
Hearings Committee - Bylaws and Policies

Keeping of Animals Bylaw

MINUTES

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Consultation Hearing held in the Council Chambers, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, The Octagon, Dunedin on Monday 21 September 2026, commencing at 9:30 am.

PRESENT

Chairperson Cr Mandy Mayhem

Members Cr Doug Hall Cr John Chambers

IN ATTENDANCE Paul Henderson (General Manager Corporate and Regulatory Services), Bonnie Wright (Manager Compliance Solutions), Tanya Morrison (Team Leader Environmental Health and Alcohol Licensing), Cazna Savell (Team Leader Animal Services), and Anne Gray (Business Advisor - Compliance Solutions)

Governance Support Officer Roxanne Davies

1 WELCOME

Attendees were welcomed to the hearing for the Keeping of Animals Bylaw. The Chair, Cr Mandy Mayhem, and panel members Cr John Chambers and Cr Doug Hall were introduced, along with staff and expert panel members. Housekeeping and health and safety information was provided before the hearing commenced.

2 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the need to stand aside from decision-making when a conflict arose between their role as an elected representative and any private or other external interest they might have.

Moved (Cr Mandy Mayhem/Cr Doug Hall):

That the Committee:

- a) **Notes** the Elected Members' Interest Register attached as Attachment A; and
- b) **Confirms** the proposed management plan for Elected Members' Interests.

Motion carried (CH/2026/017)

PART A REPORTS

4 LATE SUBMISSION

A late submission was received. The panel was asked if there were any questions about accepting the late submission; there were none.

Moved (Cr Mandy Mayhem/Cr Doug Hall):

That the Committee:

- a) **Accepts** the late submission.

Motion carried (CH/2026/018)

4 SPEAKING SCHEDULE

A report from Governance provided a schedule of submitters who wished to speak to their submissions before the Committee.

The following submitters presented to the Committee:

Jane Dawber - Dunedin Beekeepers Club - 1311688

Ms Jane Dawber, President of the Dunedin Beekeepers Club, spoke in support of retaining the current provisions relating to bees within the Keeping of Animals Bylaw. She highlighted the importance of bees for pollination, food production, biodiversity and the local economy and advised that the Club supports responsible beekeeping through education, swarm collection, community engagement, and biosecurity initiatives. Ms Dawber noted that existing self-regulation and education measures are working effectively and that the Club has the skills and resources to assist with bee-related issues. She also outlined challenges facing the sector, including declining hive numbers, varroa mite infestations, climate change impacts, and biosecurity threats, while confirming that the beekeeping industry is currently experiencing difficult economic conditions.

Ms Dawber responded to questions.

Moved (Cr Mandy Mayhem/Cr John Chambers):

That the Committee:

Adjourns the meeting.

Motion carried (CH/2026/019)

The meeting adjourned at 09.46 am and reconvened at 09.49 am.

Sharon McKenzie-Lequeux - 1311077

Ms Sharon McKenzie-Lequeux supported stronger controls on roaming cats and requested that cats be subject to the bylaw's containment requirements. She raised concerns regarding public health risks associated with toxoplasmosis, the impact of cat fouling on private property, and the difficulty of enforcing the current nuisance provisions where cat ownership cannot be identified. Ms McKenzie-Lequeux requested the removal of the exemption for cats from the containment requirements and shared personal experiences of cat fouling and attacks on her chickens by a roaming cat. She discussed challenges associated with funding toxoplasmosis research and acknowledged that not all people exposed to the disease develop symptoms.

Ms McKenzie-Lequeux responded to questions.

Rosie Olsen and Rhys Millar - Predator Free Dunedin (PFD) - 1312237

Ms Rosie Olsen and Mr Rhys Millar, on behalf of Predator Free Dunedin (PFD), spoke in support of including measures to promote responsible cat ownership within the Keeping of Animals Bylaw. They presented survey data indicating strong public support for measures such as microchipping, desexing, limits on cat numbers, and keeping cats indoors at night, and noted that 31 councils already include cat-related provisions in their bylaws. PFD advocated for defining responsible cat companionship through microchipping, registration, desexing, reasonable cat numbers, and reasonable containment measures, while emphasising that this was not a choice between cats and wildlife. They highlighted PFD's partnerships delivering subsidised microchipping clinics, ongoing predator-free initiatives, and the complementary role of the bylaw in supporting responsible ownership alongside feral cat management. They outlined potential exemptions for registered breeders and discussed reported positive outcomes from Wellington's cat management approach.

Ms Olsen and Mr Millar responded to questions.

Dr Jessica Walker on behalf of Dr Arnja Dale via AVL and Laura Vander Kley – RNZSPCA – 1312242

Dr Jessica Walker (SPCA New Zealand) spoke via Zoom in support of stronger cat management provisions. She advised that SPCA receives approximately 20,000 cats and kittens nationally each year and requested requirements for desexing, microchipping and registration, recognition of cat-related nuisances, and improved complaint tracking. Reference was made to Wellington City Council's cat bylaw and SPCA's guidance for local government.

Dr Walker responded to questions.

Chelsea McGaw and Sue Maturin - Forest and Bird Protection Society NZ - 1312218

Ms McGaw and Ms Maturin spoke in support of stronger cat management provisions, including mandatory microchipping and registration, compulsory desexing with exemptions, and a limit of three cats per household. They highlighted the impacts of roaming cats on native wildlife and biodiversity, referred to evidence of cat activity in sensitive ecological areas, and recommended a phased implementation approach. Support was also expressed for improved reporting pathways for cat nuisance complaints. Concerns were raised regarding the feeding of unowned cats and the associated nuisance effects within neighbourhoods.

Ms McGaw and Ms Maturin responded to questions.

Moved (Cr Mandy Mayhem/Cr Doug Hall):

That the Committee:

Adjourns the meeting.

Motion carried (CH/2026/020)

The meeting adjourned at 10.50 am and reconvened at 11.06 am.

Prof. Yolanda van Heezik - University of Otago, Zoology Department – 1311807

Prof. van Heezik presented research on domestic cats in urban Dunedin, noting they are the city's most abundant predator, with an estimated density of 225 cats per square kilometre. She outlined the impacts of toxoplasmosis on human and animal health, advised that the average household has 1.3 cats, and suggested a limit of two cats per household. Prof. van Heezik also highlighted the increasing use of cat management bylaws by councils across New Zealand and noted that no effective vaccine currently exists for cats.

Prof. van Heezik responded to questions.

Moved (Cr Mandy Mayhem/Cr John Chambers):

That the Committee:

Adjourns the meeting.

Motion carried (CH/2026/021)

The meeting adjourned at 11.18 am and reconvened at 11.19 am.

Eleanor Linscott - Otago Federated Farmers – 1312221

Ms Linscott, speaking on behalf of Otago Federated Farmers via AVL, supported the inclusion of companion cat management measures, including microchipping and desexing, within the bylaw as a means of reducing rural biosecurity risks. Ms Linscott highlighted the impact of toxoplasmosis on sheep farming, noting the costs associated with vaccination programmes, and advocated for an education-led approach supported by bylaw provisions. She advised that unmanaged domestic cat breeding contributes to stray and feral cat populations and referenced research demonstrating the value of increasing owner awareness of cat roaming behaviour. Ms Linscott confirmed that while a sheep vaccine is available, there is currently no practical vaccines for cats.

Ms Linscott responded to questions.

6 KEEPING OF ANIMALS BYLAW REVIEW - RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the report summarising submissions and feedback received during consultation on the Keeping of Animals Bylaw, along with staff analysis and recommendations.

Staff presented a summary of the 26 submissions received during public consultation. The draft bylaw and Statement of Proposal had previously been approved by Council following early engagement, with feedback generally divided and primarily focused on provisions relating to roosters and cats.

Roosters

Staff advised that 48 urban rooster permits had been issued over the past six years, with around 25 complaints received this year and 29 the previous year. Permits are complaint-driven, include a site visit, and may require measures to reduce nuisance impacts. The Committee agreed to retain the current approach, with permits available in urban areas and no changes recommended to the existing rural and rural-residential provisions.

Bees

Staff advised that information on beekeeping available through the DCC website is limited. The Committee supported retaining the existing provisions and noted opportunities to improve public education through engagement with local beekeeping groups. Concern was also expressed about declining hive numbers and the importance of bees to biodiversity and food production.

Cats

Staff reported that four cat-related complaints had been received this year, compared with five in 2024, and that approximately 19,400 cats are registered on the Companion Animal Register in Dunedin. The Committee noted the challenges of enforcing cat-specific bylaw provisions, including resourcing requirements and the risk of creating unenforceable rules, and that Animal Services is funded primarily through dog control fees.

The Committee considered examples of cat management approaches used elsewhere and noted that the current bylaw already contains provisions that can address animal-related issues where required. In light of the significant number of submissions received on cat management, the Committee agreed that further consultation and consideration of options to promote responsible cat ownership should be undertaken, specifically around compulsory microchipping and de-sexing domestic cats (with some exemptions).

Moved (Cr Mandy Mayhem/Cr Doug Hall):

That the Committee:

Adjourns the meeting.

Motion carried (CH/2026/022)

The meeting adjourned at 12.46 pm and reconvened at 1.08pm.

Moved (Cr Mandy Mayhem/Cr Doug Hall):

That the Committee:

- a) **Considered** the submissions received on the proposed Keeping of Animals Bylaw, including the staff analysis and recommendations, and deliberated on the amendments requested by submitters through both written and oral submissions.
- b) **Recommends** that Council approves a revised statement of proposal on matters relating to cats for the Keeping of Animals Bylaw review for further consultation.
- c) **Recommends** that Council approves a revised draft Keeping of Animals Bylaw for further consultation.
- d) **Requests** staff to provide information on costs associated with increased education, microchipping and desexing for responsible cat ownership.

Motion carried (CH/2026/023)

The meeting concluded at 1.10 pm.