

**WAITAKI DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**DOG CONTROL – POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT**  
**1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020**

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. 9000km<sup>2</sup> from Ohau to Macraes. Oamaru is the most populated town in the district.

In the 2019-20 registration year Waitaki District Council had 5593 dogs registered. The greatest number of those were in the working dog (1841 dogs) and selected owner (1712 dogs) categories.

Council's dog control service was carried out by an external contractor on a 24/7 basis with Council Officers managing the annual dog registration process and supporting contracted services when required. This arrangement changed in August 2020 when Council brought all animal control functions inhouse and increased resourcing of the function.

**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.

On 29 February 2020 Council's animal control and communications team engaged with the public at a local A&P show. The aim was to promote responsible dog ownership and to enable the public to better understand Council's dog control responsibilities.

A key finding from the event was that many dog owners take the initiative to familiarise themselves with Council's dog control requirements and bylaws and understand the principles of responsible dog ownership. Conversely, several had not sought the information made available by Council on website media or familiarised themselves with the 'Dog owners responsibilities' information sent with annual dog registration notices.

This indicates that there is real value in Council providing information to the dog owning public through print and website media, but also in face to face interactions.

As previously mentioned, in August of this year, recognition of this need was a key consideration in Council's decision to move from contracted dog control services, to direct employment of three dog control officers. The operating model will enable dog control officers to increase education and community engagement to promote responsible dog ownership.

Council's dog control related social media communications have also been enhanced with appealing imagery and engaging messages to promote compliance and a sense of community between the dog owning public.

*Images taken from Waitaki District Council social media*





Waitaki District Council

January 29 · 🌐

The Waitaki Communications team are always barking, but this year we're baking too: dog biscuits for the North Otago A&P (28Feb - 1March) - all part of a promotion highlighting Responsible Dog Ownership. Circle the calendar! Its the leash you can do.



## Compliance and Enforcement Policy

In cases where dog owners have failed to be responsible and offences against the Dog Control Act have been committed, each case is considered in accordance with Council's *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 guides Council and animal control officers towards appropriate compliance and enforcement outcomes to ensure that regulatory actions are carried out consistently, but also take the unique circumstances of a case into consideration so that Council's response is not prescriptive. As a result, Council resources and enforcement are targeted at the issues which cause, or have potential to cause the most harm, and also take into account dog owners' response to compliance and complainant's views.

In practice, this can translate into different actions being taken against a dog owner for the same offences. For example, in two separate cases which involved repeated attacks on livestock during the reporting year, one dog owner was prosecuted, whilst a second was classified as a dangerous dog. The latter had demonstrated a willingness to comply, had been in contact with the landowner and later voluntarily euthanised the dog that was responsible. In the other case, the owner had been obstructive, with their dog having to be retained by Council in the interests of public safety.

## Facilities

This year an extensive upgrade and extension of Council's dog pound was completed. The new building is a far cry from the dated structure it replaces, now providing a high standard of facility to accommodate dogs and a more fit for purpose working environment.

The building is also more secure and is equipped with hi-tech monitoring systems to reduce the likelihood of wilful damage or burglary and enhance security for employees.

*Images showing development of the Waitaki District Council Dog Pound*



### **3) Trends**

During the reporting year 566 complaints were received in comparison to the previous reporting year where 709 complaints were recorded.

It is difficult to attribute this reduction to any particular factors; however, data shows that between the imposition of Covid 19 alert level 4 on 25 March 2020 and alert level 2 commencing 13 May 2020, just fifty-five complaints were lodged. This is about the number of complaints normally expected for a one-month period.

The greatest reduction was in the number of complaints made about barking dogs (131 in 2018/19 and 71 in 2019/20) and wandering dogs (179 in 2018/19 and 125 in 2019/20). Covid 19 movement restrictions with more people staying home may help explain these reductions.

The overall reduction in complaints against the previous year corresponds with twenty-eight fewer dogs being impounded in 2019/20, of which only five percent were euthanised.

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 dog	70.00
	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	Application and assessment	35.00
Dog Permit	Reassessment	20.00
Adoption Fee	Application and assessment	165.00
Replacement tag		10.00
	Dog from another	
	district/Change of owner (For	
New tag	a dog that is currently	No Fee
	registered)	
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 2019-2020**

### **Dog Related Complaints**

<b>Complaint Type</b>	
Barking Dog	71
Bylaw	3
Dog Attack on Animal	8
Dog Attack on Dog	9
Dog Attack on Person	5
Dog Attack on Stock	5
Dog Found	148
Dog Lost	130
Dog Rushing	18
Dog Welfare	8
General Enquiry	36
Wandering Dog	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>566</b>

### **Prosecutions**

January 2020 – Charge: Being the owner of a dog which attacked an animal, namely a dog.

March 2020 – Charge: Being the owner of a dog which attacked animals, namely sheep.

### **Infringements and Warnings**

<b>Offence</b>	<b>Status</b>
⊕ Failed / refused to supply information / wilfully provided false particulars	1
⊕ Failed to comply with any bylaw authorised by section 20 Dog Control Act	2
⊕ Failed to comply with effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	1
⊕ Failed to comply with effects of disqualification	1
⊕ Failed to implant microchip transponder in dog	1
⊕ Failed to keep dog controlled or confined	28
⊕ Failed to register a dog	43
⊕ Released dog from custody	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>

## Hearings

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

## Dangerous and Menacing Dogs 2019-20

Dangerous Dogs under section 31 A & B	3
Menacing Dogs under section 33 A	11
Menacing Dogs under section 33 C	5

## Probationary/Disqualified owners 2019-20

Probationary owner	0
Disqualified owner	3

## Impounding & Euthanised Dogs 2019-20

Returned to Owner	82
Re-homed	4
Euthanised	4
<b>Total Impounded</b>	<b>90</b>