

Date: Friday, 30 July 2021

**ANIMAL MANAGEMENT
BYLAW REVIEW 2021**

**HOWICK LOCAL BOARD
WRITTEN FEEDBACK Vol. 1
(52–62)**

Sub #	Organisation Name	Local Board
52		Howick
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Animal Management Bylaw Review 2021

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Sometimes the way people interact with animals causes a problem. For example, a poorly maintained chicken coop may create an odour nuisance, or the feeding of wild animals may attract pests.

How Auckland Council helps maintain human-animal bonds

We make rules about animal ownership and interaction to minimise risks to public health and safety, nuisance, offensive behaviour and misuse of council-controlled public places.

The current rules are set in Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau Ture-ā-rohe Tiaki Kararehe 2015 / the Auckland Council Animal Management Bylaw 2015 and associated controls.

Improving the rules about animal ownership and interaction

We recently checked how the rules are working and identified potential improvements.

Our main proposals are to:

- require an approval to keep more than two standard beehives on urban premises with a land area less than 2000 square metres (no approval currently required).
- incorporate rules from another bylaw about feeding animals on private property
- update the definitions, structure, format and wording of the Bylaw and controls to make them easier to read and understand.

Other aspects of the Bylaw, controls and their implementation remain unchanged, for example:

- the Bylaw continues to focus on the impact of animals on people
- matters already covered in existing legislation are not addressed in the Bylaw, for example animal welfare in the Animal Welfare Act, pest control in the Biosecurity Act and Auckland Regional Pest Management Plan and dogs in the Dog Management Bylaw
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Organisation (if applicable):

Your local board: Howick

Your feedback

Proposal 1: Require an approval to keep more than two beehives on urban premises 2000 square meters or less

We have heard a range of views about limits on beehives in urban areas. We are seeking feedback on:

- allowing more or less beehives without an approval than the proposed two (for example, retaining the current no limit)
- limits for different sized urban premises than the proposed 2000 square metres (for example, requiring an approval for any beehive on urban premises less than 600 square metres, or in an apartment).

To own more than two hives, people would need to apply for an animal management license, which would consider factors like location and proximity to neighbours. These rules will not affect people living in rural areas.

What is your opinion on this proposal? Other

Tell us why: Beekeepers are well regulated under current law to ensure good beekeeping practices are maintained. As a hobbyist beekeeper it is good practice to keep at least two hives. This is so that if one hive is failing other hives can be resourced to strengthen each other. E.g. swapping frames of brood if a queen lost. It is not unusual to have a call out to collect a swarm and if this happens then the beekeeper could end up with more than two hives once the swarm is collected. For some this would be a temporary situation until they find a new home for the collected swarm once it has passed a period of quarantine. For this reason I believe the maximum number of hives should be increased to THREE.

Proposal 2: Move rules about the feeding of animals on private property to the Animal Management Bylaw

These rules already exist but we are proposing to include them within the Animal Management Bylaw rather than the Property Maintenance and Nuisance Bylaw 2015, so it is easier to find rules about animals.

What is your opinion on this proposal? Yes, I agree

Tell us why: I agree that it would be simpler to have rules and regulations pertaining to animals within one bylaw, be they wild or domesticated.

Proposal 3: Update the Bylaw definitions, structure, format, and wording

We have done this to make the Bylaw and controls easier to read and understand, for example by:

- aligning definitions of 'nuisance' and 'public place' with those in the Public Safety and Nuisance Bylaw 2013
- aligning the Bylaw and control structure, format, and wording with current drafting practices.

What is your opinion on this proposal? Yes, I agree

Tell us why: Keep it simple. Lessen possibility of duplication and or ambiguity. There should be consistency and uniformity between acts and bylaws so that any cross referencing makes logical sense.

Are there any other comments you wish to make?

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What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I don't agree - there should be more rules

Tell us why: Our neighbour got a hive last year and our cars and windows were covered in bee poo for months. It is not easy to was away and needs scraping off. They have a section about 1000 sqm

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What is your opinion on this proposal? Other

Tell us why: I don't mind which by law it is under as long as it's a good rule and enforceable

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What is your opinion on this proposal? Other

Tell us why: I have an English degree and you're not making the wording easy either way

Are there any other comments you wish to make?

I believe people can keep beehives but Mets remove them if there's are any objections from neighbours, that way everyone can be happy

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What is your opinion on this proposal? Yes, I agree

Tell us why: On small urban properties, more than 2 beehives could be a nuisance to neighbours

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What is your opinion on this proposal? Yes, I agree

Tell us why: Make it easier for animal control officers

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What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I don't agree - there should be fewer rules.

Tell us why: Bees are crucial for our ecosystem. Council should make it easier for people to keep bees, not harder.

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What is your opinion on this proposal? Other

Tell us why: There are already in place Asure quality govt rules. Yearly reports, subscriptions, inspections and trainings. It is well managed. Council or local powers can close down an apiary if complaints are made and not responded to by the bee keeper to the satisfaction of the council inspector. You already have those powers.

I think hobby bee keepers need supporting not limiting, the council should pay them for looking after all the gardens and trees the bees do, it's hard work.

It's also very impractical, for example, spring time bees swarm, to prevent this keepers split the hives, to make this possible keepers need 2 locations 5km apart, they take their splits to the other location. During this time a keeper may have several colonies on each site until the bees are strong enough to go to new bee keepers. This may go on through summer. Also if there is known spraying happening, or other reasons, bees have to all be moved to new locations thus also increasing numbers for a period.

It is also commonly understood in the bee keeping world that a size of a property makes no difference, the bees leave the location then visit the trees and gardens in the area, you could have a balcony hive.

As for flight path, all I did was put up a tall garden shade screen, it lifts the bees high then they disperse.

The short answer is you actually need more bees and flying insects, your cutting trees down in Auckland at a staggering rate, now you wish to reduce bees, flying insects are normal and assentual for humans, even cities, insects poo, yes that's why we wash down cars and so on. Most insect poo is removed with methilated spirits, simple. What will be next the birds?

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What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I do not agree

Tell us why: Current laws are good enough, it's domesticated cats that are a problem, pooing in gardens killing birds.

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What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I do not agree

Tell us why: Does not need redifining

Are there any other comments you wish to make?

Please support bee keepers, they need it, it's hard work, painful, expensive, ralready well regulated, council already have powers to close down a problem bee keeper, they are problems to us too, they don't register, they don't look after hives,

they are terrible to the bees, diseases over harvesting and greedy. Instead simply ask bee keepers for their registration number, if they don't have one, Asure Quality sorts them out no cost to council. All bee keepers in new Zealand have to bee registered or they get fined, bees destroyed or removed.

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- require an approval to keep more than two standard beehives on urban premises with a land area less than 2000 square metres (no approval currently required).
- incorporate rules from another bylaw about feeding animals on private property
- update the definitions, structure, format and wording of the Bylaw and controls to make them easier to read and understand.

Other aspects of the Bylaw, controls and their implementation remain unchanged, for example:

- the Bylaw continues to focus on the impact of animals on people
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Your local board: Howick

Your feedback

Proposal 1: Require an approval to keep more than two beehives on urban premises 2000 square meters or less

We have heard a range of views about limits on beehives in urban areas. We are seeking feedback on:

- allowing more or less beehives without an approval than the proposed two (for example, retaining the current no limit)
- limits for different sized urban premises than the proposed 2000 square metres (for example, requiring an approval for any beehive on urban premises less than 600 square metres, or in an apartment).

To own more than two hives, people would need to apply for an animal management license, which would consider factors like location and proximity to neighbours. These rules will not affect people living in rural areas.

What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I don't agree - there should be fewer rules.

Tell us why: I strongly disagree with your proposal to restrict the number of beehives to two without needing an approval. This proposal has clearly been made by someone with no beekeeping experience, and any issues that the general public has with a neighbour's bees causing a "nuisance" can be addressed through the normal complaints system. The main source of complaints seems to be "bee poo" - if anyone has a problem with bee poo, then this can easily be addressed by having a chat with the local beekeeper who will most likely be more than happy to do their best to remedy the situation and move the hive or make adjustments within their garden, so that the bee's flight path is away from the neighbour who is affected. A simple conversation is all that is needed here.

The proposal to require approval to keep more than two hives on an urban section of less than 2000m² will not allow better management, in fact it will have the opposite effect. A good beekeeper will usually have two hives, so that they can adjust things as needed to make sure the bees are healthy and happy. For example, if one hive is weak it can then be merged with the other hive so that there is one strong healthy hive on site. However, hives can also rapidly increase in numbers and need splitting. Therefore if you only have one very strong hive, you will need to split it into two separate hives so that the bees will not swarm (which would be considered a public nuisance). Automatically then you are that limit of the proposed two beehives, and this will not allow good beehive management at all. If you have two beehives, you may need to temporarily have four beehives on site in order to prevent bees from swarming. By restricting the number of hives to two, you will be causing more problems than there currently are, and you risk increased swarms and therefore an increased risk of diseases spreading across the Auckland area.

The current bylaw is perfectly adequate and does not need to be changed. Beekeeping is already highly regulated, and any nuisance issues can and should be dealt with amicably between the two parties concerned. Every beekeeper I have met has been courteous and will generally go out of their way to make sure their bees are not considered a nuisance. It is also worth bearing in mind that other wildlife such as cats and birds frequently cause more problems (especially in terms of poop in the gardens!) than bees, yet they are not regulated to anywhere near the same extent as bees.

Education of the public is key here – without bees, we wouldn't have food. If you felt like restricting numbers of beehives, at least make it a more reasonable number such as six hives or change it so that only commercial beekeepers (not hobbyists) need to have a permit for more than x amount of hives – there are very few hobby beekeepers who would consistently have over six hives, but the flexibility to be able to make splits as needed, in order to manage the beehives appropriately is an absolute must. The objective here should be responsible beekeeping – one beehive which is perhaps poorly situated can cause a nuisance but four well-sited beehives that are managed well can remain unnoticed and cause zero problems.

Wasps are without doubt more of a nuisance than bees (and they don't have the same pollination value that honey bees do), and beekeepers will actively work to control the wasp population (which the council currently does not do enough to control). There are so many factors already working against beekeeping (eg. wasps, varroa, colony collapse disorder, American Foulbrood) that we need to be working together to highlight their value and encourage beekeeping, rather than risk ill-informed bureaucracy and revenue-gathering having the opposite effect.

Proposal 2: Move rules about the feeding of animals on private property to the Animal Management Bylaw

These rules already exist but we are proposing to include them within the Animal Management Bylaw rather than the Property Maintenance and Nuisance Bylaw 2015, so it is easier to find rules about animals.

What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I do not agree

Tell us why: I don't agree with the restrictions on the number of beehives. Beekeeping is already highly regulated.

Proposal 3: Update the Bylaw definitions, structure, format, and wording

We have done this to make the Bylaw and controls easier to read and understand, for example by:

- aligning definitions of 'nuisance' and 'public place' with those in the Public Safety and Nuisance Bylaw 2013
- aligning the Bylaw and control structure, format, and wording with current drafting practices.

What is your opinion on this proposal? Other

Tell us why: I don't think I agree with this part, but you are making this an extremely difficult document to give feedback on, and the fact you are making people register to do this means you will lose a lot of the elderly population who can struggle with filling in forms as it is.

Are there any other comments you wish to make?

You clearly haven't consulted beekeepers on this proposal otherwise you would have immediately realised that restricting numbers to two hives on less than 2000m² (which realistically is pretty much every section in Auckland!) is not going to promote good beekeeping management. You will get more swarms, more disease spreading and perhaps less honest beekeeping practices (your fee will automatically put a lot of people significantly out of pocket) which will put the honest beekeepers at risk. Please, please reconsider your proposed changes, and at the very least make the maximum number of hives up to five or six to allow beekeepers to maintain good beekeeping practices yet still retain a cap on hives in urban areas.

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These rules already exist but we are proposing to include them within the Animal Management Bylaw rather than the Property Maintenance and Nuisance Bylaw 2015, so it is easier to find rules about animals.

What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I do not agree

Tell us why: As above.

Proposal 3: Update the Bylaw definitions, structure, format, and wording

We have done this to make the Bylaw and controls easier to read and understand, for example by:

- aligning definitions of 'nuisance' and 'public place' with those in the Public Safety and Nuisance Bylaw 2013
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Tell us why: As above.

Are there any other comments you wish to make?

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What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I don't agree - there should be fewer rules.

Tell us why: Because each community has different needs and wants

Proposal 2: Move rules about the feeding of animals on private property to the Animal Management Bylaw

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What is your opinion on this proposal? Yes, I agree

Tell us why: But these rules need to apply to everyone, ie people who feed wasps thinking they are bees and people who feed rats need to be educated first not the easy target of good environmentally active people or communities.

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What is your opinion on this proposal? Other

Tell us why: no, we all own the public space and yes there needs to be limits but applying for a licence because you can afford one will restrict and eliminate others from community efforts and the focus will be blurred to profit over community.

Are there any other comments you wish to make?

not at this stage, need to control other Nuisance issues like the uncontrolled discharge of water.

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What is your opinion on this proposal? No, I don't agree - there should be fewer rules.

Tell us why: 1. Bees are essential for our life and health. They pollinate stuff, so we can eat.

2. This city fortunately has many successful bee keepers, and for no good reason you want to wipe them out. I strongly object to your proposed Draconian and nonsensical rules.

3. For example: your meagre dimensions for a legal city hive is as good as an outright ban, because no such hive is viable.

4. A healthy hive has to have enough box layers to accommodate all its essential activities.

5. Bee-poo on someone's washing is no reason to ban all hives - bee-poo is only when bees are sick.

6. In our urban environment, bees enable hundreds of kg's of fruit and veges to be given away to charities like the City Mission every year, and in these tough times even small urban gardens can feed families.

7. Please follow the Thames-Coromandel DC rules for beehives and section sizes:

Thames-Coromandel District Council - Animal Nuisance bylaw (tcdc.govt.nz)

8. Auckland Council: I think you have not the slightest idea of the havoc you will wreak.

9. This is someone's pet ideological project, slipping thorough without scrutiny.

10. Leave well alone: if the system ain't broke, don't fix it.

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What is your opinion on this proposal?

Tell us why:

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What is your opinion on this proposal?

Tell us why:

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