

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires each local council to report on its dog control policy and practices, and provide statistical information.

This report covers the year 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 and provides the information as detailed in the legislation.

OUR POLICIES & RULES

Our Animal Control team operates under the following policies and rules:

- Waikato District Council Dog Control Policy 2015
- Waikato District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2015
- Dog Control Act 1996.

OUR DISTRICT

Our district covers more than 400,000 hectares – both rural and urban.

There are 14,791 known dogs in the Waikato district, owned by 9250 owners (as of 30 June 2016).

Approximately 20% of the registered dogs in our district are on a property of more than 20 hectares.

OUR TEAM

Waikato District Council employs 11 staff to deliver animal control services in the district. We have 1 Team Leader, 8 Animal Control Officers and 2 Pound Keepers.

We have two facilities where we impound dogs – one in Ngaruawahia and one in Pukekohe which is leased from Auckland Council.

We are also supported by a regulatory administration team (1.5 staff members dedicated to animal control).



OUR SERVICES

Waikato District Council offers a seven day a week/24 hour service with staff working a roster to cover after hour emergencies.

THE NUMBERS

Our team responded to more than 3000 complaints from members of the public between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017. These complaints ranged from dog attacks, threatening dogs, barking nuisances and roaming complaints. We also responded to 376 service requests involving roaming livestock. As well as this our team carried out proactive patrols during daily routine activities. Nearly 1200 dogs were impounded at our 2 facilities as a result of these complaints and proactive patrols.



EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITIES

Our team follows the '3E' approach: engagement and education before enforcement. This approach means our staff engage with customers in the first instance, take every opportunity to educate them and then, if necessary, take enforcement action.

This approach has had a positive impact on our relationships with dog owners, the health and safety of staff and the service satisfaction of our customers.

"The public are so quick to critique the work of pound teams and ACOs around the country.

Waikato District Council have a team with big hearts who will go the extra mile when they can.

They work hard at a thankless job and, most importantly, they care!"

Cara Thomas, dog owner in Ngaruawahia

PROHIBITED, LEASH ONLY AND OFF-LEASH DOG EXERCISE AREAS

The Waikato District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2015 provides details of the areas where dogs are prohibited, where they are allowed for exercise and where they may be exercised off-leash.

After public consultation in 2016 we added two additional off-leash areas to the bylaw – one in Pokeno and one in Tamahere.

We are also considering another two off-leash areas in Tuakau. Results of our public consultation in August/September showed the majority of submitters were supportive. Council will make a decision in December 2017.

PROHIBITED DOG AREAS

Dogs are prohibited from the following areas:

- CBD Huntly
- CBD Ngaruawahia
- A recreation domain area in Raglan
- Within 10 metres of permanently installed children's play equipment
- Areas which are developed or marked out as sports fields.

OFF-LEASH EXERCISE AREAS

We have 7 fenced parks within our district that are designated as off-leash dog exercise areas.

We also have another 14 unfenced areas where dogs can be run off-leash, but they must be under control. You'll find these listed on our website.



"It's fantastic that the Horotiu dog park is made from recycled materials. Izzy is already learning new tricks and it's a great opportunity for her to socialize with other dogs."

Josh Quartermaine, dog owner from Tauhei

ON-LEASH/SUPERVISED DOG AREAS

As a result of our policy and bylaw review in 2015, we changed the restrictions in three local towns where dogs had historically been prohibited.

Subsequently, dogs are now allowed on-lead in the CBD in Tuakau, Te Kauwhata and Raglan however they should not be tethered and/or left unsupervised.

Dogs being exercised in all other areas are required to be on a leash and under control at all times.

DOG REGISTRATION AND OTHER FEES



Waikato District Council has a scaled fee structure for registration. This rewards dog owners who have no history of offences, have continuously registered their dog/s and who meet the property requirements specified within our policies.

We also set impounding, seizure, sustenance and microchipping fees at a rate to ensure that we run a user pay system. This means that dog owners that offend contribute significantly to the cost of providing the animal control services within our district.

A reduced registration fee was given to dog owners who registered their dogs prior to 20 July – 74.88% of dogs within our district were registered prior to this.

The income we get through compliance, fees and charges and from enforcement action (such as infringements) covered 47% of our operation costs.

The remaining 53% was covered from General Rates Funding for the 2016/17 year.

DOG POUND FACILITIES

Waikato District Council owns a pound facility at Ngaruawahia where 36 dogs can be kept. For the 2016/17 registration year we also leased a pound facility from Auckland Council in Pukekohe. This facility can hold an additional 40 dogs that services our dog owners in the northern part of our district.

Both pounds are maintained by staff that are qualified in animal care and have the skills necessary to handle dogs of all nature and maintain a high standard of cleanliness within the facility.

SAVING LIVES

In the last financial year our team has continued to focus on rehoming as many impounded dogs as possible that are of suitable breed and temperament.

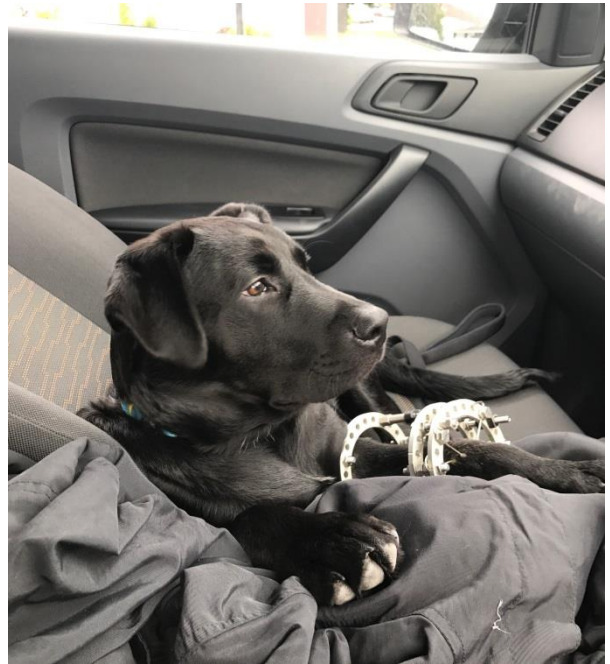
As a result we have kept euthanasia rates at a low level. We have also seen a large percentage of dogs returned to their owners as a result of the education we have been doing. This has been possible through our increased public profile and by working with numerous rescue organisations throughout the country. This is something we are very proud of!



"Pounds have no choice but to step up when people fail their animals... This is the measure of a gold standard Animal Control team effort. No one came forward to claim her, and the team busted their buns to help her out."

Fundraising for Impounded Dogs charity

EMERGING TRENDS



Comparing this data with the previous year, it is clear that there are some emerging trends.

- There's been a significant increase in the number of requests relating to the welfare of dogs and other animals. This was due to the brief closure of the Waikato SPCA as well as expectation from members of the public that Council would attend these jobs. Unfortunately under the legislation our Animal Control Officers have limited welfare enforcement powers. Our team worked within their powers to raise concerns to relevant welfare agencies in order to protect the welfare of these animals.
- There was a decrease in the number of dog attacks. In additional, a large majority of those reported did not causing significant injury. This is due to the continued education work staff are doing with dog owners and school children.
- There was an increase in the number of prosecutions we initiated. This has been assisted by the employment of our internal senior solicitor.
- There was an increase in the number of dogs classified as menacing and dangerous within our district.
- There was a slight drop in numbers of dogs we impounded but the outcome of these dogs remained the same for both years:
 - 45% returned to owner
 - 33% euthanased
 - 22% adopted.

THE NUMBERS AS OF 30 JUNE 2017

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE	
Dog Nuisance	313
Stray/Trespass	1342
Property Visit (owner classifications/unregistered etc)	701
Dog Welfare	260
Trap Required	20
Dog to Collect	91
Dog Attack	327
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	3054

REGISTRATION	
Total number of known dogs	14,715
Total number of registered dogs	14,111
Percentage of registered dogs	95.90%

PROSECUTIONS	
Number of prosecutions initiated	5
Number of prosecutions completed	3

IMPOUNDED DOGS	
Total number of impounded dogs	1122
Impounded dogs returned to owner	505
Impounded dogs euthanased	375
Impounded dogs rehomed	242

CLASSIFICATIONS	
Total Number of Probationary Owners	0
Total Number of Disqualified Owners	9
Total Number or dogs classified as Dangerous	13
Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under S31(1)(a)	2
Dangerous by Sworn Evidence S31(1)(b)	11
Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing S31(1)©	1
Total Number of Dogs Classified as Menacing	194
Menacing under S33A(1)(b)(i) by Behaviour	56
Menacing under S33A(1)(b)(ii) by Breed Characteristics	1
Menacing under S33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed	137

INFRINGEMENTS ISSUED		
SECTION	NUMBER	OFFENCE
18	Wilful obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	2
19(2)	Failure or refusal to supply information or wilfully providing false particulars	0
19A(2)	Failure to supply information or wilfully providing false particulars	0
20(5)	Failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by the section	78
23A(2)	Failure to undertake dog owner education programme or dog obedience course (or both)	0
24	Failure to comply with obligations of probationary owner 0	0
28(5)	Failure to comply with the effects of classification of dangerous dog	0
32(2)	Failure comply with the effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	1
32(4)	Fraudulent sale or transfer of dangerous dog	0
33EC(1)	Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog	2
33F(3)	Failure to advise person of muzzle and leashing requirement	0
36A(6)	Failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	2
41	False statement in relation to dog registration	0
41A	Falsely notifying death of dog	0
42	Failure to register dog	432
46(4)	Fraudulent procurement of attempt to procure replacement dog registration label or disc	0
48(3)	Failure to advise change of ownership	0
49(4)	Failure to advise change of address	0

51(1)	Removal, swapping, or counterfeiting of registration label or disc	0
52A	Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	35
53(1)	Failure to keep dog under control	18
54(2)	Failure to provide proper care and attention, to supply proper and sufficient food, and to provide adequate exercise	0
54A	Failure to carry a leash in public	1
55(7)	Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	0
62(4)	Allowing dog known to be dangerous to be at large unmuzzled or unleashed	0
62(5)	Failure to advise of muzzle and leashing requirements	0
72(2)	Releasing dog from custody	0
Total Number of Infringements		571