

WAITAKI DISTRICT COUNCIL
DOG CONTROL – POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT
1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 (DCA) requires territorial authorities to publicly report each financial year on:

- The administration of their dog control policy and their dog control practices; and
- A variety of dog control related statistics

PART ONE – ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY AND DOG CONTROL PRACTICES

1) Dog Control in the District

Waitaki District is a predominantly rural area that covers approx. 9000km² from Ohau to Macraes. Oamaru is the most populated town in the district.

In the 2018-19 registration year Waitaki District Council had 5514 dogs registered. The greatest number of those were in the working dog (1896 dogs) and selected owner (1639 dogs) categories, with selected owners making up thirty eight percent of total dog owners.

Council's dog control service is carried out by an external contractor on a 24/7 basis with Council Officers managing the annual dog registration process and also supporting our animal control officers when required.

2) Administration of Dog Control Practices and Policy

The key outcomes for dog management and control in the Waitaki District are:

- There is responsible ownership of dogs across the District, including compliance with dog owner obligations under the DCA. Opportunities are provided for dogs and their owners to exercise and recreate in public places.
- Conflicts between the general public, dogs, stock and animals and dog owners are minimised.
- Potential or actual danger, distress, intimidation and nuisance caused by dogs in the community are minimised.

- Council meets its statutory obligations for dog control and management under the Act.

In November 2018 Council partnered with a local dog training club to run a 'Dog Expo' community event, with the joint aim of promoting responsible dog ownership.

Dog owners were invited to attend with their dogs and participate in a range of training activities, also to engage with animal control officers to gain a better understanding of Council's dog control role. Information provided aimed to educate dog owners on their responsibilities and selected owner applications were offered at no charge on the day. Selected owners pay a reduced registration fee which acknowledges they have met key criteria to evidence they are responsible dog owners.

To increase awareness of dog wellbeing, free veterinary health checks and dog massages were available and local businesses were present to promoting dog related products.

Compliance and Enforcement Policy

In cases where dog owners have failed to be responsible and offences against the DCA have been committed, each case is considered in accordance with the (draft) *Compliance and Enforcement Policy*. Though not altogether specific to dog control, the Policy aims to promote consistency of decision making and process for compliance and enforcement activities.

Application of the Policy is intended to guide Council and animal control officers towards appropriate compliance and enforcement outcomes. This approach has seen an increase in the number of cases involving dog attacks or high risk non-compliance where prosecution or other Court proceedings have been considered appropriate.

As these matters are subject to legal scrutiny, evidence and procedures have been examined and areas of good practice and process improvements identified.

A noteworthy case has been the retention of a menacing dog under section 71A DCA. Council appealed a District Court decision to return the dog to the High Court. Proceedings were commenced by Council in the period covered by this report. The appeal was successful with the judgement on 22 July 2019 concluding that the District Court Judge had incorrectly ordered rehoming of the dog.

Facilities

This year an extensive upgrade of the Council dog pound began with work anticipated to be complete by September 2019.

Design of the facility incorporated better provisions for managing dangerous and sick dogs, with further improvements designed to increase welfare conditions for impounded dogs and to create a safer, better functioning environment for pound staff.

A further consideration was to mitigate the noise emitted from the building by barking dogs which had been reported as an issue by neighbours.

3) Trends

The total number of complaints received by Council increased by eight percent on the previous registration year to a total of 709 complaints.

Across the different complaint types the greatest increases were seen with wandering dogs (126 in 2017/18 and 179 in 2018/19) and dog attacks (29 in 2017/18 compared to 36 in 2018/19).

Complaints regarding wandering dogs and found dogs made up 58 percent of the total number of complaints in 2018/19. Barking dogs were the next most significant complaint category at 11 percent.

Given this it is unsurprising that the year saw a 27 percent increase in the number of impounded dogs.

There have been no changes to the lead only, prohibited or dedicated dog exercise areas we currently manage.

4) Dog Registration Fees

Council fees (inclusive of GST) for the year were unchanged from the previous year:

Dog registration - Base fee		70.00
Dog registration - category		
	Working dogs, per dog fees	21.00
	Non-working dogs, per	70.00
dog		
	Neutered non-working dog	56.00
	Selected owner dogs, per dog	28.00
	Farm pet dogs, per dog	21.00
	Probationary owner dogs	Base fee plus 50%
	Dangerous dogs	Base fee plus 50%
Late registration penalty		Base fee plus 50%
Note: Full dog registration fee (base fee) - plus the category fee		
Selected Owner/Multiple Dog Permit	Application and assessment	35.00
	Reassessment	20.00
Adoption Fee	Application and assessment	165.00
Replacement tag		10.00
	Dog from another district/ Change of owner (For a dog that is currently registered)	No Fee
Dog Impounding	First offence - registered dog	50.00
	First offence - unregistered dog	120.00
	Second offence	100.00
	Third offence	135.00
	Seizure and custody	65.00
	Sustenance per day	15.00
	Destruction fee	60.00

PART TWO – STATISTICAL INFORMATION 2018-2019

Dog Related Complaints

Complaint Type	
Barking Dog	131
Bylaw	9
Dog Attack on Animal	6
Dog Attack on Dog	13
Dog Attack on Person	8
Dog Attack on Stock	10
Dog Found	152
Dog Lost	105
Dog Nuisance	0
Dog Rushing	28
Dog Welfare	23
General Enquiry	45
Unregistered Dog	0
Wandering Dog	179
Total	709

Prosecutions

On 14 November 2018 Council prosecuted an offence against section 57(2) of the Act which involved a dog attacking and killing numerous sheep.

Infringements and Warnings

Offence	Status	
☐ Failed to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog	Animal Control - Warning Only Issued	1
	Dog Infringement Paid	3
	Dogs At Court	1
	Dogs On Hold	1
☐ Failed to keep dog controlled or confined	Animal Control - Warning Only Issued	4
	Animal Control Withdrawn	3
	Dog Infringement Paid	14
	Dogs At Court	6
☐ Failed to keep dog under control	Animal Control - Warning Only Issued	2
	Dogs At Court	1
☐ Failed to register a dog	Animal Control Withdrawn	2
	Dog Infringement Paid	4
	Dogs At Court	18
Total		60

Hearings

The Council had no hearings in relation to dogs classified as Menacing or Dangerous during the year.

Dangerous and Menacing Dogs 2018-19

Dangerous Dogs under section 31 A & B	3
Menacing Dogs under section 33 A	7
Menacing Dogs under section 33 C	9

Probationary/Disqualified owners 2018-19

Probationary owner	0
Disqualified owner	2

Impounding and Euthanised Dogs 2018-19

Returned to Owner	102
Re-homed	13
Euthanised	3
Total Impounded	118