

CPDW INC Review of the Dog Control Act 1996



COVER LETTER

Kia ora,

To: To: Hon. Mark Mitchell Minister for Emergency Management
(Review of the Dog Control Act 1996)
Minister responsible for the review of the Dog Control Act 1996

On behalf of Christchurch Professional Dog Walkers Incorporated (CPDW Inc), we are pleased to submit our stakeholder position in response to the Government's review of the Dog Control Act 1996. CPDW Inc is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation representing professional dog handlers operating in public environments. Our work is grounded in:

- Public safety
- Animal welfare
- Responsible and competent dog handling

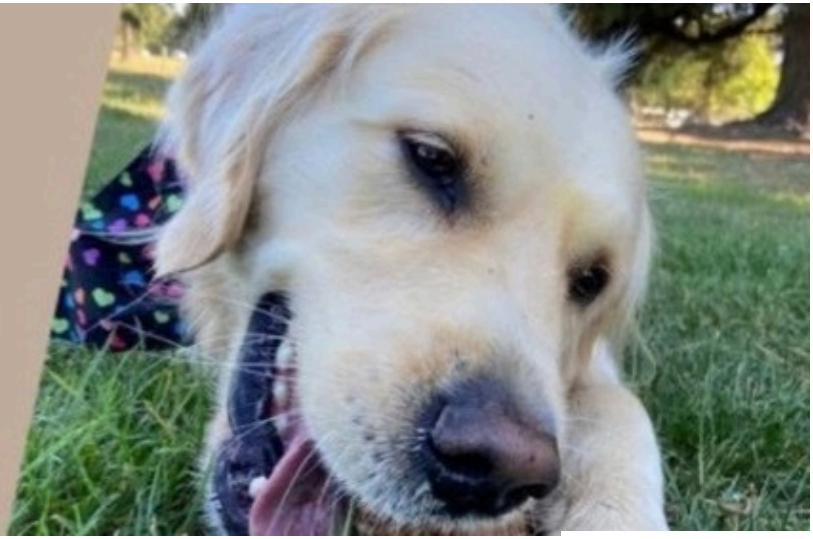
In this context, we welcome this review as an important opportunity to support practical, proportionate, evidence-informed, and outcome-focused approaches to dog management in New Zealand. Our submission reflects *real-world experience within public dog handling environments* and supports the *development of risk-based frameworks grounded in demonstrated competency*. We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with officials and contribute constructively throughout this review process.

CPDW Inc has established a structured, competency-based framework supported by a corresponding insurance and risk management model. Through the CPDW Inc Group Insurance Policy, operational practice is aligned with demonstrated competency, declared scope of services, and real-world risk exposure. This integrated approach ensures that only appropriately assessed handlers operate within defined and insured parameters, strengthening accountability, supporting public safety outcomes, and reinforcing animal welfare standards. We consider that such competency-aligned insurance frameworks provide a practical and immediately implementable mechanism to support risk-based regulation under the Dog Control Act 1996.

This approach is consistent with the discretion available to territorial authorities under sections 10 and 26 of the Dog Control Act 1996, enabling the adoption of evidence-based, competency-informed frameworks within existing legislative settings. We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with officials and contribute to the practical development and implementation of competency-based and risk-aligned frameworks, including those supported by existing industry structures such as the CPDW Inc framework. Aligned to NZQCF qualifications

Ngā mihi,

Brittany Johnson
Chair
Christchurch Professional Dog Walkers Incorporated (CPDW Inc)
23/03/26



Minister Brief – Dog Control Act Review

From: Christchurch Professional Dog Walkers Inc (CPDW Inc)



Key Issue

Current dog control frameworks rely heavily on numerical limits (e.g. number of dogs), rather than demonstrated handler competency, creating inconsistencies between risk, capability, and regulation.

Opportunity

Introduce competency-based pathways aligned with NZQCF frameworks, incorporating:

- Practical assessment
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL/APL)
- Structured capability progression

Why This Matters

- Improves public safety
- Supports animal welfare
- Enables evidence-based decision-making
- Creates national consistency
- Incorporation of structured insurance frameworks (e.g. CPDW Inc Group Insurance Policy) aligned to demonstrated competency and risk

Legislative Fit

Aligned with:

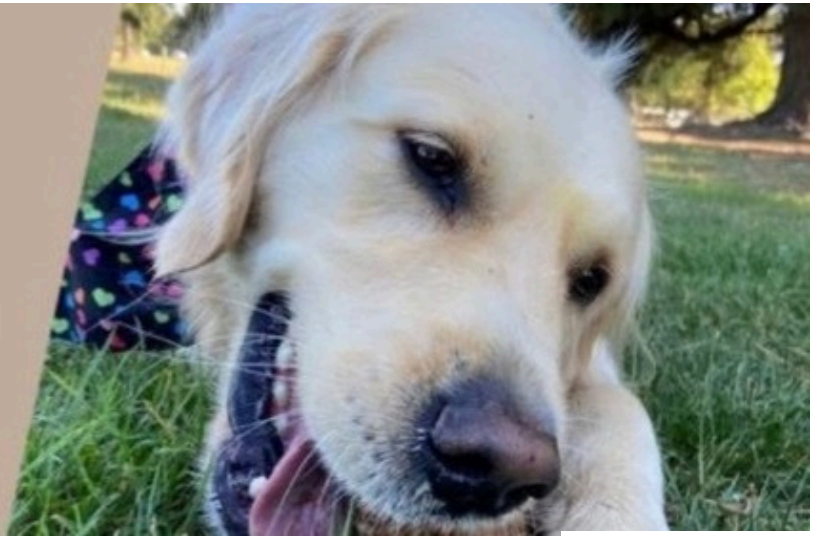
- Dog Control Act 1996 (ss10, 20, 26)
- Enables discretion using evidence-based frameworks

CPDW Offer

- Provide sector expertise
- Support competency framework development
- Assist implementation pathways

Outcome Sought

A nationally consistent, competency-based approach to dog control that complements existing legislation and supports safe, practical outcomes.



Stakeholder Position Statement Review of the Dog Control Act 1996



1. Introduction

Christchurch Professional Dog Walkers Incorporated (CPDW Inc) welcomes the Government's decision to undertake a review of the Dog Control Act 1996.

As an incorporated not-for-profit organisation, CPDW Inc represents professional dog handlers operating in public environments, with a focus on:

- Public safety
- Animal welfare
- Responsible and competent dog handling

We recognise this review as an opportunity to support practical, proportionate, evidence-informed and outcome-focused approaches to dog management in New Zealand.

CPDW Inc notes that under the Dog Control Act 1996, territorial authorities retain discretion to consider relevant expertise, sector input, and evidence-based frameworks when exercising their functions under the Act.

2. Sector Context

Dog handling in public spaces occurs across a wide range of contexts, including:

- Companion animal ownership
- Recreational handling
- Professional dog walking and care services

These contexts involve varying levels of experience, responsibility, and environmental complexity. CPDW Inc acknowledges the importance of regulatory frameworks that are:

- Clear
- Consistent
- Workable in practice

While supporting safe outcomes for both the public and dogs.

3. Competency and Practical Application

CPDW Inc supports approaches that recognise the role of **handler capability** in achieving safe outcomes.

We consider that:

3.1 Demonstrated practical competency in real-world public environments is a primary determinant of safe and effective dog handling outcomes

3.2 Recognition of experience and prior learning (RPL/APL) supports consistency and fairness

3.3 Structured pathways assist individuals to develop and demonstrate capability

3.4 At present, restrictions applied within local bylaws (including numerical dog limits) are not consistently linked to demonstrated handler competency, resulting in potential inconsistencies between risk, capability, and regulatory control

CPDW Inc has developed a competency-based framework aligned with New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) principles, incorporating:

- Structured assessment
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL/APL)
- Staged capability progression

We consider such approaches capable of complementing existing regulatory systems, and supporting more consistent, evidence-based decision-making where demonstrated competency is present, including the ability to apply discretion in a manner proportionate to risk and informed by demonstrable competency.

This is particularly relevant where regulatory controls (such as numerical dog limits) are applied **without clear linkage to demonstrated handler capability**.

CPDW Inc further notes that competency-based frameworks can be supported through structured insurance models. The CPDW Inc Group Insurance Policy operates in alignment with demonstrated competency, scope of services, and real-world risk exposure, ensuring that only appropriately assessed handlers operate within insured parameters. This provides an additional layer of accountability and risk management that complements regulatory oversight.

4. Collaboration Across the Sector

CPDW Inc supports collaborative engagement across:

- Central government
- Local authorities
- Industry and training organisations
- Animal welfare stakeholders

We acknowledge the value of working alongside organisations such as the New Zealand Dog Handler Academy (NDHA), whose assessment frameworks contribute to structured, competency-based evaluation within the sector, aligned with NZQCF principles.

5. Implementation Considerations

CPDW Inc considers that effective implementation of any future changes may be supported by:

- 5.1 Clear and transparent processes
- 5.2 Consistency across regions
- 5.3 Practical application in real-world environments
- 5.4 Proportionate approaches aligned to risk and context

5.5 We recognise the operational responsibilities of councils and the importance of frameworks that are workable at a local level, including where exemption pathways are informed by independently assessed competency.

5.6 Integration of competency-aligned insurance frameworks (such as the CPDW Inc Group Insurance Policy) to support risk-based decision-making and provide an additional mechanism for ensuring safe and accountable practice

6. Legislative Context

This submission is made with reference to key provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996, including:

- Section 10 – Functions of territorial authorities
- Section 20 – Dog control policies
- Section 26 – Dog control bylaws

These provisions enable territorial authorities to regulate dog management while retaining discretion to incorporate evidence-based and context-specific approaches.

This submission also aligns with the broader intent of:

- Animal Welfare Act 1999 – promoting the welfare of animals
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 – ensuring safety of people in public environments

7. Offer to Contribute

CPDW Inc is committed to engaging constructively in this review process.

We would welcome the opportunity to:

- **7.1** Provide sector insight
- **7.2** Share practical experience from public dog handling environments
- **7.3** Support discussions relating to competency, safety, and implementation

8. Conclusion

CPDW Inc supports the continued development of dog control frameworks that are:

- Risk-based and proportionate
- Grounded in demonstrated competency
- Consistent across jurisdictions
- Focused on safe, practical outcomes for both people and dogs

CPDW Inc remains committed to constructive, good-faith engagement throughout this process.

Brittany Johnson
Chair
Christchurch Professional Dog Walkers Incorporated (CPDW Inc)

23 March 2026



Executive Summary – Stakeholder Position Review of the Dog Control Act 1996



1. Overview

Christchurch Professional Dog Walkers Incorporated (CPDW Inc) welcomes the Government's review of the Dog Control Act 1996.

CPDW Inc is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation representing professional dog handlers operating in public environments, with a focus on:

- 1.1 *Public safety*
- 1.2 *Animal welfare*
- 1.3 *Responsible and competent dog handling*

2. Key Perspective

CPDW Inc supports approaches that are:

Risk-based and proportionate Grounded in demonstrated competency

- 2.1 *Consistent across regions*
- 2.2 *Focused on safe, practical outcomes for people and dogs*
- 2.3 At present, restrictions applied within local bylaws (including numerical dog limits) are not consistently linked to demonstrated handler competency, creating potential inconsistencies between risk, capability, and regulatory control.

3. Competency-Based Approach

CPDW Inc has developed a competency-based framework aligned with NZQCF principles, including:

- 3.1 Assessment of practical handling skills
- 3.2 Recognition of prior learning (RPL/APL)
- 3.3 Structured pathways supporting capability development

3.4 We consider that competency-based approaches may complement existing regulatory systems, and support fair and consistent outcomes where demonstrated capability is evidenced.

Such approaches may also support consistent and transparent exemption pathways where higher levels of competency are demonstrated.

These approaches may also be supported by structured insurance frameworks aligned to competency, further strengthening accountability and public safety outcomes.

4.Sector Collaboration

CPDW Inc supports collaborative engagement across government, councils, and sector organisations.

We acknowledge the value of alignment with organisations such as the New Zealand Dog Handler Academy (NDHA), where shared competency-based principles support safe and consistent outcomes.

5.Implementation Considerations

Effective implementation may be supported by:

- 5.1** Clear and transparent processes
- 5.2** Consistency across regions
- 5.3** Practical application in real-world environments
- 5.4** Proportionate approaches aligned to risk and context

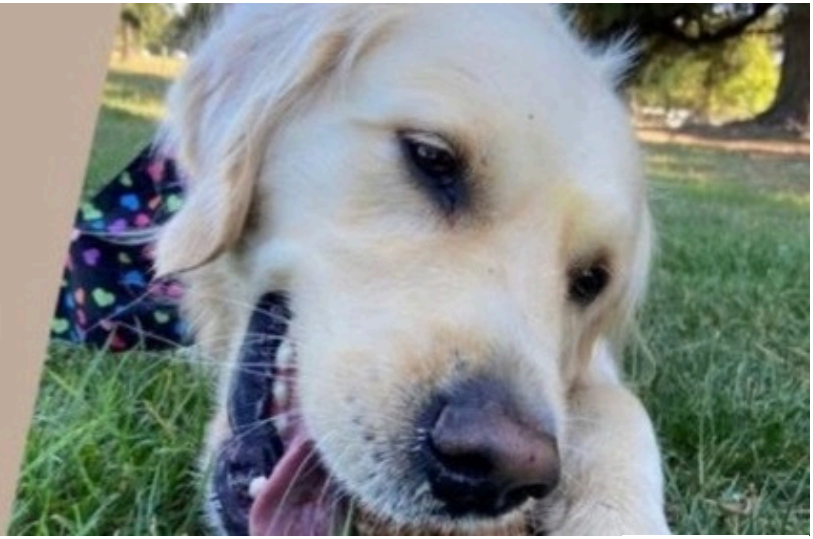
6.Offer to Contribute

CPDW Inc is committed to constructive, good-faith engagement and would welcome the opportunity to:

- 6.1** Provide sector insight
- 6.2** Share practical experience from public dog handling environments
- 6.3** Contribute to discussions on competency, safety, and implementation

Brittany Johnson
Chair
Christchurch Professional Dog Walkers Incorporated (CPDW Inc)

23 March 2026



APPENDICES

Review of the Dog Control Act 1996



Appendix A – CPDW Competency Framework Overview

- Structured handler levels (Junior → Intermediate → Advanced)
- Real-world assessment criteria
- Public environment handling standards

Appendix B – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL/APL)

- Assessment of prior experience
- Evidence-based competency recognition
- Alignment with NZQCF principles

Appendix C – NZQCF Alignment

- Alignment with Level 3 and 4 Animal Management
- Practical competency vs theoretical knowledge integration

Appendix D – NDHA Assessment Alignment

- Overview of NDHA assessment frameworks
- Role in structured competency evaluation
- Industry-aligned standards

Appendix E – Public Safety and Risk Contexts

- Real-world handling environments
- Risk variables (dog numbers, environment, handler skill)
- Application of professional judgement

Appendix F – CPDW Inc Insurance & Risk Management Framework

- Overview of CPDW Inc Group Insurance Policy
- Alignment between competency levels and insured scope of practice
- Risk management through declared services and operational limits
- Role of insurance in supporting public safety and accountability

Supporting documentation available upon request.