NZ AGILITY HEIGHTS REVIEW 2018 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT AND SURVEY OPTIONS

BACKGROUND:

Over the past few months the Heights Review Subcommittee has been analysing a range of data relating to jumping safety and considering various options to create a new, fairer, safer range of jump heights for Dog Agility in New Zealand. This report outlines our findings and conclusions and presents possible scenarios for the agility community to consider.

The scope, objectives and methodology of the review are set out in the Terms of Reference

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE HEIGHTS REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE?

The Heights review subcommittee comprises Karen de Wit (Upper Hutt), Carl Ranford (Hawera), Karen Grant (Dunedin), Kelly Daniel (Waikato), Keri Neilson (Hamilton), Kim Nicol (Wellington), Lisa Duff (Canterbury), and Nicola Parmenter (Auckland). Collectively we have over 100 years' experience competing in Agility throughout New Zealand, with 9 maxi, 20 medium, 9 mini and 3 micro dogs.

HOW DID THE HEIGHTS REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE GO ABOUT DECIDING ON THE SCENARIOS THAT ARE BEING SURVEYED?

We agreed that the priorities for establishing new jump heights and dog heights would be safety and fairness. We also decided that we wanted to take an evidence-based approach to establishing new heights. Whilst the objectives of the review are wide ranging, our initial focus is on establishing safe and fair jump heights and dog heights and then we will move to investigating other aspects such as splits, graduation, titles, course design, equipment safety and regulations relating to the hoop and long jump.

For both jump heights and dog height ranges we asked:

DO EXISTING HEIGHTS MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR SAFETY/WELLBEING FOR DOGS OF ALL HEIGHTS?

Current scientific research suggest that dogs who jump 1.25 times their shoulder height and greater have a changed jumping dynamic and therefore are at more risk of injury than dogs jumping less than this. In NZ a number of dogs routinely jump more than 1.25 times their shoulder height. If this was reduced safety would be improved.

Whilst lower jumps may be safer, some dogs will also be able to run faster when jump height is reduced. This raises other issues related to safety and jumping styles. Potentially the faster a dog approaches other obstacles the more chance there is of falling off/colliding with it, and far greater deceleration is required for weave entries, getting on ramps from angles, stopped contacts etc.

Dogs in NZ currently jump between 0.88 and 1.36 times their shoulder height.

Please refer to the Research for more detailed information.

DO EXISTING HEIGHTS ALLOW FOR A FAIR AND EQUITABLE COMPETITION FOR DOGS OF ALL HEIGHTS?

To achieve fairness a narrow range of jump/dog height ratios, both within height groups and across the entire range of dogs competing, is desirable. The current NZ system has dogs jumping between 0.88 and 1.36 times their height which is a range of 0.48.

Existing dog height ranges could have better safety and fairness values:

Micro: Dogs jump between 0.92 - 1.36 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.44. There are issues of both safety and fairness in this group.

Mini: Dogs jump between 0.88 - 1.17 times their height. This is a range of 0.29. No dogs jump over 1.25 times their height so safety is less of an issue than fairness for this group.

Medium: Dogs jump between 1.10-1.32 times their height. This is a range of 0.22. Dogs that jump over 1.25 times their height are jumping at an unsafe level.

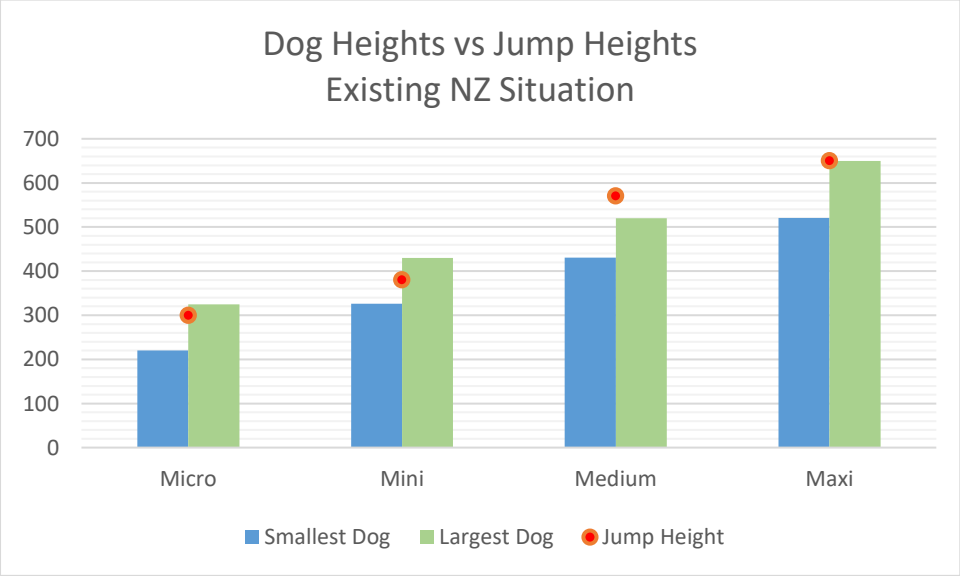
Maxi: Dogs jump between 0.92-1.25 times their height. This is a range of 0.33. Dogs jumping at 1.25 times their height are jumping at an unsafe level.

Overall: Dogs jump between 0.88 and 1.36 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.48

Note: The ranges in this document include more than 99% of the dogs in NZ currently competing. There were nine dogs that were excluded as outliers – two under 220mm and seven over 650 mm. We still expect these dogs to benefit from any of the proposed scenarios over the status quo.

Existing New Zealand Situation

Dog Height		Jump Height	% Jump/Dog Height Range		# Dogs in NZ	Group
220	325	**300**	1.36	0.92	142	micro
326	430	**380**	1.17	0.88	247	mini
431	520	**570**	1.32	1.10	535	medium
521	650	**650**	1.25	1.00	503	maxi



ARE THERE ANY CHANGES TO THE HEIGHT CLASSES THAT WOULD IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND FAIRNESS OF COMPETITION, SHOULD IT BE PROVED THEY HAVE NOT BEEN MET?

Based on the research relating to safety we felt it was desirable that no dog should jump more than a jump/shoulder height ratio of 1.2. The fairest system would see all dogs jumping the same jump/shoulder height ratio, however this is obviously an impractical solution. In the interests of fairness and the requirement for a workable solution, we settled on a maximum range of 0.30 which results in a lowest jump/shoulder height ratio of 0.90.

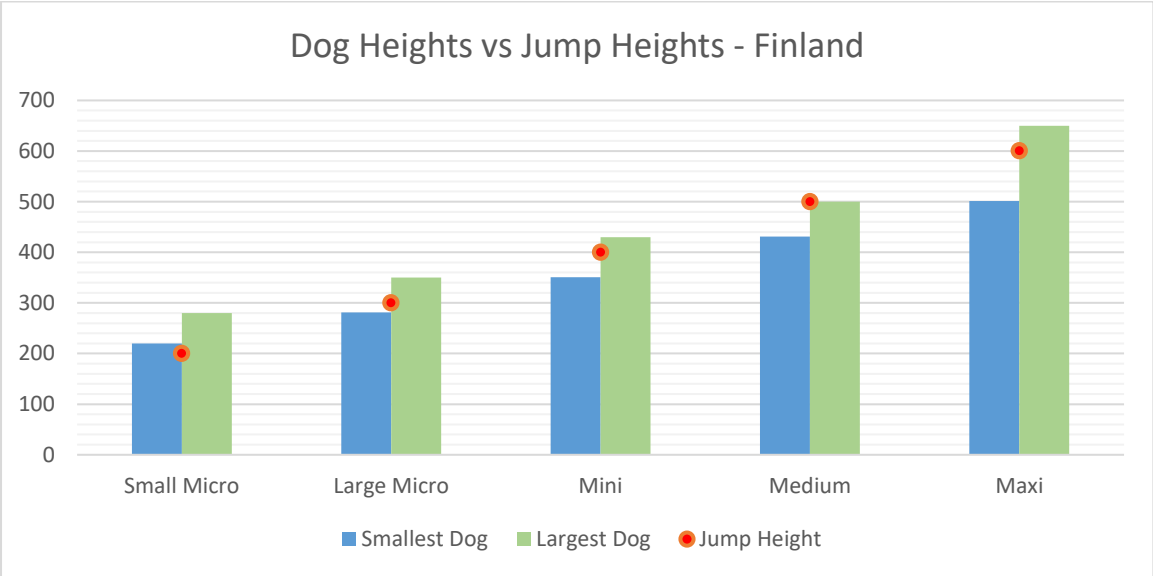
WHY NOT SIMPLY ADOPT A HEIGHTS SYSTEM FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY?

We investigated and debated the merits of nine international systems. None of these met our criteria for safety and fairness in their entirety, however Finland and USDAA were the closest.

Although it was less close to our fairness and safety criteria than the other two, we also looked hard at ANKC (Australia) given the geographical proximity of Australia and New Zealand. For ANKC we were also able to draw on the first-hand experience of some of the HRSC members. Looking at and debating these helped us formulate some of the scenarios being surveyed.

Details and implications of the Finnish, USDAA and ANKC height systems are as follows:

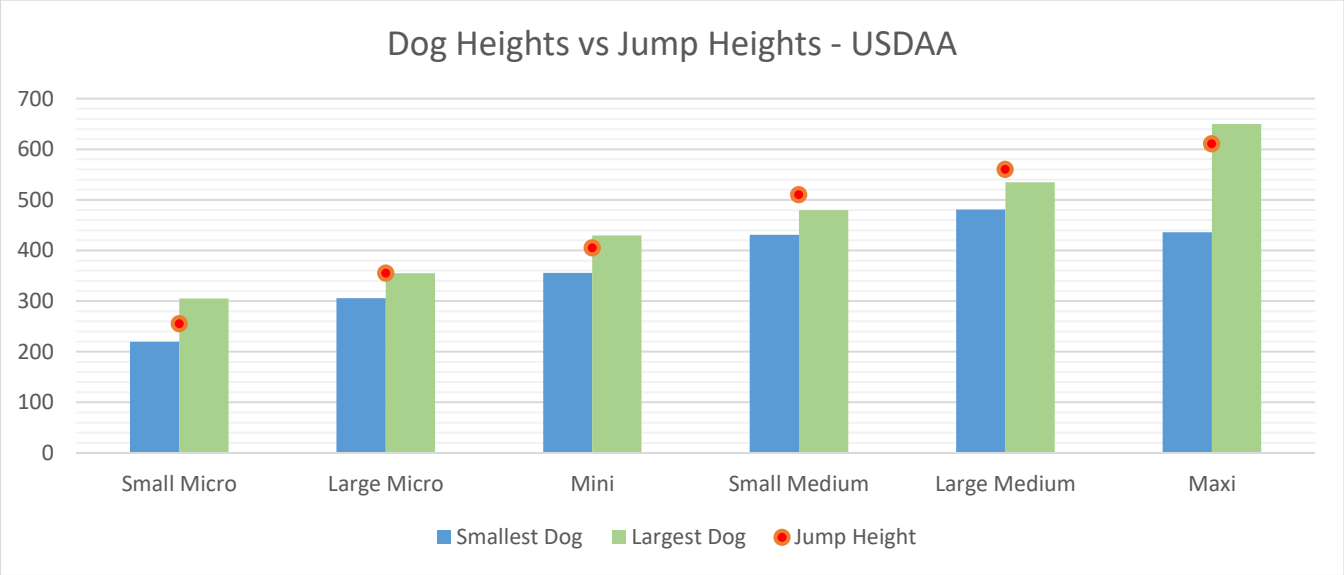
Finland								
Dog Height		Jump Height	Current Jump Height	% Jump/Dog Height Range		# Dogs in NZ	Group	Consequences
220	280	**200**	300	0.91	0.71	51	micro	100mm lower
281	350	**300**	300/380	1.07	0.86	157	micro	No change or 80mm lower
351	430	**400**	380	1.14	0.93	181	mini	20mm higher
431	500	**500**	570	1.16	1.00	350	medium	70mm lower
501	650	**600**	570/650	1.20	0.92	688	maxi	30mm higher or 50mm lower



Implications of Finnish Heights in NZ

- All dogs would jump between 0.71 and 1.2 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.49
- Individual ranges are: small micro (0.20), large micro (0.21) Mini (0.21), medium (0.16) and maxi (0.28)
- In comparison to the current heights - 994 (70%) of dogs would jump lower, 67 (4.5%) would jump the same and 366 (25.5%) would be required to jump higher.
- Of those dogs that would be required to jump higher:
    - 181 dogs (12.5%) measuring 351 to 430mm would jump 20mm higher
    - 184 dogs (13%) measuring 501 to 520mm would jump 30mm higher
- There would be two jump heights in the micro class. It is not envisaged that these would split regardless of numbers entered.

USDAA (USA)								
Dog Height		**Jump Height**	**Current Jump Height**	**% Jump/Dog Height Range**		**# Dogs in NZ**	**Group**	**Consequences**
220	305	**255**	300	1.16	0.84	94	micro	45mm lower
306	355	**355**	300/380	1.16	1.00	127	micro	55mm higher or 25mm lower
356	430	**405**	380	1.14	0.94	167	mini	25mm higher
431	480	**510**	570	1.18	1.06	187	medium	60mm lower
481	535	**560**	570/650	1.16	1.05	471	medium	10mm lower or 90mm lower
536	650	**610**	650	1.14	0.94	381	maxi	40mm lower

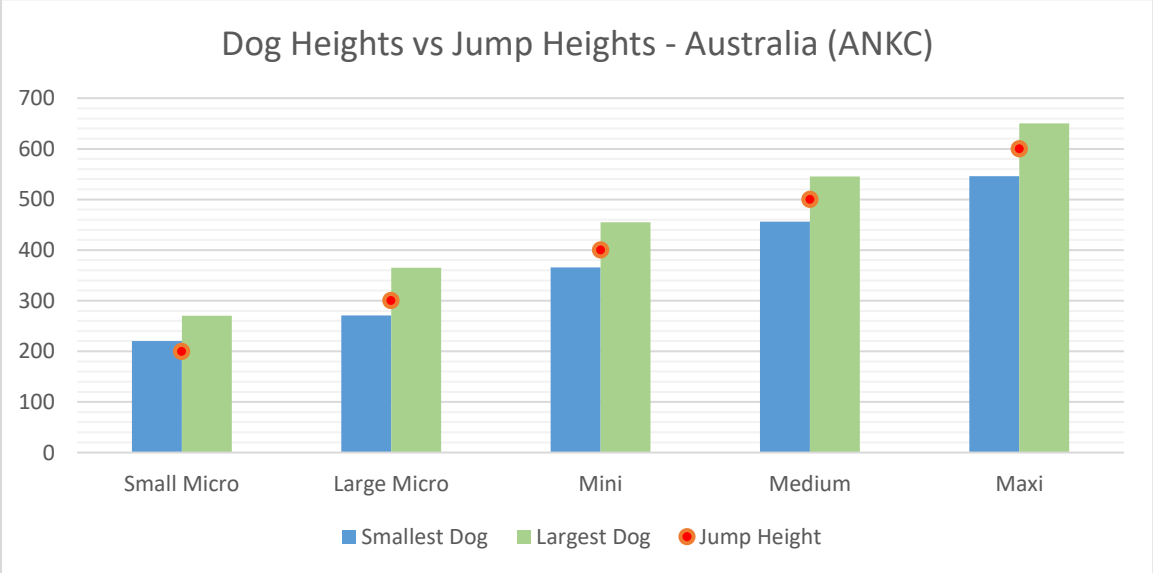


Implications of USDAA Heights in NZ

- All dogs would jump between 0.84 and 1.16 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.32
- Individual ranges are: small micro (0.32), large micro (0.16), mini (0.20), small medium (0.12) large medium (0.11) and maxi (0.20)
- In comparison to the current heights - 1210 (85%) of dogs would jump lower and 217 (15%) would be required to jump higher.
- Of those dogs that would be required to jump higher:
    - 47 dogs (3.3%) measuring 306 mm to 325mm would jump 55mm higher
    - 170 dogs (11.9%) measuring 356 to 430mm would jump 25mm higher
- There would be two jump heights in each of the micro and medium classes. It is not envisaged that these would split within the class regardless of numbers entered.

Note: USDAA dog and jump heights are measured in inches. Conversions to millimetres for maximum dog heights and jump heights have been rounded to the nearest 5mm.

Australia (ANKC)								
Dog Height		Jump Height	Current Jump Height	% Jump/Dog Height Range		# Dogs in NZ	Group	Consequences
220	270	**200**	300	0.91	0.74	31	micro	100mm lower
271	365	**300**	300/380	1.11	0.82	218	micro	No change or 80mm lower
366	455	**400**	380/570	1.09	0.88	197	mini	20mm higher or 170mm lower
456	545	**500**	570/650	1.10	0.92	675	medium	70mm lower or 150mm lower
546	650	**600**	650	1.09	0.92	306	maxi	50mm lower



Implications of ANKC Heights in NZ

- All dogs would jump between 0.74 and 1.11 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.37
- Individual ranges are: small micro (0.17), large micro (0.29), mini (0.21), medium (0.18) and maxi (0.17)
- In comparison to the current heights - 1173 (82%) of dogs would jump lower, 144 (10%) would be required to jump higher and 110 (8%) would jump the same as they do now.
- Of those dogs that would be required to jump higher:
    - 144 dogs (10%) measuring 365 to 430mm would jump 20mm higher
- There would be two jump heights in the micro class. It is not envisaged that these would split within the class regardless of numbers entered.

Ideals of New Scenarios:

Safety

No dog should jump higher than 1.2 times its height to meet safety ideals. Scenarios presented in this document have most dogs jumping between 0.9 and 1.15 times their shoulder height. This means that dogs currently jumping 0.88 times their shoulder height will jump higher. Most dogs will jump lower.

Fairness

To offer scenarios with a narrower range of jump/dog height ratios within a group compared to current. Currently this varies from 0.22 (mediums) to 0.44 (micros).

To offer scenarios with similar type dogs grouped together as much as possible. Micro, mini, medium and maxi classes would still be created.

Splits

All scenarios work under the current split system and offer the potential to continue to split classes. As stated above, the Heights Review Subcommittee will be investigating and surveying different split options in due course to see if there is a better system than the current one. This will depend in part on the outcome of the heights review. Therefore when considering the scenarios in this document you should view them in the context of the current system for splitting of classes. That is, a 4-way split where there are 15 dogs in each of micro, mini, medium and maxi; a 3-way split when there are 15 dogs in each of small (micro/mini), medium and maxi; or where all heights compete together if there are less than 15 dogs in any of small, medium or maxi. No class would split more than 4 ways.

Financial Considerations

If new jump heights were introduced this would require new lugs on jumps. In many cases this would merely involve moving/sticking/riveting new lugs on existing jumps and would be a time investment. Where metal lugs are still on jumps a larger financial and time commitment would need to be made. The Agility Committee is prepared to assist financially where lugs need to be added.

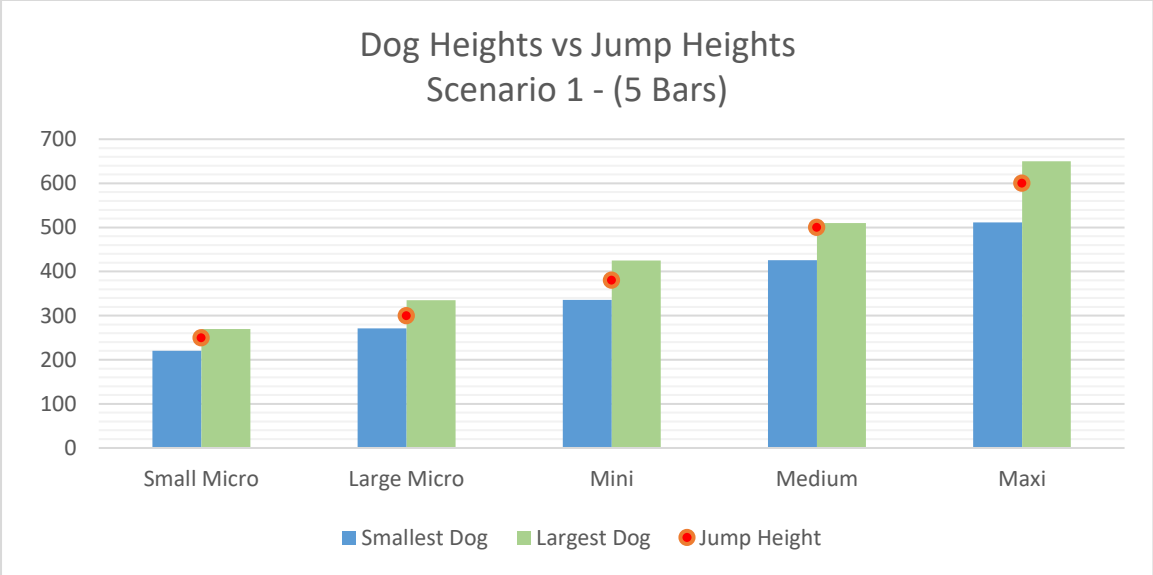
The Scenarios and the Survey

We have presented a range of scenarios for consideration. Please read these carefully prior to completing the survey, and have them with you as you complete the survey. You will be asked to rate your favourability for each scenario and also tell us your overall most and least preferred scenario. There is also an opportunity to comment on each option. Please note that this is a survey, not a vote, so if there is a particular aspect of an option you feel strongly about, be it positive or negative, please let us know.

Points to remember when completing the survey:

- Try to consider NZ agility as a whole and going forward - not just for the dog(s) you currently run
- Keep in mind the primary issues of safety and fairness
- Tell us why you feel an option, or a particular aspect of an option is good or bad

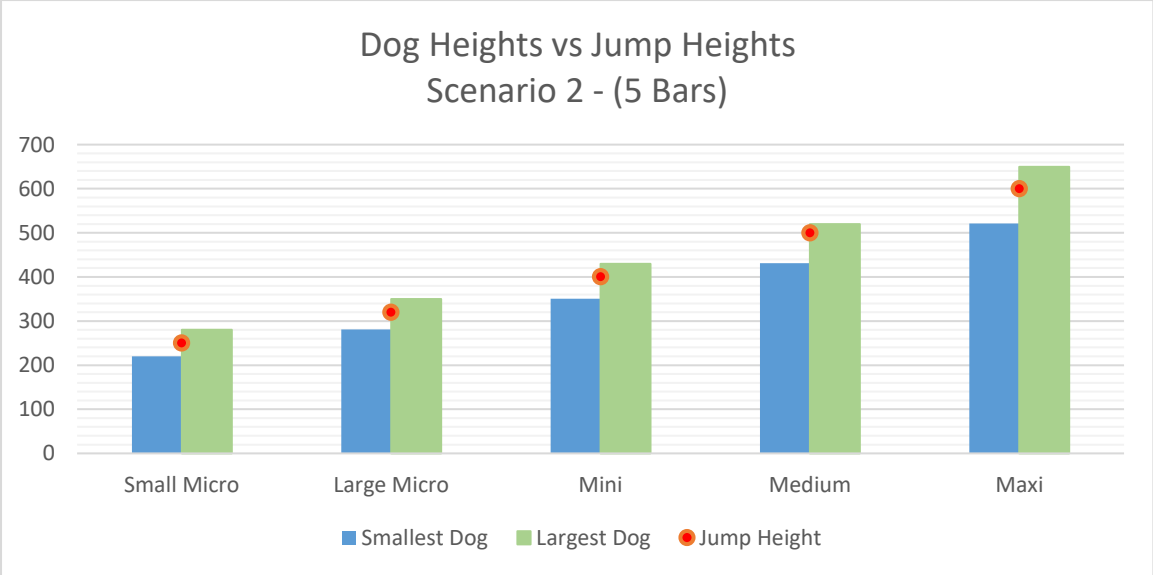
Scenario 1 – (5 Bars)								
Dog Height		**Jump Height**	**Current Jump Height**	**% Jump/Dog Height Range**		**# Dogs in NZ**	**Group**	**Consequences**
220	270	**250**	300	1.14	0.93	31	micro	50mm lower
271	335	**300**	300/380	1.11	0.90	126	micro	No change or 80mm lower
336	425	**380**	380	1.13	0.89	215	mini	no change
426	510	**500**	380/570	1.17	0.98	459	medium	120mm higher or 70mm lower
511	650	**600**	570/650	1.17	0.92	596	maxi	30mm higher or 50mm lower



Implications

- All dogs would jump between 0.89 and 1.17 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.28
- Individual ranges are: small micro (0.21), large micro (0.21) mini (0.24), medium (0.19) and maxi (0.25)
- In comparison to the current heights - 975 (68%) of dogs would jump lower, 342 (24%) would jump the same and 110 (8%) would be required to jump higher.
- Of those dogs that would be required to jump higher:
    - 17 dogs (1.2%) measuring 426 to 430mm would jump 120mm higher
    - 94 dogs (6.5%) measuring 511 to 520mm would jump 30mm higher
- There would be two jump heights in the micro class. It is not envisaged that these would split regardless of numbers entered.

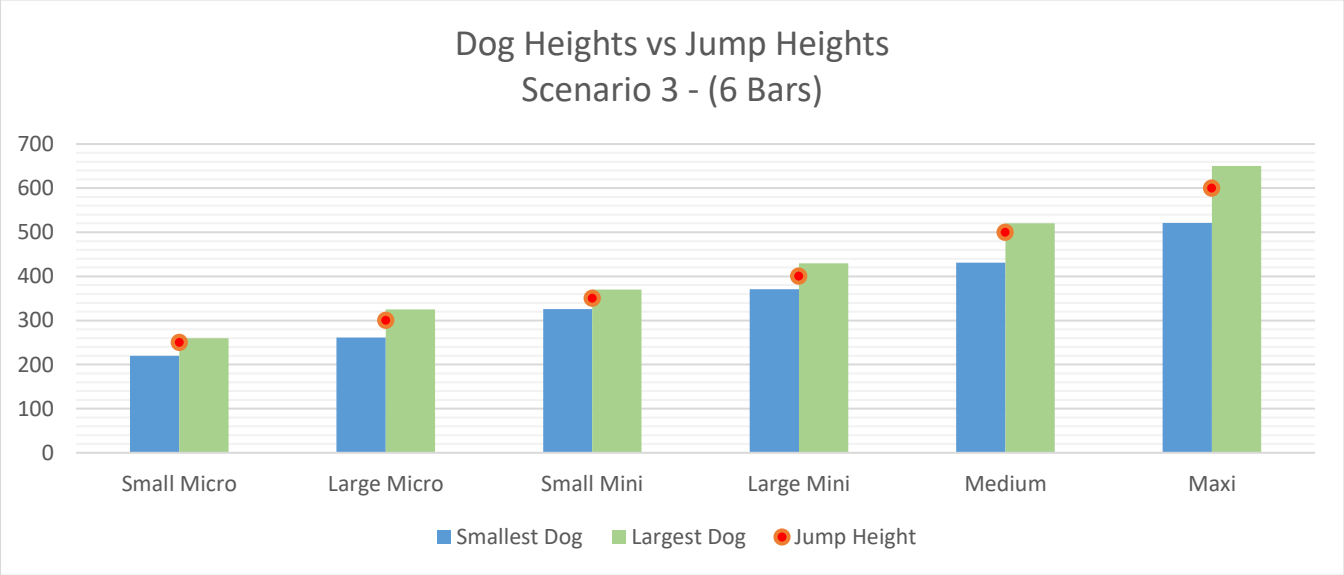
Scenario 2 – (5 Bars)								
Dog Height		**Jump Height**	**Current Jump Height**	**% Jump/Dog Height Range**		**# Dogs in NZ**	**Group**	**Consequences**
220	280	**250**	300	1.14	0.89	51	micro	50mm lower
281	350	**320**	300/380	1.14	0.91	157	micro	20mm higher or 60mm lower
351	430	**400**	380	1.14	0.93	181	mini	20mm higher
431	520	**500**	570	1.16	0.96	535	medium	70mm lower
521	650	**600**	650	1.15	0.92	503	maxi	50mm lower



Implications

- All dogs would jump between 0.89 and 1.16 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.27
- Individual ranges are: small micro (0.25), large micro (0.23) Mini (0.21), medium (0.20) and maxi (0.23)
- In comparison to the current heights - 1156 (81%) of dogs would jump lower and 271 (19%) would be required to jump higher.
- Of those dogs that would be required to jump higher:
    - 90 dogs (6.3%) measuring 281 to 325mm would jump 20mm higher
    - 181 dogs (12.7%) measuring 351 to 430mm would jump 20mm higher
- There would be two jump heights in the micro class. It is not envisaged that these would split regardless of numbers entered.

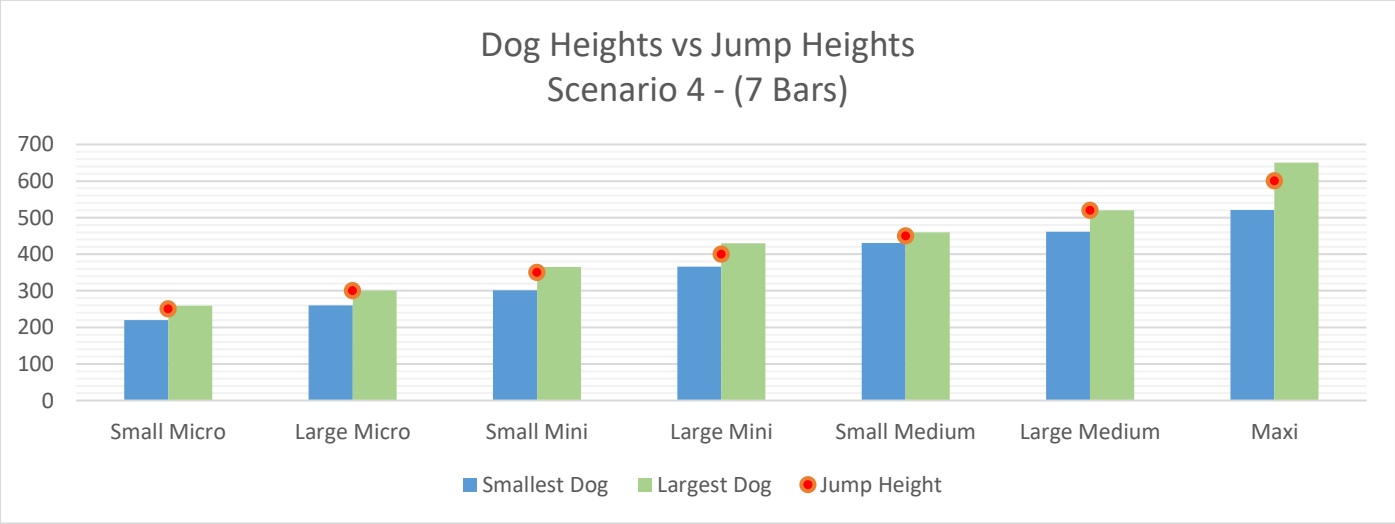
Scenario 3 – (6 Bars)								
Dog Height		Jump Height	Current Jump Height	% Jump/Dog Height Range		# Dogs in NZ	Group	Consequences
220	260	**250**	300	1.14	0.96	19	micro	50mm lower
261	325	**300**	300	1.15	0.92	123	micro	no change
326	370	**350**	380	1.07	0.95	119	mini	30mm lower
371	430	**400**	380	1.08	0.93	128	mini	20mm higher
431	520	**500**	570	1.16	0.96	535	medium	70mm lower
521	650	**600**	650	1.15	0.92	503	maxi	50mm lower



Implications

- All dogs would jump between 0.92 and 1.16 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.24
- Individual ranges are: small micro (0.18), large micro (0.23) small mini (0.12), large mini (0.15) medium (0.20) and maxi (0.23)
- In comparison to the current heights - 1176 (82%) of dogs would jump lower, 123 (9%) of dogs would jump the same as they do now, and 128 (9%) would be required to jump higher.
- Of those dogs that would be required to jump higher:
    - 128 dogs (9%) measuring 371 to 430mm would jump 20mm higher.
- There would be two jump heights in each of the micro and mini classes. It is not envisaged that these would split within the class regardless of numbers entered. But micro and mini would still split from each other if there was more than 15 in each.

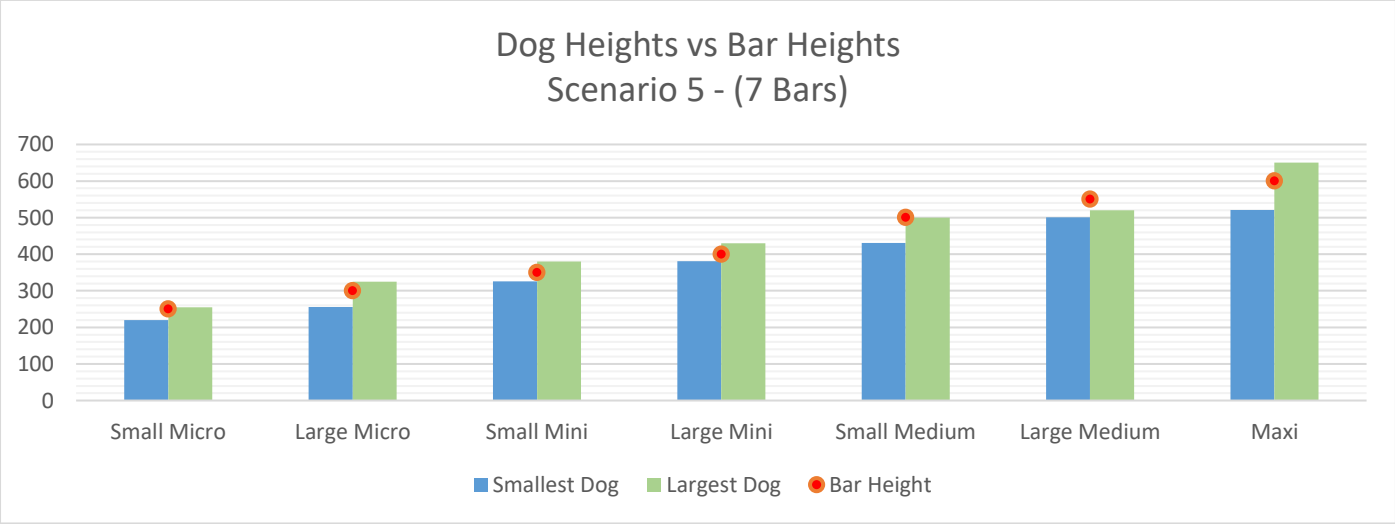
Scenario 4 – (7 Bars)								
Dog Height		Jump Height	Current Jump Height	% Jump/Dog Height Range		# Dogs in NZ	Group	Consequences
220	259	**250**	300	1.14	0.97	16	micro	50mm lower
260	300	**300**	300	1.15	1.00	74	micro	no change
301	365	**350**	300/380	1.16	0.96	158	mini	30mm lower or 50mm higher
366	430	**400**	380	1.09	0.93	141	mini	20 mm higher
431	460	**450**	570	1.04	0.98	77	medium	120mm lower
461	520	**520**	570	1.13	1.00	458	medium	50mm lower
521	650	**600**	650	1.15	0.92	503	maxi	50mm lower



Implications

- All dogs would jump between 0.92 and 1.16 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.24
- Individual ranges are: small micro (0.17), large micro (0.15) small mini (0.20), large mini (0.16), small medium (0.06), large medium (0.13), and maxi (0.23)
- In comparison to the current heights - 1159 (81.5%) of dogs would jump lower, 74 (5%) of dogs would jump the same as they do now, and 194 (13.5%) would be required to jump higher.
- Of those dogs that would be required to jump higher:
    - 52 dogs (3.5%) measuring 301 to 325mm would jump 50mm higher
    - 142 dogs (10%) measuring 366 to 430mm would jump 20mm higher
- There would be two jump heights in each of the micro, mini and medium classes. It is not envisaged that these would split within the class regardless of numbers entered. But micro, mini and medium would still split from each other if there was more than 15 in each.

Scenario 5 – (7 Bars)								
Dog Height		**Jump Height**	**Current Jump Height**	**% Jump/Dog Height Range**		**# Dogs in NZ**	**Group**	**Consequences**
220	255	**250**	300	1.14	0.98	13	micro	50mm lower
256	325	**300**	300	1.17	0.92	129	micro	no change
326	380	**350**	380	1.07	0.92	144	mini	30mm lower
381	430	**400**	380	1.05	0.93	103	mini	20mm higher
431	500	**500**	570	1.16	1.00	350	medium	70mm lower
501	520	**550**	570	1.10	1.06	185	medium	20mm lower
521	650	**600**	650	1.15	0.92	503	maxi	50mm lower



Implications

- All dogs would jump between 0.92 and 1.17 times their shoulder height. This is a range of 0.25
- Individual ranges are: small micro (0.16), large micro (0.25) small mini (0.15), large mini (0.12), small medium (0.16), large medium (0.04), and maxi (0.23)
- In comparison to the current heights - 1195 (84%) of dogs would jump lower, 129 (9%) of dogs would jump the same as they do now, and 103 (7%) would be required to jump higher.
- Of those dogs that would be required to jump higher:
    - 103 dogs (7%) measuring 381 to 430mm would jump 20mm higher
- There would be two jump heights in each of the micro, mini and medium classes. It is not envisaged that these would split within the class regardless of numbers entered. But micro, mini and medium would still split from each other if there was more than 15 in each.