

Stephen John Nahu. [REDACTED]
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To

The Regulatory Committee of Auckland Council.

AUCKLAND COUNCIL
28 AUG 2018
CBD - ALBERT ST

Re: Objection to 'menacing dog classification'
Objection to 'consequence' of menacing dog classification.
Lukah, 6 year old mixed breed. Dog ID 40090398328.

Dear Auckland city councillors,

1. My name is Stephen John Nahu. I'll be 60 years old come October. I live in [REDACTED]. I'm a father of four, 1 boy and 3 beautiful girls and grandfather to an ever growing number of grandchildren.
2. I write you on behalf of my entire whanau in regard to our 6 year old dog, Lukah, Dog ID.40090398328, who on the 10th August 2018, was assessed at the Henderson Animal Shelter as being of predominantly Pit-bull type.
3. As a result of those findings, we're very concerned about Lukah's future wellbeing. Just the mere thought of any part of Lukah's anatomy being forcibly removed is deeply upsetting. It's just not right.
4. Call it what you will. Spayed, neutered, fixed, desexed. Those are polite words chosen to soften, to detract from their actual meaning, castration. Please don't enforce this outmoded, barbaric practice on us.
5. I've heard all the arguments for and against castration but I'm not going to argue the point. Instead I'm making an impassioned plea directly to Councillors, please don't penalise us unduly because our dog falls within a wide ranging category. It's fundamentally wrong.
6. Castration is wrong. I don't want our dog disfigured and/or mentally defective. I know from past experience and a very long trouble free history of owning a number of dogs, Lukah won't be the same anymore and I don't just mean in a physical sense.

7. Lukah doesn't deserve this. He's a good boy. He's never put a foot wrong. He's well trained, he's obedient and does everything we ask of him. He has his own space, his own bed though prefers to sleep with our grandchildren. They, wouldn't have it any other way.
8. I applaud the intent of the Dog Control Act 1996 in wanting to regulate entry and proliferation of specific breeds but imposing a blanket coverage which affects a far greater group of owners other than the targeted breeds is inherently unjust.
9. I grew up with dogs. I think it's important to provide Councillors some perspective of my long association with dogs to show the depth of feeling, the attachment and the unwavering bond that forms between man and animal is a gift. A special gift to be cherished.
10. As far back as I can remember, we always had dogs. Up until the time I left home, we had 3 dogs whose lives spanned a period of almost 2 decades. Almost 40 years on I can still clearly remember what they looked like, their names, their likes and dislikes and just like each and every one of us, they were very distinct individuals.
11. My dad loved dogs. He liked having them around the house. Mum wasn't so keen on them though. There's bloody dog fur everywhere, she'd say. German Sheppard's were my dad's choice of dog. Mine too. I owned 2 of them. I love them around the home too.
12. When you spend as much time as I have with dogs you get to know their moods and all the little traits that make them the individuals they eventually become.
13. That changes when they're castrated. I'd describe the change as very similar to a 'disconnect'. It's not immediately noticeable but whatever you had before no longer exists. That special spark, the zing in their greeting, it's gone. Sure, they still do all the things they did before only something's missing.

14. That indescribable 'something' that I can't express in words is what the Dog Control Act 1996, seeks to take away. Depriving us of the full and unfettered enjoyment of an animal we treat no differently from any other member of the whanau. Please don't do this.
15. I'm asking Councillors for time, time to find a satisfactory alternative to resolve this matter. I'd like to look at DNA testing which due to prohibitive pricing wasn't really an option. Now it's option I can't ignore.
16. I'd also like to look at whether a vasectomy is an acceptable alternative. However the impression I get is a vasectomy doesn't have the desired effect proponents of castration want.
17. This isn't just about a pet's wellbeing. It's also about the continued wellbeing of the whanau dynamic and how a very special 4 legged member plays a large part in maintaining that dynamic.
18. As Lukah's guardian, I've got to protect him from harm. If that means challenging those who supposedly have Lukah's best interests at heart too, then so be it. To do anything less would be an admission of abject failure as both guardian and whanau protector. Whanau is everything.
19. Therefore I, Stephen John Nahu, request a formal hearing in regard to the Dog control Act 1996, section 33c, menacing dog classification in regard to Lukah, Dog ID 40090398328, a 6 year old mixed breed dog. I strongly object to the menacing dog classification.
20. I object to the wide ranging parameters of the classification process, which effectively amounts to a blanket coverage. In its current form, if the process of classification were applied broadly and to its fullest extent it would include the majority if not all the dog breeds currently in New Zealand.
21. As a result, owners of dogs other than the breeds the Dog Control Act 1996, seeks to regulate, are being unfairly penalised. Simply because their dog falls within a vague, indefinable grouping. It's absolutely wrong.

22. I also object to the barbaric, outmoded practice of castration. This is a procedure that's been accepted by a large number of owners simply for their own convenience. There's absolutely no definitive proof whatsoever that it does anyone, any good. Least of all the dog.
23. I suspect they're owners who spend very little to minimal time with their pet. Owners whose only contact with their dog is a weekend outing to the local park to fetch sticks or chase balls and then they're locked away until the next outing.
24. Regardless, they're considered, good owners too. I however don't think so. It's no better than how animals in zoos are treated. Catering to their basic needs. But apparently that's the norm for the majority of dogs owned by New Zealanders. Lukah's more than just a gormless play thing.
25. If Council or the government were really serious about dog control and effectively regulating the numbers and breeds of dog, a date should be set in the future and on or after that date, anyone who currently owns or wants to own a dog "must be licenced". Stop penalising the dog for the mistakes of their owners.
26. It's a waste of valuable time, energy and resources registering the dog. Liability should rest entirely where it rightly belongs, with the human owner. "Licence the owners". This would end or drastically reduce the many thousands of dogs put to death annually.
27. I strongly believe the Dog Control Act 1996, needs to be amended to include a "3 strikes" rule, where the onus and any punishment rest entirely with the owner. Not the dog. As it currently stands, whatever the offence the human gets to go home. The dog's not so fortunate. They go to the pound and/or a lonely death at the hands of some stranger. It's just not right. Make it right.

Stephen John Nahu.

On behalf of the Nahu Whanau.

