

WAITAKI DISTRICT COUNCIL
DOG CONTROL – POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT
1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) 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

In 2022-23 Waitaki District was home to 5556 registered dogs. The greatest number of those were in the working dog category (1602 dogs) and selected owner (1460) categories.

Dog control services are conducted by three Animal Management Officers on a 24/7 basis.

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 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.

Our Approach to Dog Control

Council's Dog Control Policy, Compliance and Enforcement Policy and the Act inform the approach we take to dog control activities.

Generally, where an owner repeatedly fails in their obligations to control their dogs, enforcement action is taken. This may range from the issuing of notices to improve fencing, written warnings, infringement notices, classification of dogs as dangerous or menacing, and prosecution.

The views of victims and complainants are also considered when deciding on an outcome.

Promoting responsible dog ownership is key to reducing nuisance or harm caused by dogs. In every interaction we have with dog owners, we aim to promote responsibility and accountability. Despite this, nuisance and harm caused by dogs continues to be a problem in Waitaki and dog related complaints have increased. Ultimately, this means that response to complaints and investigations make up most of our animal management team's work. In turn, this also means that the number of seized and impounded dogs increased, with some dogs resident for long periods in the most serious cases.

The animal management team are passionate about dogs and have a wealth of experience in this field. They continue to ensure that most impounded, unclaimed dogs are successfully rehomed.

Community Safety

Community safety is a priority. Dogs which are classified as dangerous or menacing represent the greatest known risk to communities and are therefore monitored for compliance.

Inspections were undertaken for all dogs registered under these categories to confirm the requirements of their classifications were being met. The results of inspections were generally positive, with only a small number of owners being required to make changes to their fences and muzzles.

Instances of non-compliance have resulted in five infringement notices. they were issued to owners of dangerous and menacing dogs for failing to comply with classification requirements.

Two menacing dogs have also been retained under section 71 of the Act following an attack for which their owner is to be prosecuted. Another dog, an American XL Bully, the first known example of this breed being recorded by Council in Waitaki, was also retained pending prosecution following an attack on stock.

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.

Education and Engagement

Animal Management Officers identified that 160 dogs were not microchipped as required by the Act. Compliance information was sent to these dog owners who were able to attend one of two microchip scanning days at the Oāmaru Dog Park and Waihemo Service Centre.

The scanning days provided an opportunity for owners to engage with the Animal Management team and to receive further information on microchipping and other dog related issues.

Together with Council's GIS Department, the Animal Management team created a more user-friendly map for the public to see which areas they can walk their dogs and what the rules are in those areas. This map was included in a QR code which was printed on the annual dog registration letters.

Trends

During the reporting year, 633 complaints were recorded in comparison to the previous reporting year where 588 complaints were recorded. This is an increase of 8%.

172 infringement notices were issued (Note: this figure includes 20 infringement warnings) in comparison to the 2021/22 reporting year when 138 notices were issued. This represents an increase of 20%.

The 2022/23 reporting year included 49 infringement notices issued for failure to register and 38 Infringements for failure to microchip.

The number of dog attacks also increased from 23 to 34. Animal management believe this is due to owners not socialising their dogs properly with other dogs and people.

The standard American Bulldog is featuring more regularly in Waitaki's recorded complaints and offences against the Act. Two dogs of this type/breed were impounded and destroyed following an attack on another dog.

The American XL Bully is a breed of growing concern in Waitaki due to its immense power and aggressive tendencies. Council's Animal Management team is keeping up to date with news and current affairs concerning the breed as ownership numbers in New Zealand are expected to slowly increase.

The number of impounded dogs increased from 96 to 158. It is noteworthy that one dog was impounded for wandering a total of 14 times.

As well as increased impounding, the number of dogs signed over to Council has also increased.

Dog Registration Fees

Council fees (inclusive of GST) for the year 2023/24.

Working Dog	\$26.00
Non – Working Dog	\$87.00
Neutered Non-working Dog	\$70.00
Selected Owner dog	\$35.00
Farm Pet	\$26.00
Disability Assist Dog	Free
Probationary owner dog	Registration fee plus 50%
Dangerous Dogs	Registration fee plus 50%
Late registration Fee	Registration fee plus 50%

Selected owner/Multiple dog permit application and Assessment	\$40.00
Selected owner/multiple dog permit Reassessment	\$25.00
Adoption fee – application and assessment	\$200.00
Replacement Tag	\$10.00
New Tag – dog transferred from another district/changed owner (for dog that is currently registered)	No fee

Impounding Fees

First offence – Registered Dog	\$75.00
First Offence – Unregistered Dog	\$150.00
Second Offence	\$150.00
Third Offence	\$200.00
Seizure and Custody	\$80.00
Sustenance per day	\$20.00
Destruction Fee	\$60.00

PART TWO – STATISTICAL INFORMATION 2022-2023

Dog Related Complaints

Complaint Type	
Barking Dog	156
Bylaw	8
Dog Attack on Animal	7
Dog Attack on Dog	10
Dog Attack on Person	9
Dog Attack on Stock	8
Dog Found	119
Dog Lost	76
Dog Rushing	23
Dog Welfare	3
General Enquiry	81
Wandering Dog	133
Total	633

Prosecutions

Two prosecutions were commenced under section 57 of the Act for dogs attacking animals. It is possible that these cases will not be completed until 2024.

One owner denied liability for an infringement notice (failure to microchip a dog) and requested a Court hearing. It is anticipated this case will be heard in December 2023.

Infringements and Warnings

134 Infringements were issued and 38 warning infringements were issued.

No.	Section	Offence
49	Section 42	Failure to register dog
31	Section 52.A	Failure to keep Dog controlled or confined
38	Section 36	Failure to implant microchip transponder in dog
20	Section 20	Failed to comply with hny bylaw authorised by section 20 Dog Control Act
10	Section 53	Failure to keep dog under control
5	Section 28(5)	Failure to comply with effects of disqualification
5	Section 33.EC	Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog

5	Section 33.EC	Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog
5	Section 32	Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog
2	Section 24	Failure to comply with obligations of probationary owner
2	Section 62(4)	Allowing dog known to be dangerous to be at large unleashed or unmuzzled
1	Section 19(2)	Failed / refused to supply information or willfully provided false particulars
1	Section 49(4)	Failure to advise change of address
1	Section 41	Made a false statement relating to dog registration
1	Section 54A	Failure to carry a leash in public

Hearings

Waitaki District Council held one hearing for an objection to a dangerous classification and one hearing for a menacing classification. The Hearings Committee upheld the menacing classification and rescinded the dangerous Classification, instead deciding that the dog ought to be classified as menacing.

Dangerous and Menacing Dogs 2022-23

Dangerous Dogs under section 31 A & B	7
Menacing Dogs under section 33 A	19
Menacing Dogs under section 33 C	8

Probationary/Disqualified owners 2022-23

Probationary owner	5
Disqualified owner	13

Impounding & Euthanised Dogs 2022/23

Returned to Owner	130
Re-homed	19
Euthanised	9
Total Impounded	158