

From: Jenny Lapham
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act Request 1987
Date: Tuesday, 3 September 2019 03:46:00 p.m.

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request below and provide the following:

The DCC sought advice from WasteMINZ, our industry body who do a lot of research in the waste area, as to which bags to purchase, and they advised us that *"if you have to give out a plastic bag then their recommendation would be to use a compostable bag as at least if it does break up in the environment it will have no toxic inks and heavy metals in it. Whereas plastic bags and oxo degradable bags will have heavy metals in them and may also have more toxic inks"*. <https://www.wasteminz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Quick-Guide-final-2019.pdf>

(a) The survey (or other source of information) that concludes "many" dog owners still relied on single-use plastic supermarket bags (rather than having already changed to re-useable bags), and also used the bags for collecting dog poop.

We did not conduct a survey. This is based on general knowledge and observation by the Animal Services staff while out patrolling the streets and when visiting dog parks.

(b) The environmental cost (broken into the usual components) of current dog owner behaviour compared to the environmental cost (broken into the usual components) of the corn-starch poop bags from point of origin to break down.

We do not hold this information.

(c) The environmental cost of the "wallet cards", broken into the usual components of design, printing, delivery, waste management immediately created by the surplus "tear-off" sections, recycling when no longer needed, etc.

Design – free
Printing - \$0.097/card
Delivery – free
Waste management and recycling - we do not hold this information

(d) The environmental cost of dog owners travelling to service centres to collect their allocated roll of bags every two months.

We do not hold this information.

(e) The financial cost (broken into the usual components) of current user behaviour and the financial cost (broken into the usual components) of the scheme, including the cost of each roll of bags, cost of collection by dog owners (mileage, parking, time lost travelling to the service centre every two months), and subsequent disposal.

The Council does not hold the information in relation to the cost of collection by dog owners etc. In respect to the cost of each roll of bags, the Council has a number of potential providers and therefore, this information is withheld pursuant to section 7(2)(i) of LGOIMA to enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

(f) The research showing compostable materials compost in landfills, especially when encased in ordinary plastic rubbish bags. (Noting this is requested because all available evidence-based credible research shows they fail to compost and increase methane and other environmentally negative impacts.)

There is no research to show that compostable materials compost in landfills, when encased in ordinary plastic rubbish bags.

The DCC have not claimed that these compostable bags compost in the landfill if encased in an ordinary plastic

rubbish bag. The statement on the DCC website only says that if they are sent to the *landfill*, the bag and contents will breakdown". The advice also goes on to say that if dogs owners wish to compost the bags at home to use a pet waste separate compost system.

The DCC sought advice from WasteMINZ, our industry body who do a lot of research in the waste area, as to which bags to purchase, and they advised us that *"if you have to give out a plastic bag then their recommendation would be to use a compostable bag as at least if it does break up in the environment it will have no toxic inks and heavy metals in it. Whereas plastic bags and oxo degradable bags will have heavy metals in them and may also have more toxic inks"*. <https://www.wasteminz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Quick-Guide-final-2019.pdf>

(g) The economic (or other principle) that allows the bags to be stated to be "free" when they are funded from registration fees already paid by the targeted user group.

We acknowledge that the bags are not 'free' in that there is a cost. However the approach taken is that unlike the previous (non compostable) bags - there is not an additional charge for the bags. In future we will state that there is no extra cost for the bags rather than stating that they are free.

(h) The evidence-based research that shows that people who do not currently pick up dog poop will make the effort to obtain and use these bags so they can commence doing so now the bags are available.

We do not hold this information.

As we have declined to provide some information you are advised that you have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Regards

Jennifer Lapham

**Governance Support Officer
Civic**

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 12 August 2019 3:14 p.m.
To: Official Information <officialinformation@oa.dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Official Information request - Free compostable dog poo bags.

Dear Dunedin City Council,

My preference is to receive the requested information through the fyi.org.nz platform.

Background to Request:

On 6 & 7 June 2019 the Otago Daily Times ran articles about the Dunedin City Council providing "free compostable dog poo bags".

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/free-compostable-poo-bags-dunedin-dog-walkers>

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/dcc-offer-compostable-dog-poo-bags>

Statements about the bags also appeared on the Dunedin City Council website in the Animal Control section on 6 June 2019, and in the June edition of the FYI pamphlet delivered to every Dunedin household early that month.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20190726204930/https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/services/dogs/free-dog-poo-bags>
http://web.archive.org/web/20190726205216/https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/721668/FYI-Issue-73-June-2019-.pdf

The two newspaper articles include the same quoted statement attributed to the Manager Compliance Solutions:
“Many people use plastic shopping bags to dispose of their dog poo, but after July 1 these won't be available, so we've introduced this trial to encourage people to pick up their dog poo while offering a plastic alternative and reducing the environmental impact.”

The information in the "FYI" pamphlet and on the DCC webpage reiterates the bags are free. The Otago Daily Times articles also state the bags are funded from dog registration fees and the Council has budgeted \$25,000 for the bags.

We note that dog owners identified the enormous negative environmental impact of the 2016 Dog Control Policy and Bylaw. Therefore we applaud the Dunedin City Council for finally recognising environmental issues. However we note that it is necessary to carefully assess schemes to confirm they are environmentally positive.

Request:

Accordingly please provide all information used to conclude this scheme when would reduce environmental impacts.

Notes:

Given this is a very recent project it is reasonable to expect the information will be immediately and easily to hand so that providing it will take little time.

Based on the usual type of analysis performed it is reasonable to expect the information provided will include, at the minimum, the following critical information:

- (a) The survey (or other source of information) that concludes “many” dog owners still relied on single-use plastic supermarket bags (rather than having already changed to re-useable bags), and also used the bags for collecting dog poop.
- (b) The environmental cost (broken into the usual components) of current dog owner behaviour compared to the environmental cost (broken into the usual components) of the corn-starch poop bags from point of origin to break down.
- (c) The environmental cost of the “wallet cards”, broken into the usual components of design, printing, delivery, waste management immediately created by the surplus “tear-off” sections, recycling when no longer needed, etc.
- (d) The environmental cost of dog owners travelling to service centres to collect their allocated roll of bags every two months.
- (e) The financial cost (broken into the usual components) of current user behaviour and the financial cost (broken into the usual components) of the scheme, including the cost of each roll of bags, cost of collection by dog owners (mileage, parking, time lost travelling to the service centre every two months), and subsequent disposal.
- (f) The research showing compostable materials compost in landfills, especially when encased in ordinary plastic rubbish bags. (Noting this is requested because all available evidence-based credible research shows they fail to compost and increase methane and other environmentally negative impacts.)
- (g) The economic (or other principle) that allows the bags to be stated to be “free” when they are funded from registration fees already paid by the targeted user group.
- (h) The evidence-based research that shows that people who do not currently pick up dog poop will make the effort to obtain and use these bags so they can commence doing so now the bags are available.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

On behalf of the [REDACTED]

This is an Official Information request made via the FYI website.

Please use this email address for all replies to this request:

fyi-request-10960-9e90ed7d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Is officialinformation@dcc.govt.nz the wrong address for Official Information requests to Dunedin City Council? If so, please contact us using this form:

https://fyi.org.nz/change_request/new?body=dunedin_city_council

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