

WAITAKI DISTRICT COUNCIL
DOG CONTROL – POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT
1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022

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

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 2021-22 registration year Waitaki District Council had 5694 dogs registered. This is 140 more dogs than the 2020 – 2021 reporting year. The greatest number of those were in the working dog (1793 dogs) and selected owner (1544 dogs) categories.

Dog control services are carried out by our three Animal Management Officers within Council. However, from the end of October 2021 – to the end of June 2022, one of these positions was vacant whilst we struggled to find a suitable candidate for the role.

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.

Getting to know dogs and their owners

From July 2021 to June 2022 Animal Control Officers recorded 437 property visits to dog owners in the Waitaki District. Although the specific reason for each interaction is not recorded, these visits are to provide advice and information, or to investigate offences against the DCA.

Our Approach to Dog Control

An 'education first' approach is taken, depending on the seriousness of the issue or risk of harm. As complaints relating to wandering dogs are in the highest category of issues reported to Council, advice on suitable property fencing is provided to the dog owner but followed-up with a direction to undertake fencing improvements if advice is not followed voluntarily. Any further non-compliance is likely to result in the enforcement pathway being taken.

Community safety a priority

This year a dog was seized and retained under section 71A (2) of the Act. This followed a series of complaints that it was wandering on a local school's grounds. The owner of this dog was issued a fencing notice which they failed to comply with.

The dog had been impounded on five occasions for wandering at the location. It was subsequently classified as menacing under section 33A of the Act.

Animal Management Officers sought a search warrant to seize the dog as the owner repeatedly failed to comply with the dog's menacing classification.

This is one of two such search warrants obtained by Council to seize and impound dogs in circumstances where owners were failing to demonstrate a willingness to comply with a menacing classification.

The number of dogs classified as dangerous or menacing under section 33C of the Act also increased in comparison to the previous year, as did the number of probationary and disqualified owners.

Community Engagement

This year, Animal Management Officers organised a Community Engagement Roadshow where small towns in the Waitaki District were visited and information was provided to dog owners. Those owners were provided with a gift bag containing dog walking maps, treats, and dog poo bags.

The team also attended a local Farmers Market to promote responsible dog ownership and to enable the public to better understand the local bylaws.

These initiatives provide a great opportunity for members of the community to access our Animal Management Officers' knowledge and experience for all things dog related.



Oamaru Dog Roadshow – Meeting dog owners and giving out dog treat bags with local maps of prohibited and on lead areas.

Selected owner registration status is one way in which responsible dog owners are recognised by being eligible for a registration fee at 40% of the \$70 base rate. This year the number of selected owners increased by 8%.

Partnerships

The working partnerships that our dog control officers have with organisations such as the SPCA, Police, local vets, neighbouring Councils, not for profit groups and charitable organisations, help Council's dog control operations and rehoming to be more successful.

These partnerships enhance the services provided by Council and mean we can channel customers to other agencies when a need is identified.

Trends

During the reporting year, 584 complaints were recorded in comparison to the previous reporting year where 758 complaints were recorded. This is a significant decrease of 23%.

The number of infringement notices issued in comparison to 2020 – 21 also decreased by 9%.

Despite a decrease in operational capacity, 437 property visits to dog owners is a significant undertaking which may have contributed towards a reduction in complaints received.

138 infringement notices were issued (Note: this figure includes 25 infringement warnings) in comparison to the 2020/21 reporting year when 151 notices were issued. Infringements for bylaws breaches increased by 100% from 8 in 2020-2021 to 18 for this period, reflecting a focus on dogs being walked off leash or in prohibited areas.

The 2020/21 reporting year included 40 infringement notices issued for failing to implant a microchip transponder. Animal management activities were not targeted at this issue in 2021/22, as dog owners are now aware of this requirement and microchip numbers must now be recorded when registering a dog.

The number of impounded dogs decreased from 149 in 2020/21 to 96 this year which represents a 36% decrease.

The number of dog attacks also decreased from 34 to 23. This is a significant change which we believe shows our approach to animal management is effective at reducing dog related harm in Waitaki. It is also the lowest number of recorded dog attacks in a five-year period.

4) Dog Registration Fees

Council fees (inclusive of GST) for the year have remained unchanged since 2015:

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 Dog Permit	Application and assessment	35.00
	Reassessment	20.00
Adoption Fee	Application and assessment	165.00
Replacement tag		10.00
New tag	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 2021-2022

Dog Related Complaints

Complaint Type	
Barking Dog	131
Bylaw	8
Dog Attack on Animal	4
Dog Attack on Dog	4
Dog Attack on Person	10
Dog Attack on Stock	5
Dog Found	122
Dog Lost	78
Dog Rushing	17
Dog Welfare	6
General Enquiry	54
Wandering Dog	145
Total	584

Prosecutions

No prosecutions.

Infringements and Warnings

Infringements for 01/07/2021 to 30/06/2022

Offence	Status
⊞ Failed / refused to supply information / wilfully provided false particulars	2
⊞ Failed to advise change of dog ownership	1
⊞ Failed to carry a leash in public	2
⊞ Failed to comply with any bylaw authorised by section 20 Dog Control Act	18
⊞ Failed to comply with effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	8
⊞ Failed to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog	3
⊞ Failed to comply with effects of disqualification	1
⊞ Failed to implant microchip transponder in dog	3
⊞ Failed to keep dog controlled or confined	41
⊞ Failed to keep dog under control	4
⊞ Failed to register a dog	55
Total	138

Hearings

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

Dangerous and Menacing Dogs 2021-22

Dangerous Dogs under section 31 A & B	8
Menacing Dogs under section 33 A	10
Menacing Dogs under section 33 C	10

Probationary/Disqualified owners 2021-22

Probationary owner	3
Disqualified owner	7

Impounding & Euthanised Dogs 2021-22

Returned to Owner	90
Re-homed	6
Euthanised	1*
Total Impounded	96

*Impounded during previous reporting year