# Draft walker submission

I do not support the proposed limit on walking multiple dogs.

​The proposed limit will only penalise responsible dog owners and will not stop irresponsible people who do not follow existing laws.

I am a dog walker who services Auckland dogs in [Area]. I have been operating since [year] and currently walk [number] dogs every week.

I do not the proposed limit because:

1. The data does not support that people walking more than three dogs off lead are creating a problem. Incident data presented by Auckland Council showed only 0.7% of complaints related to people walking more than two dogs, meaning those walking more than three must be even less. In addition the data used to support that there is a problem and presented to council in July 2024 was based on a survey of 2,000 civically minded people and its interpretation by Council is seriously flawed and fails to show that over half of respondents had never had an issue with people walking more than two dogs. The survey also doesn’t ask how many people had seen more than three dogs being walked at once. There have been more than 2,750 signatures on the Professional Dog Walkers Association petition opposing this proposed limit so more than 2,750 people don’t think there is an issue when less than 1,000 respondents to the peoples panel think they saw more than two dogs being walked causing a problem.
2. The change unfairly targets professional dog walkers only. Auckland Council staff have said that they are not targeting professional dog walkers, but this bylaw change will only impact professional dog walkers. Professional dog walkers have not been spoken to about any nuisance issues or how to best address any issues. I think that licensing of some kind rather than a total ban would better address any issues with professional dog walkers.
3. The Bylaw won't be enforced. Auckland dog owners all know that Animal Management staff are stretched, and it takes days for them to respond to serious issues. Animal Management already do not proactively monitor known dog walking hotspots and this bylaw will not change this. The fact that the Waitakere Rangers Local Board had to fund a dedicated ranger to monitor and enforce rules at west coast beaches is proof of this. If Auckland Council won't enforce the bylaw then the only people who will be impacted will be those that already follow all the rules, meaning rule breakers will continue to break the rules and issues will continue.

I support a license being developed to regulate professional dog walkers as they have the skills to handle multiple dogs and provide a valuable service to responsible dog owners in the community. A system similar to that in Wellington where walkers take a course, are observed walking dogs and face limits would fully address the current issues with Professional Dog Walkers. I also support the Wellington system where walkers with less than a year of experience are limited to walking 6 dogs and more experienced walkers can walk up to 12 dogs and I believe this would be suitable for Auckland. If Council are concerned with the cost of administering a licensing system then an association like the Professional Dog Walkers Association could assist Council with parts of the system and Council could still collect a fee.

Auckland has a serious issue with roaming dogs and Council should focus on this and not multiple dog walkers who make up a tiny amount of reported issues. A licensing regime is the only way forward and Council should proceed with licensing not the proposed universal limits.