

Northland Age – 8th August 2017

Letters: Thinking outside the kennel

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New proposed bylaws restricting dogs on the beach can be avoided with a little work around.

Pet dog owners residing or holidaying in the Bay of Islands may need some divine or Darwinian help for adapting to the Far North District Council's proposed dog control bylaw and policy.

The draft decree banishes dogs from many beaches at all times of the day and night between Labour Weekend and May 1. On the other beaches, in all reserves and urban areas, canine companions shall always be restrained by a leash not exceeding two metres.

Local populations of *Canis domesticus*, intrinsic to man's caves and castles for centuries, face gradual extinction unless owners adopt new methods of providing sufficient exercise for their survival.

Strategies pet dog carers and conservationists could try:

1. Make Princess like swimming. The law of the land stops at the water's edge. On some beaches a cheap lead will get her to the water's edge; on others, a cheap launch.
2. Buy a gun (apparently that is quite easy to do) and take up pig hunting.

Once you've filled out all the paperwork for your firearms and hunting licences, and zapped Rover through a kiwi aversion session, you're good to go. The initial expenses will be recouped over time through the reduced registration fees that pig dogs are entitled to in Northland.

3. Get Sheba certified as a conservation dog and put her to good use searching for target species like kiwi and cats (feral).

To apply, both dogs and owners must supply DNA samples to prove they have the double recessive responsibility gene. Slightly harder than option 2 but less difficult than option 1.

4. Join the police and work your way into the Delta division.

Or trade Peaches the poodle for a german shepherd and get yourself some navy overalls.
Or keep Peachy and your civvies and go undercover. (Good luck with that one.)

5. Get some stock - a sheep or two will do. Joe and Bess are now working dogs. A double cab Hilux would also be handy - to transport dogs, kids and sheep to the local park for a Saturday frolic. (If your budget won't stretch that far, try ditching the kids and commissioning the family car.)

6. Buy Lucky his own backyard. If you can find five country acres without covenants prohibiting pet dogs, he really will be lucky.

7. Become blind. Then you will qualify for a Canis elitis - a guide dog! But don't do this just yet. The next batch of blindness assist dogs have been requisitioned for FNDC's policy-makers.

8. Check out Opua Beach - the Dog Exercise Zone. A sprawling 225 metres of paradise for pooches.

Half a hectare of heaven for hounds (at spring low tide).

The dotterel-devoid, uncrowded, leash-free utopia for the endangered Bay of Islands Canis familiaris.

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