



Media Release : for immediate release

Don't try these dog training methods at home

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers New Zealand (APDTNZ) warns TV viewers against using dog training methods depicted in the TV series "Cesar to the Rescue" currently screening on Choice TV.

Mark Weaver, APDTNZ president says, "Cesar Millan's philosophy and 'training' follows a debunked 'dominance theory' ("alpha," or "pack leader") that relies on aversives including confronting, intimidating, or physically punishing the dog to suppress unwanted behaviour."

"The APDTNZ wants to make dog owners aware that using such methods can result in behaviour problems such as fear, aggression, total shut-down and damage to the dog-human relationship. These methods can lead to situations that risk injury (either to dog, human, or both), psychological damage, and/or are extremely dangerous. Some people may even regard them as animal abuse."

Mr Weaver says, "Sadly, APDTNZ trainers regularly deal with the fallout from clients having tried Millan's methods, (and other dominance based training methods) with their dogs despite the programme's warnings given for viewers not to attempt the methods displayed at home."

"Unfortunately, TV series such as "Cesar to the Rescue" make the depicted methods look tempting as these shows perpetuate the misconception that there are "quick fixes" to serious behaviour issues. Suppression of a behaviour for a TV show is very different to actually changing the true emotional response which drives the behaviour."

"Accredited peer reviewed research has shown time and again that modern humane science-based training methods are the most effective at improving behaviour outcomes which is why they are used for wild animals in captivity."

Dog training is an unregulated industry in New Zealand. Unlike other skilled professions like medicine, law, or accountancy, there are currently no standards or rules for what a trainer should know before working with dogs and owners. Members of the APDTNZ are required to abide by the Association's Code of Ethics which does not endorse punitive training methods or aversive

equipment such as electronic devices, choke or prong collars. Members also commit to ongoing education in canine behavior and training.

“The APDTNZ provides support to its members in building training skills, expertise, and understanding of modern animal behaviour science through seminars, information, education, discussion forums, and networking opportunities” says APDTNZ president Mark Weaver. “Skilled trainers can produce incredible results with humane, positive-reinforcement based training, leaving no excuse for outdated methods that use force, pain, and intimidation.

APDTNZ dog trainers are listed on the Association’s website www.apdtnz.org.nz

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