Matters 19th Nov 2024

Case study: Matakana Island

DOC began to worry about the apparent failure of New Zealand dotterel chicks to fledge on Matakana Island and set video cameras to monitor dotterel nests.

Surprise, the cameras revealed that predation by black-backed gulls was the main cause of mortality among dotterel chicks.

An eradication was successful, and there are now no black-backed gulls nesting on Matakana Island. .Dotterels have since made a huge comeback on Matakana Island, now the most successful nesting area for the waders in the country. During the 2004–05 breeding season 30 chicks were raised from 42 pairs of New Zealand dotterels, and banded dotterels from previous broods are turning up all round the Bay of Plenty and nesting in new areas. Other birds, such as variable oystercatchers, are also benefiting from the absence of the predatory gulls

<https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/black-backed-gulls/>

Threats to Dotterels are not just from dogs

6970

Predators - Hedgehogs

2022 - a hedgehog ate 3 eggs in a Manly dotterels nest. It was later discovered in a nearby trap. (<https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/resources/prickly-problem>)



Proposed updates to the council's dog policy and bylaw and regional park dog access rules

#7296

Note: this version of the feedback form has been created for the purpose of publishing submissions. As such, name, contact and demographic information has been removed and handwritten submissions have been transcribed.

Submitter details:

Organisation (if applicable): Dogs out and about Ltd

Local Board: Regional Organisation

Your feedback (all questions are optional)

The public feedback form was separated into four sections:

1. Walking multiple dogs
2. General policy and bylaw matters (for example clarifying existing rules and reformatting to make the documents more user-friendly)
3. Changes to dog access rules at Regional Parks
4. Changes to dog access rules at local parks and beaches.

This submission only contains submission content for sections 1-3 (regional elements).

1. Walking multiple dogs

We are proposing to set a limit on the number of dogs that a person may walk in a council-controlled public place at one time. The proposed number of dogs a person has in their possession in a council-controlled public place must not exceed the following limits:

Maximum number of dogs (both on-leash or off-leash): 6

Maximum number of on-leash dogs: 6

Maximum number of off-leash dogs: 3

1A. What do you think of this proposed change?

Do not support

1B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

No change to current rules (no limit on the number of dogs and all dogs must be under control at all times)

Tell us why

- Dog walkers who's been walking dogs for 20 years
- Did canine behaviour training at Unitec and learned over the years about dog behaviour
- Definitely agree with licencing with PDWA so all dog walkers are monitored, weed out the bad ones if there are incidents. The profession dog walkers association can make sure members are following the rules
- My dog owners would be lost without my services, some of them are like family to me. They are already worried about price going up if numbers limited
- I walk 18 dogs at one time but with 3 staff support. We get to park and take dogs on a lead and only take them off lead if safe. Count dogs every 10 minutes. Train staff to ensure dogs are not nuisance to the public
- All of them are off lead. I go to Waterlee Park at Mangere. It is fenced and we are always watching the area. Some dogs I pick up before 7am, and some of the staff I work with I meet at the park
- Six dogs is not practical. For me, it takes me 2 hours to pick up dogs, I spend 3 hours at the park then drop them off. 6 would not work logistically due to petrol
- The focus should be roaming dogs and bad dog owners – responsible dog owners should not be punished
- Profession dog walkers won't be able to survive other than increasing the price
- Bigger groups allow dogs to mingle and play

2. General policy and bylaw matters

To improve our approach to dog management and the bylaw rules, we are proposing to reorganise, simplify and clarify the policy and bylaw content.

What do you think of the following proposed changes?

Restructure the policy to more clearly show its goal, focus areas, council actions, and rules:

Tell us why

Clarify rule that all dogs classified as menacing must be to neuter:

Tell us why

Clarify who can provide behavioural assessments in relation to menacing dog classifications:

Tell us why

Clarify what areas in Auckland require a licence to keep multiple dogs on a property:

Tell us why

Clarify how dog access rules are set:

Tell us why

Clarify Auckland-wide dog access rules (for example, rules at council carparks and camping grounds, for working dogs, dogs in vehicles and private ways):

Tell us why

Clarify or correct errors in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules:

Tell us why

Remove outdated information in Policy Schedule 2: Dog access rules (for example, outdated landmarks):

Tell us why

Update dog access rules for Tūpuna Maunga (ancestral mountains):

Tell us why

Remove outdated or duplicate bylaw content:

Tell us why

Do you have comments on any of the above proposed changes?

Do you have any further comments on the proposed policy and bylaw changes?

3. Dog access rules at Regional Parks

Submitters were able to select from the following list to provide feedback on any of the 14 Regional Parks we are proposing to amend or clarify the dog access rules:

Ambury Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Auckland Botanic Gardens

We are proposing to change the off-leash rule at the Auckland Botanic Gardens and to prohibit dogs from all waterways and busy community areas.

A. What do you think of this proposed change?

B. If you do not support the proposed change, would you support one of the alternative options presented to decision-makers in December 2024?

Tell us why

Hunua Ranges Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs from tracks and roads that connect to the Kohukohunui track, the Kokako Management Area and Piggott's Habitat and from single-use mountain bike tracks (currently on-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Long Bay Regional Park

We are proposing to amend the summer daytime rule for the beach south of Vaughan Stream from on-leash to prohibited and clarify rules in other areas, including access to beach from southernmost carpark and prohibited tracks and bays.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Mahurangi Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Culdip Point Loop Track (currently on-leash), allow dogs on-leash at all times at Scott Point (currently on-leash time and season) and clarify rules in other areas (including dogs prohibited at Mahurangi Regional Park (East) and heritage grounds at Scott Point.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Mahurangi Regional Park (West)

Mahurangi East

Mahurangi Scott Point

Tell us why

Muriwai Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Pākiri Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on the associated beach (currently off-leash).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Shakespear Regional Park

We are proposing to apply an on-leash time and season rule to the open grass areas between Army Bay and Okoramai Bay (currently off-leash) and clarify rules in other areas (such as boundary of Army Bay and Okoramai Bay beaches, on-leash tracks and prohibited areas).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāpapakanga Regional Park

We are proposing to provide off-leash access on the beach and on-leash access on areas between the beach and car park at any time (currently prohibited during lambing season) and clarify rules in other areas (such as prohibited at camping areas and bach, and during lambing).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Tāwharanui Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Te Ārai Regional Park

We are proposing to prohibit dogs on Forestry Beach (Te Ārai Beach South to Pākiri Beach) and associated coastal tracks and to clarify access to off-leash area at the disused quarry.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Waitawa Regional Park

We are proposing to change the eastern part of Mataitai Beach from off-leash to on-leash (western part of beach to remain off-leash), change Waitawa Beach from off-leash to on-leash, prohibit dogs on single use mountain bike tracks and clarify other areas where dogs are prohibited (such as farm paddocks during lambing season, campground and bach).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Wenderholm Regional Park

We are proposing to clarify the current rules (no change to dog access).

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why

Whakanewha Regional Park

We are proposing to provide on-leash access on tracks from Omiha (Rocky Bay) to the on-leash area of the Park.

What do you think of this proposed change?

Tell us why