

What is this about?

The Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) sets the rules for owning and managing dogs in New Zealand. It requires councils to have a Dog Control Policy that sets out how dogs are managed in their district and give effect to it through a Dog Control Bylaw. Rules apply to dogs in public places. This includes places that are open to or used by the public, whether they are publicly or privately owned.

Council's Dog Control Bylaw 2020 (the current Bylaw) ([link](#)) came into force on 4 June 2020 and is now due for review alongside Council's Dog Control Policy 2020 ([link](#)). Through this process, Council is considering whether the current Policy and Bylaw settings continue to support public safety and responsible dog ownership.

Before making a final decision on any proposed changes, Council wants to hear your views. This document explains the proposed changes to the current Policy and Bylaw, and how you can provide feedback.

What does the current QLDC Policy and Bylaw do?

QLDC's current Dog Control Policy and Bylaw:

- Identify public places where dogs are prohibited, including all school grounds, Queenstown Hill, and the Queenstown Hill walkway.
- Allow dogs to be off leash in most public parks and reserves.
- Require dogs to be on a leash in other public places, including cemeteries, playgrounds, roads, and public footpaths.
- Limit people from keeping more than two dogs, unless they have a multiple dog licence.
- Require dog owners to immediately pick up and dispose of dog waste in public places.

The key proposals in the draft Bylaw and Policy are:

- New on-leash requirements for busy urban reserves;
- New on-leash requirements on busy recreational tracks;
- New leash rules for sports and play areas;
- Clearer requirements for what is meant by 'effective control';
- New dog control rules in areas with protected wildlife; and,
- Amended provisions for temporary changes to dog access rules.

Council's proposal

This statement of proposal is prepared under sections 83 and 86 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) and contains:

- a copy of the draft Policy and Bylaw
- information about the proposed amendments
- the reasons for the proposed amendments

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- how you can have your say
- timetable for consultation
- Council's determinations under section 155 of the LGA.

The key reason for this proposal is to:

- ensure Council's dog control rules are fit for purpose
- seek community views on the draft bylaw
- to encourage people to give feedback on the draft bylaw
- to let people know how they can give feedback.

How you can have your say

Anyone can make a submission online using the survey at [link](#). You can also send a written submission by post, by hand delivery, or by email to letstalk@qldc.govt.nz. However, we recommend using the online survey if you can.

A public hearing will be held in December 2026 where a panel of elected members will invite submitters to present their views in person.

Submissions open at 9:00am on 12 October 2026 and must be received by 5.00pm on 9 November 2026. All submissions should include:

- the submitter's name¹,
- details of any organisation the submitter is representing (if applicable),
- the submitter's contact details, and
- whether or not the submitter would like to speak at a hearing about the proposal.

You can get free copies of this Statement of Proposal, the draft Policy and the draft Bylaw and related Council reports from QLDC offices at 10 Gorge Road, Queenstown, or 47 Ardmore Street, Wānaka, from any QLDC library, or from the QLDCs website at <https://letstalk.qldc.govt.nz/dog-control-bylaw>. If you need help to make a submission, please contact Council on 03 441 0499 or visit one of Council's offices. All written submissions received during the submission period will be acknowledged.

Submissions are public information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. After the consultation period ends, submissions will be made publicly available, including on QLDC's website. Your personal contact details will not be published².

Council intends to hold a hearing during the week of 7 December 2026. A hearing gives people who make a submission the opportunity to speak directly to a panel of elected members about their views.

If you would like to speak at the hearing, you must indicate this on your submission form during

¹ Note: if you do not feel comfortable providing your name or contact details in a submission, please contact Council, who can facilitate an anonymous submission.

² In accordance with LGOIMA section 7(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons.

the written submission period. QLDC staff will then contact you to arrange a time to speak. You can speak either in person or by audio-visual link. If you have any accessibility or other requirements, please let us know when you indicate that you would like to speak.

Timetable for consultation

The dates below show the consultation timetable. If any of these dates change, Council will let the public know via its website.

Date	Activity
8 October 2026	Council adopted the Statement of Proposal, draft Policy and draft Bylaw for consultation.
12 October 2026	Consultation period begins (9.00am)
9 November 2026	Consultation period ends (5.00pm)
During the week of 7 December 2026	Oral submissions heard by Council hearing panel
TBD	Deliberations and adoption by Council

Background on the draft bylaw and policy

What do Dog Control Policies do?

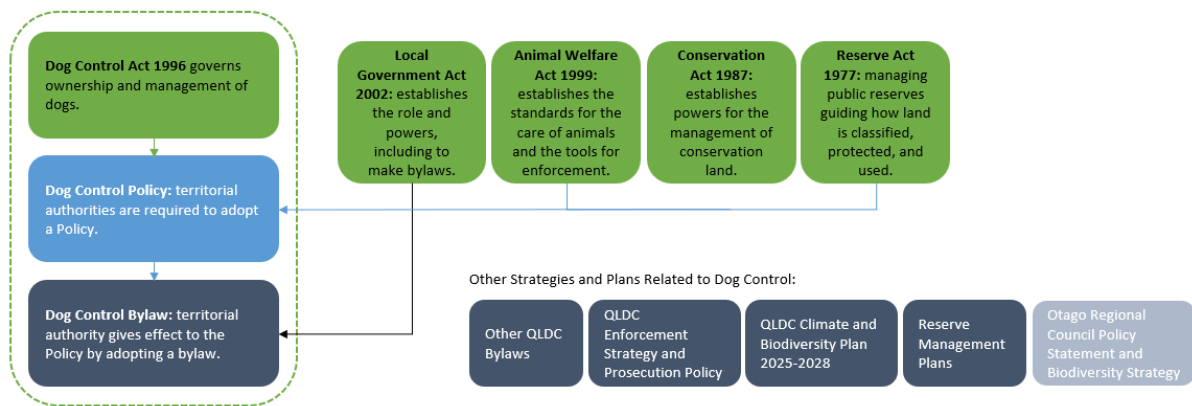
- The Policy sets out how Council will manage dogs in the district and helps meet its responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 1996.
- It provides a framework for:
 - Promoting responsible dog ownership;
 - Protecting public health and safety;
 - Minimising harm caused by dogs; and,
 - Providing for the exercise and recreational needs of dogs.

What do Dog Control Bylaws do?

Dog Control Bylaws put the Dog Control Policy into practice. They set the local rules for managing dogs in public places and provide the regulatory tools Council needs to enforce those rules. The Bylaw covers things such as:

- where dogs can be off leash, must be on leash or are prohibited
- requirement to have a licence to keep more than two dogs
- picking up and disposing of dog waste.

Figure 1: Legislative framework for the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw



Council's proposal – changes to Policy and Bylaw

At a Council meeting on 8 October 2026, Council adopted this Statement of Proposal for community consultation.

Attachment A provides a full overview of the proposed amendments to the Policy and Bylaw. The complete Policy and Bylaw and an online dog control map to support the understanding of the rules and proposed changes can be accessed via [link](#).

The draft Bylaw and Policy largely include provisions that are proposed to be carried forward without any amendment. A summary of key proposed changes to the current Bylaw and Policy is set out in the following table:

Proposed change	Why is this change proposed?
New on-leash requirements on busy recreational tracks	The proposal includes new requirements for dogs to be on a leash on busy tracks. As trails become increasingly popular, some also have become important commuting routes, requiring dogs to be on a leash will help improve safety and reduce conflicts between trail users. Changes are proposed for Arthurs Point Trail and the Frankton Track (between Frankton Marina and Park Street) as they are heavily used by walkers, runners and cyclists and are important active travel routes in the Queenstown area. Changes are also proposed to require dogs to be on leash on the Shotover Gorge Trail to ensure the track is safe and enjoyable for all users and to align with Department of Conservation (DOC) rules.
Clarifying the requirements of 'effective control'	The proposal includes a new provision of what 'effective control' means. This is intended to improve public safety and reduce nuisance caused by dogs. Owners would need to: - actively pay attention to their dog; - ensure the dog responds to commands; - remain close enough to prevent problems; and

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	prevent nuisance or risks to people, animals or wildlife. If owners cannot meet these requirements, they would need to put their dog on a leash.
New dog control rules for protection of sensitive wildlife	Across the district, there are thriving or restored environments with protected wildlife, like marsh crake, banded dotterel or crested grebes nesting on the edges of lakes or wetlands. Additional dog controls are proposed in areas with protected wildlife and nesting birds. Dogs would be prohibited from: - Mātau (Pig Island); - Wāwāhi Waka (Pigeon Island); and, - Lake Hayes Northern Wetland. Dogs would be required to be controlled on a leash at: - Lake Hayes Walkway; - Shotover Wetlands; and - Wānaka Lakefront Boardwalk. A seasonal rule to require dogs to be controlled on a leash is proposed for Tucker Beach from 1 August to 31 January.
New on leash requirements in busy urban reserves	The proposal includes new on-leash requirements for public parks and reserves. These changes aim to improve public safety in and around growing town centres. Dogs would need to be controlled on a leash in the following areas: - St Omer Park; - O'Regan's Park; - Village Green; - Buckingham Green; - Part of Roy's Bay Recreation Reserve; - Part of Bullock Creek; and, - Bridgeman Green.
New on sports and play areas	The proposal includes changes that aim to support safer spaces for recreation and sport, especially areas where children play. Dogs would be required to be on a leash: - on sports grounds while organised games and practice sessions are taking place; - at pump tracks; and - at Council-managed tennis courts. These changes aim to create safer spaces for recreation and sport.
Amended rules allowing temporary changes to dog control restrictions	This proposal would allow Council to temporarily change dog control rules in response to specific situations, such as community events, dog training events, and protect wildlife or pest control activities. This would allow Council to respond when temporary changes are needed to ensure the safety of people, dogs and protected wildlife. The proposal also allows for written applications to be made to Council, subject to any prescribed fee, requesting temporary changes to dog control rules. Any temporary change must: have regard to the objectives of the Dog Control Policy and the

	Act; • be clearly communicated to the public; and • be supported by appropriate signage.
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The Bylaw and Policy development process has also resulted in proposed changes that make these documents more straightforward to understand and align with best practice (outlined in Attachment B).

We received feedback on issues that are not proposed to be addressed via changes to the Policy or the Bylaw. These included the following:

- Feedback identified concerns about dog waste not being collected, roaming dogs, barking or owners not adhering to leashing rules. Council determined that these issues are better addressed through existing controls and other non-regulatory approaches, such as patrols, training programmes and signage, rather than changes to the Bylaw or Policy.
- Another issue raised was dog registration fees. These fees are determined through the Council's Annual Plan process, not through the review of the Bylaw or Policy (<https://www.qldc.govt.nz/services/animal-control/register-your-dog>). The Policy does provide a staggered fees framework to reward responsible ownership and self-compliance.
- Other issues raised included the impact of cats on sensitive environments, and the provision of dog waste bins and dog parks. This feedback has been provided to appropriate officers within Council.

Reasons for the proposal

The Local Government Act 2002 requires bylaws to be reviewed within five years of being made. As the current Bylaw has passed its five-year review date, a replacement bylaw must be adopted before June 2027. Any review of the Bylaw also triggers a concurrent review of the Dog Control Policy. The proposal aims to make targeted changes to ensure the policy and bylaw remain fit for purpose and meet the needs of the community - protecting public safety, the environment and supporting responsible dog ownership.

Statutory determinations

Before adopting a draft bylaw for public consultation, Council must make the determinations required under Section 155 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) and Section 10AA of the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act).

Council must be satisfied that:

- A bylaw remains the most appropriate way to address the perceived problems in relation to the regulation of dogs (Section 155(a) of the LGA).
- The draft Bylaw is the most appropriate form of bylaw (Section 155(2)(a) of the LGA) and has regard to the matters set out in section 10(4) of the Act.
- The draft Bylaw prescribes limits that are reasonable and justified (under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990).

Council made these determinations at its 26 June 2026 and 8 October 2026 meetings. The reports for these meetings (<https://letstalk.qldc.govt.nz/dog-control-bylaw>) include more detailed information about these matters.

What happens next?

Once the hearing panel has considered submissions and made its recommendations, Council will make final decisions in the first half of 2027.

Council may make other changes to the draft Bylaw and Policy in response to feedback, but anything that is a significant departure from the options set out in this proposal may require further consultation.

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Attachment A: Description of substantive amendments in the draft Bylaw and/or Policy

This attachment outlines the proposed substantive amendments included in the draft Policy and Bylaw. These amendments would introduce new or amended dog control rules and requirements. If adopted, these amendments would result in changes to the way dog owners are required to control and manage their dogs in certain locations and circumstances.

Topic	Description of current Bylaw and Policy provisions	Proposed amendments
Control in public places	Dogs are prohibited from entering: - Queenstown Hill and Walkway; and, - any school grounds, unless part of education programs or organised events managed by the school. Dogs must be on a leash in the following public places (even in the rural zone): - all cemeteries; and - all playgrounds and skateboarding facilities. Dogs are required on a leash in the following council reserves: - Earnslaw Park; - Marine Parade; - Marine Parade Reserve; - Matakauri Park; - Queenstown Bay; - Queenstown Gardens; and, - Bremner Bay. Every owner of a dog shall keep that dog on a leash in 'any other public place' (any area not outlined as a prohibited area or a designated dog exercise area), except within the Rural Zone or in a dog exercise area. The Department of Conservation (DOC) manages dog restrictions by the use of on-site access signage and brochures. Dog owners are expected to adhere to	New leash rules for pump tracks, Council-managed tennis courts and for sports fields (Schedule 1 of the draft Policy). It is proposed that dogs are required to be controlled on a leash in the following public places to ensure public safety and the safety of children: - on sports fields during organised games or practice sessions; - any pump tracks or Council managed tennis courts. New leash rules for additional reserves (Schedule 3 of the draft Policy). To ensure public safety in busy public spaces around town centres, the proposal includes additional reserves where dogs are required be kept on a leash: - O'Regan Park (Queenstown). - St Omer Park (Queenstown). - Village Green (Queenstown). - Buckingham Green (Arrowtown). - Roy's Bay Recreation Reserve (section from Dinosaur Park to McDougall Street) (Wānaka). - Bullock Creek (between Brownston Street and Ardmore Street) (Wānaka). - Bridgeman Green (Wānaka). New leash rules for recreational tracks (Schedule 3 of the draft Policy). On recreational tracks with high usage and multiple different users (cycling, walking, tourism and/or commuting) dogs must be kept on a leash to ensure the safety of all users: - Frankton Track (Frankton Marina to Park St) - Arthurs Point (entire length of track). - Shotover Gorge Trail (all QLDC managed sections across length of track). New rules for reserves with protected wildlife (Schedule 3 of the draft Policy). Additional controls for the following areas are proposed due to the presence of protected wildlife and ground nesting birds (Schedule 3 of the draft Policy): - Pigeon and Pig Island (prohibited);

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Topic	Description of current Bylaw and Policy provisions	Proposed amendments
	restrictions displayed on signage and in brochures as to where dogs are permitted or prohibited.	• Lake Hayes Northern Wetland (prohibited) • Lake Hayes walkway (on leash); • Shotover Wetlands (on leash); • Wanaka Lakefront Boardwalk (on leash); and • Tucker Beach (seasonal on leash requirement between 1 August and 31 January).
Designated Dog Exercise Areas	Council parks and reserves are dog off leash areas, (except for the excluded reserves above). It requires that “where an owner is not required to keep a dog under control on a leash the owner must – (a) keep that dog under effective control by voice, or signal while that dog is in any public place; and (b) immediately leash and bring the dog under control if the dog causes a nuisance to any person or animal”. A Dog Control Officer or Dog Ranger may seize any dog that is not under effective control.	Clarify the requirements for effective control. It is proposed that the following provision is added “dog owners must: pay active attention to be aware of where the dog is and what it is doing; ensure the dog is responsive to commands, with prompt recall; be close enough to the dog to quickly prevent any issues; and ensure the dog is not creating a nuisance to any other person, or to any stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife.” Further, that “every dog owner or person in charge of a dog in a public place must keep their dog leashed if they cannot meet the effective control requirements”.
Temporary changes to dog access rules	The Council may temporarily exempt any person, premises or public place from any duty or restriction in this bylaw. The Council may grant an application for a temporary exemption where it is satisfied that allowing the activity will achieve the - (a) purpose of the Act; and (b) objectives of the Council’s Dog Control Policy; and (c) preservation of public safety. An applicant seeking a temporary exemption must pay Council the applicable fee.	Enables Council to make temporary changes for organised community events, the protection of wildlife vulnerable to dogs or for pest control activities. As long as it will achieve the (a) purpose of the Act; and (b) objectives of the Council’s Dog Control Policy; and (c) preservation of public safety. <i>“If Council authorises a temporary change under clause 8.1, the decision must specify:</i> (a) the reason for it; (b) the person, activity and/or place to which it applies; (c) the rule that will apply and any conditions imposed; (d) its commencement and expiry dates; and (e) the manner in which the temporary change will be publicised to clearly identify the affected area, including at least one or more signs placed on or adjacent to that area.” The draft Policy wording reflects the changes proposed in the draft Bylaw.

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Attachment B: Description of non-substantive amendments in the draft Bylaw and/or Policy

This attachment outlines the non-substantive amendments that improve the structure and readability of the Bylaw and Policy. Amendments consolidate related provisions, clarify existing requirements or processes, and remove unnecessary duplication to make the documents easier to navigate and understand.

Topic	Description of current Bylaw and Policy provisions	Proposed amendments
Control of dogs in public places	As outlined above.	The draft Policy introduces a comprehensive dog control access framework in line with best practice. It outlines dog access rules in Schedule 1, 2 & 3 of the Policy and the draft Bylaw gives effect to this overall framework, following best practice. This means the policy provides dog owners with all information they need to know in one place. Clarification of existing off leash rules (Schedule 2 of the draft Policy): - Schedule 2 it states, <i>“Unless otherwise stated in Schedule 1 or 3, in urban areas in the District dogs are allowed off a leash, while under effective control in all parks, reserves, lakes, rivers, foreshore areas and on all recreational tracks”</i>. This provides clarity of the existing off leash rules across these areas. - The proposal includes clarification for tracks which are treated under the current bylaw as dog exercise areas and remain appropriate dog exercise areas (in Schedule 3 of the Policy). These tracks are established on unformed public roads. Tracks include Wānaka Outlet, Beacon Point Track and Kelvin Peninsular Trail. Clarification of existing leash rules in urban areas (Schedule 2 of the draft Policy). In urban areas in the district, dogs must be under control on a leash in the most public places. The proposal clarifies this existing requirement rather than relying on the broad definition of ‘any other public place’ (in the current bylaw). Schedule 2 of the Policy clarifies that this leash rule applies to: public roads; private ways; car parks; Council facilities; and pedestrian zones. Clarification of lease and easement agreements the Bylaw clarifies the existing circumstance that some recreational tracks cross privately owned land or public conservation land and may be subject to easements, leases, licences or other access arrangements. It states that <i>“the dog access classifications in the Policy establish the rules applying under the Policy and Bylaw. They do not confer a right to enter or remain on land and do not prevent a landowner, lawful occupier or other person with authority over the land from imposing a more stringent access restriction or condition. Any such restriction or condition operates independently of this Policy.”</i>
Registration fees and other fees	The Act requires that all dogs are to be registered. Dog registration fees are set by Council resolution through	The proposal clarifies the existing structure of fees:

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Topic	Description of current Bylaw and Policy provisions	Proposed amendments
	the Annual Plan process and are used to fund QLDC dog control services. The Policy specifies registration fees for differing classifications of dogs. Registration fee reductions recognise and reward responsible dog ownership and self-compliance, these apply to dogs that are neutered, dogs at fenced properties and for owners who have not received infringements or had dogs impounded in the two years leading up to the current registration period. Where there is a negative dog or dog owner history, no dogs owned will qualify for a reduction in registration fees. Registration fees paid after 31 July will have a late payment penalty applied. The penalty is an additional 50% of the registration fee. Infringements for not registering a dog may also be issued in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Strategy and Prosecution Policy. QLDC will refund registration fees where a registered dog dies in the period of registration, as per Section 39 of the Act.	- for differing classifications of dogs (including working dogs, disability assist dogs, dangerous dogs and retired working dogs); and - for graduated reduction in registration fees relating to fenced properties, neutered dogs and positive record. It also outlines the existing penalty fee for registration paid after 31 July each registration year and refund process for dogs that die in the period of registration.
Multiple dog licence	No more than two dogs of registrable age i.e. three months old and over (whether or not such dogs are registered) may be kept on any premises unless the owner or occupier of the property has a licence from QLDC. This does not apply to - working dogs kept on any premises within the rural zone (as provided in the	The proposal clarifies the existing process; - that council may grant licence; grant the licence subject to any reasonable conditions it considers necessary to achieve the objectives of the Dog Control Policy or refuse application; - that the licence relates to the premise (which could include multiple owners); and - fees for the licence are set through the Annual Plan process.

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Topic	Description of current Bylaw and Policy provisions	Proposed amendments
	QLDC Proposed District Plan or Operative District Plan) ; or impounding facilities administered by the Queenstown Lakes District Council; or dogs receiving medical treatment or recovering from medical treatment at any veterinary practice. No licence shall be granted to the owner or occupier of any premises for more than two dogs if the owner or occupier cannot demonstrate compliance with the QLDC Dog Control Bylaw 2020, or that the criteria below are met to the satisfaction of QLDC. Criteria outlined include the number of dogs requested, type or breed of dogs, fencing, size of premise, location of premise etc. A licence may be revoked the if number of dogs on the premises exceeds the number of dogs specified in the licence, where the breed of dog kept at the premises has changed, where the dogs are no longer kept at the address specified in the licence or the owner is in contravention of the Animal Welfare Act 1999. A licence is subject to the conditions set by the Council. It has effect only in relation to the premises described in the licence; and is not transferable to any other person, or any other premises, or any dog that is not specified in the licence. A Dog Control Officer or Dog Ranger may seize any dog kept at a premises and impound any dog at the owner's cost where - (a) more than two dogs are kept at a premises; and (b) there is no licence permitting the keeping of more than two dogs.	

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Topic	Description of current Bylaw and Policy provisions	Proposed amendments
	The applicant must pay to the Council the licence fee.	
Menacing and dangerous dogs and neutering	Dogs can be classified as menacing in accordance with sections 33A and 33C of the Act. QLDC will prescribe classifications in accordance with the Act. Any dog classified as menacing or dangerous by QLDC or any other council (in accordance with section 33A or 33C of the Act) must be neutered. Owners must comply with this policy on neutering within one month of the classification. The owner must produce evidence to Council to show that the dog has been neutered.	Minor formatting change so that all provisions are grouped in a separate section.
Infringements	The Policy provides the Act's Schedule 1 Infringement Offences and Fees.	Formatting change proposed to remove the infringement table in the draft Policy to avoid duplication of legislation. It provides reference to the schedule in the Act.
Welfare of dogs	QLDC undertakes, promotes and encourages services and programmes that promote responsible dog ownership and the welfare of dogs. The policy states that if the welfare of a dog is at risk, the Dog Control Officer will respond as necessary by exercising the powers under the Act. During an Emergency: all dog owners are expected to plan and prepare for the care and welfare of their dog(s) in anticipation of an emergency. While a state of emergency is in place dog owners must always keep their dog under effective control and ensure that their dog does not injure, endanger or cause distress to any person.	Clarifications relating to the existing roles and responsibilities of Council and the New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Outlined in related information, it outlines that animal welfare matters relating to companion animals are largely enforced by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Guidance relating to welfare have also been incorporated into the new responsible dog ownership section.