



NOTICE OF AN EXTRA ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

**Ōpōtiki District Council Chambers, 108 St John Street, Ōpōtiki
Tuesday, 15 September 2026
Commencing at 9.00am**

ORDER PAPER

APOLOGIES

DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS IN RELATION TO AGENDA ITEMS

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Chair: His Worship the Mayor – Daid Moore

Members: Cr Maude Maxwell (Deputy Mayor)

Cr Shona Browne

Cr Barry Howe

Cr Curley Keno

Cr Steve Nelson

Cr Dean Petersen

Cr Pāpā Wharewera (Chairperson)

Committee Secretary: Gae Finlay

Quorum: 4

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MEMBERS' INTERESTS) ACT 1968

Councillors are reminded that if you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda, then you must declare this interest and refrain from discussing or voting on this item, and are advised to withdraw from the Council chamber.

Stace Lewer

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

EXTRA ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2026

HEARING OF SUBMISSIONS FOR DOG CONTROL POLICY AND GAMBLING AND TAB VENUES POLICY

SCHEDULE OF SUBMITTERS TO SPEAK

DOG CONTROL POLICY			
Submission Number	Submitter	Page Number	Time
007	Forest & Bird “Giving Nature A Voice” – Lynne Hickling	27	9.05am
GAMBLING AND TAB VENUES POLICY			
Submission Number	Submitted	Page Number	Time
003	Gaming Machine Association of New Zealand – Jarrod True	75	9.20am
004	Health New Zealand – Renee Bolkowy	90	9.35am
	END		9.45 am

COUNCIL REPORT

Date : 15 September 2026

To : Extra-Ordinary Council Meeting

From : Michael Fryer, Strategy and Policy Manager

Subject : **SUBMISSIONS TO THE DOG CONTROL POLICY AND GAMBLING AND TAB VENUE POLICY FOLLOWING SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE PROCEDURES**

File ID : A1422494

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council has recently undertaken a Special Consultative Procedure with respect to the review of the Dog Control and Gambling and TAB Venue Policies.
- Council has received eight (8) submissions in respect to the Dog Control Policy.
- Council has received four (4) submissions, with one (1) late submission in respect to the Gambling and TAB Venues Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **That the report titled "Submissions to the Dog Control Policy and Gambling and Tab Venue Policy Following Special Consultative Procedures" be received.**
- 2) **That Council receives the eight (8) submissions received with respect to the Dog Control Policy.**
- 3) **That Council receives the four (4) submissions received with respect to the Gambling Policy.**
- 4) **That Council accepts the late submission received from Kō Kollektive.**

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to present the submissions received through Council's Special Consultative Procedure on the Dog Control Policy and the Gambling and TAB Venues Policy, and to enable Council to formally receive them.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

2. The matters detailed in this report relate to the following priorities from Ōpōtiki District Council's Long-Term Plan 2024-2034:

- ☒ Community Priority One: Strong relationships and partners
- ☐ Community Priority Two: Investment in our district
- ☒ Community Priority Three: Well-being is valued
- ☐ Community Priority Four: Our communities are resilient
- ☐ Community Priority Five: Growth is sustained over time

BACKGROUND

3. The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of Council's consultation of the Dog Control Policy and Gambling and TAB Venues Policy.
4. On 9 June 2026, Council resolved to adopt a Statement of Proposal and noted the community consultation would be undertaken from 18 June 2026 to 23 July 2026.
5. In total:
 - Eight submissions were received with respect to the Dog Control Policy, with one submitter who wishes to be heard (Appendix 1).
 - Four submissions were received with respect to the Gambling Policy, with two submitters who wish to be heard (Appendix 2).
6. Council also received one late submission with respect to the Gambling and TAB Venues Policy. This submitter does not wish to be heard.

OPTIONS

7. The options available to Council are to either:

OPTION 1: To accept all submissions, including the one late submission.	
Description	<i>Council formally receives all submissions, including the late submission.</i>
Advantages	<i>Aligns with statutory consultation requirements. Enables Council to proceed to formal consideration of submissions.</i>
Disadvantages	<i>None identified.</i>
Impact on mana whenua	<i>No identified impacts.</i>
Strategic alignment	<i>Community Priority Three: Well-being is valued. The draft policy has undergone a special consultative procedure to ensure the community is informed and provided an opportunity to submit to the proposed policy.</i>
Associated risks	<i>There are no risks identified.</i>

OPTION 2: To accept the submissions, with the exception of the late submission	
Description	<i>Council accepts the submissions and declines to receive the late submission.</i>
Advantages	<i>Aligns with statutory consultation requirements. Enables Council to proceed to formal consideration of submissions excluding the late submission.</i>
Disadvantages	<i>Council would be unable to consider the community viewpoints raised in the late submission.</i>
Impact on mana whenua	<i>No identified impacts.</i>
Strategic alignment	<i>May not fully align with any strategic priorities.</i>
Associated risks	<i>Risk of not considering full range of community feedback.</i>

DISCUSSION

8. An initial analysis of the feedback indicates several emerging themes across both policies that were identified through consultation, ensuring Council has visibility of the issues raised before entering formal deliberations.

Dog Control

9. All eight submissions received supported the draft Dog Control Policy. While supportive, submitters identified several areas where they felt stronger emphasis or clearer enforcement would improve outcomes for the community. These Themes included:
 10. *Roaming dogs and public safety*
Submitters expressed concern about the number of roaming dogs in the district and the risks they pose to people, other dogs, and livestock. Several submitters emphasised the need for more proactive enforcement and clearer expectations for owners.
 11. *Nuisance barking and neighbourhood impacts*
Persistent barking was raised as a common issue, with submitters seeking stronger enforcement tools and clearer guidance for owners.
 12. *Responsible dog ownership*
Submitters supported measures related to registration, microchipping, desexing, and general dog welfare. Many felt that education and awareness campaigns would help improve compliance.
 13. *Protection of wildlife and sensitive areas*
Some submitters highlighted the need for stronger controls in ecologically sensitive areas, particularly coastal and wildlife habitats.

14. *Recognition of disability assist dogs*

Submitters supported clearer recognition of disability assist dogs and ensuring their rights are protected.

15. Overall, the feedback reflected strong community support for the policy direction and a desire for continued emphasis on safety, responsible ownership, and animal welfare.

Gambling

16. Five submissions were received on the Gambling and TAB Venues Policy, including one late submission. Feedback reflected two distinct perspectives on the future direction of gambling regulation in the district. The key themes included:

17. *Support for retaining the sinking lid approach*

Submitters emphasised the social and public health impacts of gambling harm, particularly for Māori, whānau, and communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation. They argued that reducing opportunities to gamble remains an important harm-minimisation measure.

18. *Support for a cap-based system with relocation flexibility*

Other submitters highlighted the community funding generated through Class 4 gambling and argues that allowing venue relocations could enable operators to move to more suitable locations. They noted that gambling machine numbers have reduced over time while gambling harm has not decreased at the same rate.

Financial/budget considerations

19. There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

Policy and planning implications

20. There are no policy and planning implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

Impact on mana whenua

21. There is no identified impact on mana whenua.

Climate impact considerations

22. There are no implications associated with climate.

Risks

23. There are no risks identified.

Community wellbeing considerations

24. The purpose of Local Government now includes promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future ('the four well-beings').

25. The well-beings have been considered and there are no significant impacts on social, economic, environmental, or cultural well-being.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Assessment of significance

26. On every issue requiring a decision, Council is required to determine how significant a decision is to the community, and what the corresponding level of engagement should be. Council uses the Significance Flowchart in the Significance and Engagement Policy to determine the level of significance.
27. While the decisions sought are the result of a **Consult** level of engagement, the level of significance related to the decision in this report is considered to be **low**. Because the decision is determined to have **low** significance in accordance with the policy, the corresponding level of engagement required is **Inform**.

Assessment of engagement

28. As the level of significance has been determined to be **low**, the level of engagement required is **Inform** according to the Engagement Framework of the Significance and Engagement Policy:

INFORM

To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen.

29. The tools that Council will use for the 'Inform' level of engagement include a report in the public agenda of the Council meeting and may include a combination of public notices in the newspaper and/or on Council's social media.

CONCLUSION

30. Councils Dog Control and Gambling and TAB Venues Policies are required to be renewed. In June 2026, Council resolved to carry out a Special Consultative Procedure to seek feedback from the community on whether to renew or not renew the policies.
31. This report notes the submissions received.

Michael Fryer

STRATEGY & POLICY MANAGER



DOG CONTROL POLICY SUBMISSIONS

Dog Control Policy: List of Submitters

Submission Number	Date Submitted	Name	If a hearing is held, would you like to speak to your submission in-person		Do you agree with the proposed changes in the Draft Dog Control Policy?		
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Other
001	19-Jun-26	Louise Bullen		No	Yes		
002	21-Jun-26	Doreen Greaves		No	Yes		
003	01-Jul-26	Marita Matchitt		No	Yes		
004	19-Jul-26	Julie Van Der Veer		No	Yes		
005	18-June-26	Dora Motateanu		No	Yes		
006	26-Jul-26	Jenny Gregory		No	Yes		
007	23-Jul-26	Linda Conning	Yes		Yes		
008	28-May-26	Roger Drower		No	Yes		

SUBMISSION 001 -004

Title: Hono Mai Responses to Dog Control Policy

Submission Number	Date Submitted	Name	If a hearing is held, would you like to speak to your submission in-person?		Do you agree with the proposed changes in the Draft Dog Control Policy?			Any other feedback you would like to add?
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Other	
001	19-Jun-26	Louise Bullen		No	Yes			I think there needs to be stricter rules on barking dogs being a nuisance even in rural areas and there also needs to be a limit in rural areas to how many dogs can be allowed as 10 plus howling barking dogs regardless of whether on a rural property is still a nuisance to neighbours and affects their quality of life.
002	21-Jun-26	Doreen Greaves		No	Yes			I want to be able to walk my small dog down the street, without the fear of being attacked, by a much larger, & possibly hungry dog.
003	1-Jul-26	Marita Matchitt		No	Yes			I believe rules & signs up around public places for dogs to be leashed. All dogs should be on a leash on beaches especially. Stray dogs on beaches is very confronting & dangerous. It stops some people walking beaches. I'm one of those people.
004	19-Jul-26	Julie Van Der Veer		No	Yes			I would like to see a limit of 2 dogs per household, as apparently if you get a kennel license then you can have an extra dog, this is unsatisfactory when dogs are at home all day and tied up for the good part of the day. They should be microchipped as well and registered. If they are persistently barking then it should be compulsory for a dog collar. Education for owners but not sure how this would be managed as would need to be separate from the dog rangers. The dog rangers

							do a great job now but are restricted as it is a big job in this town. Lots of loose dogs during the night and especially early morning which needs to be sorted but can only be done if the Council have more Dog Rangers available early morning like 6am onwards. It is only time before we have a dog problem where a dog attacks a human, there is just so many dogs wandering
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POLICY	STATUS	AT	DATE	DOC ID
<i>DOG CONTROL POLICY</i>	<i>Draft</i>		<i>14/05/2026</i>	



OPOTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL

DOG CONTROL POLICY

AMENDMENTS/REVIEW

No:	Amendment(s)/Review	Date	Carried out by / Authority
0.1	Created	2022	
0.2	Renewed	14/05/2026	Scott J

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy is made under section 10 of the Dog Control Act 1996, which requires the Council to adopt a dog control policy for the Ōpōtiki District.

The Consolidated Bylaws 2021, Part 9 Dog Control, supports this policy by regulating dogs to prevent danger, distress, and nuisance. This policy sets the direction for dog control in the District and is implemented through those bylaws.

Council is responsible for administering and enforcing the Act, including maintaining a register of all dogs.

In developing this policy, the Act requires Council to consider:

- Minimising danger, distress, and nuisance to the community;
- Preventing uncontrolled dog access to areas frequented by children;
- Ensuring people can safely use public places without fear of attack or intimidation;
- Meeting the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Meet the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996;
- Reduce nuisance and issues caused by dogs;
- Keep the community safe through education and enforcement;
- Promote and recognise responsible dog ownership and animal care;
- Identify public places where dogs are permitted or prohibited.

This policy and the accompanying Bylaw have effect in all areas of the Ōpōtiki District and should be read alongside this policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires, -

Act – Dog Control Act 1996.

Bylaw(s) – Ōpōtiki District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2021

Council – Ōpōtiki District Council.

District – The area administered by Ōpōtiki District Council.

Disability Assist Dog – a dog certified by an organisation listed in Schedule 5 of the Act as being trained, or in training, to assist a person with a disability.

DOC – Department of Conservation.

Dog Control Officer/Officer – someone appointed under section 11 of the Act and includes a warranted officer exercising powers under section 17 of the Act.

Dangerous Dog – a dog that has been classified as a dangerous dog under section 31 of the Act.

Domestic Animal – includes:

- Any animal (including a bird or reptile) kept as a domestic pet;
- Any working dog;
- Any other animal kept by any person for recreational purposes or for that person's occupation or employment.

Neutered Dog – given its meaning by section 2 of the Act.

Owner – given its meaning by section 2 of the Act.

Public Place – given its meaning by section 2 of the Act.

Menacing Dog – a dog that has been classified as a dangerous dog under section 33A of the Act.

POLICY STATEMENTS

4. DOG OWNERSHIP OBLIGATIONS

4.1. Registration and fees

Maintaining an effective dog registration system is a statutory requirement and essential for the efficient management of dog control.

All dogs over three months of age must be registered with Council annually. Registration runs from 1 July, and owners must complete the required registration forms or online declarations. An exception applies to puppies that reach three months of age during the registration year, for which the registration fee will be pro-rated.

Dog owners must notify Council of any change in ownership or address. Where a dog is transferred to a new owner, both parties are responsible for ensuring the transfer is recorded. Dogs moving into the District from another council must be re-registered, and existing registration tags must be surrendered. Where registration is current, a new Council-issued tag will be provided for a replacement fee as per Councils fees and charges schedule.

Owners must notify Council if a dog dies. A refund for the remainder of the registration year may be issued upon written notification.

Registration fees are set annually in Councils Fees and Charges and reflect the costs of registering and managing dogs. A late payment penalty of 50% applies after 1 August. Council may take enforcement action where dogs are not registered or ownership details are not updated, including the issuing of infringement notices.

Fees apply to the following categories:

- Entire dogs – full fee;
- Neutered dogs – reduced fee;
- Working dogs – reduced fee;
- Certified disability assists dogs – free

Council provides reduced registration fees to promote responsible ownership, reduce roaming and unwanted dogs, and support positive animal welfare outcomes. Eligibility for reduced fees may require supporting evidence, such as veterinary certification or signed declarations.

Owners seeking a reduced fee for working dogs must complete a declaration form. Working dogs include those primarily used for lawful hunting activities and that have completed avian awareness and aversion training.

4.2. Microchipping

All dogs registered for the first time from 1 July 2006 must be microchipped, except for working dogs kept solely or principally for herding or driving stock.

Owners must provide Council with proof of microchipping. If a dog is not microchipped, Council may:

- Issue a warning or infringement notice;
- Prosecute the owner;
- Microchip the dog if it is impounded and recover the cost from the owner or person reclaiming the dog.

4.3. Dog welfare

Dogs have specific physical and behavioural needs. Owners are responsible for ensuring their dog's welfare by providing:

- Proper care and attention;
 - Adequate food and water;
 - Suitable shelter;
 - Enough exercise.
- it may be useful to include welfare act provision ref. recommended kennels dimensions and structure, cleaning, bedding requirements and avoidance of prolonged tethering, as well as daily exercise recommendation (Welfare act). Some members of community unaware.

To support dog welfare, Council provides:

- Access to public places and appropriate spaces where dogs can be exercised safely;
- Offer education and information to help owners understand their responsibilities;
- Action when dogs are not properly cared for. This could include:
 - Investigating complaints about lack of food, water, or shelter;
 - Providing urgent care (food, water, shelter) if needed;
 - Referring welfare concerns to the SPCA or other relevant agencies.

To address breaches of dog welfare and control laws, Council may:

- Refer cases to the SPCA or other agencies;
- Issue warnings;
- Issue infringement notices.

All dog owners and persons in charge of dogs must meet their obligations under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and comply with the minimum standards in the Code of Welfare: Dogs.¹

5. PUBLIC PLACES AND DOG CONTROL

The Act allows Council to designate public places where dogs are prohibited, must be on a leash, or may be off leash. In the Ōpōtiki District, these areas are classified as:

- Dog exercise areas – dogs may be exercised off leash.
- Dog prohibited areas – dogs are not allowed, either at all times or at specified times.

Dog exercise areas and dog prohibited areas are detailed in Schedule 1, Part 9 of the Bylaws.

¹ <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/46030-Code-of-Welfare-Dog>

5.1. Exercise areas

Dog exercise areas are:

- Beaches (except designated prohibited areas);
- Ōpōtiki Township stopbanks;
- Volkner island

5.2. Prohibited areas

Dogs are prohibited at all times in:

- Public playgrounds (within 10 metres of plays equipment);
- Church Street (Kelly Street to Richard Street);
- Hukutaia Domain;
- Rose Garden Pre-School and playground;
- Effluent ponds (Snell Road);
- Upton Park;
- Waioweka Spit (east end);
- Waiaua Spits (both sides of river mouth);
- Waithe Spit (dotterel breeding area).

Dogs are prohibited during organised sports events at:

- Rugby Park / Princess Street Reserve;
- Ōhiwa Domain (corner of Ōtara Road and Gault Road);
- Memorial Park.

5.3. Leash rules

Leash requirements:

- Dogs must be on a leash in all urban public places (Residential, Industrial, Town Centre, and Mixed Activity under the District Plan), unless in a designated exercise and prohibited area.
- In all other public places, dogs must be under control, and owners must carry a leash at all times.

5.4. Access restrictions under other legislation

The Act requires this policy to identify land within the district that is subject to dog access restrictions under the:

- Conservation Act 1987 (controlled or open dog areas);
- National Parks Act 1980;
- Te Urewera Act 2014.

Only permitted hunting dogs, guide dogs, and dogs used for authorised purposes (such as conservation management) may be taken onto conservation land. All other dogs are prohibited.

Within Department of Conservation (DOC) land east of Ōhiwa Harbour (East Coast Hawke's Bay Conservancy), dogs are not permitted in:

- Scenic reserves;
- Conservation areas;
- Forest parks (including Raukumara, Kaweka, and Ruahine Forest Parks).

This includes named areas such as the Urutawa and Waioweka Conservation Areas, unless a permit is obtained from DOC.

Dog access to Te Urewera is restricted to permitted hunting dogs. All other dogs are prohibited.

6. MANAGING RISK AND NUISANCE

6.1. Roaming dogs - provisions regarding roaming dogs, especially in rural areas (council to be notified, not allowed to cause harm to the dog unless stopping an active attack when the dog cannot be contained safely - Welfare act).

Roaming dogs can cause nuisance and pose risks to people, animals, and wildlife. Council responds to complaints and undertakes patrols in urban areas to identify roaming dogs.

- If a registered dog is found roaming for the first time, it may be returned to its owner, and an infringement notice may be issued.
- Dogs found roaming may be impounded, with owners liable for impounding, daily care, and infringement fees.(After Pay or payment arrangements allowed for beneficiaries etc?)
- Repeat roaming offences may result in Council requiring the dog to be neutered.

6.2. Barking dogs

Complaints about barking dogs will be investigated by a Dog Control Officer.

If a dog is creating a nuisance through persistent or loud barking or howling, the officer may:

- Inspect the property, and
- Issue a written notice requiring the owner to take reasonable steps to stop the nuisance.

6.3. Dog faeces

Owners must immediately remove and hygienically dispose of any faeces left by their dog in a public place or on private property.

6.4. Limit of number of dogs

A maximum of two dogs over three months of age may be kept on a property in the following zones, unless Council permit is obtained:

- Residential Zone;
- Mixed Activity Zone;
- Ōhiwa Harbour Zone;
- Coastal Settlement Zone.

This limit does not apply to:

- Boarding kennels;
- Veterinary clinics;
- The Duke Street Pound.

There is no limit on the number of dogs in the Rural Zone or Coastal Zone.

6.5. Bitches in season

Owners of bitches in season must keep them securely confined while ensuring they receive proper care, including adequate food, water, and exercise. [Maybe refer to SPCA for desexing support?](#)

6.6. Diseased dogs

Dogs with infectious diseases must not be taken into public places. They must remain on the owner's property, except when being transported to a veterinary clinic for treatment. [obligation to ensure vet treatment?](#)

7. DOG OWNER CLASSIFICATION

7.1. Probationary owners

Section 21 of the Act allows for classification as a probationary owner. An owner may be classified as a probationary owner for up to 24 months if they are convicted of an offence under the Act (or other specified legislation) or commit three or more infringement offences within a 24-month period.

A probationary owner:

- May not own any dogs other than those already owned and registered at the time of classification;
- Must dispose of any unregistered dogs within 14 days in a lawful manner;
- May be required to complete an approved dog owner education or obedience course at their own expense.

7.2. Disqualification of dog owners

A person may be disqualified from owning dogs for up to five years if they are convicted of a serious offence under the Act (or any other Act specified in section 25 of the Act) or commit three or more infringement offences within a 24-month period. Council may instead apply probationary status where appropriate.

A disqualified person:

- Must dispose of all dogs they own within 14 days in a lawful manner;
- Must not transfer ownership to anyone living at the same address;
- Must not own or keep a dog for the duration of the disqualification.

8. DOG CLASSIFICATIONS

8.1. Dangerous dogs

Adhering to section 31 of the Act, Council must classify a dog dangerous if:

- The owner of the dog has been convicted of a specified offence under the Act;
- Council has reasonable grounds to believe the dog constitutes a threat to the safety of any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife based on sworn evidence that the dog has shown aggressive behaviour on one or more occasions.
- The owner admits in writing that the dog constitutes a threat to safety or any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife.

If a dog is classified as dangerous, the owner must:

- Must pay a higher registration fee as stipulated in the fees and charges
- Keep the dog securely contained on their property, with dog-free access to at least one entrance to the dwelling;
- Ensure the dog is muzzled and, on a leash, when in any public place (unless in a designated exercise area);
- Neuter the dog (over three months of age) within one month of receiving notice;
- Ensure the dog is microchipped within two months;
- Not transfer ownership without Council's written consent.

Failure to comply may result in Council seeking a destruction order and the owner will face a maximum fine of \$3,000. If an owner fails to comply with a court order to have the dog destroyed and does not

produce a veterinarian's certificate stating that the dog has been destroyed, the owner will face a further fine of \$3,000.

Complaints of dog attacks causing serious injury will be referred to the Police as a criminal matter.

8.2. Menacing dogs

As per section 33A of the Act, Council may classify a dog as menacing if it poses a threat or has shown aggressive behaviour towards people, animals, or wildlife. Dogs classified under the Act as prescribed breeds or types must also be classified as menacing.

If a dog is classified as menacing, the owner must:

- Ensure the dog is muzzled at all times when in a public place;
- Neuter the dog (over three months of age) within one month of receiving notice;
- Ensure the dog is microchipped within two months of classification.

All dogs classified as menacing, including those transferred from another district, must be neutered.

8.3. Menacing by breed or type

The list of dogs classified as menacing by breed or type can be found in Schedule 4 of the Act.
([breed identification process - ie owners questioning classifications can provide a DNA test?](#))

Dogs classified as menacing by breed or type must be desexed within one month of notification, ownership, or by 12 months of age (for puppies).

Council may grant an exemption where the owner provides veterinary evidence that the dog is not fit to be desexed within this timeframe.

Owners of dogs classified as menacing by breed or type must:

- Keep the dog in a secure area that allows safe access to at least one entrance of the dwelling;
- Ensure the dog is muzzled in any public place unless confined in a vehicle or cage (in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 1999);
- Notify Council in writing within seven days of any change in ownership, including the new owner's details and address.

9. EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

9.1. Owner education

Council will educate dog owners and the wider community about responsible dog ownership through:

- Printed materials (e.g. brochures);
- Council communications, including the Pānui newsletter;
- School and community education programmes.

Dog Control Officers will also work directly with dog owners where complaints or issues arise.

9.2. Dog training

Council encourages all dog owners to train and socialise their dogs, including attending puppy training and obedience classes.

Avian awareness and avoidance training is required for hunting dogs to be registered as working dogs and may also be required for access to certain DOC land. Owners could contact Council or DOC to arrange this training.

10. ENFORCEMENT

Council recognises that most dog owners are responsible, and that issues can often be resolved through education. This will generally be the first approach, except where an incident causes harm or distress to a person or animal. Enforcement action may also be taken to protect public safety and ensure compliance with dog control requirements.

10.1. Rehoming unclaimed/surrendered dogs

An unclaimed/surrendered dog that is assessed as suitable may be rehomed to an approved person or organisation at the discretion of Council.

Council will ensure any dog rehomed is microchipped and registered for the remainder of the current registration year. Council is not responsible for any illness occurring after the dog has been rehomed.

10.2. Infringement notices (legal protection for council: council not responsible for infringements, incidents or liabilities after change of ownership)

The Act authorises Dog Control Officers to issue infringement notices for offences.

Infringement offences and fees are prescribed by the Schedule 1 of the Act, and Council has no discretion to alter them.

10.3. Prosecution thresholds

Prosecution is at the discretion of Council, except for non-registration and dog attack offences.

The Strategy & Development Group Manager has delegated authority to proceed to prosecutions for non-registration and dog attack offences.

10.4. Euthanasia of dogs

Impounded dogs that are not claimed within seven days and are unsuitable for rehoming will be euthanised humanely. Dogs suitable for rehoming may also be euthanised if a suitable owner cannot be found.

Where an owner requests euthanasia of an impounded dog, this will be arranged at the owner's cost. (What if the dog is rehomingable?)

11. FEES AND CHARGES

Fees and charges are set in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges Schedule.

12. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Dog Control Act 1996

Animal Welfare Act 1999

Ōpōtiki District Council Consolidated Bylaws 2021

13. REVIEW

This policy must be reviewed every three years in accordance with the special consultative procedure prescribed in the Local Government Act 2002.

Note

- during discussions with members of the public, we noticed some members of rural community are not aware of the situation when they are allowed to destroy a dog. We would suggest that this is included - provisions of welfare act: allowed to humanely destroy a dog to stop an active attack, not allowed to destroy a dog for roaming (call council instead) .
- it may be beneficial to include minimum provisions of welfare act in terms of "enough exercise" and kennels dimensions/resting area, cleaning standards, as well as provisions regarding prolonged tethering.

Dog Control Policy

more emphasis on education for dog owners is a sound idea — but only if the owners are educatable.

Some people are averse to anything that involves common sense & compassion towards their animals.

These morons need a tougher approach.

If a dog bites a person / kills pets, livestock or wildlife, it should be shot at once.

The owner should not have any say in the matter.

Bar such people from owning dogs, if they are not responsible owners.

Owning a dog is not a right, it's a responsibility.

If an owner should be aggressive, call the police for assistance.

Do not let these low-lives get away with it. These dogs, for the sake of it, should be treated well, who deserve to be treated well, as well as public & other animals, the bad owners

need to be dealt with much more harshly.

Neutering any dog should be a condition to owning one, If people can't afford to care for their dogs, they should not be allowed to own one. Having secure fences/gates can keep dogs contained, to safeguard the public.

a secure section should be a condition to owning a dog, a dog can be a special companion. It deserves to be treated as such.

Senny Gregory

SUBMISSION 007

Royal Forest and Bird Protection Soc NZ Inc
Eastern Bay of Plenty Branch
Easternbayofplenty.branch@forestandbird.org.nz



Forest & Bird
GIVING NATURE A VOICE

Contact: Linda Conning 0223228245

23 July 2026

info@odc.govt.nz

SUBMISSION ON REVIEW OF THE DOG CONTROL POLICY

Introduction

Forest and Bird's purpose is *"to take all reasonable steps within the power of the Society for the preservation and protection of the indigenous flora and fauna and the natural features of New Zealand"*. The Branch area comprises the three Eastern Bay districts, from Otamarakau to East Cape and includes the Ohiwa Harbour, Te Urewera and Whirinaki Forest Park.

Forest and Bird's interest in this policy review in reference to Section (4) (iv) of the Dog Control Act 1996 which includes as an object of the Act:

*"by imposing on owners of dogs obligations designed to ensure that dogs do not injure, endanger, or cause distress to any stock, poultry, domestic animal, **or protected wildlife**; [our emphasis]*

We welcome the opportunity to submit on this policy.

4.1 Registration and Fees and 9.2 Training

We particularly support the incentives of reducing dog registration fees for dogs that have undergone avian avoidance training, noting that this needs to happen every year.

We are however ambivalent about hunting dogs being classified as working dogs.

Working dogs do not have to be microchipped (s36A(2A)) and the owner does not have to carry a leash in public (s54A (3)). This means that "lost" dogs are not so easily returned to their owners, and the public and wildlife are more at risk when the dogs trained to hunt are out and about and not actually hunting.

It would be preferable if hunting dogs simply had a lower registration fee if they have completed avian awareness training.

5.2 Prohibited Areas

We support the Prohibited areas but Ohiwa Spit and the Ohiwa Harbour should also be included as they are significant wildlife areas.

It seems very odd to the branch that these areas are not included, as previous joint efforts with the Council, DoC, and BOPRC, agreed on settings for these areas and installed signage to that effect.

There is a typo that should read "Waiotahi" spit.

There is another error in the section on *Dogs are prohibited during organised sports events o Ōhiwa Domain (corner of Ōtara Road and Gault Road);*
This are is not Ohiwa Domain – is it called Otara Domain?

5.3 Leash Rules

Ohiwa Domain should be added to sites where dogs should be on a leash, as there are both kiwi and weka present there and for consistency with the settings for the Onekawa-Mawhai Regional Park for which it is an entrance.

5.4 Access restrictions under other legislation

2nd and last paragraphs

The word “Permitted” is used in the sense that there is a permit. This language is used by DoC. However to the general public “Permitted” means “allowed” and this creates confusion.

For clarity it should say

Only ~~permitted~~ hunting dogs issued with a permit

Dog access to Te Urewera is restricted to ~~permitted~~ hunting dogs issued with a permit.

10 Enforcement – Bylaws

- The Bylaws need to be updated to include all the required Prohibited areas and Leash areas for consistency with the Policy.
- Enforcement of bylaws is necessary for the policy to be effective. Forest and Bird has noticed a distinct lack of enforcement of bylaws over the years, which brings them into disrepute and not being taken seriously.
- A programme of periodic spot checks would help to keep the bylaws visible.
- All of these actions need to be budgeted for in the Long Term and Annual Plans.

Forest and Bird would like to be heard.

Kia ora

Further to our submission, there is an ambiguous sentence in 5.3 Leash Areas:

Leash requirements:

o Dogs must be on a leash in all urban public places (Residential, Industrial, Town Centre, and Mixed Activity under the District Plan), unless in a designated exercise and prohibited area.

This could be read as dogs don't need to be on a leash in a prohibited area.
It should read:

unless in a designated exercise ~~and prohibited~~ area.

Please attach this email to our original submission.

Ngā mihi,

Linda Conning, Branch Chairperson

Eastern Bay of Plenty Branch

FOREST & BIRD | TE REO O TE TAIAO, GIVING NATURE A VOICE

Branch webpage www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/eastern-bay-plenty

Ph 073077108

Please note branches are run by volunteers

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Page 30

Please note branches are run by volunteers



assistdogadvocate@gmail.com We take refusal for Disability Assist Dogs and their owners seriously and will follow up as soon as we are notified.

My name is Roger Drower As an Advocate for Disability Assist/Service Dogs, I would like to share some relevant information with you. As I am the spokesperson for Civil Defence Emergency Management groups (CDEM) throughout New Zealand, advocating for Disability Assist/Service Dogs and their owners and what will be needed in a CD emergency.

Disability affects over 1.1 million (24%) of the New Zealand population. Many of those with disabilities have 'disability aides' and these can include a specially trained Disability Assist Dog.

The Dog Control Act 1996 (schedule 5) lists the 8 organisations that can certify a Disability Assist/Service Dog.

Dog in New Zealand. The Dog Control Act 1996 (s75) states that any disability assist dog accompanying & assisting a person with a disability may enter and remain – in any public place.

While the Humans Rights Act 1993 s21 states that the prohibited grounds of discrimination include reliance on a disability assist dog. This means that if you deny a person accompanied by a qualified

Disability Assist Dog access and/or service is an illegal act of discrimination, which can be punishable by a fine from Human Rights Commission.

Disability Assist dogs, are trained (or in training) to assist a person with a disability and may legally enter any public place and can be easily recognised by the jacket they wear.

When Disability Assist Dogs are working, please remember:

Disability Assist Dog identification tag

The Disability Assist Dog identification tag is a unique tag worn by a certified dog to provide easy identification of disability assist dog status. The Disability Assist Dog identification tag is mandatory.

However, the tag will provide easy recognition of a disability assist dog, allowing access to civil defence centres in an emergency, and will also support rapid reunification if the dog and owner/handler become separated.



Just letting you know by Law we can bring Assist/Service dog into any public place, including buses, trains and other public transport, and places owned by private businesses like supermarkets, restaurants and other food outlets, shopping malls, cinemas, Schools, Hospital, Council buildings, GOVT Buildings, camping grounds, motels or hotels, Rentals, and Club's ETC. If you refuse any Assist/Service dog you can be fined **NZ serious offence by Law.**

Council has to go back to the principal Government Act and this can NOT be overridden by law.

Interpretation Dog Control Act 1996 and Humans Rights Act 1993 Health Act 1956 Bill of Rights Act 1990.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,— **disability assist dog** means a dog certified by one of the organisations listed in [Schedule 5](#) as being a dog that has been trained (or is being trained) to assist a person with a disability. Please Note Assist dogs are not Pet dogs. Under GOVT Dog Control Act 1996, Humans Right Act 1993, Health Act 1956, Bill of rights Act 1990 All Disability/ Assist/ Service Dogs are been put at risk with pet/family dogs in the **CBD**, without fear of attack or intimidation by Pet family dogs. The DUTY of CARE for our service dog where is it? **This is a privilege to have an Assist/Service Dog**

8 Organisations that certify Disability Assist Dogs (as of December 2024)

These dogs, which are trained (or in training) to assist a person with a disability, may legally enter any public place.

Disability Assist Dogs can be recognised by the jacket they wear.

When Disability Assist Dogs are working, please remember

- Do not pat or talk to the dogs, as they are at work.
- Disability assist dogs **never** wear a muzzle.
- Disability assist dogs and their handlers have **access to priority seating areas on bus, rail, and ferry.**
- Assist dogs currently active under a certifying organisation are required to wear a uniform vest **or** harness for that organisation.
- If you have a question, talk to the dog's handler. The handler will hold organisational identification that can be presented if required. The ID may be in the form of a photo ID card or app on their phone.



Assistance Dogs New Zealand (ADNZT)

[Assistance Dogs New Zealand Trust \(ADNZT\)](#) is a registered charitable trust, providing trained dogs to clients with a range of disabilities. "72% of our clients are children and young adults under 20 years old, and 50% of our clients live with autism and often multiple disorders".



Blind and Low Vision NZ (Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind Incorporated)

For Blind Low Vision NZ guide dogs, approximately 120 puppies are bred each year, of which about one-third go on to become [working guide dogs](#). It takes 2 years of rigorous training for the puppies to become guide dogs, involving an incredible team of skilled people.

While in training to become an assist dog, Blind and Low Vision guide puppies wear a



vest like the one shown here. (Left)

Once fully trained and working, Blind and Low Vision assist dogs wear a harness like the one shown here. (Right)



Hearing Dogs for Deaf People New Zealand

[Hearing Dogs](#) National Charity exists to enhance the independence and wellbeing of deaf and severely hearing-impaired New Zealanders through the provision of specially-trained Hearing Dogs, to internationally recognised standards.



K9 Medical Detection New Zealand

[K9 Medical Detection N.Z.](#) mission is to improve the health of all kiwis by using genetically selected dogs working in a controlled clinical environment to assist in the early detection of cancer and other diseases.



Pawsible Trust New Zealand

[Pawsible Service Dogs N.Z.](#) **WHO WE HELP** Our service dogs are trained to meet the needs of individuals with a physical, neurological, or psychological disability. Some of the disabilities and conditions we will work with are:

Multiple Sclerosis, Osteoarthritis and scoliosis, Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, Arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, Muscular Dystrophy, Friedrich's Ataxia, Spinal injuries & head injuries, Stability and balance conditions, Psychiatric conditions, Stroke and Parkinson's disease.



Mobility Assistance Dogs Trust

The [Mobility Assistance Dogs Trust](#) trains mobility dogs to offer practical support, companionship and security. They transform the lives of people living with disabilities, and your support can make an incredible difference.



New Zealand Epilepsy Assist Dogs Trust

The [NZ Epilepsy Assist Dogs Trust](#) is a charitable trust registered in 2007 for the purpose of training dogs in New Zealand.



Perfect Partners Assistance Dogs Trust (PPADT)

[Perfect Partners Assistance Dogs Trust](#) oversees the training and certification of disability assist dogs to enable people with disabilities to enhance their quality of life using the human animal bond. The relationship between disability assist dog and owner helps to overcome physical, emotional and social challenges.

References

The [Dog Control Act 1996 No 13 \(as at 30 November 2022\)](#), [Public Act – New Zealand Legislation](#) provides for the authorisation of organisations to certify disability assist dogs.

8 Organisations currently listed in section two of the Act that are authorised to certify dogs as disability assist dogs are:

- Assistance Dogs New Zealand Trust
- Blind and Low Vision NZ (Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind Incorporated)
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People New Zealand • K9 Medical Detention New Zealand
- Pawsible Service Dog.
- Mobility Assistance Dogs Trust
- New Zealand Epilepsy Assist Dogs Trust
- Perfect Partners Assistance Dogs Trust

[Guidelines for authorisation to certify disability assist dogs](#)

[Disability assist dogs and rights of access](#)

Fact Sheet: Recognising Disability Assist Dogs in emergencies

specified agency— (a)

means—

- (b) the Aviation Security Service established under [section 72B\(2\)\(ca\)](#) of the Civil Aviation Act 1990:
- (c) (ii) the Department of Conservation:
- (d) (iii) the Department of Corrections:
- (e) (iv) the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry:
- (f) (v) the Ministry of Defence:
- (g) (vi) the Ministry of Fisheries:

- (h) (vii) the New Zealand Customs Service:
- (i) (viii) the New Zealand Defence Force:
- (j) (ix) the New Zealand Police; and
- (k) (b) includes the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management

<https://www.dia.govt.nz/Dog-Control-Disability-Assists-Dogs>

Disability Assist Dogs

A disability assist dog is trained to help people with disabilities and enable them to be as independent as possible. They may enter and remain in places where **other dogs are prohibited to go**.

Disability assist dogs have the right to access any public place and private business - including supermarkets, health facilities, shops and malls, food outlets, motels or hotels, movie theatres and restaurants.

Disability assist dogs are entitled to travel on all forms of public transport, including in taxis. Permission may be needed to enter a marae or church.

Disability assist dogs are trained and certified by organisations authorised under Schedule 5 of the Dog Control Act 1996.

Other service dogs, including emotional support and therapy dogs, do not have the same rights as certified disability assist dogs.

Identifying disability assist dogs

Each organisation issues a coat for the dog to wear with the organisation's name on it, and some form of identification for the handler.

It is ok to ask what organisation the disability assist dog is certified under. It is not ok to ask questions about the person's disability.

Disability assist dog providers

Disability assist dogs must be certified by one of the following organisations:

- [Assistance Dogs New Zealand Trust](#)
- [Hearing Dogs for Deaf People New Zealand](#)
- [Mobility Dogs](#)
- [New Zealand Epilepsy Assist Dogs Trust](#)
- [Perfect Partners Assistance Dogs Trust](#)
- [Blind Low Vision NZ](#)
- [Pawsible Service Dogs Trust New Zealand](#)
- [K9 Medical Detection](#).

Note: [K9 Search Medical Detection](#) (K9SMD) was removed from the list of authorised organisations, effective 20 December 2024. Any dogs certified by K9SMD before 20 December 2024 retain their public access rights. From 20 December 2024, no dogs can be certified for public access by K9SMD. After conferring with the Minister for Disability Issues, the Minister of Local Government can recommend new organisations to be authorised under the Act.

Organisations who want to be authorised under Schedule 5 must apply via the Department of Internal Affairs.

More information on the process and requirements is contained in the [Guidelines for authorisation to certify disability assist dogs](#).

You can contact the Department via dogs@dia.govt.nz

Whaikaha | Ministry of Disabled People As you can see, we're going for an informative, positive tone while still making it clear that respecting these dogs' access is non-negotiable by law. Any refusal will go to Humans Rights, or and you could be fined.

DIA under the Humans rights Act 1993 and the bill of rights Act 1990. Permission may be needed to enter a marae or church. We feel this has broken our rights as we go to marae or church to get Permission to enter this we will challenge. Treaty of Waitangi welcome and allows Assist/Service dogs in.

Under the DIA Dog Control Act and MODP laws that Doc cannot override.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/dog-access/where-you-can-take-your-dog/>

Rules for disability assist dogs

Dogs certified to assist with a disability can visit any area of conservation land if they are there to assist or train with someone.

This includes any place that usually does not allow dogs, and the dog will only require a permit if the area requires a person to have one. Contact the DOC office closest to the area to apply.

The Department of Internal Affairs authorises organisations to certify these dogs under the Dog Control Act. [See the list of authorised organisations](#).

Why we are saying NO to Domestic pet dogs in the CBD this is for our safety.

For my experience, I have been rushed, attacked, threaten, and been refused entry. Fake service dog also rushed and attacked me. In NZ been rushed, attacked, total 1014

1014 Attacked and rushed on Asist/Service dogs. Assist dog Advocate are worried about this, one day we are going to get attacked and we mite loss our lives or the Assist/Service dog lives.



Police Dog, killed on line of duty.



This Disability Assist/Service dog was attacked at Taupo CBD on the 15/01/2021, had it's ear bitten going into a café.



Assist/Service dog Attacked in Auckland 2018 Lucky to be alive.



8/6/2022 dog rushed at (Assist/service dog) at home in Tokoroa. By the Same dog twice. Dog Control officer gave this person Address for them to go to tell them off. This is not a member of the public to do. This is council Job, not the person who has a service dog.



19 November 2025 The attack happened while the pair were walking with support worker Kendall Johnston at Redruth Park, off Collins St in Timaru, about 1.30pm on Monday

19 December 2025 Deaf Doctor with her service dog was rushed at in a park. She txted Council but no one follow up from Council nor replied back by txt. In Tokoroa.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/roaming-dog-attacks-prevent-blind-low-vision-clients-from-receiving-guidedogs/DJPNOC43SNECLEJSS4UOYRIYJA/>

Blind Low Vision New Zealand wants strong action against roaming dogs after an Auckland guide dog user was hospitalised.

The foundation's head of guide dogs, Pete Hoskin, told the Herald the attacks were affecting clients in high-risk areas.

"We have had a couple of instances where a client was attacked with their guide dog," he said.

‘He is my eyes’: Guide dog attacked by another dog at Timaru park



Rachael Comer

November 19, 2025



Paul Glass and guide dog Clayton at their Timaru home on Tuesday, a day after Clayton was attacked by another dog at a park. AIMAN AMERUL MUNER / THE TIMARU HERALD Paul

Glass shares an unbreakable bond with the dog he considers an extension of himself.

But that may be compromised after Clayton, the dog the legally blind man has been guided by for more than a year, was attacked by another dog.

The attack happened while the pair were walking with support worker Kendall Johnston at Redruth Park, off Collins St in Timaru, about 1.30pm on Monday.

Clayton received significant wounds to his legs and torso.

It would now be a case of waiting to assess the psychological impact on him and his suitability to continue work as a guide, said Greer Gerson, a guide dog mobility instructor with Blind Low Vision.

The situation had been frightening for Glass, who said not being able to see what was happening was frustrating.



Clayton received wounds to his legs and torso and is now resting at home. AIMAN AMERUL MUNER / THE TIMARU HERALD

“I couldn’t do anything,” he said. “People don’t realise he is my eyes. He is a very big part of who I am.”

Johnston said Clayton was walking off his lead at the park, a place Glass and the dog visited about five times a week, as it was a nice chance for him to have a stretch and a run around.

“Clayton always stays close to Paul and I was guiding him, looking at the ground making sure there were no potholes,” she said.

Johnston said a dog then appeared out of nowhere, being walked by a woman, “and nearly bowled me over”.

“Then I looked up and the dog took Clayton out.

“The lady let go of the lead, and Clayton had a muzzle on because he likes to eat other dogs’ poo.”

Johnston said she screamed “Control your dog!” at the woman.

“And she said, ‘It’s not my dog – it’s my neighbour’s.’ My heart was racing.”



Paul Glass describes Clayton as “a very big part of who I am”. AIMAN AMERUL MUNER / THE TIMARU HERALD

She said the incident happened quickly, and she tried to stay calm for Glass.

“Paul was worried as he could hear the attack and the whines and cries Clayton was making.”

Johnston said a man then came into the park, and he pulled the other dog off Clayton, but the dog’s collar he was holding snapped and the attack continued.

When the other dog took off, Clayton was limping and covered in blood. Being about five minutes from the car, Johnston said she guided Glass and his guide to her car.

“It was very full on and there were so many other dogs about. I tried to warn other dog owners about the dog.”

She was not sure where the woman went, saying her only concern was for Glass and his dog.

“I was thinking, just get them in the car, get them in the car. We went straight to the vet and Clayton was very shaken.”



Paul Glass has been guided by Clayton for more than a year. AIMAN AMERUL MUNER / THE TIMARU HERALD

Johnston said she remembered the dog was stocky with mainly black fur, and some brown points.

The woman leading the dog had short, dark hair and was “tallish”, she said.

Johnston said she and Glass reported the attack to the Timaru District Council.

The Timaru Herald has contacted the council with a series of questions about the incident. It is yet to respond.

Gerson visited Clayton and Glass on Tuesday.

“Physically he will heal, but for any animal attacked there will be serious ramifications, and for a service dog it will have quite a lasting impression.”

Gerson said she had been doing her job for 32 years, in several different countries, and she had seen guide dogs that were traumatised by attacks and unable to continue work.



Redruth Park, in Timaru, on Tuesday. AIMAN AMERUL MUNER / THE TIMARU HERALD

This was tough on the handler, who lost their companion, and then for the organisation to find a significant match again, she said.

“The psychological impact can be quite affecting.

“We won’t know with Clayton until we integrate back into the community.”

When that did happen, Gerson said she would be close by to support Glass and his guide dog, to see how he responded when he was out in the community.

“The safety factor comes into it for the handler,” she said.

Gerson said it was a serious incident and she praised the bystander who intervened.

“It was terrifying for everybody.”

[Rachael Comer • Senior reporter rachael.comer@stuff.co.nz](#) Rachael

Comer is a Timaru-based senior reporter specialising in local body issues, the arts, and community and human interest stories.

[Dog attacks: 'Backyard breeding' a major concern - vet | RNZ News](#) On Facebook her concerns are below.

Priya & Sally On Facebook

23 February 2026 at 10:02 ·

I'm concerned about the recent increase in attacks both on humans and service dogs by other dogs. It is unclear whether this was the dogs home and what the circumstances were. However people were injured so this warrants consideration.

To me articles like this raise the question of whether public spaces should be regulated or visiting private homes should be discussed further.

Some cities ban dogs from the city centre. However where i live, owners can decide whether their establishments, like hairdressers and cafes, allow pet dogs.

However, I believe these places should only permit disability assist dogs as some handlers of disability assist dogs that I have spoken with now avoid these places because of the unpredictability of pet dogs. Thus isolation and already isolated community.

Similarly, harsher penalties and a review of council regulations are needed for roaming dogs or pets in these areas. This incident happened in a backyard but still highlights the same problem of attacks.

Assist dog Advocate are worried about that, one day we are going to get attacked and we mite loss our lives or the Assist/Service dog lives.

Assist/Service Dog are trained to go to the toilet before we go out in public.

This is what we now so far and this has been reported to us at Disability Assist Dog Advocate (DADA)

Pet dog is going to the toilet in the CBD. And people standing in the poo like you in the dog poo walks inside a shop, and the shop owner smells the poo, next comes an Assist/Service Dog without the person knowing with an Assist/Service dog gets the blame first and been told to get out of the shop is high within NZ, then you could have complaints to Council, Minster of Disability and Humans Rights.

Attacks or rushed on Assist/Service Dog in the CBD and in public is high in NZ 630 only been reported to Council. And most of this has not been put in the right class Assist/Service dog are been put as pet dogs we are NOT pets dogs. This illegal anywhere in New Zealand, but councils across the country are taking different approaches to enforcing the rules, or not to act on enforcing the rules.

6:41 pm on 16 December 2025 Stuff. Some guide dogs who get attacked by other dogs while on the job cannot recover their confidence and have to be retired.

Several guide dogs and their handlers have been attacked by roaming or out control dogs in the past four weeks in Timaru, Papakura, Wellington and Auckland.

Chely said guide dogs cannot defend themselves or get away when in the harness. "There's nothing she can do."

Dog not on lead rushed at my Guide dog and I couldn't stop it at all I fell over, I was taken to Hospital, Where Assist dogs needed Vet care. Council don't blood care what has happened to us.

The cost of training and investing in a guide dog is about \$175,000 through its life, Midgen said.

We with an Assist/Service dog handler said It's not enough to say there are laws in place to protect us. When was last time a dog owner was prosecuted, for pet dog rushing or attacking an Assist/Service dog.

18 Dec 2025 about 5.30pm RHS of lake park in Tokoroa, two Bulldogs rushed at me and my service dog, The black one barrelled over and lunged for his neck. The owner called the dogs of but, I feel the owner did care. Next day 19 December after talking to a friend he told me to let the council know. I contacted the Council by txt as I am deaf, and I haven't heard nothing back from council. My friend also txt the Dog control for me. As we can't hear on the phone. Our Council has given us their numbers for dog control and for us not to give their number out. But no one follow up from Council nor replied back by txt

23 Feb 2026 P&S "However, I believe these places should only permit disability assist dogs as some handlers of disability assist dogs that I have spoken with now avoid these places because of the unpredictability of pet dogs. Thus isolation and already Isolated community."

Assaults on Assist/Service Dog is high in NZ 120 only 10 been reported to Council. Police it is a dog we can't help, but we only give them a warning. Council and Police needs to GET HARD on People who Assaults us. This is two counts of Assaults on the person and Assist/Service dog.

Public Transport where they allowed pet dogs on the public transport, where pet dog are going to the toilet, barking, rushing at Assist/Service dog. Who got asked to leave first on the bus, it was an Assist/Service dog, got told to get off the bus and Driver push this person and their Assist/Service dog of the bus and left on the road, it was the last bus for the day and the taxi wouldn't pick them up, to take them home. Now that is sad.

One person with Assist/Service dog had to clean up, someone pet dog poo on the bus, this is not ok.

Public transport in NZ 201 Assist/Service dogs been refused

Did you Know in 2023 the first Assist/Service dog been verbal trespassed on a public transport and been removed by Police. This had to be dropped by Public Transport.

Joseph T and His Guide dog was removed by Police off Intercity bus February 2025.

We have been refused: Disability assist dogs have the right to access any public place and private business – including Council building, supermarkets, health facilities, shops and malls, food outlets, motels or hotels, movie theatres and restaurants. Disability assist dogs are entitled to travel on all forms of public transport, including in taxis and Ubers not all ways allowing us.

Rentals refusing Assist/Service Dogs, to stay or visiting. Under the law they cannot do this. 4 May 2022

[https://www.greens.org.nz/disability_assist_dogs_now_protected_in_law#:~:text=By%20spelling%20out%20that%20disability,dog%2C%E2%80%9D%20Mojo%20Mathers%20says.&text=Join%20our%20submission%20on%20the,2\)!](https://www.greens.org.nz/disability_assist_dogs_now_protected_in_law#:~:text=By%20spelling%20out%20that%20disability,dog%2C%E2%80%9D%20Mojo%20Mathers%20says.&text=Join%20our%20submission%20on%20the,2)!)

"By spelling out that disability assist dogs are covered under the law, it is now clear that you cannot deny disabled people a service, like accommodation, just because they have a disability assist dog," Mojo Mathers says.

"Companion Animals" is not a reserved term, and these furry friends are legally *pets* and do not confer special rights to their owners in tenancy situations. Certified disability dogs, on the other hand, are protected under the law as an extension of their disabled owners and generally cannot be restricted from rental properties. <https://apia.org.nz/landlording/when-is-a-pet-not-a-pet-operationalising-no-pet-clauses-under-the-current-rules/#:~:text=Certified%20disability%20dogs%2C%20on%20the,be%20restricted%20from%20rental%20properties>.

Motels Hotels, Camping grounds Refusing Assist/Service dogs. Under the law they cannot do this.

Doctor Surgery, WINZ and Council buildings Refusing Assist/Service dogs. Under the law they cannot do this.

One of the most frequently encountered disabling issues all handlers and trainers faced was being denied access to businesses, such as shops, cafés, restaurants, and public transport. Participants stated that staff said the dog was not allowed access for reasons such as the dog was dirty, smelly, dog shit in our shop, might steal food or frighten customers, or staff just did not want the dog on the premises. Such discriminatory attitudes and behaviours demonstrated a lack of understanding by business staff that the dog with its handler or trainer had a legal right to access.

Thanks to Pet dogs are making this a lot harder for us with Assist/Service dogs.

Within NZ so many People with Assist/Service Dogs are scared to report it to council or Police or to business, for example, **1** you report it we go back to your organisation and your dog will be taken of you the council or business will not believe you. **2** Some of us gets threaten and abuse if we make any complaints to XYZ. **3** We know where you live. **4.** People make barking sounds, or other sounds and following us around. **5.** The community don't want you around. **6.** I'll kick your dog now get out. **7.** We will call the police and get you trespassed. **8.** Council will take your dog of you.

This is what some of us put up with on a daily basis.

When the dog control law was drawn up it was for to **protect Assist/Service Dog** to go in the CBD and all public places, Transport, Taxi, boats. Now our safety is been put at risk, why people do not understand what we go through on a daily basis.

So rather than seeing a single unit, the public sees a person and a dog, therefore, treating them separately. When strangers are compelled to interact inappropriately with a working assistance dog, it demonstrates a level of disrespect for the handler and invades the handler or trainer's personal space. It also creates a dilemma for the dog as even the best trained dog can find such enticing stimuli very difficult to ignore. These

types of actions distract the dog from its purpose of assisting its handler and can disrupt and prolong its training. All these situations can cause distress for the dog and its handler or trainer and at the same time highlight the unique role of the assistance dog in assisting disabled people. When the public is unaware of the dog's presence, the dog may be at risk of injury. Again, this creates a dilemma as the dog, on one hand, is not meant to solicit attention and should blend into the background but on the other, people need to be aware of its presence to avoid injuring it. What is apparent from this study is that participants are cognisant of the dog's welfare but at times limited public awareness of the dog's presence places its safety at risk. Furthermore, the lack of acknowledgement of injuring the dog distresses the handler, creating yet another dilemma regarding choosing to address the incident or ignoring it. This research identified that the NZ public lacks knowledge and understanding of assistance dogs' roles, their right of access to public places, and etiquette of engagement with the dog and its handler or trainer. In addition, there is a lack of awareness of the complexity of disability in that impairment can be visible and invisible. At present, the role of educating the public is placed firmly in the hands of the handler or trainer and at times this role is unwanted, inappropriate, or inconvenient. Therefore, it is essential that business, transport, and other managers realise that the right of access for assistance dogs is not a company policy but a law by which they must abide. Business managers need to take responsibility for ensuring that their frontline staff are fully conversant with the laws surrounding assistance dogs and human rights in order to break down the structural barriers faced by disabled people. Such actions would enable staff to provide exemplary service and be proud of their knowledge and the service they provide. Furthermore, the public need to be informed about how to engage with the dog/trainer or dog/handler team. Etiquette is simple—ask first and do not be offended if the answer is no. This recommendation was suggested previously by Spence. Other actions include distributing posters or leaflets of the different types of assistance dogs with a brief statement of the laws to businesses and their frontline staff, including dog registration or city council Animals 2021, 11, 3359 12 of 14 documents, or placing them in shop windows. Such simple actions would assist with including disabled handlers in the community

Around NZ in the CBD alone numbers of Assist/Service Dog been Rushed or Attacked well over 47 % per year, One is too many, what this does to the person/s mental health and most of all to the Assist/Service Dog. The cost to train an Assist/Service dog is High to train an Assist/Service dog, this starts from \$35,000.00 Hearing Dog, Assistance Dog \$75,000.00 to \$175,000.00 this is Low vision Guide Dogs NZ. Assist/Service Dogs being Attacked, Rushed and assaulted at this put the training at risk.

Public places where dogs can go, public places when they must be on a leash, and how dogs are managed to protect public safety and the environment.

Domestic Pet dogs: are getting more right to go into places, **Areas Where Dogs are Prohibited**, to go, this makes it a lot harder for us with Assist/Service Dogs, GOVT laws is clear.

This is why we are saying **NO to Domestic Pet dogs** in the **CBD** this is for our safety. Domestic Pet dog **do not** have the same rights as us, they are not under the dog control act **2**

Interpretation 8 organisations listed in [Schedule 5](#) as being a dog that has been trained (or is being trained) to assist a person with a disability **public place— (a)**

s75 Disability Assist Dog and the **health Act s120** and **The Bill Of rights Act 1990** The Act are below on page 28-31 for you to see

This is why we are saying NO to pets in the CBD and Public transport. Why? For example. Pet dog doing poo as you were walking to go into the shop without you knowing that you stepped on doggy poo, then an Assist/Service dog walks behind you into the shop and the shop keeper tells us to get out as there because there is dog poo inside their shop.

Pet dog are going to the toilet in the gardens on footpaths. WE are getting the blame for this. You will see the report on page 8 This act covers us Assist/Service dog not domestic Pets dog.

Health Act s120: Assist/Service dogs are covered under this Act, this is not for Pet dogs.

Areas Where Dogs are Prohibited

All the **8** organisations listed in [Schedule 5](#) are exempt on your list.

CBD, Shops, Malls, Cafe, Food outlets, Restaurants, Council buildings, pools, Sports grounds, Cemetery, Hotels, Motels, Camping grounds, Beaches, Parks, Churches, Public Transport, Events and more.

Private Property

All the **8** organisations listed in [Schedule 5](#) are exempt on your list. Rentals, owner of a property and more.

Muzzle and leashing

All the **8** organisations listed in [Schedule 5](#) are exempt on your list.

Footpaths

Damage footpaths or Vehicles this is a hazard for Assist/Service dog, Low vision, Mobility ETC and you This is what Aucklanders are working on to help people with Disability, here is a good link to have a look at how a lady has low vision with a Service Dog this will help you to understand what they come across on daily bases on footpaths, signs, cars and trip hazards. Can you please share this to you members. This is health and safety as well. Have a look at the links. Can we make it a better place?

Guide Dog Sienna [sonotedSpragtuul93506im81011at7i uc5a8uy2Mm4ftc4t70254i148cf](#) · What we found while we were walking back from the park. Cars on footpath and road signs.

Here is a good link to have a look at how a lady has low vision with a Service Dog this will help you to understand what they come across.

[#dog](#) [#GuideDog](#) [#SuperDog](#) [#Labradorretriever](#) [#ServiceDog](#) [#Walk](#) [#Obstacles](#) [#ForYouPage](#) [# fyp](#)

Guide Dog Sienna [toeorpdsSn10 00022t24euu 9445urmtbmiD:7 ca50mmea55216e 9m561007](#) ·

Well, today's grocery run turned into an episode of Wipeout. Dodging wheelie bins, playing mechanic with the bonnet-up car, and doing some off-roading around the hatchbacks. But hey, we made it to the prize - Christmas goodies!

What would've made our trip easier was if these obstacles weren't blocking the footpath - have some consideration and respect people.



Bikes



streets

Hazard in the CBD and

Poor low vision Lady walking

This is Health and safety issue this is a big Hazard for us. More so for Low Vision & Mobility issue. And you.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/checkpoint/audio/2018865387/footpath-parking-claimed-by-cars-problem-forpedestrians>

Parking on the footpath is illegal anywhere in New Zealand, but councils across the country are taking different approaches to enforcing the rules.

When it comes to Aucklanders' parking habits, there's a tension between what's legal and what's practical.

On some of the city's slimmest streets, drivers are faced with a choice between parking partially on the footpath to allow traffic through, or parking on the road to allow pedestrian access.

But while some residents say it's just part of living in a city, for the disability community, it can pose problems of accessibility.

The New Zealand Road Code stated that people could not park in the way of other people using the road, including pedestrians.

It clarified that meant no parking on any footpath.

CCS Disability Action educator Vivian Naylor said that was the way it should be.

"Pedestrians have to be the foundation on which everything else is built, and if they're not taken into the equation, then we're never going to get a decent environment for them to operate in safely."

Naylor said people parking on footpaths needed to have more consideration for the disability community.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/disabled-community-ask-for-safer-detours-when-aucklands-footpaths-areblocked/OAG4VGJOYQOBMQMD4B6RM66HM/>

A blind woman in Auckland says her life is at risk because of construction work blocking footpaths and accessibility advocates are calling on Auckland Transport to enforce stricter guidelines for its contractors.

Rhonda Comins told the Herald she was walking down a path in Newmarket when she suddenly met an



unexpected obstacle on the footpath.

E-Scooter dangerous for disability People and their Assist/Service Dog.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/527752/disabled-community-shut-out-after-ario-e-scooter-remote-reparking-feature-turned-off>

<https://www.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz/news/reinstate-ario-remote-reparking>

BJ Clark from CCS Disability Action was disappointed.

He said scooters on footpaths are at best annoying, and at worse dangerous.

"It just it just bars the way on footpaths, et cetera. If you're in a wheelchair, it's not necessarily possible for you to shift it and if you have a sight impairment, then you're going to strike the obstacle.

"For too long, people with impairments have had to fight every inch of the way to get better access to the community, a right that many of us take for granted.

"Maybe someone just needs to say we have a problem here, let's get it fixed and get it done."

In the meantime, Ario is employing more people to go out and move the scooters to stop them being a hazard.

<https://blindlowvision.org.nz/news/e-scooters/>

"An e-scooter came very fast along the pavement on Grafton Bridge and the handlebar smacked into me, knocked me over and left me in considerable pain."

Alix, a PhD student at the University of Auckland who has low vision, recounted this experience. Unfortunately, it's not anomaly.

Last week we contacted Kiwis who are blind or have low vision and living in cities where escooter hire programmes are currently on trial, to get a sense of what you think about them being used on our footpaths.

Our Access and Awareness Advisor, Chris Orr, said: "As a person who is blind myself, I believe we should all be able to feel safe and confident using footpaths to get to where we need to."

Vocalising the Blind Foundation's position, he shared that because e-scooters are almost silent, and travel at speeds of up to 27km/hr, they can pose a hazard for pedestrians who are blind and low vision.

Alix's incident happened on her regular walk from Newmarket to the university campus in Grafton, Auckland. She should have confidence in taking this route as a pedestrian, but she says now that the footpaths are too cluttered, her commute is slower and she has recently started using a white cane as a mobility aid.

"Low vision pedestrians are virtually indistinguishable from sighted pedestrians if they do not use a cane or guide dog, so e-scooters are very dangerous as the drivers assume that if they speed along footpaths people will move out of their way," she explains.

It's not only moving e-scooters that are a hazard. The introduction of rent and leave schemes, bringing hundreds of e-scooters to city streets, means those not in use are a danger.

"They are parked all over the footpaths and are a serious hazard. I now use a white cane and the scooters are still a hazard because the handle bars have whacked me in the upper body when the cane has detected nothing on the footpath but the handles are overhanging," shares Alix.

The Blind Foundation recognises the benefits of sustainable micro-transport options in helping people get where they need to quickly and easily. However, we take the view that footpaths are for pedestrians and not e-scooters.

Chris explains: "We believe there is a solution that will work for all of us. E-scooters should be a welcome part of our cities but on the cycle paths and roads, not on the footpaths."

What's next?

Our survey was sent to people who are blind or have low vision living in Auckland, Lower Hutt, Christchurch and Dunedin. If you received this survey, you have until Sunday 31 March to share your thoughts. Once we have further information about what will be happening in Wellington, we plan to reach out to people in this area too.

Meanwhile the Blind Foundation has begun to lobby central and local government to keep footpaths safe for all pedestrians, including those who are blind or have low vision. We are doing this alongside like-minded organisations including Living Streets Aotearoa Blind Citizens NZ, and CCS Disability Action.

The media are also following this issue closely, with the latest headline today reading [“NZTA faces pressure to regulate e-scooter use”](#), and including our spokesperson, Chris Orr.

We look forward to keeping you updated as our efforts to see e-scooters kept off the footpaths progress.

Do you have a story you would like to share about an experience with an e-scooter?

Email: communications@blindfoundation.org.nz

Auckland woman suffers injuries after being run over by Lime scooter on footpath, rider identified and banned



<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/auckland-woman-suffers-injuries-after-being-run-over-by-lime-scooter-on-footpath-rider-identified-and-banned/QBMQUOE3MVFUJMK3UNZFDQSOWA/>

By [Jaime Lyth](#)

Multimedia Journalist · NZ Herald ·

19 Mar, 2025 06:00 AM 3 mins to read

- **A university student suffered injuries after being struck by a high-speed Lime scooter on an Auckland footpath.**
- **Lime confirmed the rider involved had been identified and banned from its platform, stating zero tolerance for such behaviour.**
- **ACC paid out almost \$15 million for scooter injuries last year, with claims rising significantly.**

A young woman has been left badly bruised after she was ploughed into by someone riding a Lime scooter on an [Auckland Central](#) footpath.

And following *Herald* inquiries, Lime confirmed the rider had been identified and banned from its platform.

The dramatic crash – which occurred about midnight on Friday – was caught on CCTV footage outside a CBD apartment block.

Student Diane Lee, 21, was left with a wound on her cheek and bruises on her upper limbs, lower leg, hip and thigh.

“It’s a bit traumatising ... my boyfriend hates seeing scooters now.”

ACC paid out almost [\\$15 million for scooter injuries last year](#), an increase of almost 50% from the year before.

ACC received 3400 new claims, a rise of almost 500 on the year before, with about a third of claims coming from Auckland.

Auckland Council orders Beam e-scooters be deactivated by midnight, refers matter to police <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/companies/freight-logistics/auckland-council-orders-beam-e-scooters-be-deactivated-by-midnight-refers-matter-to-police/CWMR3IN3TNGSZOSQCETXJPK6SA/?ref=readmore>

E-scooter injuries and ACC payouts surge – Govt to consider rule changes



<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/changes-could-soon-be-coming-to-e-scooter-rules-following-a-sharp-spike-in-acc-injurypayouts/YZBKBS2LZNC5RLCPW6EF2YJKB4/?ref=readmore>

By [Lachlan Rennie](#)

Multimedia Journalist, Newstalk ZB·Newstalk ZB·

31 Jan, 2025 08:03 AM

Public Transport some stories below.

We with Assist/Service Dogs are been refuse and we/some of us have to pay for taking our Assist/Service Dogs onboard. Members of the public has a go at us for taking our Assist/service dog on board so do the drivers. As you can see in this report Public Transport 201 Assist/Service dogs has been refused within NZ. Some driver in NZ are asking money for us to take our Assist/Service dog onboard if we don't pay get off the bus. Showing our ID we still get turned away.

Domestic PET Dog get a free ride and we have to pay this is not right.

From AT. On Friday 11 February 2022, I was boarding bus 856 at 12:40pm at 2 Fitzwilliam Drive, Torbay (stop 4278), headed for Browns Bay, when the bus driver complained that my guide dog was not wearing a red coat. I produced my Guide Dog ID, but even then, the driver was very reluctant to let me board the bus.

Bus 17. Auckland Bus Driver refuse service dog after a pet dog on the bus rushed at my service dog. The driver push person with a service dog off the bus they were trying to get on the bus.

Pet dog getting more f^K rights On Facebook

Feb 2025 Intercity refuse to take me and my Guide dog onboard he took my bag of the bus, and said "you bitch if you make a complaint you are going to lost you dog now.

A man from Greytown says his "dignity was stripped" after he and his service animal were escorted off an

Intercity bus by police last week. <https://www.thepost.co.nz/nz-news/360583377/humiliated-blind-passenger-removed-bus-overservice-dog>

April 2025 I (JT) was also informed by the BLV that three members have also experience discrimination.

Knowing this, it drives me, to hold Intercity accountable.

January 2026 The real cost of being disabled isn't the \$7 taxi fare. It's two lost hours of work waiting for a taxi, being unable to use the convenient apps non disabled people have for service others get without question.

Inclusion isn't charity, it's equity.

Registered Assist/Service dog

All the **8 organisations** listed in [Schedule 5](#) Been Attacked or rushed at or been assaulted or been refuse entry, Council or Police, MUST be record and take action. DIA said this is council jurisdiction and responsibility, to enforce the law to act on as well, protect all Assist/Service Dogs within NZ.

Related information Working dogs include disability assist dogs, dogs kept by state departments such as police dogs and customs dogs, pest control dogs and dogs kept solely or principally as stock or herding dogs. A full list can be found in section 2 of the Act. Working dogs are excluded from the requirement to comply with clause of the Act. Disability assist dogs are those dogs certified as disability assist dogs by the organisations listed in Schedule 5 of the Act. Disability assist dogs are not required to comply with clauses of this Bylaw under section 75 of the Act. Section 54A of the Act requires all dog owners to carry a leash at all times regardless of the provisions of this Bylaw. This section does not apply to the owner of a working dog in relation to the working dog. No Council cannot override a Government Law.

Doing OIA in 2024 on Council's most of them are not keeping records or if they are they are putting Assist/Service as **Domestic Pet dogs** not in the right class as Registered Assist/Service dog. Some of these reply's back from councils.

1. This isn't something we record so Council would have no idea how many dogs in our system are service dogs.
2. Council don't collect the type of information you are requesting. We apologise, but unfortunately we are unable to help.
3. Council does not hold this Information. Incidents such as the ones you've requested may have been reported. Council is not required to hold this, nor does it have these kinds of incidents as a category for Service requests.
4. Therefore, we are refusing your request under section 17(e) of the Act, as the Information requested does not exist. We have put service dog under domestic dog!
5. When investigating incidents involving dogs, such as attacks or rushing, we do not record whether the victim dog is a registered disability assistance or other working dog type, as this does not affect the seriousness of the offence or the way the investigation is conducted.
6. We have reviewed our records and 1 service dog has been rushed in the last 10years (March 2024). The outcome of that incident was a warning issued to the owner of the rushing dog.
7. There are two incidents recorded relating to assist/service dogs. Of the incidents are attacks or rushing. For completeness, these are the details:
8. Thank you for your information request relating to discrimination on assist/service dogs, received on 8 October 2024. We will keep more upto date records on assist/service dog. I am shocked to read what is happening in New Zealand.
9. The Council received one complaint of a service dog being rushed in the area on 23 February 2024 while it was under training. We have no information recorded as to the organisation this particular service dog belonged to.
10. The Council received one complaint from a third party relating to a Service Dog (guide dog) being refused entry to a Café on 13 April 2022.
11. Thanks for this information about fake service dogs, I have seen these myself but there is nothing we can do about them, sorry not our problem. Attacked or rushed at dog is a dog, as a service dog is a dog under one class sorry no help.
12. Service requests may reference "guide dog" in the body of the request (not assist or service dog). Our current SR system doesn't record a dog's "category". Can you please confirm what information you are looking for?

Fake service dog are attacking or rushing at Registered Assist/Service Dog. This is bruising the system, to take their pet dog into places. They are misleading people. This is not ok.

40 Proof of class of dog

(1)

Where the territorial authority fixes a fee for the registration of a working dog that is lower than that fixed for a dog that is not a working dog, any person claiming to register any dog as a working dog shall, if so required by the territorial authority, make a written statement that the dog is a working dog of a specified class.

41 Penalty for false statement relating to application for registration

Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000 who, in making an application for the registration of a dog, makes any written statement knowing that statement to be false.

This is what we (DADA) are pushing for. Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000. **IF you are selling this fake labels, listed below you can be fined NZ serious offence by Law.**

Dog owners using fake assistant dog labels on the rise

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2018/08/dog-owners-using-fake-assistant-dog-labels-on-the-rise.html>

The Very Real Danger of Fake Service Dogs and Misleading.

Fake service dog certification on line Do more to help to Stop this with in NZ Protect our Service Dog.

Council, Police and Govt needs to work Keeping fake service dogs out. Under GOVT Dog Control Act 1996 (2 Interpretation service dog, (a) specified agency, warranted officer, (40) proof of class of dog, (41) Penalty for false statement relating to application for registration. Council,

Government and DIA are going to get a lot harder on business are selling this Fake label's on the harness we will take action.

You have fake service dog in your area sold from shops.

The Very Real Danger of Fake Service Dogs

By [Jason Bottlinger](#) on January 16, 2018



Service dogs provide an amazing and crucial service for people living with disabilities.

Unfortunately, some people have used these dogs' recent popularity as an opportunity to break the rules. Fake service dogs, which are really just pets in fancy vests, do not provide critical services or help save lives. These animals present a danger to actual service dogs, as well as to children, since they are not trained the way service dogs are.

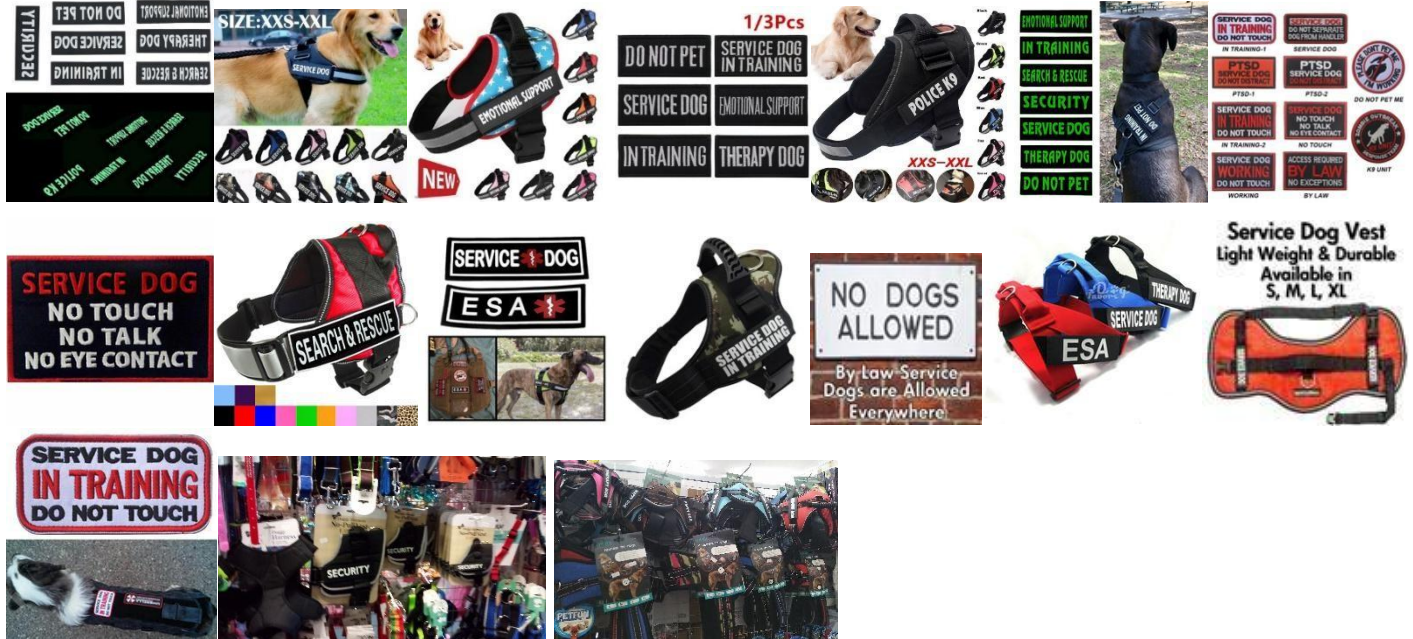
And if you're bitten, it still hurts.

New Zealand with (**label signs** Service Dog, POLICE, Search & Rescue, In Training, Security, Emotional support, Therapy Dog) on it was **sold illegally** as it is not legal to sell them in NZ. You need to tell all your suppliers. Reflective Service Dog Vest Harness Adjustable Chest Plate Collar. People can NOT use the name POLICE, Search & Rescue, In Training, Security, Emotional support, Therapy Dog and Service Dog on and pet/family dog this also come under the **NZ serious offence by law** this is the same as Service Dog we are all under the NZ GOVT Act. They, you are Misleading people has bought the harness and **label sign** saying "Service Dog" from a

shop Coin save, Two Dollar and more stores or tredeme or wish and on Face book. People is making up this sign Service Dog to go on pet/family dog is not right, they are breaking the NZ GOVT law. This has gone to NZ Police & GOVT. Please remove the **label signs** from you site. Or shops :) this is all Velcro Labels.

Under GOVT Dog Control Act 1996 (2 Interpretation service dog, (a) specified agency, warranted officer, (40) **proof of class of dog**, (41) Penalty for false statement relating to application for registration. They are Registered under DC GOVT) work safe Act 2015, Humans Right Act 1993, Health Act 1956, Bill of rights Act 1990 All Disability/Service Dogs and GOVT Dogs are been put at risk with pet/family dogs this label on their pets are NOT Registered this is breaking the law.

Do more to help to Stop this within NZ Protect our Service Dog.



They are sold on Trade Me, wish, Facebook ETC on internet, in shops around NZ. If you see this report to Council, Police and to us.

Under GOVT Dog Control Act 1996 (2 Interpretation service dog, (a), (40) proof of class of dog, use this Act when you are reporting this with photos and if you can get their Name/s Address ETC.

Please let you supplier know that you could get find. So can your supplier could be find as well.

We are working hard to stop fake service dog labels to be sold online and shops as this has been impacted on us as we have been rushed or Attacked by this fake service dog. WE are talking of experience.

From DIA

DIA said this is council jurisdiction and responsibility, to enforce the law to act on as well, protect all Assist/Service Dogs within NZ.

This is what we (DADA) are pushing for. Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000. **IF you are selling this fake labels, listed below you can be fined NZ serious offence by Law.**

This is where Council comes into play to help us, As we can see this Fake service, Therapy dog etc. Will get out of control like over sea has, to ACT on to stop this happening within NZ.

The people this. They have the right they have labels saying service, Therapy dog ECT that that can go into XYZ and they will be misleading people and we are seeing this, their pet dog is SHITTING or PISSING in the CBD and Shops. This is why we are getting told to leave. This is why we with certified Assist/Service dog are getting told to leave shops, malls and Public Transport Etc.

The shops will get a call from Council and HRC then you will have a bigger problem on your hands.

Selling fake service dog labels some Council HAS NOT been followed up, nor a fine, Some Council has asked them to remove the fake Labels. This is a start to protect all Assist/Service Dogs within NZ.

CBD rushed, attacked, 630 on Assist/service dogs and CBD Persons taken to Hospital.
Parks rushed, attacked, 110 on Assist/service dogs. Dog not on lead rushed at my Guide dog and I couldn't stop it at all I fell over, I was taken to Hospital, Where Assist dogs needed Vet care.
Doctor Surgery 6 rushing at Assist/service dogs by pet dogs in the surgery.
Beach's total 11. Rushed 9 and 3 Attacks on Assist/service dogs. Where Assist dogs needed Vet care.
Hospital 2 Attacked on Assist/service dogs needed Vet care.
Transport 201 refused. Bus 17. Auckland Bus Driver refuse service dog after a pet dog on the bus rushed at service dog. The driver push person with a service dog off the bus they were trying to get on the bus. Pet dog getting more f^^Kin rights than us. On Facebook
On the street, dog are getting out and rushing at Assist dogs 236

Fake service dogs within NZ are very high, this is what we know hasn't been reported to Council or to the DIA, what we know so far there is about 532 fake service dogs with in NZ they think they have the right to go into shops, hospital and public transport, we have been rushed at fake service dogs. We are pushing for, Every person commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000. **IF you are selling this fake labels, listed below you can be fined NZ serious offence by Law.**

Disability Assist Dog Discrimination TOTALS																	
R = Refusal / AD= allowed after discussion. L = Lawyer / Police = POL / Trespassed = TP / DIA / Council = COU																	
HRC Outcome: M= Mediation / E= educate / C = court / F = fine / New Zealand Transport Authority = NZTA																	
Sector	R	AD	L	COU	POL	TP	DIA	GOVT	TEN	NZTA	DHB	HRC	Human Rights Commission outcome				Notes:
													M	E	C	F	\$

Automotive	28	22	0	4	0	0	28	4	0	28	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	
Education	4	1	1	4	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	0	1	2	2	0	0	
DHB & Doctor Surgery	5	7	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Council	4	2	1	9	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	
WINZ	5	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Hospitality	54	8	6	20	2	0	14	13	1	0	3	21	1	2	0	2	11500	
Events	7	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Church & Marae	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Real Estate	16	2	0	0	0	0	5	3	3	1	0	5	1	1	0	2	12000	
Recreation	1	3	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Retail	29	8	0	6	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	
Transport	597	12	2	167	7	1	10	10	0	10	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	
Sub-total	751	71	12	215	9	1	71	43	5	39	16	57	3	5	2	4	23500	
Attacks/Rushed A/S Dog	11	5	1	1014	4	0	9	9	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	
False Service Dogs	0	0	0	243	6	0	280	17	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	
Assaults on A/S dogs	121	0	0	10	1	0	7	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	
<u>TOTAL</u>	883	76	13	1482	20	1	367	74	5	39	22	64	3	5	3	5	23500	

12/12/2020 Auckland Bus refuse service dog on the bus, after a pet dog was on the bus rushed at service dog in Auckland trying to get on the bus. Drive pushed service dog off the bus. On Facebook went to council to report this Council has not noted this at all. OIA

First Assist/Service Dog been Removed by Police and AT Verbal trespassed on Public Transport in August 2023. This was removed by AT Public Transport

Joseph T and His Guide dog was removed by Police off Intercity bus February 2025

We believe in January and February 2025 Intercity got Police To remove Assist/Service dogs Two other times. April 2025 Intercity bus refuse to take a service dog.

One of the Council Dog Control said Males should not have service dogs to stay home with their dog, only females are allowed to have service dogs to go places. By TXT in 20215

January 2026 One person do not want to be named the driver said you bitch you make a complaint the Council will take your dog of you and you complaint our drives will not take you and you will be trespassed on AT, This person went to Council told them what happened now the drives refused to take them. this was in January 2026.

24 April 2026 Sally was refused her service dog on AT transport, Police was called because her service dog has no muzzle on her dog.

DIA said this is council jurisdiction and responsibility, to enforce the law to act on as well, protect all Assist/Service Dogs within NZ.

As from 14 November 2025 [Whaikaha | Ministry of Disabled People](#) | [Whaikaha.govt.nz](#) As you can see, we're going for an informative, positive tone while still making it clear that respecting these Assist/Service Dogs' access is non-negotiable by law. Any refusal, will go to Humans Rights.

This document is what we know so far, what is going on around NZ

Here is same link for you to look at. This will surprise you.

<https://www.1news.co.nz/2023/09/05/its-against-the-law-so-why-are-kiwis-with-service-dogs-turned-away/#:~:text=The%20most%20recent%20involved%20an,the%20police%20to%20remove%20her.&text=Zheng%20stood%20her%20ground%20knowing,no%20other%20passengers%20backed%20her.>
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/property/110100849/landlords-must-pay-blind-woman-4000-after-breaching-human-rights-act>
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/homed/renting/300781212/family-with-assistance-dog-illegally-discriminated-against-in-search-for-rental>
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/93262694/nz-bus-apologises-after-assistance-dog-moose-is-challenged-by-driver>
<https://www.1news.co.nz/2020/11/19/blind-wellington-man-kicked-off-bus-for-his-poodle-guide-dog/>
<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/wellington-student-with-service-dog-abused-refused-uber-ride/7373HUVET7KDX3GY6TXAD3DIE/>
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/130543015/uber-to-educate-drivers-who-cancel-jobs-with-service-dogs>
<https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/09-11-2021/hounded-out-how-bans-on-dogs-hurt-disabled-people-like-me>
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/114939509/hamilton-shopping-centre-forces-out-deaf-man-and-disability-dog>
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/97288221/strategy-highlights-42-priorities-to-make-new-plymouth-age-friendly?rm=a>
<https://www.localmatters.co.nz/hibiscus-news/beach-walks-continuously-end-in-confrontation/>
2024
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/531931/taxis-rideshares-discriminating-against-blind-people-with-guide-dogs-advocate>

[Roaming dog attacks prevent blind, low-vision clients from receiving guide dogs - NZ Herald](#)

2025
https://www.nzherald.co.nz/apology-after-blind-dog-banned-from-hillsborough-holden-museum-in-new-plymouth/RK7SZTMECNECZB2Q4T4FBBE5ZU/?utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=nzh_fb&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwY2xjawl84M9leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHZjuaFM66MvoOpufdfIPmxsRWlzn6pDoWpTXguSxe_fXJjSnJ7LNNa_w_aem_Sl6nX2QyeeWpdT_vY0thVQ#Echobox=1741662083

https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Resource-material-Dog-Control-Guidelines-for-authorisation-to-certify-disability-assist-dogs?OpenDocument

https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1996/0013/latest/DLM375466.html?search=ad_act_assistance+dog_25_ac%40bn%40rn%40dn%40apub%40aloc%40apri%40apro%40aimp%40bgov%40bloc%40bpri%40bmem%40rpub%40rimp_ac%40ainf%40anif%40bcur%40rinf%40rnif_haw_se&p=1 <https://at.govt.nz/bus-train-ferry/whaikaha-accessible->

[travel/disability-assist-dogs-on-public-transport](#) <https://www.thepost.co.nz/nz-news/360583377/humiliated-blind-passenger-removed-bus-over-service-dog>

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/roaming-dog-attacks-prevent-blind-low-vision-clients-from-receiving-guidedogs/DJPNOC43SNECLEJSS4UOYRIYJA/>

Air NZ twice denies woman with disability permission to fly with assistance dog | RNZ News
<https://share.google/1GI66KPkqanas2Xlb>

[‘He is my eyes’: Guide dog attacked by another dog at Timaru park | The Press](#)

[Guide dog showing signs of anxiety | RNZ](#) Was Attacked Some guide dogs who get attacked by other dogs while on the job can not recover their confidence and have to be retired.

Blind Low Vision NZ

25 March at 16:15

With the Government now ordering a full review of the Dog Control Act following a spate of horrific attacks, the message is clear: the status quo is failing our communities.

At Blind Low Vision NZ, we believe that every Kiwi should be able to walk their neighbourhood without fear. We support a total overhaul of the Dog Control Act to ensure councils have the tools they need to manage roaming dogs effectively. We cannot wait for another tragedy.

We need:

- ✓ Consistent enforcement across all regions
- ✓ Stronger powers for local animal control
- ✓ A preventative focus on roaming dog populations

Join us: Write to the Minister for Local Government Simon Watts and demand a stronger Dog Control Act. We need an Act that gives councils the power to proactively protect their communities. Email Simon.Watts@parliament.govt.nz.

[Image description] A woman named Laura, wearing a rust-coloured sweater, leans down to embrace her black guide dog, Ryder, who is wearing a brown leather harness. Below them, a bright yellow box with black text reads: "Join the call for change. Tell your MP we need a well-resourced Dog Control Act."

We have this small part off this Act/s and this is clear for Assist/Service Dogs Only, This is NOT for **Domestic** pet dog

2 Interpretation

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

disability assist dog means a dog certified by one of the organisations listed in [Schedule 5](#) as being a dog that has been trained (or is being trained) to assist a person with a disability

public place—

(a)

means a place that, at any material time, is open to or is being used by the public, whether free or on payment of a charge, and whether any owner or occupier of the place is lawfully entitled to exclude or eject any person from that place; and

(b)

includes any aircraft, hovercraft, ship or ferry or other vessel, train, or vehicle carrying or available to carry passengers for reward

register, as a noun, means a dogs register kept by a territorial authority under [section 34](#)

75 Disability assist dogs

(1) Any disability assist **dog** accompanying and assisting a person with a disability, or accompanying a person genuinely engaged in the **dog** 's training, may enter and remain— [section 120](#)

(a) in any premises registered under regulations made under [section 120](#) of the Health Act 1956;
or

(b) in any public place.

This is also covered in the Health Act 1956 and the Human Rights Act 1993 – recently updated section 21.

21 Prohibited grounds of discrimination

(1) For the purposes of this Act, the **prohibited grounds of discrimination** are— (a) sex, which includes pregnancy and childbirth:

(b) marital status, which means being—

(i) single; or

(ii) married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship; or

(iii) the surviving spouse of a marriage or the surviving partner of a civil union or de facto relationship; or

(iv) separated from a spouse or civil union partner; or

(v) a party to a marriage or civil union that is now dissolved, or to a de facto relationship that is now ended:

(c) religious belief:

(d) ethical belief, which means the lack of a religious belief, whether in respect of a particular religion or religions or all religions:

(e) colour:

(f) race:

(g) ethnic or national origins, which includes nationality or citizenship:

(h) disability, which means—

(i) physical disability or impairment:

(ii) physical illness:

(iii) psychiatric illness:

(iv) intellectual or psychological disability or impairment:

(v) any other loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function:

(vi) reliance on a disability assist dog, wheelchair, or other remedial means:

(vii) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing illness:

134 Access by the public to places, vehicles, and facilities

(1) Every person commits an offence who—

- (a) refuses to allow any other person access to or use of any place or vehicle which members of the public are entitled or allowed to enter or use; or
- (b) refuses any other person the use of any facilities in that place or vehicle which are available to members of the public; or
- (c) requires any other person to leave or to cease to use that place or vehicle or those facilities,— when that refusal or requirement is in breach of any of the provisions of [Part 2](#).

(2) Every person who commits an offence against this section is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000.

(3) In this section, the term vehicle includes a vessel, an aircraft, or a hovercraft.

Compare: 1971 No 150 s 24; 1977 No 49 s 86

Section 134(2): amended, on 1 July 2013, by [section 413](#) of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011 (2011 No 81).

If a business is discriminating against you the best channel to get assistance is via the Human Rights Commission. It is important to lodge complaints here so these issues can be addressed with the businesses and they can be educated on the rights of people that own a disability assist dog. This is a breach of section 21 of the Human Rights Act 1993:

Contact details for the HRC can be found below. For more information I would head to this Citizens Advice Bureau webpage: <https://www.cab.org.nz/article/KB00000983>

The section is section 120 of the Health Act and I would look at the following (part 2) of the section this is linked to the Dog Control Act in Section 75. Disability assist dogs can enter any public place and the listed places (A-G) that are registered with territorial (local/councils) authorities as mentioned in the Health Act.

The Dog Control Act refers to this section of the health act:

57A Dogs rushing at persons, animals, or vehicles

(1) This section applies to a dog in a public place that—

- (a) rushes at, or startles, any person or animal in a manner that causes— (i) any person to be killed, injured, or endangered; or
- (ii) any property to be damaged or endangered; or
- (b) rushes at any vehicle in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, an accident.

(2) If this section applies,—

(a) the owner of the dog commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000 in addition to any liability that he or she may incur for any damage caused by the dog; and (b) the court may make an order for the destruction of the dog.

(3) A dog control officer or dog ranger who has reasonable grounds to believe that an offence has been committed under subsection (2)(a) may, at any time before a decision of the court under that subsection, seize or take custody of the dog and may enter any land or premises (except a dwelling house) to do so.

Bill of rights Act 1990. [New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 No 109 \(as at 30 August 2022\), Public Act 14 Freedom of expression – New Zealand Legislation](#)

14 Freedom of expression

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and opinions of any kind in any form.

17 Freedom of association

Everyone has the right to freedom of association.

19 Freedom from discrimination

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of discrimination in the [Human Rights Act 1993](#).

(2) Measures taken in good faith for the purpose of assisting or advancing persons or groups of persons disadvantaged because of discrimination that is unlawful by virtue of [Part 2](#) of the Human Rights Act 1993 do not constitute discrimination.

Whaikaha | Ministry of Disabled People | Whaikaha.govt.nz

Disability community The disability community refers to disabled people, partners, friends, families, relatives, unpaid carers and others directly involved in supporting disabled people. This can also include advocacy/consumer organisations made up of and representing disabled people.

Disability competence Disability competence includes disability awareness (knowledge of disabilities and disability-related issues) and disability responsiveness (the ability to adapt behaviours and environments to foster inclusion).

Disabled people The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) defines a disabled person as someone with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability rights Disability rights are the rights set out in the UNCRPD, and in other places, including New Zealand laws that protect and empower disabled people to fully participate in society. Disability rights give disabled people the same rights as others, not additional rights.

Under this Dog Control Act where does it say Domestic pet dogs allowed to go on Public Transport Including supermarkets, health facilities, shops and malls, food outlets, motels or hotels, movie theatres, restaurants, Hospital? it doesn't say, Pet dogs owners think they having these rights.

Sorry under this Dog Control Act 1996, Pet has no rights at all under this Act. Including supermarkets, health facilities, shops and malls, food outlets, motels or hotels, movie theatres, restaurants, Hospital and Public Transport.

From DIA it is very clear “disability assist dog is trained to help people with disabilities and enable them to be as independent as possible. They may enter and remain in places where **other dogs are prohibited to go.**

Disability assist dogs have the right to access any public place and private business – including supermarkets, health facilities, shops and malls, food outlets, motels or hotels, movie theatres and restaurants Hospital and Public Transport.

Disability assist dogs are entitled to travel on all forms of public transport, including in taxis. Permission may be needed to enter a marae or church.

Disability assist dogs are trained and certified by organisations authorised under Schedule 5 of the Dog Control Act 1996.

Other service dogs, including emotional support and therapy dogs, do not have the same rights as certified disability assist dogs.”

This is very clear from DIA.

Within NZ so many People with Assist/Service Dogs are scared to report it to council, Police or to business, for example, **1** you report it we go back to your organisation and your dog will be taken of you the council or business will not believe you. **2** Some of us gets threaten and abuse if we make any complaints to XYZ. **3** We know where you live. **4**. People make barking sounds, or other sounds and following us around. **5**. The community don't want you around. **6**. I'll kick your dog now get out. **7**. We will call the police and get you trespassed. **8**. Council will take your dog of you.

This is what some of us put up with on a daily basis.

As from 14 November 2025 [Whaikaha | Ministry of Disabled People](#) | [Whaikaha.govt.nz](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz)

As you can see, we're going for an informative, positive tone while still making it clear that respecting these Assist/Service Dogs' access is non-negotiable by law. Any refusal, will go to Humans Rights.

From the DIA and (DADA) we have to stick to the law, so why are we getting pushed out? Because pet dog and barking, rushing or attacking and going to the toilet, in the CBD, Mails, cafe and public transport where dogs are prohibited to go.

Don't get me wrong there is a lot of good owners but the law from DIA and MODP is very clear on this.

This is why I am bringing this to you and to your team.

We (DADA) and the Councils and Public cannot override this part of the Dog control act. This is non-negotiable by law.

This is a privilege to have an Assist/Service Dog, not a right.

Safety for our Assist/Service dog comes first.

We have a small part in the Acts to cover and to Protect us. DIA said this is council jurisdiction and responsibility, to enforce the law to act on as well, protect all Assist/Service Dogs within NZ.

Thank you for your understanding and reading this long submission. We looking forward to your feedback.

Roger Drower.

Volunteer Advocates for
Disability Assist Dogs
assistdogadvocate@gmail.com



**National Emergency
Management Agency**
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru

Roger (Service dog Haper) and Naomi are spokesperson for Disability Assist/Service Dogs NZ for Civil Defence Emergency Management groups (CDEM) throughout New Zealand, advocating for Disability Assist/Service Dogs and their owners and what will be needed in a CD emergency. It has been great to see CDEM groups taking us seriously for what we might need in an emergency and incorporating this into their plans.

The information contained in this email is confidential to the intended recipient and may be legally privileged. You may not copy or disclose this email to anyone without the written permission of the sender. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete this message.

assistdogadvocate@gmail.com we take refusal for Disability Assist/Service Dogs and their owners seriously and will follow up as soon as we are notified.

The information contained in this document is confidential to the intended recipient and may be legally privileged. You may not copy or disclose this email to anyone without the written permission of the sender. It is not necessarily the view nor an official communication of the Spokesperson For Disability Assist/Service Dogs Within NZ and Our Rights Under New Zealand Law. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete this message. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you received this e-mail by mistake and delete this from your system. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing, or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited.



GAMBLING AND TAB VENUES POLICY SUBMISSIONS

Gambling Policy: List of Submitters

Submission Number	Date Submitted	Name	Organisation	If a hearing is held, would you like to speak to your submission in-person		Do you support the Gambling and TAB Venue Policy amendments?		
				Yes	No	Yes	No	Other
001	21-Jul-2026	Jerry Belcher	The Lion Foundation		No	Yes		
002	24-Jun-2026	Jo Salisbury	New Zealand Community Trust		No	Yes		
003	24-June-2026	Jarrod True	The Gaming Association of New Zealand	Yes		Yes		
004	23-Jul-2026	Renee Bolkowy	Health New Zealand	Yes		Yes		
005	30-Jun-2026	Nita Walker	Kō Kollektive Trust		No	Yes		

21 July 2026

Ōpōtiki District Council
By email: info@odc.govt.nz

Ōpōtiki District Council – Gambling and TAB Venues Policy

We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission in respect of the council's review of the current Gambling and TAB Venues Policy.

The Lion Foundation is generally supportive of the current policy but recommends the following changes.

Replace Sinking Lid with Cap

The Lion Foundation is supportive of the introduction of a cap on venue and EGM numbers to replace the current sinking lid policy. This would allow for gaming machine numbers to keep track with population growth and allow for the establishment of new venues into any proposed commercial/industrial developments in the future.

A cap of 5 venues and 58 machines is recommended.

Current venue and EGM numbers have declined in recent years and we believe continuing to impose a sinking lid policy will impact on the ability to provide impactful funding support to Ōpōtiki's growing population base.

There is no direct correlation between gaming machine numbers and problem gambling rates. Over the last 15 years, the problem gambling rate has remained static, despite gaming machine numbers declining by over 25% over the past 10 years.

Retention of Relocation Clause

We fully support the retention of a relocation clause for the following reasons.

- ❖ Allows for venues to relocate from high deprivation areas to more suitable areas Enables venues to re-establish after a natural disaster, flood, or fire.
- ❖ Enables venues to move out of earthquake-prone and dangerous buildings.
- ❖ Enables venues to move to new refurbished and fit-for-purpose premises.
- ❖ Creates fairness in cases of public works acquisition or lease termination.
- ❖ Prevents landlords demanding unreasonable rentals.

GRANT N^o 7013708: ST JOHN CENTRAL REGION. When it comes to saving lives, it pays to have the latest gear. So, when St John needed to upgrade their aging ambulance to a new unit, we were keen to help. It's just one of thousands of good causes we fund every year, right around New Zealand.

Here for good

In addition, we would like to see the current exclusion zone from other gambling venues and sensitive location be expanded to a 1km radius. We also believe that allowing venues to move out of areas of high deprivation will, given time, have positive outcomes for these communities.

We would also like to recommend that a 3km "affected party" clause also be included in the policy whereby council notify existing venue or sensitive community organisations once an application is received. This would allow the opportunity to provide council with feedback regarding potential impact on their organisations or existing businesses.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Steve Avery (GM – Business).

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'TSG', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tony Goldfinch

Chief Executive Officer

Email: tony.goldfinch@lionfoundation.org.nz

Opotiki Class 4 Gambling Policy

Public Consultation



Thank you for giving NZCT the opportunity to be involved in the public consultation on your Class 4 Gambling Policy. Engaging with the community and key stakeholders provides for balanced and effective policy making.

NZCT recommends replacing the existing sinking lid with a population-based cap and adopting a relocation policy

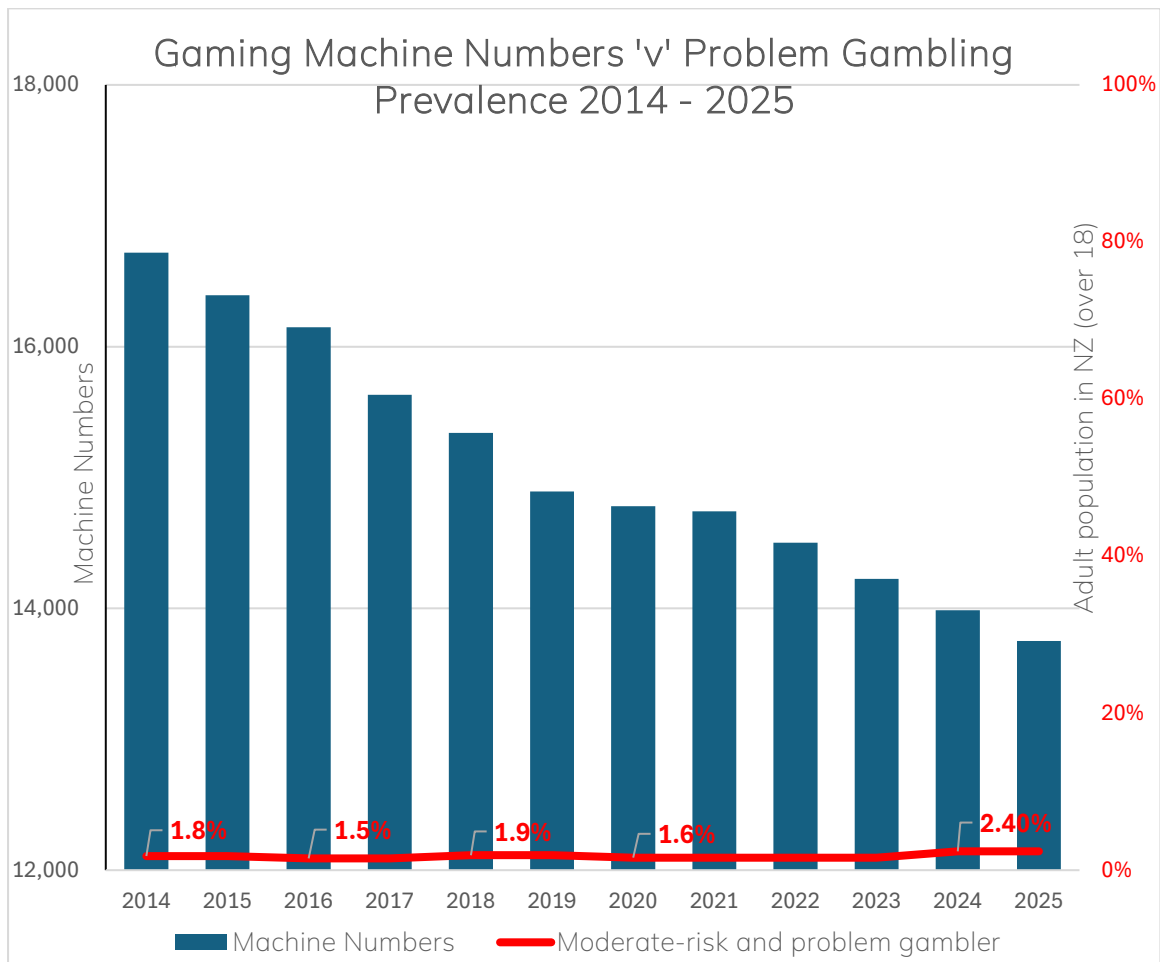
NZCT recommends that the sinking lid be replaced with a cap that allows for a modest increase in Class 4 gaming in line with population growth in Opotiki.

We recommend a relocation provision be added to allow council to consider, on a case-by-case basis, relocations in any circumstances where the applicant can demonstrate that the new site is more desirable from a harm minimisation perspective. Venues should not have to wait for a catastrophic event to move to a more desirable location. Venues should also be able to move for normal operational reasons such as relocating to a more modern premise.

Sinking lids don't reduce gambling harm

Despite substantial reductions in machine numbers over time, national data does not show a corresponding reduction in problem gambling rates.

Since 2003 when the Gambling Act (2003) was promulgated, many councils have implemented sinking lid policies, leading to a reduction of 11,470 pokie machines nationwide (a 45% decrease; DIA). Since 2014, there has been a reduction of 2,966 machines nationwide (an 18% decrease; DIA). Despite this, Health NZ reports that the rate of problem gambling and those at moderate risk of gambling harm (all gambling types) has remained stable over the last decade, fluctuating only slightly between 1.8% in 2014 and 2.4% in 2024.



Note: the problem gambling rate measures ALL forms of gambling – pokies make up approximately half of the 2.4% of moderate-risk and problem gamblers shown above.¹

NZ has a low problem gambling rate

In response to an OIA request, the Ministry of Health explains that the 2024 percentage split for moderate-risk gamblers and high-risk (problem) gamblers is as per the table below.²

	Total
Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI)	% (95CI)
High-risk (problem) gambler	0.5*(0.2-0.8)
Moderate-risk gambler	1.9 (1.5-2.5)

**Health NZ states that the result should be viewed as unreliable, and caution should be used when interpreting the result, as Relative Standard Error is between 0.25 and 0.5.*

It is important to note that moderate-risk gamblers and problem gamblers are by definition distinctly different.

¹ [Gambling harm intervention services data | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

² *Ministry of Health Response to NZCT OIA request 16th April 2025 (attached as appendix)

The Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI) which the Ministry of Health uses as the template for its Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), characterises ‘problem gamblers’ as people who experience harm³ and goes on to explain that ‘Moderate risk’ gamblers are defined as people who *‘may or may not have experienced adverse consequences from gambling.’*

For clarity, this is stating that moderate risk gamblers are at moderate risk (or in other words have a moderate chance) of experiencing harm at some level from their gambling. It does not describe a category of people who uniformly suffer moderate levels of harm.

Some submissions may also explain that ‘low risk’ gamblers also experience harm at low levels. But again, the PGSI states that *“...[t]his group likely will not have experienced any adverse consequences from gambling”*... at all.

Problem gambling in context

New Zealand’s rate of problem gambling (not inclusive of moderate risk) is low by international standards as the following table and study shows.⁴

Comparing National Problem Gambling Prevalence Rates

Jurisdiction	Year	Problem Gambling Rate
USA	2015	4.60%
South Africa	2013	3.20%
Macau	2005	2.50%
Czech Republic	2014	2.30%
Cyprus	2012	2.20%
Northern Ireland	2010	2.20%
Canada	2005	2.00%
Hong Kong	2012	1.90%
Hungary	2012	1.90%
Germany	2015	1.70%
Brazil	2010	1.30%
Italy	2010	1.27%
Denmark	2012	0.90%
Iceland	2015	0.80%
Great Britain	2012	0.70%
Finland	2014	0.60%
South Korea	2013	0.50%
Singapore	2015	0.50%
France	2015	0.50%
Australia	2016	0.40%
Norway	2009	0.40%
Sweden	2014	0.30%
New Zealand	2015	0.20%

³ [Canadian Problem Gambling Index: Final Report Feb 19, 2001](#)

⁴ [Calado F, Griffiths MD. Problem gambling worldwide: An update and systematic review of empirical research \(2000-2015\). Journal of Behavioural Addictions 2016; 5\(4\): 592-613. Doi:10.1556/2006.5.2016.073](#)

Relatively few New Zealanders are classified as problem gamblers under PGSI measures. The majority of gambling participation falls outside categories associated with measurable harm.

For comparison, whilst problem gambling in New Zealand occurs at a rate of 0.5% - with pokies making up approximately half (0.25%) of that figure ⁵ - the rate of hazardous drinking (have drunk hazardously in a way that can harm themselves or others⁶) is 16.6% of adults, which is equivalent to about 720,000 people⁷.

Despite the rate of hazardous alcohol consumption being sixty-six (66) times greater than problem Class 4 gambling, policy responses generally do not seek to eliminate alcohol availability, recognising that most adults can enjoy it responsibly.

While alcohol and gambling are regulated differently, the comparison illustrates the importance of proportional and evidence-based policy responses.

A sinking lid Council gaming policy would ultimately eliminate the availability of a legal and popular form of gambling entertainment for the 99.5% of adult New Zealanders who are not problem gamblers.

Historical and international policy experience suggests that prohibition approaches can result in unintended consequences and is not an effective tool for minimising harm. Eliminating gaming rooms over time does not address the root causes of problem gambling, especially since individuals can now easily shift to online gambling, which is available 24/7, has fewer controls as physical in venue Class 4 gaming environments, and currently provides no return to the community in the form of grants.

Whilst co-morbidity between problem gambling and other negative behaviours a person may experience is acknowledged, The New Zealand Gambling Study Wave 4 (2015) states that there is no evidence for causative effects from problem gambling to those other negative experiences. It states that although problem gambling is *“highly co-morbid with substance use disorders and other behavioural addictions, as well as with mood, anxiety and personality disorders...”* ⁸ the *“...relationships between gambling and other mental health disorders are complex, prospective studies have found that substance use, substance use disorders and behavioural addictions are robust predictors of problem gambling onset...”*⁹ and not the reverse.

The Class 4 sector is heavily regulated

Despite the number of problem gamblers being very small, the Class 4 sector works hard to minimise harmful behaviours. The Class 4 sector contributes over half of the annual \$20 million problem gambling levy that funds a nationwide network of problem gambling services. Additionally, NZCT alone invests \$650,000 annually in harm minimisation initiatives, including staff training, resources, and technology.

Gaming rooms operate within strict harm minimisation regulations, with staff trained to identify and intervene when they observe signs of harm. For example, venue staff must

⁵ [Gambling harm intervention services data | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

⁶ [Alcohol Resources — Key facts about drinking in New Zealand](#)

⁷ <https://www.health.govt.nz/publications/annual-update-of-key-results-202324-new-zealand-health-survey>

⁸ Pg 26 - <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2018-08/national-gambling-study-report-6-aug18.pdf>

⁹ Pg 26 - <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/2018-08/national-gambling-study-report-6-aug18.pdf>

undertake record-keeping sweeps of gaming rooms three times an hour to monitor for, and act on, signs of harm. Furthermore, venue staff must discuss with a customer their gambling activity should a customer attempt to make a second withdrawal of money from an in-venue ATM for the purposes of additional in-venue Class 4 gambling.

Responsible management and enhanced Harm Minimisation Regulations

The regulatory framework for Class 4 gambling ensures gaming lounge activities are managed with transparency and accountability. In 2023 there were updates to these regulations that have strengthened oversight and further promoted responsible gambling practices and enhanced community trust.

The stringent harm minimisation regulations provide even greater protections for individuals who are susceptible to harm. A cap is a balanced approach that maintains the provision of a legal form of entertainment in your community that enriches your district's hospitality offerings and generates community funding from discretionary income.

Online gambling is larger than Class 4 and growing

With the emergence of online gambling, it is unclear what effect sinking lids are having in migrating problem gamblers online where there are currently fewer protections against problem gambling compared to those provided by physical in person Class 4 venues.

What is clear is that online gambling expenditure continues to increase year on year¹⁰ whilst the more controlled environment of Class 4 gambling is in decline. New Zealanders spend approximately \$1.36 billion annually on online casino gambling¹¹.

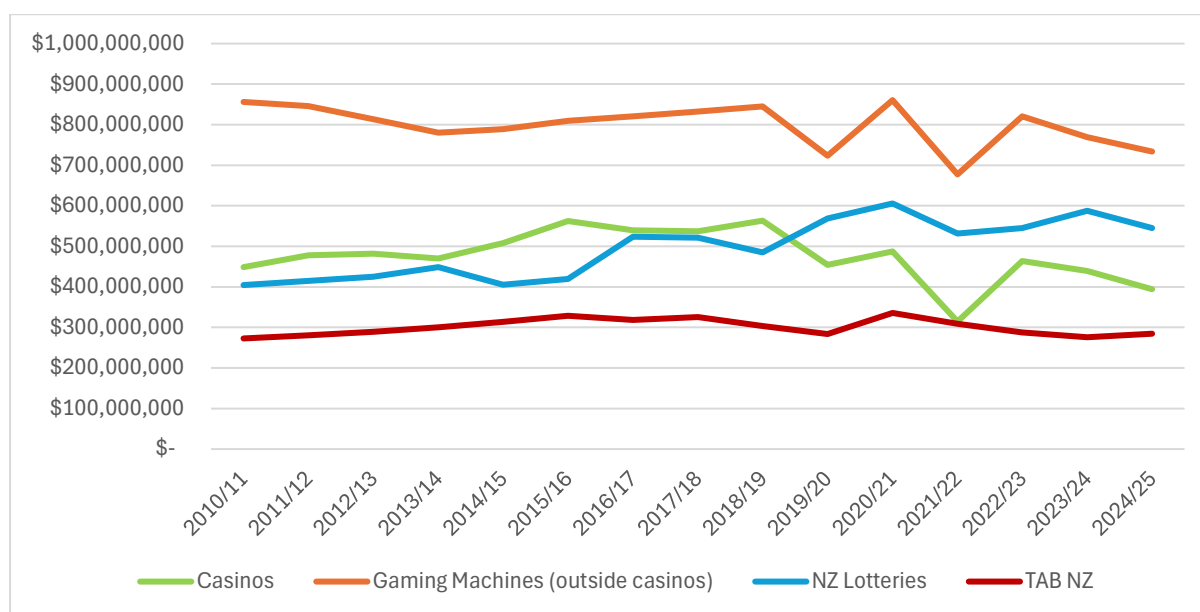
Class 4 spending is not growing – longitudinal picture

Class 4 annual gambling expenditure in New Zealand, inflation-adjusted spending since 2010/11 has seen Class 4 trend down 14%. Not all forms of gambling are down, with Lotto experiencing a 35% increase over the same period. Longitudinal data for online gambling is not yet available.

¹⁰ [DIA x Dot Historical Market Analysis](#) pages 9 and 10

¹¹ [DIA x Dot Historical Market Analysis](#) pages 9 and 10

Inflation Adjusted Gambling Expenditure¹²



Another submission may claim that sinking lid policies have led to a 13% reduction in harm; however, this misinterprets research¹³ that indicated sinking lids decreased expenditure (not harm) by 13%. There is no evidence that indicates that there is a 1:1 correlation between expenditure and harm. Interestingly, the same research also found that per capita caps had the same effect on expenditure.

Furthermore, sinking lid policies pose a significant risk to the continuation of Class 4 community grants. Class 4 grants are essential for supporting non-profit organisations to foster happier, healthier, and more connected communities. In 2024, Class 4 societies awarded \$490,350 in grants within Opotiki.

Entertainment value

Class 4 gambling rooms offer recreational and social opportunities for residents. These hospitality establishments provide entertainment options and foster social connectivity in a way that online gambling does not, all whilst generating vital community funding.

¹² DIA Gambling Expenditure Statistics Report

¹³ <https://www.health.govt.nz/publications/capping-gambling-in-nz-the-effectiveness-of-local-government-policy-interventions>

Gambling has a net positive wellbeing benefit

In New Zealand, gambling in all its forms contributes net positive well-being benefits of approximately \$2 billion annually¹⁴. This value is the sum of its entertainment value, the resulting government revenue, the problem gambling levy, and the globally unique provision of community grants that inject money into a community's not-for-profit sector and the local retail and service industries that support it.

Sustainable Class 4 policy

Continuing with the current sinking lid policy constitutes a decision with eventual financial implications in Opotiki amounting to over \$490,350 per annum. It is imperative that the Council revisit their current sinking lid policy to explore a range sustainable Class 4 policies.

¹⁴ TDB Advisory Report 2021 Page 87

Appendix

Ministry of Health OIA request – Split of problem gamblers to moderate risk gamblers



133 Molesworth Street
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6140
New Zealand
T+64 4 496 2000

16 April 2025

Jo Salisbury

By email: jo.salisbury@nzct.org.nz
Ref: H2025063518

Tēnā koe Jo

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 19 March 2025 for information regarding the latest New Zealand Gambling Survey. Please find a response to each part of your request below:

Looking for some clarification please following the latest gambling survey release by Health NZ - Kupe - Data Explorer. Please can we have the split of problem gamblers to moderate risk gamblers as they have been combined in the same category. We've noticed that the survey has combined moderate risk gamblers and problem gamblers to get a total of 2.4% or 104,000 people. Can you please provide the split here as per previous reports?

The percentage splits for moderate-risk gamblers and high-risk (problem) gamblers are provided in the table below.

	Total	Male	Female
Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI)	% (95CI)	% (95CI)	% (95CI)
High-risk (problem) gambler	0.5 ^ (0.2-0.8)	0.7 ^ (0.2-1.4)	0.3 ^ (0.1-0.6)
Moderate-risk gambler	1.9 (1.5-2.5)	2.2 (1.5-3.1)	1.7 (1.1-2.6)

[^]Indicates result should be viewed as unreliable, and caution should be used when interpreting the result, as Relative Standard Error is between 0.25 and 0.5.

The Gaming Machine Association of New Zealand’s Submission on Ōpōtiki District Council’s Gambling Venue Policy

Introduction

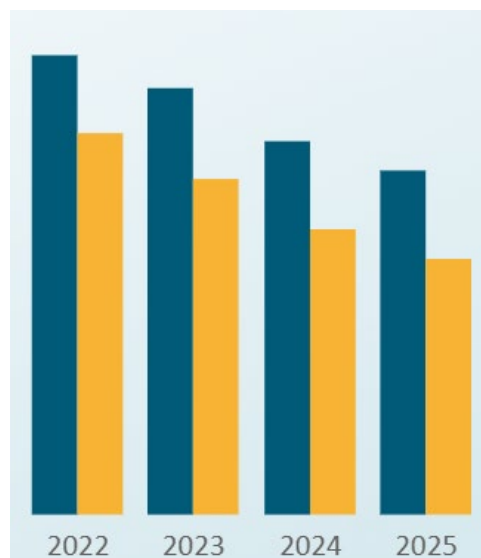
1. The Gaming Machine Association of New Zealand (“the Association”) represents the vast majority of the gaming machine societies that operate in New Zealand. The Association wishes to provide Ōpōtiki District Council with pertinent information regarding gaming machine gambling to help council to make a balanced, evidence-based decision.

Summary

2. The Association recommends that the relocation provision be amended to allow council to consider, on a case-by-case basis, relocations in any circumstances where the applicant can demonstrate that the new site is more desirable from a harm minimisation perspective. This would allow venues to move to lower deprivation areas and away from residential areas/sensitive sites.
3. The proposed policy only allows relocation to be considered by Council when the venue cannot continue to operate at the existing site due to exceptional circumstances; for example, due to a fire, or natural disaster. **We should not have to wait for a catastrophic event to move a venue to a more desirable location.**
4. The Association also recommends that the sinking lid be replaced with a cap that allows for a small amount of additional growth. This would allow for gaming machine numbers to keep track with population growth and would be more in line with historical machine numbers. A cap of five venues and 58 machines is recommended.

Local Data and Information

5. Local gaming machine spend has been in decline since 2022.



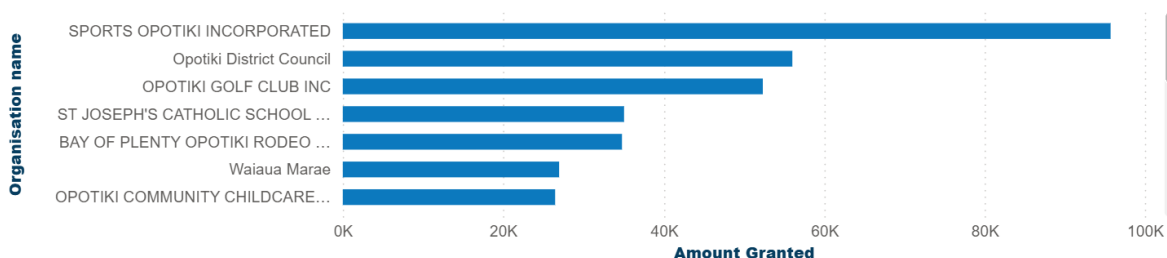
6. Local gaming machine numbers continue to decline. In March 2015, the Ōpōtiki District had five venues and 69 gaming machines. In March 2026, the district had only four venues and 49 gaming machines.



7. The amount of gaming machine grants made to Ōpōtiki District-based organisations is posted on the granted.govt.nz website. In 2024, grants totalling **\$490,350** were made to Ōpōtiki District-based community and sporting groups. This included a grant of \$56,000 to Ōpōtiki District Council:

Amount Granted by Organisation

Year of Acceptance ● 2024



8. In addition to the external grants, club venues use the proceeds from the machines to support their members and their club facilities. One of the four venues that operate gaming machines in the Ōpōtiki District is a club venue: Ōpōtiki County Returned Services Association Incorporated with seven gaming machines.

Amending the Relocation Provision

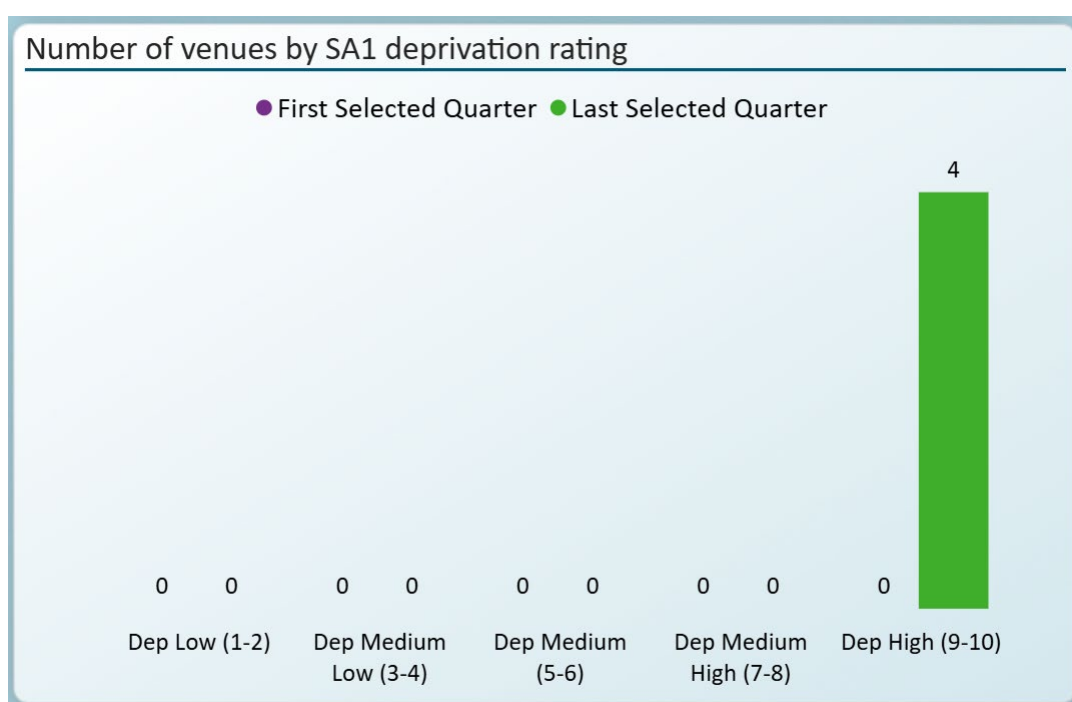
9. In September 2013, Parliament recognised the merit in enabling venues to relocate, and expressly amended the Gambling Act 2003 to enable venues to relocate and retain the same number of machines when a relocation consent was obtained.

10. The amendment was not made to help venues who found themselves needing to move due to exceptional circumstances. The amendment was made to encourage and facilitate venues to move from undesirable locations to more desirable locations. In the in committee reading of the Gambling (Gambling Harm Reduction) Amendment Bill (the Bill that led to the enactment of section 97A), the Bill's sponsor, Te Ururoa Flavell, stated¹:

The Government... wanted to allow venues, with permission from territorial authorities, to move their pokie machines out of harm's way—perhaps to central business districts...

11. Venue relocation is a harm minimisation tool.

12. If a venue wishes to relocate out of a high deprivation area to a lower deprivation area, the policy should permit this. There is no good policy reason for taking steps to restrict this option. Restricting the option to relocate simply entrenches venues in high deprivation locations. All of Ōpōtiki's venues are currently located in areas of high deprivation:



13. If a venue wishes to relocate out of a suburban/residential area to a more suitable area, such as a central business district, the policy should permit this. There is no good policy

¹ https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/hansard-debates/rhr/document/50HansD_20130807_00000040/gambling-gambling-harm-reduction-amendment-bill-in

reason for taking steps to restrict this option. Restricting the option to relocate simply entrenches venues in undesirable residential locations.

14. The relocation provision should not be limited to circumstances where the venue cannot continue to operate at the existing site: i.e., relocation should not be limited to cases where there has been a fire or natural disaster. **We should not have to wait for a fire or earthquake to move machines from undesirable areas to more desirable areas. We should seize every such opportunity and promptly facilitate it.**
15. The relocation policy should also be flexible enough to support businesses that wish to move to new, modern, refurbished premises. Allowing local businesses to upgrade their premises and provide a more modern, attractive offering to the public helps to revitalise business districts, improves the local economy and encourages tourism.
16. The first venue to relocate under the amendments made to the Gambling Act 2003 was the Te Rapa Tavern in Hamilton. The photos below show the old, rundown premises and the new modern premises. The redevelopment cost \$3,000,000.



The old Te Rapa Tavern



The new Te Rapa Tavern

17. The relocation policy should enable venues to move to smaller, more suitable premises. Enabling venues to move away from large premises, with large car parking areas, to newer, smaller premises also has the advantage of freeing up large areas of land, which may be better used for affordable high-density housing.
18. The relocation policy should enable venues to move out of earthquake-prone buildings to stronger, more modern buildings. This is a health and safety issue.
19. It would also be reasonable to also allow venues to relocate when the move is due to onerous rental sums or lease terms being imposed. Currently, once a venue has obtained a licence to host gaming machines its value is artificially increased. This often leads to landlords demanding higher than normal rentals. Allowing more flexible relocation prevents landlords demanding unreasonable rentals as it gives the venue operator the ability to relocate to an alternative venue.

20. It is recommended that the following wording be adopted:

Relocation of Venues

On application Council may permit existing Class 4 Gambling venues to re-establish at a new site.

Any application to relocate a current venue will be considered on a case-by-case basis and approval will be at the discretion of the Council.

An application, and the proposed venue, must comply with all other conditions and provisions set out in this Policy and is also subject to the following conditions:

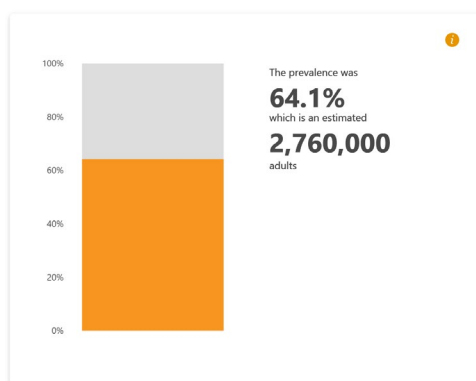
- a) The deprivation level of the new location must be the same or lower than that of the previous venue.
- b) The venue operator of the new location will be the same as the former location.
- c) The maximum number of gaming machines permitted to operate at the new venue is the same as the maximum number of gaming machines permitted to operate at the old venue immediately before the licence relating to the old venue is cancelled.
- d) Meeting the application fee requirements.

Note: Where a venue relocates, the Class 4 licence for the old venue will be cancelled and the old venue will be treated as if no Class 4 venue licence had ever been held for that venue.

Benefits from Gaming Machines - Gambling is an Enjoyable Activity

21. Gambling is a popular form of entertainment that most New Zealanders participate in. The 2025 New Zealand Gambling Survey² found that 64.1% of adult New Zealanders had participated in some form of gambling in the previous 12 months (estimated to be 2,760,000 New Zealanders aged 15 and over).

2023/24 New Zealand Gambling Survey



² <https://kupe.healthpromotion.govt.nz/nzgs/participation-frequency-and-expenditure/any-gambling/any-gambling-activity/>

22. The majority of people who gamble do so because they find it an enjoyable activity. This was observed by Suits (1979, p. 155)³, who stated:

Gambling is a recreational activity or a kind of participation sport from which the principal satisfaction derives from the activity itself and from the ebb and flow of wins and losses rather than from ultimate outcome - the net amount won or lost. For most gamblers, the purpose of gambling is not to get rich, but to "have fun," to experience "excitement," or to have "something to look forward to," and they view payment for this recreation in the same light as others look on outlays for theatre tickets, vacation trips, or a night on the town.

23. Gambling for the non-addicted gambler may be an avenue for socialising, stress relief and a way of having fun. Contrary to how it may appear from a non-gambler's perspective, gamblers do not necessarily anticipate they will make money from gambling. Parke (2015)⁴ stated:

Players mostly realise that they are paying for a leisure experience. They are not expecting to be paid, except for a small minority, who are going to earn an income as a professional gambler.

Benefits from Gaming Machines - Positive Wellbeing Impact from Gambling in New Zealand

24. The 2021 TDB Advisory report, Gambling in New Zealand: A National Wellbeing Analysis⁵, found that gambling in New Zealand had a net positive wellbeing benefit totalling around \$1.74b to \$2.16b per annum.



3 Suits, D. (1979). The Elasticity of Demand for Gambling. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 93(1), 155–162.

4 Parke, J. (2015). Gambling, leisure and pleasure: Exploring psychosocial need satisfaction in gambling. Presentation at the KPMG eGaming summit. <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/pdf/2016/07/im-esummit-report-2015.pdf>

5 https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/Gambling_in_New_Zealand.pdf

Revenue Breakdown

25. The return to players on a non-casino gaming machine is required to be set between 78% and 92%, with most being set at 91.5%. On average, for every \$1.00 gambled, 91.5 cents are returned to the player in winnings. The money retained is typically allocated as follows:

Typical Distribution of Gaming Machine Profits

	GST Inclusive	GST Exclusive
Government Duty	20%	23%
GST	13.04%	0
Problem Gambling Levy	1.08%	1.23%
DIA Costs	2.9%	3.33%
Gaming Machine Depreciation	6.95%	8%
Repairs & Maintenance	2.84%	3.27%
Venue Costs	13.9%	16%
Society Costs	1.74%	2%
Donations	37.53%	43.16%

Gaming Machines – Key Facts

26. Gaming machines have been present in New Zealand communities since the early 1980s. Initially the machines were operated without a gaming licence. The first gaming licence was issued to Pub Charity on 25 March 1988, over 38 years ago.
27. New Zealand has a very low problem gambling rate by international standards. The March 2025 New Zealand National Gambling Survey⁶ found that the combined rate of moderate-risk gambling and problem gambling was 2.4% of the adult population (aged 15+). This equates to approximately 104,000 adults. A subsequent OIA request⁷ revealed that this was comprised of 0.5% problem gambling and 1.9% moderate risk gambling. The problem gambling rate is for all forms of gambling, not just gaming machine gambling.
28. All gaming machine societies contribute to a problem gambling fund. This fund provides over \$25 million per annum to the Ministry of Health to support and treat gambling addiction and to increase public awareness. The funding is ring-fenced and not able to be redirected to other health areas.
29. An excellent, well-funded problem gambling treatment service exists. The problem gambling helpline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Free, confidential help is available in 40 different languages. Free face-to-face counselling is also available, and specialist counselling is available for Māori, Pasifika and Asian clients. An anonymous, free text service (8006) is available. Support via email is also available (help@pgfnz.org.nz).

⁶ <https://kupe.healthpromotion.govt.nz/nzgs/gambling-harm/problem-gambling-severity-index/>

⁷ https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/OIA_Problem_Gambling_Rate_March_2025.pdf

Existing Gaming Machine Safeguards

30. Retaining a sinking lid policy is not necessary given the significant measures that are already in place to minimise the harm from gaming machines.
31. Gamblers are now only permitted to make one cash withdrawal per day. If a second cash withdrawal is made, the venue staff are required to talk to the player about their gambling and complete a two-page report about the person's gambling. That report must then be reviewed by the venue manager within seven days.
32. ATMs are excluded from all gaming rooms. ATMs at gaming venues must be in direct line of sight from the main bar area or main customer service area.
33. Gaming machines cannot be visible from outside the venue.
34. Venue staff are required to undertake three formal sweeps of the gaming room per hour and keep a detailed record of each sweep.
35. Limits exist on the type of venues that can host gaming machines. The primary activity of all gaming venues must be focused on persons over 18 years of age. For example, it is prohibited to have gaming machines in venues such as sports stadiums, internet cafes, and cinemas.
36. There is a statutory age limit that prohibits persons under 18 years of age playing a gaming machine.
37. There are very restrictive limits on the amount of money that can be staked and the amount of prize money that can be won. The maximum stake is \$2.50. The maximum prize for a non-jackpot machine is \$500.00. The maximum prize for a jackpot-linked machine is \$1,000.00.
38. All gaming machines in New Zealand have a feature that interrupts play and displays a pop-up message. The pop-up message informs the player of the duration of the player's session, the amount spent, and the amount won or lost. A message is then displayed asking the player whether they wish to continue with their session or collect their credits.
39. Gaming machines in New Zealand do not accept banknotes above \$20.00 in denomination.
40. All gaming venues have a harm minimisation policy.
41. All gaming venues have pamphlets that provide information about the characteristics of problem gambling and how to seek advice for problem gambling.
42. All gaming venues have signage that encourages players to gamble only at levels they can afford. The signage also details how to seek assistance for problem gambling.
43. All gaming venue staff are required to have undertaken comprehensive problem gambling awareness and intervention training.

44. Any person who advises that they have a problem with their gambling is required to be excluded from the venue.
45. It is not permissible for a player to play two gaming machines at once.
46. All gaming machines have a clock on the main screen. All gaming machines display the odds of winning.
47. The design of a gaming machine is highly regulated and controlled. For example, a gaming machine is not permitted to generate a result that indicates a near win (for example, if five symbols are required for a win, the machine is not permitted to intentionally generate four symbols in a row).
48. It is not permissible to use the word “jackpot” or any similar word in advertising that is visible from outside a venue.

Time to Replace the Sinking Lid Policy With a Cap

49. Adopting policy settings that allow for a small amount of growth is reasonable given the current environment of high regulation, Ōpōtiki District’s population growth, and the expansion of online gambling.
50. There is no direct correlation between gaming machine numbers and problem gambling rates. Over the last 15 years, the problem gambling rate has remained static, despite gaming machine numbers declining by over 25%.
51. The 2012 National Gambling Survey⁸ concluded that the prevalence of problematic gambling reduced significantly during the 1990s and has since stayed about the same. The report stated on pages 17 and 18:

Problem gambling and related harms probably reduced significantly during the 1990s but have since remained at about the same level despite reductions in non-casino EGM numbers and the expansion of regulatory, public health and treatment measures. Given that gambling availability expanded markedly since 1987 and official expenditure continued to increase until 2004, these findings are consistent with the adaptation hypothesis. This hypothesis proposes that while gambling problems increase when high risk forms of gambling are first introduced and made widely available, over time individual and environmental adaptations occur that lead to problem reduction.

52. The New Zealand National Gambling Study: Wave 3 (2014)⁹ noted that the problem gambling rate had remained the same over the last 10-15 years despite gaming machine numbers decreasing. The report stated on page 19:

In contrast to the 1990s, there is no evidence that problem gambling prevalence decreased with decreasing participation rates during the 2000s. When

⁸ <https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/national-gambling-study-report-2.pdf>

⁹ https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/NZ_National_Gambling_Study_Wave4_2015.pdf

methodological differences between studies are taken into account, it appears that problem gambling prevalence has remained much the same during the past 10 to 15 years.

...gambling participation has decreased substantially in New Zealand during the past 20 years, and problem gambling and related harm has probably plateaued...

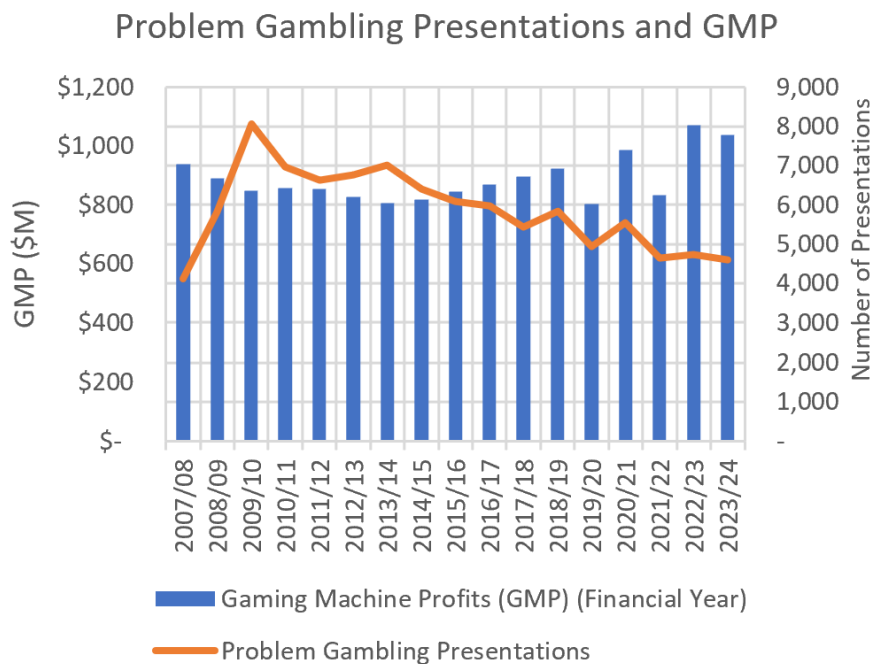
53. Professor Max Abbott is New Zealand's leading expert on problem gambling. In 2006, Professor Abbott published a paper titled *Do EGMs and Problem Gambling Go Together Like a Horse and Carriage?* The paper noted that gaming machine reductions and the introduction of caps generally appear to have little impact on problem gambling rates. Professor Abbott noted:

EGM reductions and the introduction of caps generally appear to have little impact (page 1).

Over time, years rather than decades, adaptation ('host' immunity and protective environmental changes) typically occurs, and problem levels reduce, even in the face of increasing exposure (page 6).

Contrary to expectation, as indicated previously, although EGM numbers and expenditure increased substantially in New Zealand from 1991 to 1999, the percentage of adults who gambled weekly dropped from 48% to 40%. This is of particular interest because it suggests that greater availability and expenditure do not necessarily increase high-risk exposure (page 14).

54. There is no direct correlation between gaming machine spend and problem gambling presentations:



Source: DIA website: https://catalogue.data.govt.nz/dataset/class-4-gambling-key-performance-indicators/resource/4893f532-b4b8-4966-b33c-de3836817a49?inner_span=True

55. Retaining a restrictive policy is unlikely to reduce problem gambling, but will, over time, reduce the amount of funding available to community groups based in Ōpōtiki District. Reducing gaming machine venues reduces casual and recreational play, and therefore reduces machine turnover and the amount of money generated for grant distribution. However, problem gamblers are people who are addicted to gambling. If a new bar is established and the policy prevents that bar from hosting gaming machines, a person who is addicted to gambling will simply travel the short distance to the next bar that has gaming machines, or worse, may move to another form of gambling such as offshore-based internet and mobile phone gambling.

Unintended Consequences – Increase in Internet and Mobile Phone Gambling

56. Any reduction in the local gaming machine offering may have unintended consequences, as this may simply lead to a migration of the gambling spend to offshore internet- and mobile-based offerings. While it is illegal to advertise overseas gambling in New Zealand, it is not illegal to participate in gambling on an overseas-based website or mobile phone application.



57. It now takes only a simple search and a few minutes to download to your computer, tablet, or mobile phone any type of casino game you desire, including an exact replica of the gaming machine programs currently available in New Zealand venues.
58. The 2020 Health and Lifestyle Survey found that 1 in 4 New Zealand adults participated in some form of online gambling, with 19% participating almost every week.¹⁰

¹⁰

https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/2020_Health_and_Lifestyles_Survey_report.pdf

In the last 12 months,

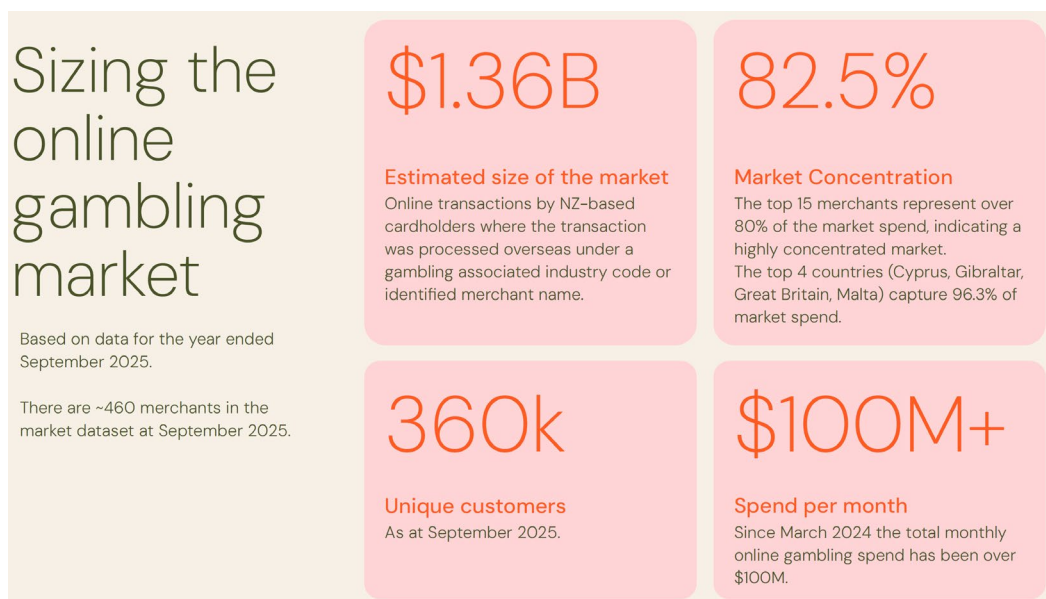
1 in 4 (27%) New Zealand adults participated in some form of online gambling.



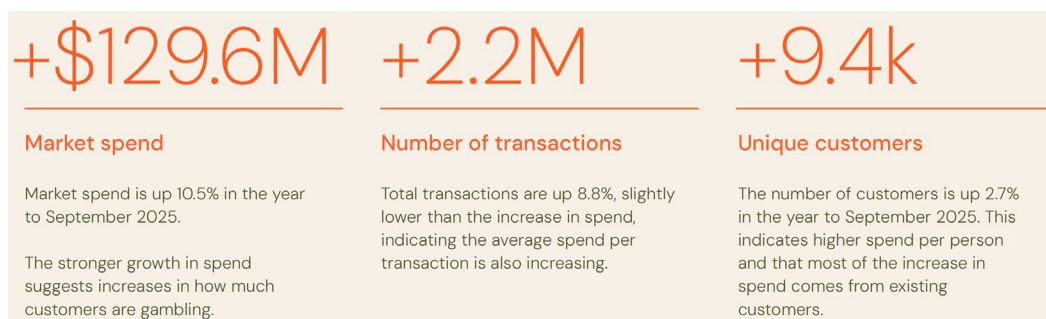
19% of online gamblers participated in online gambling almost every week.



59. The November 2025 Historical Market Report¹¹ estimated the New Zealand online gambling market (both sports betting and online casino gambling) to be \$1.36b:



60. The November 2025 Historical Market Report¹² found that the New Zealand online gambling market is expanding both in breadth (more customers) and depth (more transactions per customer, and higher spend per transaction). Market spend was up 10.5% in the year to September 2025:



¹¹ <https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/2025-New-Zealand-Market-Insights-Report-Historical-Market-Analysis.pdf>

¹² <https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/2025-New-Zealand-Market-Insights-Report-Historical-Market-Analysis.pdf>

61. The November 2025 User Behaviour Report¹³ found that in the year ended September 2025, 360,000 individuals participated in online, offshore gambling:



62. The migration from physical Lotto stores and SkyCity was apparent during the Covid-19 lockdowns. When the physical venues were closed, the number of online registered players, and the amount of online revenue, skyrocketed:

‘MyLotto’:

- 2018 748,000 registered players.
- 2020 1,230,000 registered players.
- 2018 \$201m spend.
- 2020 \$430m spend.

SkyCity online casino:

- 2018 25,661 registered players.
- 2020 48,958 registered players.
- 2018 \$254m spend.
- 2020 \$793m spend.

63. The Australian National University 2024 study *Gambling Participation in Australia 2024, Trends Over Time, and Profiles Associated with Online Gambling*¹⁴ confirmed the player migration from physical gambling venues to online. The study found at page 6:

Our data also suggest that these individuals may have ‘switched’ their gambling

¹³ <https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/2025-New-Zealand-Market-Insights-Report-User-Behaviour.pdf>

¹⁴ https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/Gambling_in_Australia_2024_002.pdf

activity from venue-based gambling (e.g. EGM gambling) to activities that are readily available online in Australia, such as betting on sports and racing. This may reflect [an] increase in overall online gambling participation that has been observed prior to COVID-19.

64. Offshore-based online gambling poses considerable risks because it:

- Is highly accessible, being available 24 hours a day from the comfort and privacy of your home;
- Has no restrictions on bet sizes;
- Has no capacity for venue staff to observe and assist people in trouble;
- Reaches new groups of people who may be vulnerable to the medium;
- Provides no guaranteed return to players;
- Is more easily abused by minors;
- Has reduced protections to prevent fraud, money laundering or unfair gambling practices; and
- Is currently unregulated, so on-line gamblers are often encouraged to gamble more by being offered inducements or by being offered the opportunity to gamble on credit. For example, many overseas sites offer sizable cash bonuses to a customer's account for each friend that they induce to also open an account and deposit funds.

65. The 2019 New South Wales Gambling Survey¹⁵ found that the problem gambling rate among internet gamblers was twice as high as gamblers who gambled in physical venues. The report stated:

Internet gamblers were more likely than non-internet gamblers to be moderate-risk and problem (18% compared with 5%). Problem gambling prevalence among internet gamblers was twice as high (4% compared with 2% of non-internet gamblers). Similarly, internet gamblers were more than three times more likely to be in the moderate-risk category (14% compared with 4% of non-internet gamblers).

66. Offshore-based online gambling currently does not generate any community funding for New Zealanders, and currently does not make any contribution to the New Zealand health and treatment services, as no contribution is made to the problem gambling levy.

67. The Government has confirmed its decision to regulate online casino gambling and begin issuing online gambling licences from 1 December 2026. The introduction of a licensing system will allow offshore-based online providers to market and advertise more freely,

¹⁵

<https://www.gamblinglaw.co.nz/download/NSW-Gambling-Survey-2019.pdf>

which is expected to drive significant growth. However, only 4% of their gross revenue will be allocated to community grants. These providers are likely to be entirely based offshore, resulting in no local employment and all profits being removed from New Zealand.

Oral Hearing

68. Jarrod True, on behalf of the Gaming Machine Association of New Zealand, would like to make a presentation at the upcoming oral hearing.

24 June 2026

Jarrod True

Counsel

Gaming Machine Association of New Zealand

jarrod.true@truelegal.co.nz

027 452 7763

gmanz.org.nz

23 July 2026

Ōpōtiki District Council
108 St John Street
Ōpōtiki 3122

Tēnā koutou Ōpōtiki District Council,

Technical Advice: Gambling and TAB Venues Policy

1. Health New Zealand –Te Whatu Ora National Public Health Service (Health NZ) in Te Manawa Taki region is providing technical advice on the Gambling and TAB Venues Policy. National Public Health Service (NPHS) Te Manawa Taki services the Bay of Plenty, Lakes, Taranaki, Waikato, and Tairāwhiti areas including the Ōpōtiki District.
2. NPHS recognises its responsibilities to improve, promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people and communities of Aotearoa New Zealand under the Healthy Futures (Pae Ora) Act 2022 and the Health Act 1956. To achieve healthy communities and health equity across population groups.¹ In undertaking this work, we are guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the role of iwi-Māori Partnership Boards and the Hauora Māori Advisory Committee.
3. Medical Officers of Health² have a responsibility to reduce conditions within their local community that are likely to cause injury and disease, including gambling-related harm. The technical advice provided, aligns to Health NZ's position to realise healthier and more resilient communities. Incorporating public health commitments will support efforts to reduce inequities and promote the good health and wellbeing of communities along with the environment and places where we grow, live, learn, work and play.
4. NPHS Te Manawa Taki region welcomes the opportunity to assist Ōpōtiki District Council (ŌDC) in their planning and decision-making responsibilities by sharing public health perspectives. We wish to speak our advice. The primary contact point for this technical advice is Health Promotion Advisor, Renee Bolkowy renee.bolkowy@tewhatauora.govt.nz.

Recommendations

5. NPHS Te Manawa Taki **supports** ŌDC maintaining a sinking lid policy on Class 4 Gambling venues, so that **no new venues** can be established within the district.
6. In addition, we recommend that:
 - a) **No new TAB venues** to be established in the district **including mergers**.
 - b) The following wording changes associated with prohibiting merging of clubs to **“no relocations”** for consistency and alignment with the purpose of the policy.
 - c) The policy clarifies that damage or destruction of a venue does not create an exception to the Council's no-relocation policy. If a venue permanently closes, the venue rights should not be

¹ *Determinants of health*. (2017, February 3). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/determinants-of-health>

² [Section 7A, Health Act 1956](#)

transferred elsewhere within the district. Such as, temporary closure and reopening on the same site is permitted and permanent closure and relocation to a new site is not permitted.

- d) For section 4.7, *Conditions applying to all Gambling venues under this policy*, we recommend strengthening restrictions on external gambling promotion by combining the first two conditions and replacing them with the following: *“Class 4 gambling venues must not use the word “casino”, casino-related imagery, or any branding that may create the impression that the venue operates as a casino. Gambling machines, gambling activities, and all gambling-related advertising, signage, branding, promotional material, jackpot information, and inducements must be confined to the interior of the venue and must not be visible from outside the venue or to passing pedestrians.”*
7. We also suggest the Gambling and TAB Venues Policy is amended to include a multifaceted approach to reducing gambling-related harm. Given the significant health, social and economic impacts of gambling harm in Ōpōtiki, Council should take a proactive leadership role in gambling harm prevention beyond regulating venue numbers. We recommend Council work alongside local iwi, hapū, community organisations and gambling harm prevention services to implement a comprehensive harm-minimisation approach, including education and awareness initiatives, strengthened support and referral pathways, community engagement, and regular monitoring and reporting of gambling-related harm. Consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles of partnership, participation, and active protection, these actions should support culturally responsive and Māori-led approaches to wellbeing, ensuring Māori perspectives are reflected in the design, implementation, and evaluation of gambling harm prevention initiatives.
8. NPHS Te Manawa Taki also notes that the draft policy is based on data from a 2014 Social Impact Assessment. More recent data would have been preferable as a basis for decision-making. However, we acknowledge that earlier this year Council had to prioritise impacts of climate change which may have made undertaking a new assessment challenging.

Ōpōtiki District Specific Data

9. Ōpōtiki's strong Māori identity is a significant strength of the district. Protecting the health and wellbeing of whānau Māori through policies that minimise gambling-related harm aligns with Council's role in supporting thriving communities.
10. Ōpōtiki's seasonal workforce, including the Pacific Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme and other temporary seasonal workers, may also be relevant to local harm-minimisation planning. While this does not suggest increased gambling risk, temporary workers may face access barriers to information and support. This reinforces the value of strong venue controls and culturally accessible support pathways developed with local partners.
11. Currently in the Ōpōtiki District, there are 49 Electronic Gaming Machines (EGM) across four Class 4 gambling venues. Of the 49 machines, 100% are in areas of the highest deprivation (i.e., 9-10).³ The concentration of all gambling machines within areas of the highest deprivation is particularly concerning given the well-established relationship between gambling harm and socioeconomic disadvantage. People living in more deprived communities experience higher rates of gambling harm, while these same communities contribute a disproportionate share of

³ Department of Internal Affairs. (2025). *Gaming machine profits (GMP) Quarterly Report – December 2025*. Available from [Microsoft Power BI](#)

gambling expenditure.^{4,5} This pattern reinforces existing inequities and places additional pressure on communities already facing social and economic challenges.

12. Since 2017, the number of gambling venues in Ōpōtiki has reduced from five to four and the number of EGMs has reduced from 57 to 49. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the sinking lid policy in progressively reducing gambling availability over time. Evidence indicates that sinking lid policies paired with no relocations and mergers are the most effective local government mechanisms for reducing gambling expenditure and gambling-related harm.⁶ Retaining this approach will continue to support the Council's objective of minimising gambling harm within the district.
13. In the Ōpōtiki District, in 2025, gaming machine profits (GMP) were approximately \$2,348,678. This equates to about \$6,435 being lost per day to Class 4 gambling.³
14. From the end of 2024 to the end of 2025, GMP decreased by \$200,842.68 within the Ōpōtiki district.³ While this is a positive trend, it reinforces Council to continue with a strong sinking lid policy, along with no relocations and mergers.
15. The 2023 Census shows that the median personal income for Ōpōtiki was \$30,500 compared to the national figure at \$41,500.⁷ Ōpōtiki has a higher proportion (69.3%) of residents living in the most deprived quintile than the New Zealand average (20.8%).⁸

Community Funding Considerations

16. Gambling proceeds are often viewed as a source of community funding. Evidence indicates, however, that gambling expenditure is disproportionately generated from higher deprivation communities, but grant funding is not always returned to the communities from which it originated. Gambling machine operators are required by law to allocate a minimum 40% of proceeds (i.e., the amount wagered, less the amount paid back as prizes) back to community groups and organisations, but not necessarily to the community where the money was lost. Determining which districts are benefiting disproportionately is difficult. The New Zealand Gambling Survey 2023/2024 (NZGS 2023/24) revealed that 46.2% of respondents felt that raising money through gambling does more harm than good. These figures are higher for Māori, Pacific, and Asian respondents.⁹
17. In 2024, only 19% (\$490,350) of EGM profits were granted back to the Ōpōtiki community.¹⁰ This results in a transfer of resources away from local communities already experiencing disadvantage. NPHS Te Manawa Taki encourages exploration of alternative and more equitable funding models that do not rely on gambling losses.

⁴ Pearce, J., Mason, K., Hiscock, R., & Day, P. (2008). A national study of neighbourhood access to gambling opportunities and individual gambling behaviour. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* (1979-), 62(10), 862–868.

⁵ Bellringer, M. E., Janicot, S., & Ikeda, T. (2024). Changes in some health and lifestyle behaviours are significantly associated with changes in gambling behaviours: Findings from a longitudinal New Zealand population study. *Addictive Behaviors*, 149, 107886.

⁶ Erwin, C., Lees, K., Pacheco, G., & Turcu, A. (2020). *Capping problem gambling in NZ: The effectiveness of local government policy intervention*. Auckland.

⁷ Stats NZ. (2025). *Ōpōtiki District*. <https://tools.summaries.stats.govt.nz/places/TA/opotiki-district>

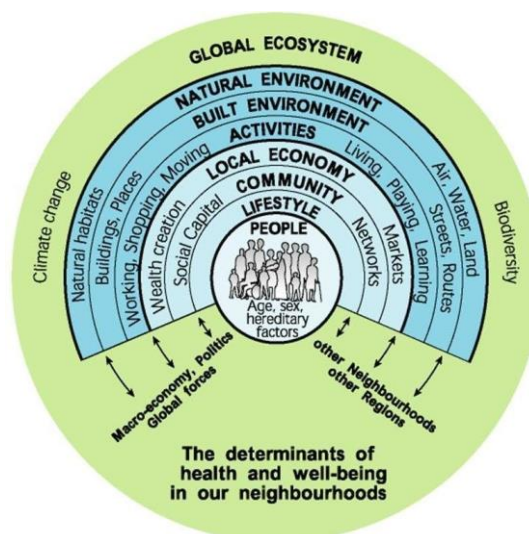
⁸ Infometrics. 2023 *Socioeconomic Deprivation: Most Deprived Quintile, Ōpōtiki District*. Infometrics Regional Economic Profile. Available at: <https://regions.infometrics.co.nz/opotiki-district/census/drill-down/socioeconomic-deprivation/most-deprived-quintile?compare=new-zealand&census=opotiki-district> (accessed July 2026).

⁹ Ministry of Health and Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora. New Zealand Gambling Survey 2023/24 results. 2025 Available from: <https://kupe.healthpromotion.govt.nz/nzgs/>

¹⁰ Department of Internal Affairs. Grants by District. 2025 Available from: <https://granted.govt.nz/dashboard>

Social Determinants of Health

18. Health and wellbeing are influenced by a wide range of factors beyond the health sector. These factors are often referred to as the 'social determinants of health', and can be described as the environmental, economic and social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.¹¹
19. The diagram¹² below shows how these determinants of health are complex and interlinked. Initiatives to improve health outcomes and overall quality of life must involve organisations and groups beyond the health sector, such as local government, if they are to have a collective impact.¹³



Social determinants of health

Gambling Harm and Health

20. Gambling is a significant public health issue that causes a wide range of harm.¹⁴ These harms are commonly understood to affect the health and wellbeing of the people who gamble. However, these harms extend beyond individuals; gambling harm is experienced by family members, entire whānau, the wider community, and society more broadly. Gambling harm, therefore, is not individualistic but is distributed in a more interconnected way.¹⁵
21. Gambling disorder is a recognised diagnosable condition,¹⁶ and Council has an important

¹¹ Public Health Advisory Committee. (2004). The Health of People and Communities. A Way Forward: Public Policy and the Economic Determinants of Health. Public Health Advisory Committee.

¹² Barton, H. & Grant, M. (2006). A health map for the local human habitat. The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health, 126(6), 252-253. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1466424006070466>

¹³ McGinnis, J.M., Williams-Russo, P. & Knickman, J.R. (2002). The case for more active policy attention to health promotion. Health Affairs, 21(2), 78-93. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.21.2.78>

¹⁴ Ward, A.D., McIvor, J.T. and Bracewell, P. (2020). The geographic distribution of gaming machine proceeds in New Zealand. Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online, 15: 54-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2019.1640752>

¹⁵ Bhattacharjee, A., Dolton, P., Mosley, M., & Pabst, A. (2023). The Fiscal Costs and Benefits of Problem Gambling: Towards Better Estimates.

¹⁶ Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) & Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP). (2024). Prevention and treatment of gambling-related harm (Position Statement 45). <https://www.ranzcp.org/clinical-guidelines-publications/clinical-guidelines-publications-library/gambling-related-harm>

upstream prevention role through this policy by limiting the availability and accessibility of gambling opportunities before harm escalates.

22. There is clear evidence of public concern about the impacts of gambling. The NZGS 2023/24 found that 55.4% of participants were concerned about the level of gambling in their community,⁹ with gambling linked to a range of impacts.

23. Examples of gambling harm include impacts on:

Physical and mental wellbeing

- Increased rates of illnesses and conditions, such as obesity (higher body mass index) and elevated blood pressure
- Lifestyle-related health risks/adoption of unhealthy coping strategies (e.g., smoking, alcohol, or substance use)
- Disrupted routines, including poor sleep and missed meals
- Reduced seeking of and interaction with healthcare services due to financial pressure
- Psychological distress, depression, and anxiety; gambling can both result from and contribute to mental health issues
- Financial harm, such as debt, which can indirectly affect physical health by increasing stress and limiting access to necessities, making it harder to maintain healthy lifestyles

Social wellbeing

- The breakdown of interpersonal relationships
- Increased engagement in criminal activity to recover losses (e.g. theft)
- Overall reduction in social participation and community engagement

Cultural wellbeing

- Negative impacts on a person's cultural beliefs, practices, identity, and connection to their community
- Reduced participation in cultural obligations and community events due to financial strain or relational stress (e.g., fa'alavelave in Pacific communities)
- Feeling shame or guilt related to one's cultural or family/community role
- Weakening of cultural connectedness and sense of belonging.^{17,18}

Class 4 Gambling: Harm, Expenditure & Community Impact

24. Gambling harm occurs across a spectrum, ranging from low risk to moderate/problem gambling. In 2023/24, an estimated 2.4% (104,000 people) of the total population of Aotearoa were affected by moderate risk/problem gambling, whereas 5.9% (255,000 people) were affected by low-risk gambling.⁹ Applied to the Ōpōtiki population,⁷ this suggests that approximately 643 adults (about 500 would be Māori and about 140 would be non-Māori)⁹ may have experienced gambling-related harm in the previous year.

25. There are multiple forms of gambling, including casino, lotto, sports betting, and, in a contemporary context, online forms of each, demonstrating a shift toward greater accessibility and

¹⁷ Abbott, M., Bellringer, M., Vandal, A., Hodgins, D., Palmer Du Preez, K., Landon, J., Sullivan, S., & Feigin, V. (2012). Effectiveness of problem gambling brief telephone interventions: A randomised controlled trial. Auckland: Auckland University of Technology, Gambling and Addictions Research Centre

¹⁸ Ministry of Health. (2023, September 25). Te Pae Māhutonga model of Māori health. [Te Pae Mahutonga model of Māori health | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

ease of participation.¹⁹ A potential argument against a sinking lid policy is that people may shift from EGMs to online gambling, including less-regulated offshore sites. However, NZ evidence does not support substantial substitution. Evidence indicates that reduced Class 4 gambling losses are unlikely to be replaced by other forms of gambling (including online or illegal gambling) and are more likely to be absorbed into other household spending.²⁰ National survey evidence also suggests that offshore online gambling remains a minority behaviour in NZ, with about 3.6% of adults reporting gambling on overseas websites.⁹ Qualitative research shows that some individuals may shift their gambling online.²¹ However, at a population level, a sinking lid policy is expected to reduce overall exposure and harm rather than drive people to other forms of gambling. Given the rural location of Ōpōtiki, if there were to be a reduction in EGM venues, it is unlikely people would migrate to other gambling venues given the significant travel distances and time required to access them.

26. Nonetheless, Class 4 gambling results in significant financial harm. Nationally, annual expenditure from non-casino gambling machines is increasing. In 2025, approximately, \$1.02 billion was lost on Class 4 gambling machines.³
27. EGMs are particularly harmful due both to their design and the environments in which they are located. For example, the machines encourage continuous play and the reinvestment of winnings, and the surrounding environments further support this. These environments (pokie rooms) are often designed with dim lighting and a lack of spaces that promote social interaction, such as tables or communal areas. This creates conditions that encourage uninterrupted, solitary play.^{22,23}
28. National expenditure on Class 4 gambling machines reached an all-time high in 2022/23 of \$1.07 billion; the highest since records began in 2007.³ A report by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research investigated the potential effects on the retail sector if consumers did not engage in Class 4 gambling.²⁰ In short, the retail sector could have gained an estimated \$445 million in 2018/19 if household expenditure on Class 4 gambling was diverted to other uses. This report shows that Class 4 gambling not only has a significant social cost but also diverts productive expenditure from local businesses.

Gambling and Inequity

29. Gambling harm is unevenly distributed across population groups in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- Māori are 2.24 times more likely than non-Māori to be moderate-risk or high-risk gamblers
- Pacific people are 2.31 times more likely than non-Pacific people to be moderate-risk or high-risk gamblers
- Disabled people are 4.02 times more likely than non-disabled people to be moderate-risk or high-risk gamblers
- Young people make up approximately 25% of moderate and high-risk gamblers

¹⁹ Dyall, L., Hawke, Z., Herd, R., & Nahi, P. (2012). Housework metaphor for gambling public health action: An indigenous perspective. *International journal of mental health and addiction*, 10(5), 737-747.

²⁰ New Zealand Institute of Economic Research. (2020). The retail employment and tax costs of class 4 gambling in New Zealand. [The retail employment and tax costs of Class 4 gambling in New Zealand](#)

²¹ Bellringer ME, Lowe G, Paavonen A-M, Preez KPd, Garrett N, Abbott M. New Zealand National Gambling Study: Qualitative phase Auckland: Auckland University of Technology, Gambling and Addictions Research Centre; 2019 [Available from: [Final Report NGS Qualitative 16 September 2019](#)

²² Ministry of Health. 2025. *Strategy to Prevent and Minimise Gambling Harm 2025/26 to 2027/28*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

²³ Adams, P. and Wiles, (J. 2016). *Gambling machine annexes as enabling spaces for addictive engagement*. Auckland: Centre for Addiction Research. University of Auckland, New Zealand.

- Asian people are more likely than New Zealand Europeans to experience gambling harm.⁹
30. These disproportionate statistics can, in part, be attributed to the concentration of certain groups, such as Māori, in areas of higher socio-economic deprivation, where EGMs and gambling venues are more densely clustered.⁴ This is reflected in the following evidence:
- In areas of higher socio-economic deprivation, the prevalence of problem gambling is three times higher than in areas with lower levels of deprivation.³
 - A disproportionate share of overall gambling expenditure comes from more deprived areas, where people spend, on average, three times more on Class 4 gambling than those in the least deprived areas.⁴
31. Higher rates of gambling harm among Māori can also be attributed to the impacts of colonisation, which have entrenched disadvantages such as limited access to education and employment, poverty and discrimination. As a result, these inequities have led to a disproportionate representation of Māori in socioeconomically deprived areas, where more EGMs exist, thus increasing the pathways for experiencing gambling harm.²⁴

Gambling Harm Support

32. There are no consistent screening practices for problem gambling in Aotearoa NZ, making it difficult to accurately determine the scale of gambling-related harm in Ōpōtiki. National estimates suggest just 16% of people experiencing moderate-risk or problem gambling access support services.²⁵ Service utilisation data does not fully reflect the extent of gambling harm in communities. Barriers to accessing support include stigma, shame, and lack of awareness of available services.²⁶ Consequently, the true burden of gambling harm in Ōpōtiki is likely considerably higher than intervention service data alone indicate. Maintaining a strong harm-minimisation policy remains important in preventing harm before specialist intervention is required.

Conclusion

NPHS Te Manawa Taki supports Council retaining and strengthening its sinking lid approach to control the availability and accessibility of gambling opportunities within the district. We recommend prohibiting new Class 4 gambling venues, relocations, club mergers and new TAB venues. These measures are consistent with the evidence base for reducing gambling-related harm and are particularly important given Ōpōtiki's high levels of deprivation, majority Māori population and concentration of gambling opportunities within the most deprived communities. We encourage Council to continue its leadership role in protecting community wellbeing and promoting equitable health outcomes through a strong harm-minimisation policy. We also encourage exploration of alternative, sustainable community funding mechanisms that reduce reliance on gambling proceeds.

²⁴ Levy, M. (2015). *The impacts of gambling for Māori families and communities: A strengths-based approach to achieving Whānau Ora*. Te Rūnanga o Kirikiriroa Trust Inc. New Zealand.

²⁵ Ministry of Health. 2019. Strategy to Prevent and Minimise Gambling Harm 2019/20 to 2021/22. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

²⁶ Wieczorek, Ł., & Dąbrowska, K. (2018). What makes people with gambling disorder undergo treatment? Patient and professional perspectives. *Nordisk Alkohol- & Narkotikatidskrift : NAT*, 35(3), 196–214.

Nāku noa, nā,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L Lane', is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Dr Lynne Lane

Medical Officer of Health | Public Health Medicine Specialist
National Public Health Service Te Manawa Taki

30 July 2026

Tēnā koutou,

Submission on Draft Gambling and TAB Venues Policy 2026

Kō Collective Trust supports Ōpōtiki District Council's Draft Gambling and TAB Venues Policy 2026, particularly the continuation of the sinking lid approach, restrictions on new Class 4 gambling venues, and restrictions on new TAB venues. These measures help reduce gambling opportunities and minimise harm in our community.

As a kaupapa Māori provider working with whānau affected by gambling harm, we believe the draft policy provides a solid foundation but should be strengthened to better reflect current evidence, Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, and the realities of gambling harm in Ōpōtiki.

Why This Matters

Our review of Class 4 gambling data shows that Ōpōtiki experiences gambling losses averaging around \$2.67 million per year. That's over \$7,000 a day.

While the sinking lid approach appears to be reducing overall losses, gambling harm remains significant. Ōpōtiki's machines have become more harm-dense. Average spend per machine per quarter increased from approximately \$9,688 in 2015 to approximately \$11,885 in the latest available quarter, an increase of approximately 22.7% since 2015. This means that while fewer machines are operating, the remaining machines continue to extract significant losses from the community.

The equity analysis is even more compelling. In 2023, Ōpōtiki's Class 4 GMP was approximately \$289 per resident, compared with an indicative national figure of approximately \$200 per resident, meaning Ōpōtiki's per-resident losses were approximately 1.44 times the national average. Across 2008–2025, cumulative losses equated to approximately \$4,756 per resident or approximately \$6,054 per adult aged 15+.

Ōpōtiki is also a predominantly Māori district. The public health analysis records the district as 66.2% Māori, and calculates that, if losses were distributed proportionally by population, the Māori-attributable share of 2023 losses would be approximately \$1.93 million. Because the dataset is not ethnicity-resolved, this figure is indicative only; however, the analysis notes that it should be read as a conservative floor, not a ceiling, given the wider equity evidence that Māori experience above-proportional gambling harm.

For a district that is predominantly Māori and experiences higher levels of deprivation than many other areas, gambling harm is both a public health and equity issue.

Key Recommendations

1. Maintain and Strengthen the Sinking Lid Policy

The reduction in gaming machine numbers appears to be contributing to lower gambling losses. Council should retain the sinking lid approach and continue reducing gambling opportunities over time.

2. Embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori Equity

The final policy should include a Te Tiriti statement that commits Council to:

- Active protection of Māori wellbeing
- Partnership with iwi, hapū, and kaupapa Māori providers
- Equity-focused decision-making
- Consideration of Māori outcomes in all gambling policy decisions

3. Recognise Gambling Harm as a Public Health Issue

The policy should acknowledge that gambling harm extends beyond licensing matters and affects whānau wellbeing, financial security, mental health, and community resilience.

4. Use Current Evidence

Council should commit to updating its evidence base every three years using:

- Local gambling loss data
- Gaming machine and venue numbers
- Deprivation indicators
- Māori health and wellbeing data
- Online gambling trends
- Community and whānau feedback

5. Recognise Online Gambling

Gambling harm increasingly occurs through phones, apps, and offshore gambling websites. While Council's powers relate mainly to physical venues, the policy should acknowledge online gambling as part of the wider harm environment.

6. Explore Digital Harm Prevention

Council should investigate practical measures to reduce access to gambling through Council-funded digital infrastructure, including public Wi-Fi and community facilities.

7. Strengthen Harm Minimisation Requirements

Venue operators should demonstrate:

- Staff training
- Harm recognition and intervention procedures
- Referral pathways to local support services
- Cultural responsiveness when engaging with Māori and whānau

8. Improve Gambling Harm Signage

All gambling venues should display clear, visible, culturally appropriate information about gambling harm and available support services, including local kaupapa Māori providers.

9. Strengthen Relocation and Merger Controls

Any relocation or merger application should consider:

- Proximity to schools, marae, health services, community facilities, and MSD offices
- Deprivation levels
- Potential impacts on Māori and vulnerable communities
- Cumulative gambling exposure

10. Improve Transparency Around Community Returns

Council should seek clearer reporting on how gambling proceeds generated in Ōpōtiki are returned to local communities and whether those returns contribute to community wellbeing and harm prevention.

11. Establish a Local Gambling Harm Dashboard

Council should monitor and publicly report on:

- Number of venues
- Number of gaming machines
- Gambling losses
- Per-capita gambling expenditure
- Community grant returns
- Equity indicators
- Local gambling harm trends

Conclusion

KŌ Kollektive Trust supports the overall direction of the Draft Gambling and TAB Venues Policy, including the sinking lid approach and restrictions on new gambling venues. However, the final policy should be strengthened to:

- Embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Recognise gambling harm as a public health issue
- Address Māori and equity impacts
- Respond to online gambling harms
- Strengthen harm minimisation measures
- Improve transparency and accountability
- Use current local evidence to guide decisions

We encourage Council to adopt the policy only after these improvements have been incorporated.

Nāku noa, nā

Nita Walker

For and on behalf of **KŌ Kollektive Trust**