



Association of Professional Dog Trainers
New Zealand (APDTNZ)

<https://www.apdtnz.org.nz/>

Advocating and Educating the dog
industry since 2009

11 August 2022

Trade Tested Limited
PO Box 9117
Newmarket, Auckland 1149

Dog Training Collars NZ promotion

The Association of Professional Dog Trainers New Zealand (APDTNZ) would like to express its disappointment and concern with your recent advertising for dog e-collars.

Trade Tested is known in New Zealand to be on the forefront of selling innovative and trusted, reliable products. Your website states

"...When we try out a new range, it all gets tested by someone at our headquarters in Auckland... finally ending up with something we know our customers will be happy with. Only then are we confident enough to put our sticker on the side and call it Trade Tested."

However, based on decades of peer-reviewed, scientific studies investigating behaviour and learning of many species, as well as the first-hand experience of our members, who must regularly deal with the aftermath of aversive dog training tools, the APDTNZ feels that the e-collar range you are promoting does not meet your own criteria.

It is the view of APDTNZ that the use of electric shock as a form of corrective training carries physically and psychologically harmful effects. It is detrimental to the welfare of dogs, can cause breakdown of the human-dog bond, and even aggressive behaviours. Aversive stimuli received during training may not only be acutely stressful, painful, and frightening for the animals, but may also produce long-term adverse effects on behavioural and emotional responses.

The ADPTNZ is disturbed that some of the statements made in the product descriptions of your e-collar promotion are scientifically incorrect and misleading at best but may affect the welfare of dogs at worst. The sales pitch also perpetuates the misconception that there are "quick fixes" to training and behaviour issues, when, in the real world, a professionally devised and applied training and/or behaviour modification protocol can take weeks, months or, in the case of separation-related disorders for example, even years to implement successfully.

Examples of concerning product descriptions:

“Our Dog Training Collar with Remote 1000m uses gentle static and beeps for safe reinforcement.”

1. For the “gentle static and beeps” to work, shocks will first need to be applied, often repeatedly. The animal then will react to the beep because it has now become a ‘warning’. The beep is now also aversive in itself to the animal through associative learning.
 2. Scientifically, the term ‘Reinforcement’ means that a consequence of a behaviour leads to an increase of the likelihood of the behaviour occurring in the future. The use of the term here is misleading to dog owners as it’s usually associated with something ‘good’, whereas the beep or consequent shock are not.
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“Train your pooch to stop barking even when you aren’t around...” “...you can simply set up this collar, pop it on your fur baby, and walk away!”

Dogs bark for a wide range of reasons as part of their natural communication, from being bored because they don’t get enough physical activity and mental stimulation or feeling fearful of noises or people coming to their property, to happy greetings or even suffering with separation anxiety. Stopping all barking is as unreasonable and in-humane as expecting a child to never talk.

“Training Collars are used to train the dogs and NOT for punishment.”

Scientifically, the use of a shock in training is ‘Positive Punishment,’ meaning that an aversive stimuli was added as a consequence after the animal performed a behaviour, which reduces the likelihood of that behaviour occurring in the future.

There is no evidence to suggest that aversive training methods are more effective than reward-based training methods and that, in fact, studies suggest the opposite might be true (China et al, 2020; Ziv, 2017). There are other highly effective, non-aversive training alternatives and shock collars should no longer be an accepted practice in dog training.

While shock collars are sadly still legal in New Zealand, the use of shock in training and electric training collars are already banned in many countries given the inherent welfare concerns.

As a professional dog training organisation, the APDTNZ and its members aim to help dog owners become aware that learning and behaviour modification can be consistently, reliably, and effectively resolved (or at the very least successfully managed) with the use of humane, science-based, non-aversive training methods.

We request that Trade Test withdraw these products from their catalogue and replace with products that address and help to alleviate the underlying reasons for problem behaviours in dogs such as

- Home agility course
- Home puppy confidence building equipment
- Dog enrichment tools such as food puzzles, chew toys
- Interactive toys
- Science-based, 'force-free' dog training videos and books

The APDTNZ would be happy to assist and discuss safe and appropriate options for dog owners. You can view our Position Statement on Electric training Collars and the research supporting our claims on our website at : <https://www.apdtnz.org.nz/position-statement-use-of-electronic-stimulation-shock-collars-in-training-dogs>

Sincerely
Darran Rowe
APDTNZ President