

Proposed Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw

We have in the past been dog owners and may be again sometime. We have several friends who are dog owners. We have been members of the NZ Kennel Association and Tasman Districts Gundog Club. We have participated with the Blenheim Canine Training Club.

We have studied fully the various links on the MDC website.

In principle support the changes with the proposed new Bylaw and Policy documents.

However, listed below are some concerns we wish to highlight.

Dog Control Policy

1. Why in Section 3: Dog fees and charges, under Responsible dog owners (category one) does it include subsection b) the dog has been neutered? It is our experience that many people who keep a dog whole for the purpose of breeding, as we once did, can be and are indeed very responsible owners. Yet they continue to be penalised through the annual registration structure with payment of much higher fees. This is totally unfair where they meet all the other criteria of category one.
2. A dog should be wearing a registration tag but in certain circumstances (like hunting) it can be dangerous for them to have a collar on. So, the wording in the first bullet point of Section 5 could be expanded to match the more reasonable statement of the Bylaw under section 16 and maintain better clarity.
3. In Section 6: Offences and Penalties there is a greater explanation of the different fines than what is in the Bylaw Section 22. We were wondering if it would be clearer to have both documents including the same information?

Dog Control Bylaw

1. The document is very encompassing, as it should be, and the two schedules are helpful if not slightly overpowering with the comprehensiveness of them. We felt though that many people would struggle to comprehend all the various combinations of on-leash and off-leash areas. The map, whilst good to have, was difficult to study unless expanded hugely to study all the places. Once this Bylaw is in place there will need to be a lot of education and far more signage erected to assist people understand what is permitted, or prohibited.
2. We are not overly comfortable with a change to permit dogs into the CBD but acknowledge that some other places in NZ have this. Our concern relates to the mix of dog sizes. Some larger breeds of dogs can be intimidating no matter how 'lovable' the owner may perceive them. Some smaller breeds of dog can be yappy and move very quickly with their excitement and leads are a hazard under foot for others.

3. We understand that some people have asked for this CBD change so that they can visit cafes and like shops with their pet. We presume that it will be up to business owners if they wish to allow dogs into their store or at tables on the sidewalk. We do hope though that common sense prevails and dog owners realise that not all people like dogs nor find it relaxing being near them. It will be a pity if café owners cannot choose to have a 'no dogs' policy and are pressured into allowing dogs to be present.
4. As with the introduction of any changes and new rules there will be a period of confusion and tension. We do expect that the MDC will be proactive with a greater number of clear and well-placed signs to aid the populace with interpretation of the changes. These should help with self-policing by users too.

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Submitters