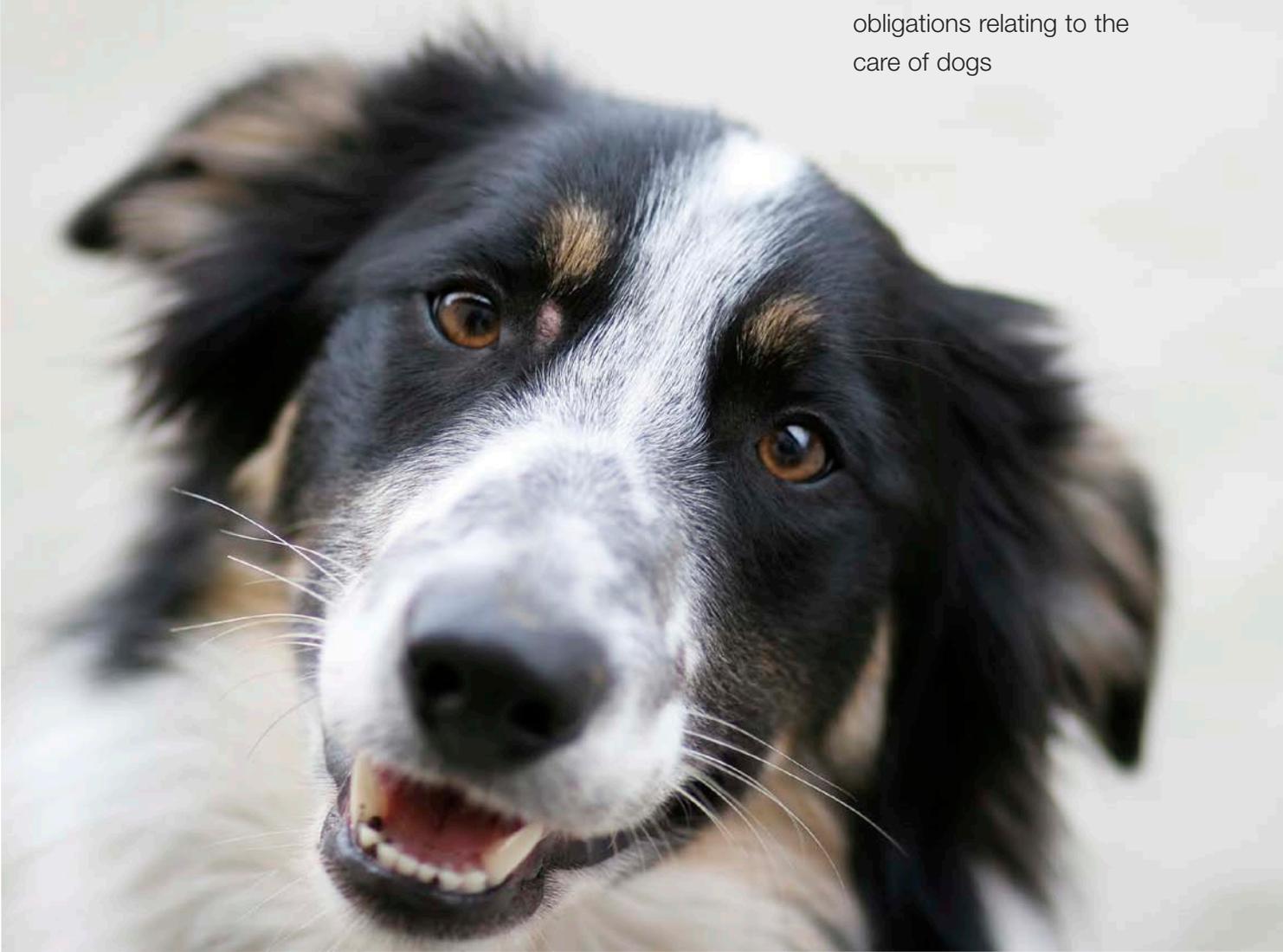




THE NEW ZEALAND  
**COMPANION ANIMAL**  
COUNCIL INC

## **A Summary of the Code of Welfare for Dogs**

Establishing the fundamental obligations relating to the care of dogs



# Foreword

**This booklet is produced as a summary of the Animal Welfare (Dogs) Code of Welfare 2010 (the code) and is not a full reproduction of the code. The code contains additional information, and can be accessed at [www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare).**

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) imposes obligations on every person who owns or is in charge of a dog. The code has been issued pursuant to section 75 of the Act and provides guidance on how to comply with the legislative requirements. However, the code does not provide an exhaustive list of the Act's requirements, and owners and those in charge of dogs should note that they must comply with the minimum standards in the code *and* the general provisions in the Act. A copy of the Act is accessible at [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz).

Dog owners also have a number of obligations under the Dog Control Act 1996, which are summarised at the rear of

this booklet. Further information on the Act is available at [www.dia.govt.nz/dogcontrol](http://www.dia.govt.nz/dogcontrol).

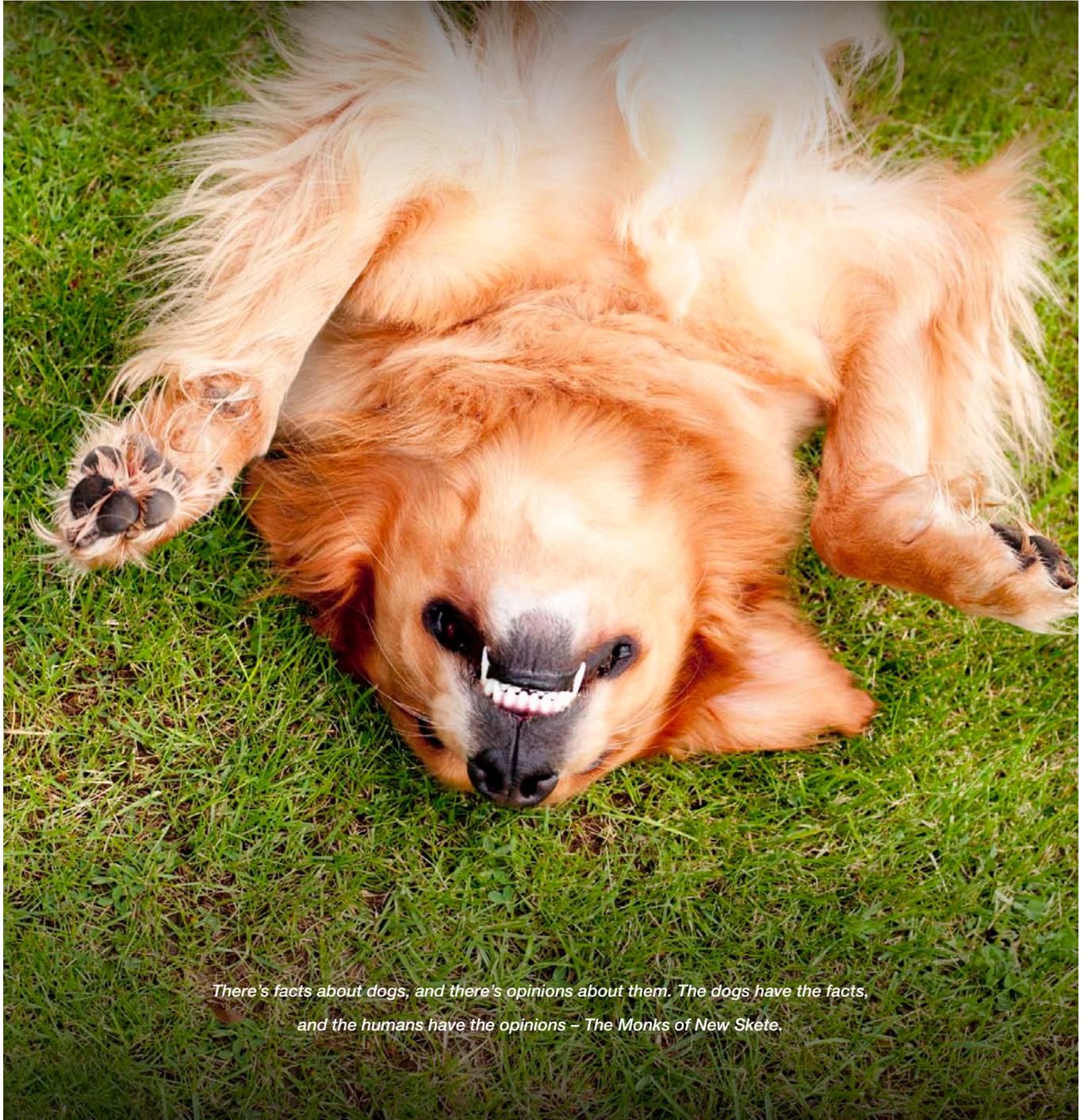
The code provides for the physical, health and behavioural needs (as defined in section 4 of the Act) of animals. These needs include:

- proper and sufficient food and water
  - adequate shelter
  - opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour
  - physical handling in a manner which minimises the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
  - protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, any significant injury or disease
- being a need which, in each case, is appropriate to the species, environment and circumstances of the animal.

The code also takes account of:

- good practice
- scientific knowledge
- available technology.





*There's facts about dogs, and there's opinions about them. The dogs have the facts,  
and the humans have the opinions – The Monks of New Skete.*

# Introduction

## What is the purpose of the code?

Owners and persons in charge of dogs have a responsibility to understand and meet the welfare needs of their dogs. The purpose of this code is to encourage all those responsible for dogs to adopt the highest standards of husbandry, care and handling.

The code sets minimum standards for the care and management of dogs. It includes recommendations for best practice to encourage standards of care better than just the minimum.

## Who does this code apply to?

This code applies to all persons responsible for the welfare of dogs, including dog breeders, those who show dogs, keep dogs as companions (pets), and use dogs for sport, as working animals, or for any other reason.

## What animals does this code apply to?

The code applies to *all* dogs, including those kept as companions, for breeding, sport or for working purposes. Examples of working and sport dogs include disability-assist dogs, dogs used for guarding, dogs used for livestock management, sled-pulling dogs, racing greyhounds, dogs and hounds used for hunting and agility dogs.

This code does not cover dog fighting, which is an offence under the Act.

## What happens if I do not follow the minimum standards in this code?

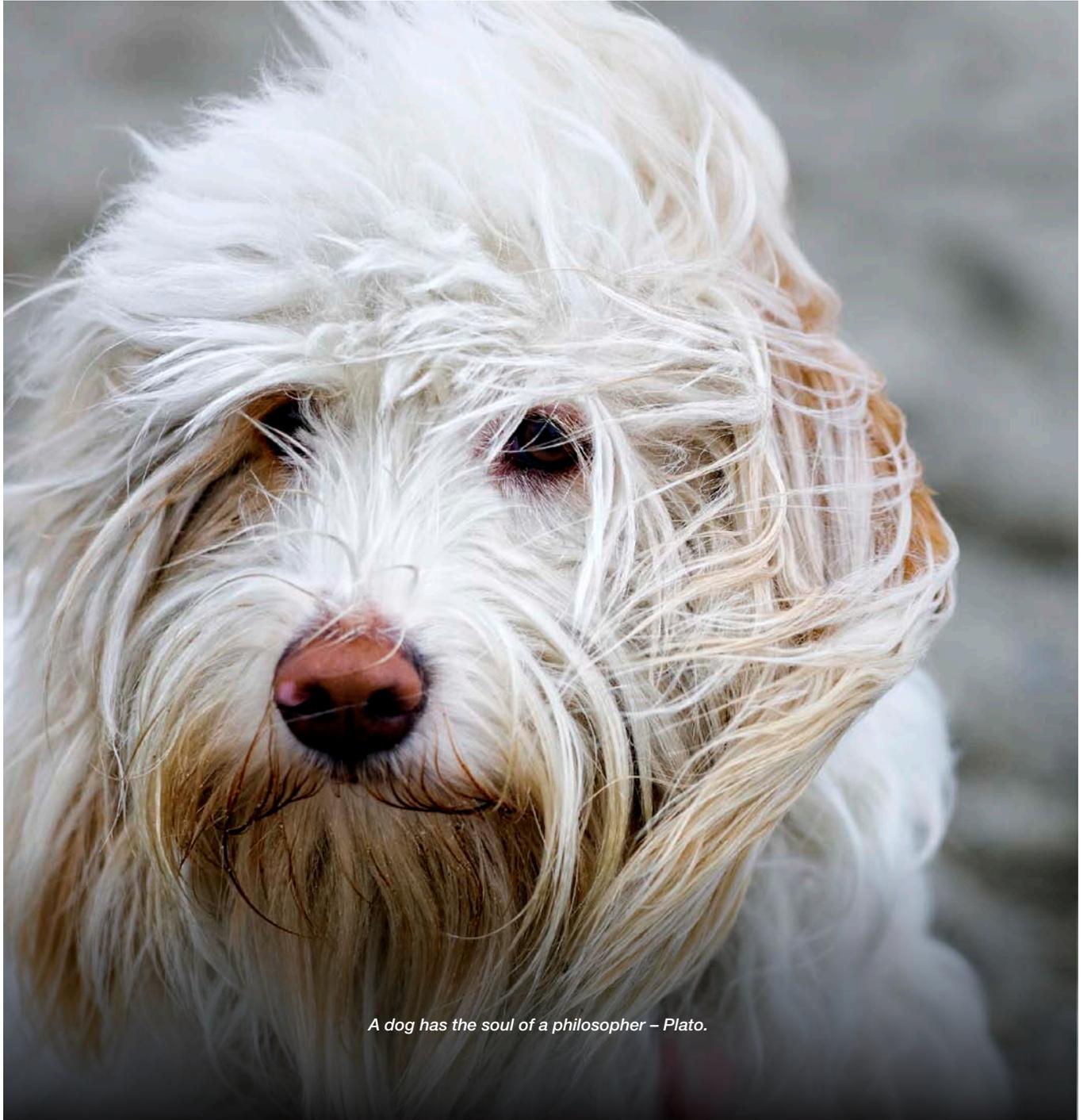
Failure to meet a minimum standard in this code may be used as evidence to support a prosecution for an offence under the Animal Welfare Act. A person who is charged with an offence can defend him or herself by showing that he or she has equalled or exceeded the minimum standards in this code.

The recommendations for best practice in this code have no legal effect and are included to encourage higher standards of animal welfare.

**How does this code relate to other codes of welfare?**

Other codes of welfare in existence or under development provide minimum standards and recommendations for best practice in particular circumstances, such as temporary housing or use of animals in film and entertainment. These should be consulted where appropriate.





*A dog has the soul of a philosopher – Plato.*

## Adopting/Purchasing a Dog

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Before acquiring a dog, intending dog owners should seek advice from experts such as reputable breeders, veterinarians or the New Zealand Kennel Club on breed and lifestyle suitability, potential inherited medical problems and behavioural tendencies. Intending owners should be realistic about their ability to provide for the dog's needs, including its need for company.
- (b) When acquiring a dog, the new owner should be provided with information about:
  - i) settling the dog into its new environment;
  - ii) feeding requirements from puppy to adulthood;
  - iii) ongoing care;
  - iv) behaviour training including basic toilet training;
  - v) vaccinations, flea and worming treatments;
  - vi) current feeding regime, along with one or two days' supply of food, and an understanding of the importance of making gradual changes to the diet.
- (c) New owners should attend puppy or young-dog training courses to learn how to train a puppy to come when called, to sit and stay and to behave when visitors arrive.

## Body Condition

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) If a dog is exhibiting a body score "thin", as defined in Appendix I, "Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs", to the code, in conjunction with any other physical or behavioural indicators of malnutrition, appropriate remedial action through veterinary attention or improved nutrition must be taken.
- (b) If a dog is exhibiting a body score "grossly obese", as defined in Appendix I, "Assessment of Body Condition of Dogs", to the code, veterinary advice must be sought and remedial action taken to decrease body weight using a planned exercise programme to increase energy expenditure and dietary modification to reduce energy intake.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) A dog's body should be maintained at "ideal" as defined in Appendix I in the code.
- (b) If a dog is "heavy" according to Appendix I in the code, appropriate remedial action should be taken to decrease body weight using a

planned exercise programme to increase energy expenditure and dietary modification to reduce energy intake.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Obese dogs face serious health risks and are predisposed to conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Excessive weight can also damage joints, reduce mobility and exacerbate arthritis. The life expectancy of an obese dog is 25% less than that of a normal dog.

## Water

### MINIMUM STANDARD

Dogs must have frequent access to water, appropriate to their needs, that is palatable to the dog, not harmful to health and available in quantities sufficient to maintain vital bodily functions.

## Food and Feeding

### MINIMUM STANDARD

Dogs must receive adequate quantities of nutritious food to enable each dog to:

- (i) maintain good health;
- (ii) meet its physiological demands, including those resulting from the level of physical activity, growth, pregnancy, lactation and exposure to cold; and
- (iii) avoid metabolic and nutritional disorders.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Puppies from time of weaning to four months of age should be fed small quantities at regular intervals three to four times throughout the day.
- (b) Puppies from the age of four to nine months should be fed two to three times a day.
- (c) Dogs over the age of nine months should be fed at least once a day; however, the optimum frequency of feeding will vary depending on the breed and the dog's level of activity. The feeding regime should be modified as necessary to maintain optimum body weight and health. If there is any doubt concerning feeding regimes, advice should be sought from an appropriate source.

- (d) Where a dog's body weight and condition score do not meet the norm for the breed, and particularly where a dog is overweight, expert advice should be obtained about a weight management programme.
- (e) Prescription diets for certain medical conditions should be fed as instructed by a veterinarian or other experienced person.

## Sanitation

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Faeces and urine must not be permitted to accumulate to such an extent that they pose a threat to the health or welfare of the dog.
- (b) Food and water containers must be kept clean of contamination that may pose a threat to the health or welfare of the dog.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Kennels and runs should be checked on a daily basis and any contaminated bedding, faeces and urine removed.
- (b) Where larger and/or changing populations of dogs are kept, hygiene measures should be of a high standard to minimise the risk of cross-infection.

## Containment

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Dogs must not be contained or tethered in a way that causes them injury or distress.
- (b) Collars must fit comfortably without damaging the skin or restricting breathing.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Owners should keep their dog under control at all times. This is best achieved by providing a secure but confined environment where dogs can roam. If a property is not appropriately fenced then the dog should be kept indoors or provided with an outdoor kennel with an attached run or a tether.
- (b) Dogs should not be left unattended or routinely tethered by choke-chains or other devices which tighten around the neck.
- (c) Collars should be checked frequently, particularly in young growing dogs, and loosened if they become tight to prevent effects such as chafing of the skin or restriction of breathing.

## Kennelling, Shelter and Ventilation

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Dogs must be provided with sheltered and dry sleeping quarters.
- (b) Measures must be taken to enable dogs to keep warm in cold weather.
- (c) Sleeping quarters must be large enough to allow the dog to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably.
- (d) Dogs must be able to urinate and defaecate away from the sleeping area.
- (e) Ventilation and shade must be provided in situations where dogs are likely to experience heat distress.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Kennels should be constructed of solid, non-permeable materials, preferably raised above ground level, be stable, draught-free and of sufficient size to comfortably house each dog.
- (b) Dogs should not be required to sleep on concrete or metal surfaces. Where kennel and run areas are made of these materials dogs should be provided with a raised platform, shelf or other type of bed made of a softer material on which to sleep.

- (c) Housing should be sited to provide shelter from cold, wet and windy weather, and to provide shade on hot sunny days, with the ideal area providing both shade and sun. Shade is especially important during the hottest part of the summer when artificial shade should be provided where no natural shade exists.
- (d) Where a number of dogs are kept together, such as in a boarding kennels or pet shops, ventilation should be controlled to manage dampness and noxious odours and to minimise the airborne spread of infectious diseases such as kennel cough.
- (e) Dogs should only be housed communally if they are known to interact well together, or are kept under observation to ensure that they do not fight.
- (f) Kennels and kennels with runs attached should be no smaller than the minimum kennel and run sizes given in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Recommended minimum sizes for kennels and kennels with runs attached**

<b>Size of dog</b>	<b>Kennel only</b>	<b>Kennel plus run</b>
Small (<7 kg)	900mm x 700mm	500mm x 500mm plus 600mm x 1m
Medium (7-20 kg)	1.2m x 800mm	600mm x 700mm plus 800mm x 1m
Large (21-40 kg)	1m x 1.5m	800mm x 800mm plus 1m x 800mm
Extra large (>40 kg)	1m x 2m	1.2m x 1.2m plus 1.2m x 2.4m

Please note this is guidance only and expert advice should be sought.

## **Exercise**

### **MINIMUM STANDARD**

- (a) Dogs must receive daily exercise sufficient to maintain their health and well-being.
- (b) Dogs must be supervised at all times when exercising with exercise equipment such as treadmills, to limit the risk of injury or over-exercise.

### **RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE**

- (a) Dogs should have at least 60 minutes every day off the lead or chain or out of the run, with freedom to explore their immediate environment. However, owners should seek advice on the appropriate amount of exercise for their dog according to its age, breed and individual circumstances.

- (b) Dogs being exercised should be under control at all times, or exercised in an enclosed area where they cannot come to harm.
- (c) People training dogs for agility competitions or other impact sports should consider the stage of skeletal development, follow a structured training process and seek advice from skilled professionals. This is particularly important for dogs under the age of 18 months.
- (d) The level of exercise should be appropriate for the age and level of fitness of the dog.
- (e) Bitches should not be worked or exercised hard in the last two weeks of pregnancy.
- (f) Bitches should not be worked until their puppies are close to weaning.

## Bitches in Heat and Mating

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### INTRODUCTION

Bitches generally come into heat (oestrus) at intervals of about six to ten months. Each heat period lasts approximately three weeks.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Only dogs in good health and physical condition should be used for breeding.
- (b) Bitches should not be intentionally mated
  - i) at less than twelve months of age; or
  - ii) on their first heat.
- (c) Veterinary advice should be sought before
  - i) mating bitches of seven years of age or more; or
  - ii) mating bitches for the first time at five years of age or more.
- (d) Bitches should be well grown before mating.
- (e) Bitches should not be mated so as to whelp and rear litters on consecutive seasons.
- (f) Bitches in heat should be carefully supervised or securely contained to prevent physical contact with male dogs and unwanted matings.
- (g) Preventative health care in the form of vaccination and parasite control should be carried out on bitches and dogs to be used for breeding, under veterinary advice.

- (h) Mating dogs should be allowed to separate naturally.

## Whelping

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### INTRODUCTION

The length of gestation in the dog is about 63 days. Information about the stages of pregnancy, whelping and lactation can be obtained from experts such as veterinarians and dog breeders.

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Bitches that are due to whelp, or are whelping, must be provided with a suitable whelping area in a safe, warm and quiet environment.
- (b) Bitches that are due to whelp must be inspected frequently to ensure that they are not experiencing whelping difficulties.
- (c) If a bitch is exhibiting any signs that indicate that she is experiencing difficulties at any point during whelping, expert assistance must be sought.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) If whelping boxes are used, they should be placed in a warm but well-ventilated environment. Advice on design should

be obtained from an expert such as an experienced dog breeder, veterinarian or veterinary nurse.

- (b) The bedding material should be replaced after the birth has taken place and as frequently as needed to keep the area clean, but without causing unnecessary disruption to the dam and puppies. Cleaning will need to be more frequent as the puppies get older and the dam is less able to clean up after them.
- (c) After whelping, the dam should be allowed access to her puppies until the puppies are fully weaned.
- (d) Unweaned puppies should be individually checked each day and regularly treated for parasites.

## Weaning

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Puppies should remain with the dam to suckle during the first three weeks.
- (b) Supplementary feeding should not be commenced before the puppies are three weeks of age, except with veterinary advice in circumstances in which the bitch is unable to supply adequate milk to feed some or all of the pups.

- (c) Puppies should not be permanently removed from the dam to be weaned before four weeks of age. They should be given access to the dam for suckling until six weeks of age and removed before this only where the dam shows aggression to the puppies or where ongoing lactation could damage the bitch's health.

## Supply of Puppies

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Puppies must be able to feed independently and be in good health when made available for sale or rehoming, unless:
  - i) they have been orphaned and must be rehomed to ensure that they are able to obtain milk from another bitch or be hand raised; or
  - ii) early removal from the bitch is deemed necessary by a veterinarian.
- (b) People supplying puppies must, at the time of supply, disclose to persons receiving them, any known inherited disorders that the puppy or adult dog may be predisposed to which may cause health and/or welfare problems during the dog's lifetime.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Puppies should be at least eight weeks of age and should have begun socialisation with other dogs and humans when made available for sale or rehoming.
- (b) Owners of puppies to be rehomed need to be satisfied that the puppies are capable of independent life before moving them to new homes.
- (c) People selling dogs should allow the intending new owner to interact with the pup, its littermates and its mother, and father if possible.

## Desexing

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### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Dogs not intended for breeding should be desexed before puberty.
- (b) Dogs that have or are likely to develop known inherited faults should be desexed as early as practicable once the condition has been identified.

## Breeding

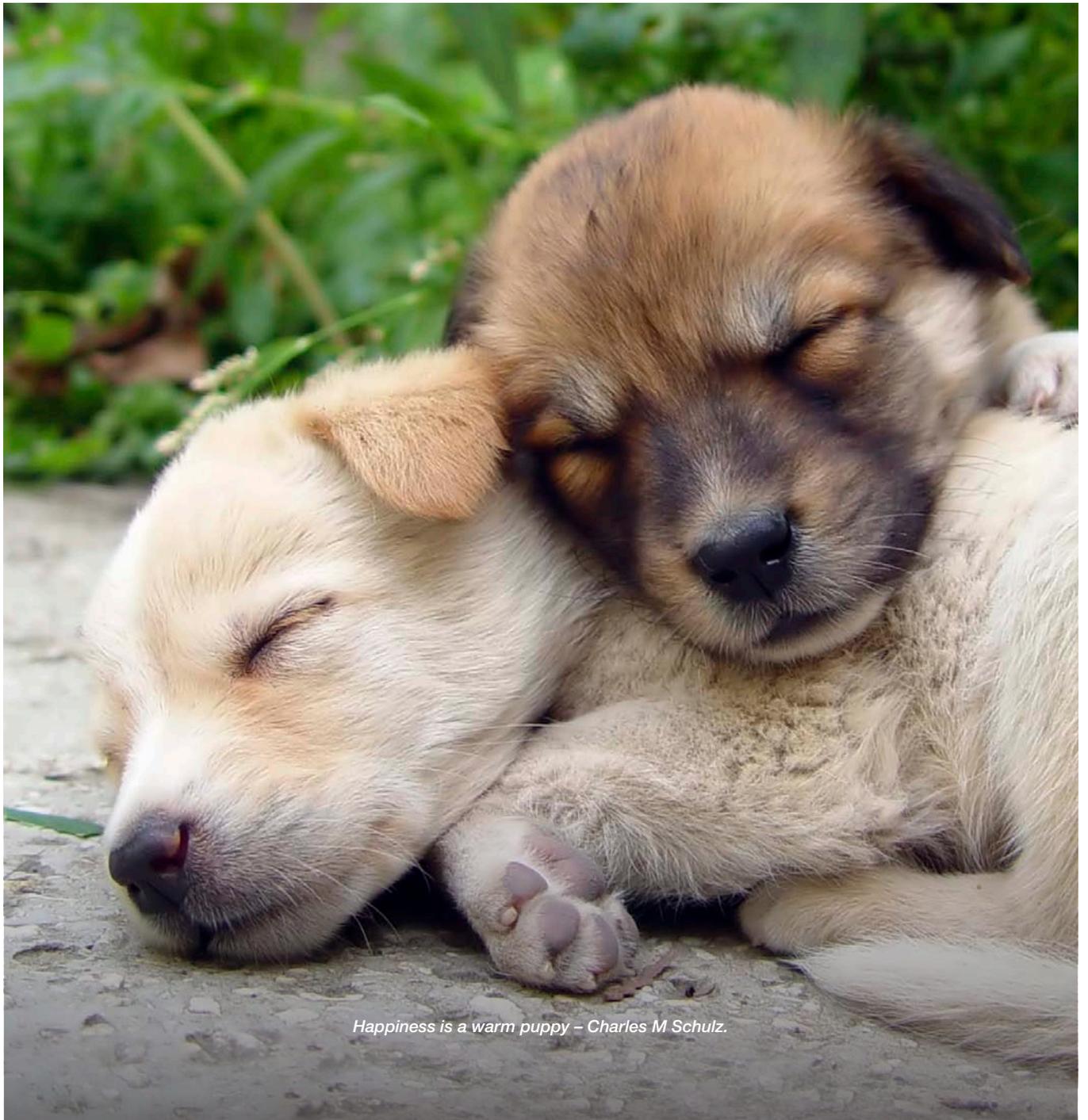
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### MINIMUM STANDARD

Breeders must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the genetic make-up of both sire and dam will not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of known inherited disorders.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Breeders should report the occurrence of inherited disorders to the New Zealand Kennel Club Canine Health committee to assist progress in reducing these disorders and identify carrier dogs.
- (b) Breeders should follow a documented scheme that allows for monitoring and eventual prevention of known inherited disorders.
- (c) Dogs and bitches should not be kept together if there is a risk of accidental mating.
- (d) All dogs being considered for mating should be tested for inherited disorders where such tests are available. For those inherited disorders where no suitable test is available, occurrence of inherited disorders in their genealogy should be assessed. Veterinary or other appropriate advice should be sought in this respect.



*Happiness is a warm puppy – Charles M Schulz.*

## III Health and Injury

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### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Owners, or persons in charge of dogs, who observe their dogs to be showing:
  - (i) signs of significant acute pain, suffering and distress; or
  - (ii) signs of chronic pain, suffering and distress; or
  - (iii) signs of rapidly deteriorating health; or
  - (iv) serious injurymust seek immediate attention from a veterinarian or appropriately trained animal health practitioner.
- (b) If a dog is suffering from pain or distress that is extreme or untreatable, then the animal must be euthanased.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) All ill or injured dogs should be examined by a veterinarian.
- (b) An attempt should be made to locate the owner or person in charge of dogs that are found injured.
- (c) Dogs of unknown ownership which are observed to be significantly injured should receive urgent veterinary attention to alleviate pain.

- (d) A veterinarian should be consulted immediately if bleeding is profuse or persists for more than a few minutes.
- (e) Owners and persons in charge who know that their dogs will be distant from veterinary care (e.g. when hunting, at sport or working) should carry a first aid kit appropriate for dogs.

## Illness Related to Diet

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### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Veterinary attention should be sought for any dog that shows signs of food sensitivity which include, but are not limited to, skin disease (especially scratching or dermatitis), vomiting and diarrhoea.
- (b) Veterinary attention should be sought for any dog showing extreme or unexpected changes in appetite. Both decreased and increased appetite can indicate underlying disease.
- (c) Dogs' teeth and gums should be checked regularly by their owners and appropriate action taken where tooth and gum health deteriorate.

## Infectious Diseases

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### MINIMUM STANDARD

Dogs known to be infected with an infectious disease must be carefully supervised and securely isolated so as to prevent infecting other dogs.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Dogs should be provided with protection against infectious disease by vaccination according to veterinary recommendations.
- (b) When puppies are six to eight weeks of age, their owners should seek veterinary advice on a vaccination programme against relevant infectious diseases.
- (c) Puppies should be kept away from public places until approximately two weeks after their final vaccinations, but it is also important not to compromise socialisation during this period. Contact with other dogs should be limited to those known to be vaccinated, and puppies should be restricted to areas that are not accessible to unvaccinated dogs.
- (d) Preventative health plans for breeding bitches and their litters should be carried out according to veterinary recommendations.

## Parasitic Disease

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### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Dogs should be given regular and effective treatments to prevent internal and external parasite burdens, as recommended by veterinarians or product manufacturers.
- (b) Bitches should be treated for roundworms during pregnancy to prevent their spread to the pups.
- (c) Puppies should be wormed with an effective roundworm treatment at two-week intervals from two to 12 weeks of age. Thereafter they should be wormed every three months, using a broad spectrum wormer, or as recommended by a veterinarian.
- (d) If dogs are tethered or in runs on bare earth, they should regularly be moved to fresh ground and the area kept clear of faeces, to prevent the build-up of hookworms.
- (e) Dogs should be checked regularly for signs of infestation with external parasites e.g. scratching, chewing or hair loss, and should be treated appropriately.
- (f) Dogs to be wormed should only be treated with products intended for dogs.

## Diseases of the Skin

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### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

Dogs with minimal hair covering and/or pale skin on the nose or ears should be protected from sunburn and skin cancer by keeping them out of direct sunlight during the sunniest times of the day. The application of appropriate animal sunscreen on nose and ears is helpful but not fully preventative.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

There are many causes of skin disease in dogs including allergies, parasitic diseases, fungal infection such as ringworm, bacterial infection, nutritional imbalances and hormonal disorders. Few of these conditions are resolved without appropriate treatment. Delays in seeking help may lead to worsening of the condition as the dog damages its skin further by chewing and scratching, and to complications such as secondary bacterial infections which may then require additional treatment.

## Harmful Substances

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### INTRODUCTION

As natural scavengers, dogs are susceptible to accidental poisoning by many substances e.g. vertebrate pest baits, poisonous plants, illegal drugs, prescription medicines, household cleaners, and contaminated water. Dogs can also be poisoned by eating carcasses of poisoned animals.

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Owners and persons in charge of dogs must take all practical steps to ensure that dogs are not exposed to poisons and harmful substances.
- (b) Owners and persons in charge of dogs known to have eaten a harmful substance or showing signs indicative of poisoning (e.g. tremors, fitting, frenzied behaviour, sudden vomiting, sudden drowsiness or collapse) must seek immediate veterinary attention.

## Dew Claws

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Where dew claws are to be removed from puppies by a person other than a veterinarian, it must be done before the eyes have started to open or before four days old, whichever comes first.
- (b) Where dew claws are removed by a person other than a veterinarian, that person must possess the knowledge, training and competence, in relation to that procedure, that is necessary to maintain the health and welfare of the pup.
- (c) Dew claws on dogs after their eyes have begun to open or after four days of age, must only be removed by a veterinarian.
- (d) If dew claw removal is not performed, care must be taken to manage any consequential risks to animal health and welfare.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Jointed dew claws should not be routinely removed.
- (b) Dew claw removal, when conducted, should be carried out by a veterinarian.

## Tail Docking

### INTRODUCTION

Tail docking is a painful procedure when performed on puppies older than four days of age. The method of removal may also influence the pain experienced. Veterinarians can provide advice on whether tail docking is needed for particular dogs.

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Tails may only be shortened or removed by using a tail band –
  - (i) in puppies that are less than four days old in which the eyes have not started to open; and
  - (ii) by a person who possesses the appropriate knowledge, training and competency necessary to do so effectively, and who is acting under a documented quality assurance scheme that assures compliance with this minimum standard; and
  - (iii) the remaining length of the tail must be sufficient to avoid compromising health and welfare when the dog is mature.
- (b) Tails that need to be shortened or removed to manage existing injury or disease, must only be shortened or removed by a veterinarian using appropriate pain relief.

### **RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE**

- (a) Tail docking should not be performed at all unless it is required for treatment of an existing injury or disease.
- (b) Injury of the tail can lead to serious complications and any injury to the tail, as with other injury, should be assessed by a veterinarian to determine the best course of treatment.

## **Care of Older Dogs**

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### **RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE**

- (a) Dogs over the age of seven years should be provided with a diet appropriate for their health.
- (b) Dogs over the age of seven years should receive regular veterinary checks to ensure that their health and welfare is maintained by early diagnosis and treatment of age-related diseases.

## **Debarking**

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### **MINIMUM STANDARD**

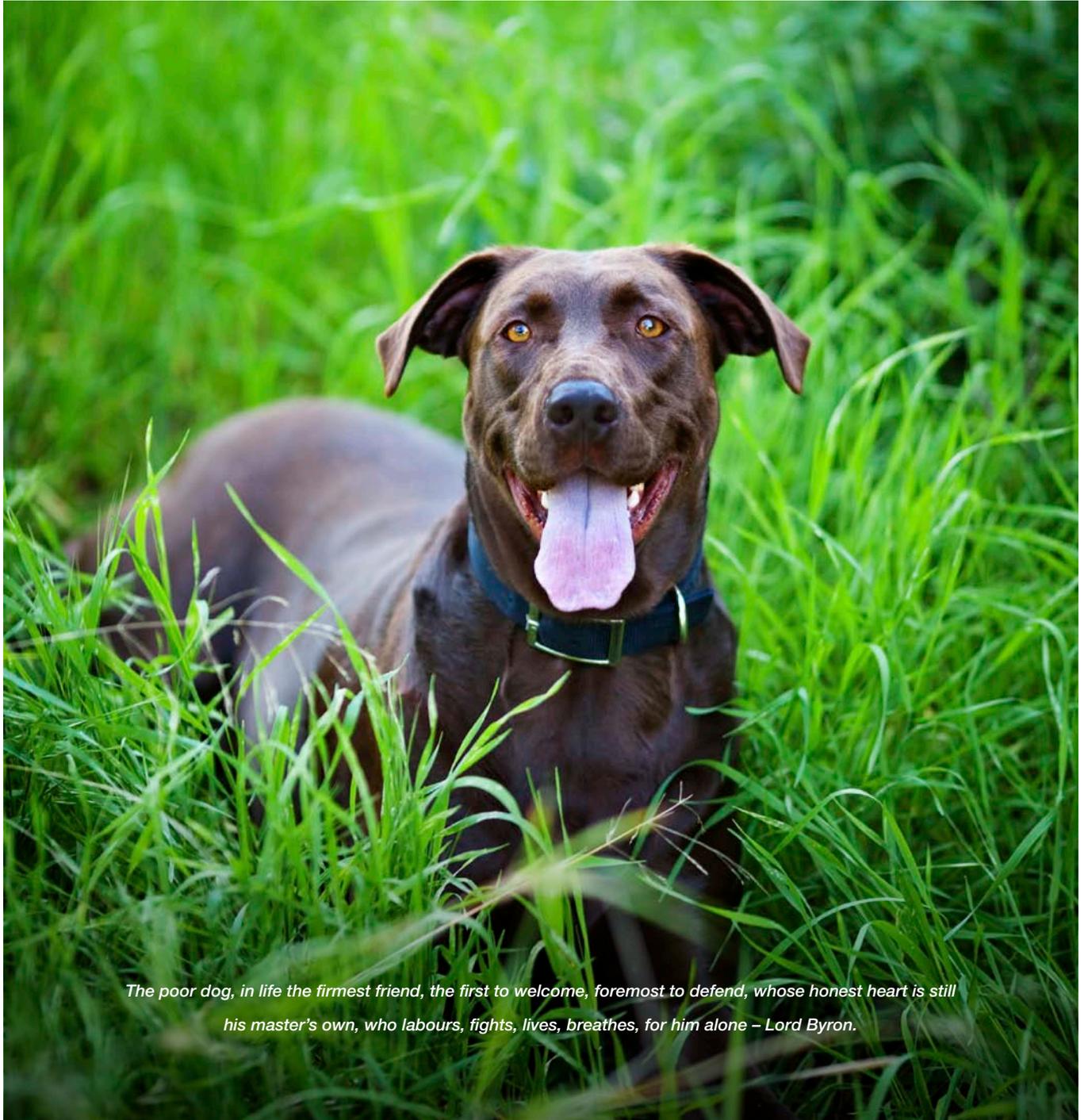
Dogs must only be taken to a veterinarian for debarking after other suitable means of treating inappropriate barking have been attempted and have failed.

## **Claws and Coat**

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### **MINIMUM STANDARD**

- (a) The coats of long-haired dogs must be groomed and/or clipped at a frequency that will prevent suffering and distress due to matting or infestation by parasites.
- (b) Claws must be clipped when necessary to avoid penetration of the skin and/or foot pads.



*The poor dog, in life the firmest friend, the first to welcome, foremost to defend, whose honest heart is still  
his master's own, who labours, fights, lives, breathes, for him alone – Lord Byron.*

## Training

### MINIMUM STANDARD

Training techniques must be appropriate for the individual dog.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Puppies should be well socialised to minimise the development of behavioural problems. Socialisation should be appropriate to the circumstances in which the individual dog will be kept as an adult (e.g. dogs likely to come into contact with livestock should be socialised accordingly).
- (b) Dogs should be given the opportunity to socialise with other dogs on a daily basis.
- (c) Dogs should be trained to minimise the risk of inappropriate behaviour and so that they are under control at all times.
- (d) Dogs should be trained or taken to reputable training classes from the age of 16 weeks to learn basic commands.
- (e) Appropriate advice (e.g. from a veterinarian, dog trainer or dog behaviourist) should be sought at the early stages of a behavioural problem.
- (f) Where an owner or person in charge of a dog is at all uncertain how the dog will

respond to other dogs, livestock or wildlife, the dog should be restrained in a manner that keeps all parties safe.

- (g) Training sessions should be short and regular and should be determined by the animal's reactions and condition, without over-working the animal.
- (h) The owner's dominant position should be enforced calmly and patiently using recognised techniques that provide positive reinforcement for acceptable behaviour as part of the training process. Dominance should not be established by physical punishment or processes that are psychologically harmful to the dog.



## Aids for Training

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Training aids, including electronic training devices, must not be used in a way that causes unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress to the dog.
- (b) Pinch or prong collars must not be used.
- (c) Muzzles must fit comfortably without chafing the skin or impeding breathing and must allow the dog to open its mouth sufficiently to enable panting or drinking.

### Electronic devices

#### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Electronic devices should be used carefully and only when other training methods have failed.
- (b) Operators of electronic devices should be trained and knowledgeable, aware of the early signs of distress in the dogs being trained, and able to alleviate these.
- (c) Electronic devices should not be used on dogs with a nervous disposition.
- (d) Electronic devices should only be activated during or immediately after (within a few seconds of) the offending behaviour.

- (e) Electronic devices should not be left on unsupervised dogs because they can cause serious harm if they malfunction or are accidentally remotely activated.
- (f) Electronic devices should only be used to control barking where the problem being addressed is intractable to other training methods.

### Choke chains

#### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Choke chains can be harmful if misused and owners and persons in charge should seek advice on their appropriate use.
- (b) Choke chains should be fitted so that they are comfortable and hang slack when not being used to correct the dog.
- (c) Choke chains should be used only during training sessions, when the dog is on a lead and supervised.

### Muzzles

#### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) There should be a period of preconditioning with supervision by the handler as dogs may initially find the muzzle frightening or distressing.
- (b) Trainers of racing dogs may use industry approved muzzles at their discretion.

## Transportation

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) Dogs must be provided with adequate ventilation when being carried in a vehicle.
- (b) Dogs must not be transported loose in a stock crate with livestock.
- (c) If dogs are carried in a purpose-built transport box fixed to a vehicle, it must be well-ventilated and free from exhaust fumes and road dust.
- (d) Except for working dogs at work, dogs must not be carried on the open rear of a moving vehicle unless they are secured or enclosed in a crate.
- (e) Dogs must not be left unattended in a vehicle in conditions where the dog is likely to suffer from heat stress.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Dogs should be transported using a specially designed, climate-controlled travelling crate if possible.
- (b) Dogs should not be carried in the closed boot of a car unless they are injured and this is the most appropriate manner in which to transport them over a short distance.

- (c) When dogs are transported on the back of trucks or in vans, nonslip surfaces should be provided.
- (d) If a dog is transported on the back of or on the fuel tank of a farm motorbike, the driver should provide a nonslip cover for the dog to assist it to retain balance when the vehicle is moving at speed or cornering.
- (e) Dogs should not be left unattended in vehicles. If a dog must be left in a vehicle even for a short time, the vehicle should be parked in shade with more than one window left open to allow air to circulate so that heat stress will not occur.
- (f) Dogs should not be carried on the open back of vehicles during extremes of weather unless shelter is provided.
- (g) When dogs are tethered on the back of an open vehicle for transport, the securing lead or chain should be attached so that the cab provides protection against the wind.
- (h) When dogs are tethered on the back of an open vehicle for transport, the securing lead or chain should be long enough to permit the dog to stand, lie down and move about but short enough to prevent the dog's legs from reaching the side of the tray so that it cannot fall off or enter the cab of the vehicle.

- (i) When groups of dogs are transported together, submissive dogs should be protected from those that are more dominant by physical separation or restraint that prevents aggressive interaction.
- (j) When dogs are transported together in a group, there should be easy and safe access to all dogs by the owner or person in charge.
- (k) Dogs awaiting loading onto aircraft should be kept in a secure, tranquil and quiet environment and should be sheltered from the elements.

## Fireworks

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### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Dogs that are fearful of fireworks should be kept in an area with the least possible exposure to the sight and sound of fireworks.
- (b) Dogs kept outside when fireworks are in use should be kennelled, and the kennels should be covered.
- (c) Veterinary advice should be sought for particularly nervous dogs and medication may be appropriate if the dogs cannot be physically removed from the area.

## Euthanasia

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### INTRODUCTION

It is an offence under the Act to kill any animal such that it suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

### MINIMUM STANDARD

- (a) When a dog is euthanased it must be carried out in such a way as to ensure that death occurs quickly and that pain and distress is minimised.
- (b) Dogs of any age must not be killed by drowning.

### RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE

- (a) Dogs should be euthanased by a veterinarian.
- (b) Where a veterinarian is not available and the dog is to be shot, this should be undertaken only by a fully competent person, taking special care to safeguard people and other animals in the area.

## Dog Control Act 1996

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Dog owners also have a number of obligations under the Dog Control Act 1996. Dog owners, amongst other things, must ensure that the dog is registered, is kept under control at all times, has sufficient food, water and shelter, and receives proper care, attention and adequate exercise. In addition, the Act sets out the powers and responsibilities of local councils. Local councils' powers and responsibilities include adopting a policy on dogs, making dog control bylaws, and enforcing the Act in their territories. Dog owners must comply with dog control bylaws which vary between local councils.

The New Zealand Companion Animal Council strongly recommends that all dog owners be familiar with their obligations under the Act and their local councils' policies and dog control bylaws. Further information on the Act is available on the Department of Internal Affairs' website [www.dia.govt.nz/dogcontrol](http://www.dia.govt.nz/dogcontrol). Dog owners can contact their local council for detailed local dog owner information. The contact details for local councils are available at [www.localcouncils.govt.nz](http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz).

## Legal Status of Codes of Welfare

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Codes of welfare are deemed to be regulations for the purposes of the Regulations (Disallowance) Act 1989. As such, they are subject to the scrutiny of the Regulations Review Committee of Parliament.

Codes of welfare contain minimum standards and may also contain recommended practice and recommended recommendations for best practice. In the Companion Code of Welfare for Dogs codes of welfare, only minimum standards have legal effect and in two possible ways:

- evidence of a failure to meet a relevant minimum standard may be used to support a prosecution for an offence under the Act
- a person who is charged with an offence against the Act can defend himself/herself by showing that he/she has equalled or exceeded the minimum standards.

## Legal obligations of Owners and Persons in Charge of Animals

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“Owner” and “Person in Charge” are defined in Appendix II: Interpretation and definitions, in the code. Under the Act, the “owner” of an animal or the “person in charge” is responsible for meeting the legal obligations for animal welfare. It should be noted that the “owner” is not always identical

with the “person in charge”, which may change according to the particular circumstance (e.g. when responsibility for the animal is assumed by a person/s who is not the owner e.g. in boarding kennels or is under the instruction of a trainer).

The owner or person in charge of a dog has *overall* responsibility for the welfare of the dog(s) in his or her care. The legal obligations set out below are not an exhaustive list of the obligations in the Act.

**The owner or person in charge of dogs must:**

- (i) ensure that the physical, health and behavioural needs of the dog are met in a manner that is in accordance with both good practice and scientific knowledge
- (ii) where practicable, ensure that a dog that is ill or injured receives treatment that will alleviate any unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress being suffered by the dog or that it is killed humanely.

**The owner or person in charge of a dog must not without reasonable excuse:**

- (i) keep a dog alive when it is in such a condition that it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- (ii) sell, attempt to sell or offer for sale, otherwise than for the express purpose of being killed,

a dog, when it is suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress

- (iii) desert a dog in circumstances in which no provision is made to meet its physical, health and behavioural needs.

**No person may:**

- (i) ill-treat a dog
- (ii) release a dog that has been kept in captivity, in circumstances in which the dog is likely to suffer unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- (iii) perform any significant surgical procedure on a dog unless that person is a veterinarian, or a veterinary student under the direct supervision of a veterinarian or, in the case of a controlled surgical procedure, a person approved by a veterinarian
- (iv) perform on a dog a surgical procedure that is not a significant surgical procedure (as defined by the Act) in such a manner that the dog suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress
- (v) kill a dog in such a manner that the dog suffers unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

It is an offence under Section 31 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 to allow animals (including dogs) to participate in fighting ventures or to aid in providing animals for such ventures.



THE NEW ZEALAND  
**COMPANION ANIMAL**  
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## CONTACTS

Officers of the New Zealand Companion Animal Council are confirmed annually and are accordingly subject to change from time to time. For full contact details including office bearers, telephone numbers, and postal and email addresses visit our website: [www.nzcac.org.nz](http://www.nzcac.org.nz)

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