

Item 2: Review of the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw

SESSION TYPE: Workshop

PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:

The purpose of this workshop is to provide elected members with an update on the review of the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw, including analysis undertaken to date. Feedback is sought on the proposed approach to regulating dogs in specific areas. This feedback will inform the development of the Statement of Proposal, Draft Dog Control Bylaw, and Draft Dog Control Policy, which will be presented to Council for adoption at its October meeting.

DATE/START TIME:

Tuesday, 11 August 2026 at 2.00pm

TIME BREAKDOWN:

Presentation: 30 minutes approximately
Questions or Debate/Discussion: 30 minutes approximately

PRESENTERS:

Caitlin Pemberton, Policy Advisor
Carrie Williams, Policy Manager
Katherine Harbrow, General Manager: Finance, Risk & Assurance

Prepared by:



Name: Caitlin Pemberton
Title: Policy Advisor

31 July 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Katherine Harbrow
Title: General Manager: Finance, Risk and Assurance
31 July 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

A	Review of the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw
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Review of the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw

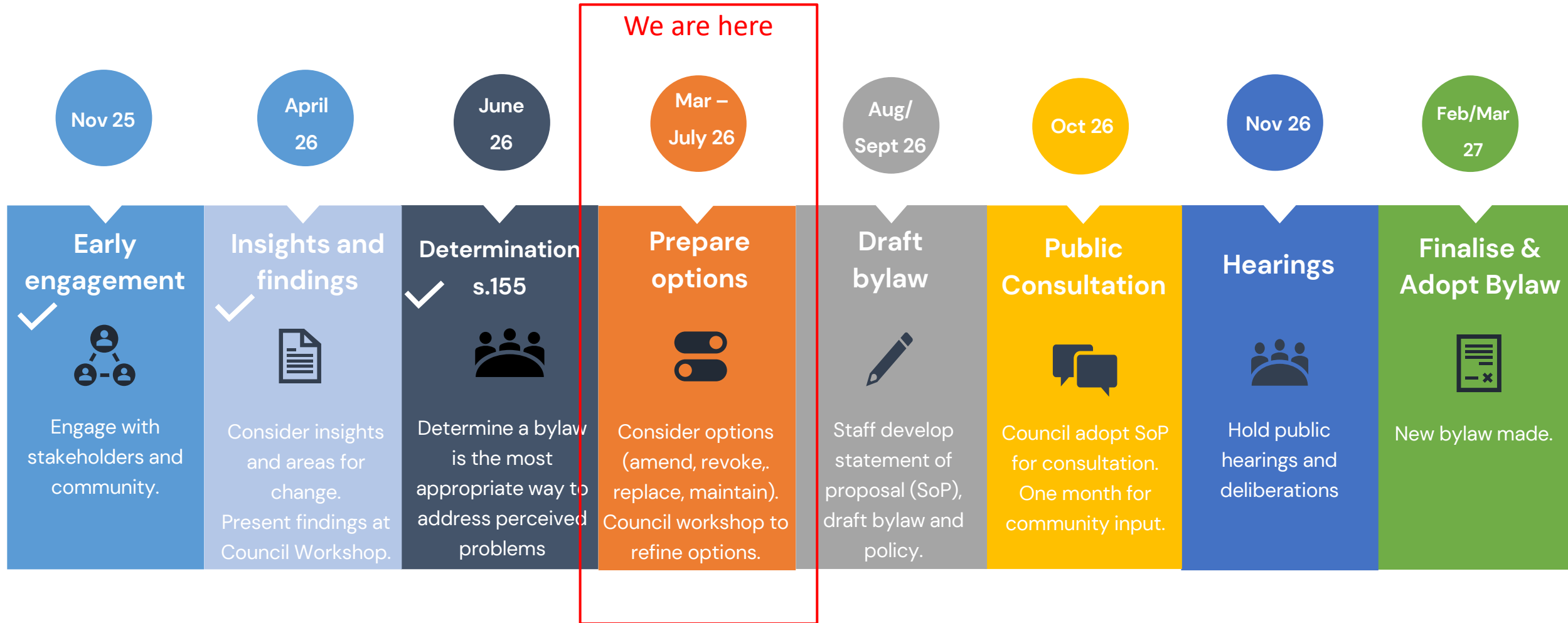
Council Workshop: 11 August 2026

What we are seeking today

- > Staff presented key findings at a Council workshop in April and sought elected member input on the range of options to address key areas. Today, we are seeking further input on how to regulate dogs in the following specific areas:
 - shared trails (including trails that cross both DOC and Council land);
 - areas with sensitive wildlife;
 - high-visitation reserves; and,
 - publicly accessible LINZ land.

- > Feedback will guide the development of a Statement of Proposal (SoP), Draft Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy that Council will be asked to adopt for consultation in October 2026.

The bylaw development process



Recap: Dog Control Bylaw background and context

- > The Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) governs the ownership and management of dogs.
- > The Act requires councils to adopt a Dog Control Policy (Policy) and give effect to it through a Dog Control Bylaw (Bylaw).

The Act requires territorial authorities to adopt a policy which has regard to:

- the need to minimise danger, distress, and nuisance to the community generally;
- the need to avoid the inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to public places that are frequented by children;
- the importance of enabling, to the extent that is practicable, the public to use streets and public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation; and,
- the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

Recap: Findings and insights to date



Findings and insights – early engagement

Current rules are **generally working well**.

Support for current leash requirements (78% agreed or strongly agreed).

Support for off leash access in reserves and trails (81–83%).

Areas for potential change:

- Mixed views on dog access rules. Some respondents, (particularly non-dog owners), wanted more on-leash areas, while some others wish to retain or expand off-leash access.
- Safety concerns about interactions between off-leash dogs and cyclists on busy trails.
- Support for protections where there are sensitive environments (77%).
- Repeated issues raised about dogs not being under effective control, dog waste not being collected, dogs roaming, barking, and non-compliance with existing rules.
- Calls for fenced dog parks.
- Calls for stronger enforcement, compliance monitoring and penalties.
- Request for more education and training opportunities.



Elected members insights – 28 April 2026

Elected members largely agreed that the current settings are working well and the comparatively permissive model effectively supports dog exercise needs while maintaining public safety.

Key direction:

- Preferred a balanced approach, with targeted amendments that are place-based and context-specific.
- Further analysis to consider changes in higher risk areas (e.g. pump tracks, sports fields during games, sensitive environments or busy shared trails).
- Rules must be straight-forward for community understanding and enforcement.

Issues we are seeking further input on

Staff have undertaken further analysis and refined potential changes. Today, staff are seeking further input on the following areas:

- shared trails (including trails that cross both DOC and Council land);
- areas with sensitive wildlife;
- high-visitation reserves; and,
- publicly accessible LINZ land.

Councillor feedback is sought on the proposed direction. For each issue, there are a range of regulatory options available and elected members could choose to be more enabling or more prohibitive.

Enable	Restrict	Prohibit
No specific controls i.e. Rely on responsible dog ownership/Dog Control Act only	Provide for subject to conditions i.e. Additional controls in specific circumstances	Prevent from occurring i.e. Exclude dogs from specific areas
 Less restrictive optionsMore restrictive options		

Attachment A outlines other proposed changes.

Shared trails – busy and active travel trails

Preliminary analysis assessed high use and service level trails based on the following:

- visitation levels,
- proximity to town or urban centres,
- types of trail use (i.e. cycling, walking, tourism); and,
- specific trail characteristics (width, seal, open space, proximity to roads).

As an outcome, the following trails have been identified, where Council could consider leash controls for dogs:

- Arthurs Point Trail (A).
- Frankton Track – section from the Frankton Marina to Park Street (B).

Refer to **Attachment B** for further information.



Questions for elected members:

- Are there other criteria that should be considered?
- Are there other trails that should be considered?

Shared trails – across both DOC and Council land

Analysis of high use and service level trails, highlighted that the following trails cross both DOC and Council land and have inconsistent dog control rules:

- Arrow River Bridges Trail,
- Shotover Gorge Trail,
- Twin Rivers Trail,
- Tucker Beach Trail,
- Lake Hayes Walkway,
- Countryside Trail, and,
- Gibbston River Wine Trail.

Options to provide greater consistency could be non-regulatory or regulatory. Any regulatory changes would have to be justified under the Act (i.e. ecological values, public safety etc).

Refer to **Attachment C** for further information.



Questions for elected members:

- Staff have not recommended changes to the QLDC sections of the trails. However, would elected members like staff to investigate options for achieving greater consistency across the trails?

Sensitive environments - sites for consideration

The Act includes an objective to ensure that dogs do not injure, endanger, or cause distress to protected wildlife. It does not contain specific thresholds or potential effects to justify dog control restrictions, but it is considered that supporting information or evidence is required.

Preliminary analysis has identified the following long-list of sites with ecological values, that Council could consider additional dog controls for:

- Mātau (Pig Island) and Wāwāhi Waka (Pigeon Island).
- Lake Hayes Wetland.
- Tucker Beach Trail.
- Shotover Wetlands.
- Wānaka Lakefront Boardwalk.
- Three Significant Natural Areas (SNAs):
 - SNA near Bush Creek trail.
 - SNA adjacent Kingston Road/SH6.
 - SNA on Wye Creek trail.
- Mt Iron (including SNA).
- Albert Town Wetland.
- Kinloch Wetland (road parcels).

Refer to **Attachment D** for further information.

Question for elected members:

- It is proposed to refine this long-list, based on evidence. Do councillors support this approach?

Leash rules – busy urban reserves

Preliminary analysis has assessed high use and service level reserves based on the following;

- visitation levels;
- proximity to town or urban centres,
- open space capacity;
- types of reserve use (i.e. sports reserve, destination park); and
- other facilities present (playgrounds, skateparks).

As an outcome of this, the following reserves were identified where Council could consider for leash controls:

- St. Omer Park (A).
- O'Regan Park (B).
- Village Green (C).
- Buckingham Green (Arrowtown).
- Roy's Bay Recreation Reserve – section from Dinosaur Park to McDougal Street (Wānaka).

Refer to **Attachment E** for further information.



Questions for elected members:

- Are there other criteria that should be considered?
- Are there other reserves that should be considered?

LINZ land –could consider for public safety or wildlife

Any LINZ land that is publicly accessible should be treated as an on-leash area, unless in the Rural Zone (PDP). Most LINZ land parcels are in the Rural Zone – therefore are treated as off leash.



Parks and recreation (121 parcels)

Primarily waterbodies (lakes and rivers).
Most rivers have a DOC marginal strip.
Key considerations could be:

- presence of protected wildlife (braided rivers were raised during early engagement) or
- public safety (i.e. busy lakefronts).



Productive land (32 parcels)

If land is publicly accessible, a consideration could whether there is a risk or potential risk to stock.



Rural/Lifestyle blocks (2 parcels)

Questions for elected members:

- Staff propose further investigating specific LINZ lakes, rivers and land parcels, based on the considerations outlined to assess if additional controls may be needed. Do elected members support this approach?

Other key items that have been identified for change

The following areas for potential change and clarification have been identified during analysis. These have not already been raised with elected members.

- **Civic buildings:** Propose to clarify the existing rules relating to dog access in civic buildings (i.e. prohibited libraries, unless a certified working dogs undertaking work in which it has been registered).
- **Road reserves:** Propose to clarify rules for some road reserves, as appropriate designating areas to be dog off leash areas (i.e. Kelvin Peninsula Track).
- **Rural Zone:** This is currently used in the bylaw to provide different conditions for rural areas in the district. It means that dogs are not required on a leash in public places in the rural zone unless it's a cemetery or playground. Preliminary analysis shows there are some complexities with using this mechanism. Options to clarify these rules will be further investigated.

Questions for elected members:

- Are elected members comfortable with the current rules in the rural zone?
- Are there any concerns or questions about these items?

Next steps



Questions and discussion

Attachments

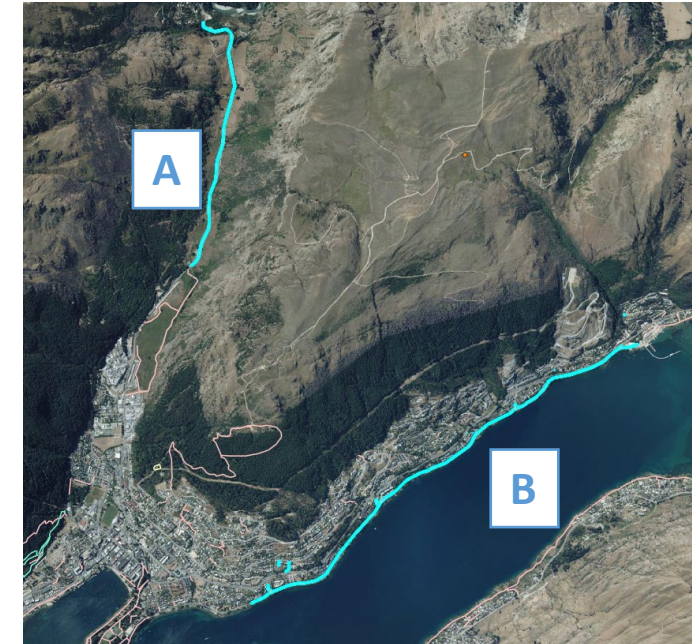
Attachment A: Other proposed changes

Staff will present the following amendments in the Statement of Proposal at the October Council meeting:

Area of potential change	 Proposed changes to the bylaw	 Non-regulatory changes
Calls for more on leash areas	• Require dogs to be controlled on a leash on 'sportsgrounds while organised games are being played'. • Require dogs to be controlled on a leash on 'playgrounds and other sports areas' which would be inclusive of playgrounds and skateparks (status quo), with the addition of pump tracks, tennis and netball courts.	
Effective control, dog waste, roaming, barking, and non-compliance issues	• Clarify definition for 'effective control' in the bylaw.	• Continue non-regulatory interventions (i.e. provision of dog waste bins and bag dispensers). • Add to the Policy what 'responsible dog ownership' means and what is required.
Other	• Amend to enable Council to make temporary changes (by resolution) for organised events, dog training events, protected wildlife vulnerable to dogs, or for pest control activities.	• Clarify through an explanatory note the rules for land subject to easements and leases.

Attachment B: Trails proposed for consideration

Site	Current rule	Recommendation	Explanation
Arthurs Point Trail (Queenstown) (A)	Off leash (section through Matakauri requires dogs to be on leash)	On leash	This section of trail provides a sealed active travel route that follows the road from Arthurs Point to the Matakauri wetlands. This path primarily provides for active travel/commuting and mostly achieves a grade 2 standard. Due to the roadside nature and primary active travel route purpose of this trail, a dogs on-leash provision is considered appropriate to ensure the safety of cyclists/commuters and road users.
Frankton Track (B)	Off leash	On leash (from the Frankton Marina to Park St)	The trail was raised during early community engagement survey as a location where on-leash dog rules could be implemented. It is a premier track which experiences a high level of commuters (higher volume of higher speed users) as well as recreation users (pedestrians and cyclists). In 2025 the Frankton Track had a daily average of 222 pedestrians and 496 cyclists (counter on track at Park St). Due to the high-profile nature, high usage and the trail being a popular active travel route, a change to require dogs to be on leash from the Frankton Marina to Park St is recommended. This is to ensure the safety of cyclists/walkers and other users.



Attachment C: Trails across both DOC and Council land

Site	Current rules	Recommendation for QLDC land	Explanation
Arrow River Bridges Trail	Off leash (QLDC land). On leash (DOC land).	No change	- This trail changes through QLDC and DOC land. It provides a loop track from the village to the bottom of Jopp St. It is an unsealed trail which provides recreation opportunities for cyclists, walkers, runners and horse riders alongside the Arrow River. The trail is intended to be a low speed, multi-use recreational space. - In the early community engagement survey, fast-moving cyclist and off leash dogs was raised as an issue for this trail. Work is already underway to appropriately manage the user conflict between bike operators and other users to support low speed and safe use of the trail.
Shotover Gorge Trail	Off leash (QLDC land). On leash (DOC land).	No change	- This trail is primarily across DOC land with small sections of QLDC land and private land (easements). It is an unsealed premier trail is intended to provide recreational opportunities for walkers, runners and cyclists in proximity to the Shotover River. - In the early community engagement survey, fast-moving cyclist and off leash dogs was raised as an issue for this trail.
Countryside Trail	Off leash (QLDC land). On leash (DOC land).	No change	This is a premier trail that changes through QLDC and DOC land. It is a grade 3 standard, unsealed trail intended to provide recreational benefit and value for all users.
Gibbston River Wine Trail	Off leash (QLDC land). On leash (DOC land).	No change	This is a premier trail that changes across QLDC and DOC land. It provides a recreation experience connecting Arrowtown to the Gibbston Valley. The separation of this trail from dense urban areas means majority of users of this trail are primarily cyclists.

Attachment C: Trails across both DOC and Council land

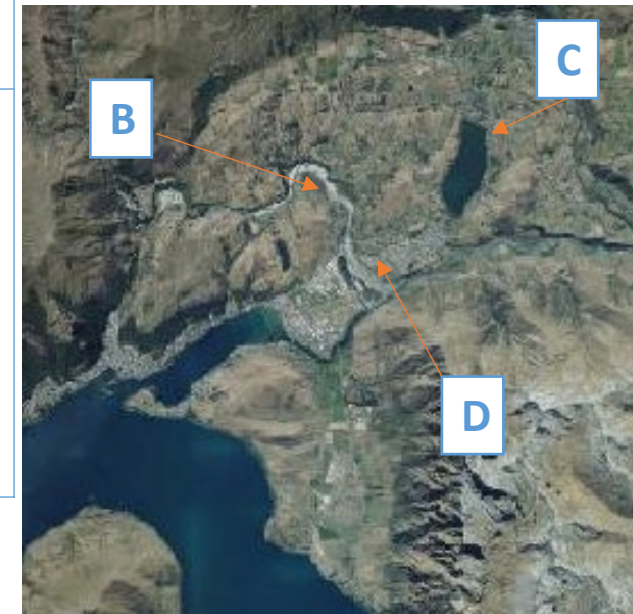
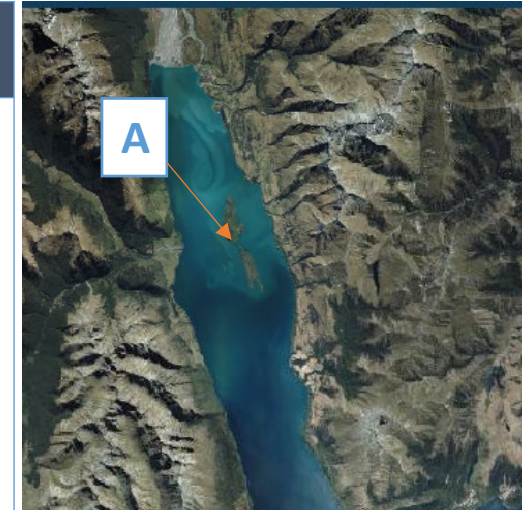
Site	Current rules	Recommendation for QLDC land	Explanation
Tucker Beach Trail	Off leash (QLDC land). On leash (DOC land).	Refer to Attachment D .	This is a premier trail that is well used by walkers, runners and cyclists. It traverses a combination of QLDC and DOC land along the southern side of the Shotover River. Possible changes relating to the protected wildlife in outlined in Attachment D.
Lake Hayes Walkway	Off leash (QLDC land). On leash (DOC land).	Refer to Attachment D .	This trail is a loop trail that crosses DOC and QLDC land around the perimeter of Lake Hayes. It provides a highly valued recreation trail for walkers and runners. Possible changes relating to the wetland in outlined in Attachment D.
Twin Rivers Trail	Off leash (QLDC land). On leash (DOC land).	No change. Except for Shotover Wetlands - refer to Attachment D .	The trail changes across QLDC and DOC land through for the section behind Shotover/Lake Hayes. The unsealed trail provides for a range of user groups including cyclists, walkers, runners, and horse riders. Possible changes relating to the wetland in outlined in Attachment D.

Attachment D: Sensitive areas proposed for consideration

Site	Current rule	Recommendation	Explanation
Mātau (Pig Island) and Wāwāhi Waka (Pigeon Island) (A – see next slide)	Off leash (Operationally the islands have been treated as dogs <u>prohibited</u>)	Prohibited	- Mātau (Pig Island) and Wāwāhi Waka (Pigeon Island) are located at the northern end of Whakatipu Queenstown Lake. Both islands are of significance to Kai Tahu, identified as Wahi Tipuna areas in the Proposed District Plan. Also, classed as Scenic Reserves under the Reserves Act 1977. - The Wakatipu Islands Management Plan 2021 records the species commonly seen and heard on the islands, which includes tui, bellbird, fantail, grey warbler, brown creeper, falcon and kereru. As well as native fish in the waters surrounding the islands. - Buff weka were reintroduced to the islands in 2006 and 2008, respectively. - The islands were raised during early engagement by stakeholders (including ORC, Kai Tahu representative on CRG) warranting consideration for dog controls to help protect sensitive wildlife.
Tucker Beach trail (B – see next slide)	Off leash (QLDC sections)	TBD	- Tucker Beach is a braided river ecosystem associated with the Lower Shotover River that provides breeding, nesting and feeding habitat for a range of indigenous bird species, several of which are nationally threatened or at risk. It supports species such as banded dotterel/tūturiwhatu, black-fronted tern/tarapirohe, black-billed gull/tarāpuka and South Island pied oystercatcher/tōrea. - The area was raised during early engagement by stakeholders, warranting consideration for dog controls to help protect sensitive wildlife. - Further controls for the QLDC sections of the trail, including seasonal requirements (possibly same as existing vehicle restriction period) could ensure the ground-nesting birds are protected from disruption and predation during nesting periods.

Attachment D: Sensitive areas proposed for consideration

Site	Current rule	Recommendation	Explanation
Lake Hayes Wetland (C)	Off leash (QLDC land)	TBD	• Lake Hayes Margins (present at north and south of lake) is classed by Otago Regional Council (ORC) as a regionally significant wetland (link). • The wetland is habitat for nationally or internationally rare or threatened species. It provides habitat for threatened swamp birds (such as the Australasian Bittern and Great Crested Grebe) and is a breeding area for a variety of waterfowl, including the Marsh Crake. • QLDC endorsed the Waiwhakaata (Lake Hayes) Strategy 2025 as a collaborative, non-statutory framework guiding integrated catchment restoration in March 2026. The restoration of the catchment is a priority under the Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028. • The wetland was raised during early engagement by stakeholders as warranting consideration for dog controls to protect sensitive birdlife.
Shotover Wetlands (D)	Off leash	TBD	• Shotover River Confluence Swamp is classed by ORC as a regionally significant wetland (link). • The wetland is habitat for nationally or internationally rare or threatened species. The Marsh Crake was recorded last year by Southern Lakes Sanctuary (link) which indicates the improving health of the wetland. • This wetland was raised during early engagement by stakeholders as warranting consideration for dog controls to help protect sensitive to protect sensitive birdlife in the wetlands.



Attachment D: Sensitive areas proposed for consideration

Site	Current rule	Recommendation	Explanation
Wanaka Lakefront Boardwalk (E)	Off leash	TBD	- The Lake Wānaka Grebe Project (link) started in 2013 is a community-led conservation initiative to provide safe nesting areas native southern crested grebe/pūteketeke along the Wānaka Lakefront. The grebes are recorded to return every year. - This was raised during early engagement in the community survey as an area for dog controls to be considered to protect sensitive birdlife.
Mt Iron (F)	Off leash	TBD	- In April 2025, QLDC adopted the Mount Iron Reserve Management Plan (RMP). The RMP intends to protect and enhance the reserve's unique, special, and significant ecological values. Mt Iron is classified as an Outstanding Natural Feature, with parts of the reserve listed as Significant Natural Areas. - The Mount Iron Ecological Report (2026) outlines that the area supports a diverse range of indigenous habitats and indigenous bird species including fantail, grey warbler, bellbird, silvereye and pipipi. Most notably, New Zealand falcon (kārearea) is known to breed on the cliffs. The reserve also provides habitat for indigenous lizards. - Mt Iron Reserve enhancement is a key initiative of the QLDC Climate & Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028.
Lagoon Reserve in Albert Town (G)	Off leash	TBD	The lagoon was formerly a wildlife refuge under the Wildlife Act 1953 but is now vested to QLDC. The Albert Town Lagoon Management Plan (March 2016) records the species present, including australian coot, New Zealand scaup, whitefaced heron, welcome swallow (protected species).



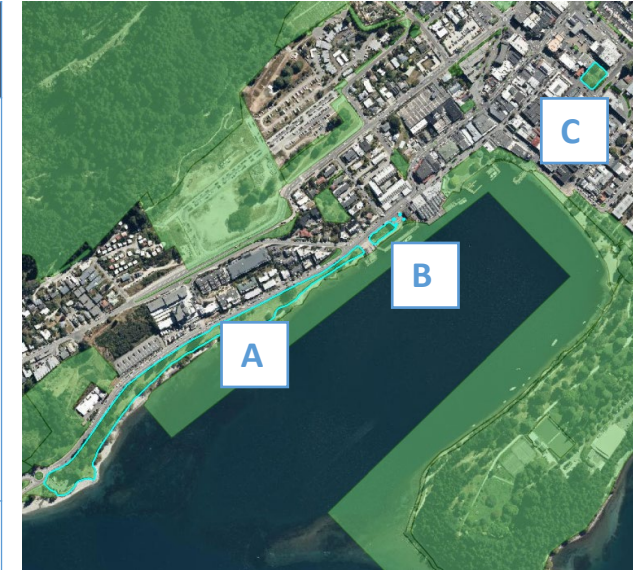
Attachment D: Sensitive areas proposed for consideration

Site	Current rule	Recommendation	Explanation
Kinloch Wetland (H)	Off leash	TBD	Kinloch Lagoon is classed by ORC as a regionally significant wetland (link). The site is primarily DOC land, however, there are parcels of privately owned land and small road parcels. Information about this site is still being gathered.
SNA near Bush Creek trail (I)	Off leash	TBD	SNA assessment indicates that the site is considered an important indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat for threatened/at risk fauna and a range of other protected wildlife.
SNA adjacent Kingston Road/SH6. SNA on Wye Creek trail (J)	Off leash	TBD	SNA assessment identifies fauna present – noting that falcon, tui, bellbird, tomtit, grey warbler, fantail, silver eye, brown creeper and introduced birds present from time to time and east falcon nesting sites. It notes the location as a significant indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat.
SNA ref D1B – Kingston Road/SH6 (K)	Off leash	TBD	SNA assessment indicated that vegetation will provide habitat for a variety of indigenous birds, invertebrates and lizards.



Attachment E: Reserves proposed for consideration

Site	Current rule	Recommendation	Explanation
St Omer Park (Queenstown) (A)	Dogs off leash	Dogs on leash	This reserve is a peri-urban reserve that provides some seating and is the continuation of the walkway toward the one mile round-a-bout that offers a walk along the lakefront away from the busier Marine Parade. Whilst this area doesn't receive the same level of foot traffic as Marine Parade, it does still receive a high volume of tourist foot traffic and is in very close proximity to commercial areas. It also hosts a playground. Due to its proximity to the CBD, busy road and high foot traffic, it is recommended this area is changed to dogs on-leash to ensure the safety of visitors and users.
O'Regans Park (Queenstown) (B)	Dogs off leash	Dogs on leash	This is a urban reserve that provides some seating and is the beginning of the walkway toward the one-mile round-a-bout. Whilst this area doesn't receive the same level of foot traffic as Marine Parade, it does still receive a high volume of tourist foot traffic and is in close proximity to commercial areas including restaurants and cafes. Due to its proximity to the CBD, busy road, and high foot traffic volume, it is recommended this area is changed to dogs on leash to ensure the safety of visitors and other users.
Village Green (Queenstown) (C)	Dogs off leash	Dogs on leash	This is a small urban reserve that provides for passive recreation for those working in and visiting the CBD. Due to the high amenity/high profile nature and primary use of the reserve for passive recreation (picnicking/lunch), the current dog off-leash provision should be changed to dog on-leash to ensure the safety of visitors and users and minimise potential for distress or nuisance.



Attachment E: Reserves proposed for consideration

Site	Current rule	Recommendation	Explanation
Buckingham Green (Arrowtown) (D)	Dogs off leash	Dogs on leash	Buckingham Green is a well used flat green space in the central area of Arrowtown. It provides an open space for visitors and is well used for passive recreation. Due to the urban nature, relatively small area and frequent use for consuming food etc, it is recommended to change this site to be dogs on-leash to ensure the safety of users and minimise nuisance for visitors and users.
Roy's Bay Recreation Reserve (Wānaka)(E)	Dogs off leash	Dogs on leash (from the Dinosaur Park to McDougal Street)	This reserve stretches from the dinosaur park on the northeastern side to the Watersports Centre on the western side. It includes a destination playground and a wide sealed path that receives a high volume of users for a variety of activities including walking, running and cycling. It also offers a green buffer between the town and the lake foreshore that is highly utilised for passive recreation activities such as picnicking. Due to its popularity, and the high-profile nature of the reserve, it is recommended that dogs are controlled on leash in the reserve and trails within (from the Dinosaur Park to McDougal Street) to ensure the safety of visitors and users and minimise potential for distress or nuisance.

