

Dog Control Policy and Practices

Annual Report 2022-2023



Introduction

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires Council to report annually to the Secretary of Local Government on its dog control policy and practices. This report is to fulfil this requirement for the 22/23 financial year from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Overview

Council delivers its Animal Control services in-house, with funding of the dog control component being a mixture of user pays (dog registration fees) and rates, as set out by Councils revenue & finance policy. During the 2022/23 year the Council adopted an amendment to the Long-Term Plan which saw a change in the level of user pays component in the funding of the dog control activity; to now recover 80-90% Private Good (through fees and charges) and 10-20% Public Good (through rates), from the previously set 70-80% Private Good and 20-30% Public Good (as applied for the financial year relevant to this report).

The Animal Control team is part of the Customer and Compliance team, which is in the Community Experience and Services Group at Council. During the 2022-23 year, the Animal Control team comprised of a team leader, four full time officers and two part time officers with support provided by a Customer Support Officer assisting the administration needs of the Animal Control function.

The Dog Pound is located on Council land off Mako Mako Road, Levin. The facility has kennelling for up to 28 dogs at any one time, housed within a large exercise yard. The Pound is closed to the public on a day-to-day basis, but provides an appointment-based system for owners of impounded dogs to collect their animal.

A review of Council's Dog Control Policy and Bylaw was undertaken in June 2015 and following the public consultative process was subsequently adopted in August 2015. This bylaw is due for review by June 2025.

This year the Animal Control team put focus on proactive communication around what our Animal Control and Compliance Teams provide to the Community, as well as concentrated effort on increasing our emailable dog owner database. This mahi has included the creation of new Dog Control electronic newsletter communication as well as improving our internal systems for receiving electronic notifications from owners. It also saw our team attending community events such as Neighbours Day 2022 organised by Levin Community Patrol.

Dog Numbers

The year started with a known 6,319 dogs on Council's Dog Database, decreasing to 6,090 known dogs by the end of the registration year.

<i>Dogs at 1 July 2022</i>	<i>Dogs at 30 June 2023</i>
6,319	6,090

For dog owners that did not register their dogs, and where the non-registration came to Animal Control staff's attention, infringement notices were issued to the dog owner for failing to register their dog/s. If the infringement notice was not paid, it was lodged with the Ministry of Justice for collection.

Council also offers a time payment arrangement for owners who may not be able to pay their dogs registration fees in full immediately. Time payment arrangements are offered by direct debit only, and are to be paid in full by 31 August.

Dog Registration Fees

Councils' dog registration fee structure is designed to reflect the makeup of our community and to reward responsible ownership. The following fee structures apply:

<i>Dog Registration Type</i>	<i>Fees 2022/23</i>
Disability Assist Dog	Free
Selected Owner Status	\$68.00
NZKC Registered Status	\$68.00
Racing Greyhound Registered Status	\$68.00
De-sexed Pet	\$81.50
Entire Pet	\$136.00
Working Dog	\$60.00
Stock (Farm) Dog	\$60.00
Puppy	\$57.00
Superannuitant Owner	\$81.50
Dangerous Dog De-sexed	\$122.25
Dangerous Dog Entire	\$204.00
Late Penalty Fee	+50%

Registration Notices for 2023/24 were distributed to all current dog owners in our database in the first weeks of July 2023. For the new 23/24 year dog owners, who elected to receive their registration renewal information via email, received an email on the 6 July 2023.

This is the third year Council has distributed dog registration renewal information in this way, and it is expected the number of dog owners wishing to opt into this service will continue to increase in the coming years as they have trended upwards in the last two years.

Impounded Dogs

The number of dogs impounded during the year:

<i>2019/2020</i>	<i>2020/2021</i>	<i>2021/2022</i>	<i>2022/2023</i>
220	155	167	248

Probationary Owners/Disqualified Owners

There were no disqualified owners in the District as at 30 June 2023.

Prosecutions

There were no prosecutions completed during the year.

Dangerous/Menacing Dogs

The number of dogs classified as dangerous under section 31 of the Dog Control Act 1996:

Category	2022/23
Dangerous 31(1)(a)	0
Dangerous 31(1)(b)	9
Dangerous by owner admission (31(1)(c))	0
TOTAL	9

The number of dogs classified as menacing under sections 33A or 33C of the Dog Control Act 1996:

Category	2022/23
Menacing by behavior 33A(1)(b)(i)	73
Menacing by breed characteristic 33A(1)(b)(ii)	0
Menacing by breed 33C(1)	79
TOTAL	152

Complaints

All complaints received by Council are recorded on our Dog Database. All complaints are investigated with the outcome advised to the complainant. There were 1,106 complaints during the year including a number of dog attacks.

Category	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Barking	556	413	228	407
Wandering	398	411	327	449
Attacks	92	106	99	117
Aggressive Behavior	75	96	93	133
Stock Worrying	5	4	0	0
TOTAL	1,126	1,030	747	1,106

Infringements

Whilst Council Officers issue infringement notices to errant dog owners, this is normally the last resort as all else has failed.

176 infringements were issued this year, comprising:

<i>Infringement Type</i>	<i>Number issued</i>
Wilful Obstruction of Officer	1
Failure to Implant Microchip	1
Failure to Register	147
Failure to keep dog controlled/confined	20
Failure to carry leash in public	1
Falsely notifying death of dog	1
Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	0
Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog	5

Afterhours Service

Animal Control Officers are rostered to provide an 'emergency' after hours service, 365 days of the year. Afterhour's services relate to Dog Control and Stock Control emergency needs.