

Dog Control Policy and Practices

Annual Report 2023-2024



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 23/24 financial year from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

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.

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 2023-24 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, and 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.

Over the 2023/24 year, the Animal Control team extended their business hours to offer a wider range of services during the weekdays and on weekends to support the needs of the community. The operating hours for the animal control activity are Monday to Friday, 7am to 7pm, and Saturday to Sunday, 8am to 4:30pm, representing an increase from the previous hours of Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 4pm, with weekends limited to emergency after-hours services only. Thus, enabling the team to increase their focus on proactive officer patrols and collaborating with dog owners directly, to address and problem-solve recurring nuisance issues such as wandering and barking dogs.

Dog Numbers

The year started with a known 6,090 dogs on Council's Dog Database, increasing to 6,543 known dogs by the end of the registration year.

<i>Dogs at 1 July 2023</i>	<i>Dogs at 30 June 2024</i>
6,090	6,543

For dog owners that did not register their dogs, and where the non-registration of the dog 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 offer a time payment arrangement in advance, by way of direct debit or automatic payments for owners who may not be able to pay their dogs registration fees in full immediately. Any payment arrangements need to be paid in full by 30 June, before the start of the new registration year. Once paid in full, the new registration tag will then be sent out in July for the new registration period.

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 2023/24</i>
Disability Assist Dog	Free
Selected Owner Status	\$80.00
NZKC Registered Status	\$80.00
Racing Greyhound Registered Status	\$80.00
De-sexed Pet	\$96.00
Entire Pet	\$160.50
Working Dog	\$70.80
Stock (Farm) Dog	\$70.08
Puppy	\$67.00
Superannuitant Owner	\$80.00
Dangerous Dog De-sexed	\$144.00
Dangerous Dog Entire	\$240.75
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 23/24 year, dog owners who elected to receive their registration renewal information via email, received an email on 6 July 2023.

This is the fourth 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 three years.

Impounded Dogs

The number of dogs impounded during the year:

<i>2020/2021</i>	<i>2021/2022</i>	<i>2022/2023</i>	<i>2023/2024</i>
155	167	248	261

Probationary Owners/Disqualified Owners

There were no disqualified owners in the District as at 30 June 2024.

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	2023/24
Dangerous 31(1)(a)	0
Dangerous 31(1)(b)	5
Dangerous by owner admission (31(1)(c))	0
TOTAL	5

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

Category	2023/24
Menacing by behavior 33A(1)(b)(i)	79
Menacing by breed characteristic 33A(1)(b)(ii)	0
Menacing by breed 33C(1)	51
TOTAL	130

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	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Barking	413	228	407	544
Wandering	411	327	449	465
Attacks	106	99	117	88
Aggressive Behavior	96	93	133	115
Stock Worrying	4	0	0	3
TOTAL	1,030	747	1,106	1,215

Infringements

Whilst Council Officers issue infringement notices to errant dog owners, this is normally the last resort, after initial efforts to engage with the dog owner and seek cooperative solutions have failed.

255 infringements were issued this year, comprising:

<i>Infringement Type</i>	<i>Number issued</i>
Wilful Obstruction of Officer	0
Failure to Implant Microchip	3
Failure to Register	203
Failure to keep dog controlled/confined	36
Failure to carry leash in public	0
Falsely notifying death of dog	0
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	13

Afterhours Service

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