



Annual Report

Dog Control Policy and
Practice 2024/2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Waikato District Council, as a territorial authority is required to manage and enforce provisions pursuant to the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act).

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

This report fulfils this statutory requirement for the dog registration year 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 and provides an update on the progress and processes of the Waikato District Council Animal Control services.

BACKGROUND

All Dog Control functions in the district are conducted in-house which includes the administration, field, and pound services.

The team is responsible for responding to complaints about dogs at large or causing nuisance, ensuring compliance with the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Waikato District Council Dog Control Policy and Bylaw 2022, encouraging responsible dog ownership, timely registration of dogs as well as community education.

The Animal Control team have officers assigned to the north or south of the district which allows them to interact with dog owners and the public in those areas. With local knowledge, the officers can respond to complaints and requests for service in a timelier and more efficient way. The team also have a work roster to cover after-hour high priority requests.

THE COUNCIL'S DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES

Waikato District Council Dog Control Policy 2022

The Council adopted a Dog Control Policy in April 2022 which outlines the Council's requirements regarding controlling dogs in public places. The policy is enforceable under the Waikato District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2022.

The objectives of the policy are:

- Minimise danger, distress, and nuisance from dogs in our community.
- Prevent risk of injury in public places that are frequented by children, whether or not the children are accompanied by adults.
- Enable, to the extent that is practicable, the public (including families) to use streets and public amenities without fear or attack or intimidation by dogs.
- Promote the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

DOG REGISTRATION

The council provides a free year's registration for owners that de-sex their dog and a discounted rate for those who pay registration prior to 1 August.

Approved, Selected or Farm Owner categories can be earned, providing for further discounts.

Fees are used for:

- Dog Control activities including law enforcement, patrols, and complaint investigation.
- Dog incident prevention (including finding unregistered dogs, and the classification and enforcement of menacing and dangerous dogs)
- Assist with desexing dogs in the district (\$1 from every dog registration goes to our desexing fund).
- Provide education programs for schools and community groups
- Pound services (including lost and found, adoption and micro-chipping)
- Running the annual dog registration renewal program



Key Points 2024/2025

RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

Animal Control Officers responded to 4,027 dog control related customer requests for service over the 2024/2025 period. This does not include proactive patrolling. This is 107 more individual requests for service than the previous year.

The Animal Control team achieved a 100% response rate to aggressive dog behaviour complaints, where immediate risk to public safety is present, within one hour. This is up from a 98.2% response rate the previous year.

DOG REGISTRATION

The number of known dogs in the district on 30 June 2025 was 16,030. Of these, 13,273 were registered for the 2024/25 period, giving a compliance percentage of 82.8%, an increase of nearly 5% from the previous year.

This year, the team are focussed on putting an earlier and more proactive effort to following up on all known unregistered dogs once the annual re-registration period has ended (1 August).

Historically, approximately 50% of the noncompliant dogs are either deceased or left the area with no notification to Council.

PROBATIONARY AND DISQUALIFIED OWNERS

A person who has received three or more infringement notices within a two-year period, or who has been convicted of any offence under the Dog Control Act 1996 must be classified as a Disqualified Owner. This can be reduced to a probationary classification if the territorial authority believes disqualification is not warranted.

A disqualified owner must dispose of all dogs owned by them to a different owner and address for a period of up to 5 years. Probationary owners can retain their current registered dogs but are restricted to own any further dogs for a period up to 5 years.

There are four disqualified owners and no probationary owners in the district.

ENFORCEMENT

Animal Control has a range of enforcement measures that can be taken for offending, ranging from as simple as issuing an infringement for lower levels of offending, to as serious as prosecuting a dog owner which can lead to a criminal conviction, destruction of the dog and disqualification as a dog owner for up to five years.

Waikato District Council follows the '3 E' model to facilitate compliance. This means our staff take the approach of engaging with our customers in the first instance, taking every opportunity to educate them and provide an opportunity to be voluntarily compliant, and then, if necessary, taking the appropriate enforcement action. This approach has resulted in better relationships with dog owners in our communities.

A total of 612 infringements were issued for offences under the Dog Control Act 1996 (453 more than issued the previous year). This is largely due to the increase in following up non-compliance for dog registration once the team was at full capacity. Infringements are issued if dog owners do not register within given time frames.

The Council initiated and completed two prosecutions during 2024/25.

The first against a dog owner for an attack on stock resulting in:

- A fine of \$500 under s57(2) for an attack on another animal and an order that 50% of the fine is to be paid to Council.
- A conviction and discharge under s53(1) failure to control.
- A conviction and discharge under s42(1) failure to register dog and
- A financial reparation payment of \$500 to be made to the stock owner.

The second against a dog owner for an attack on person resulting in:

- Failure to control charge – fine of \$1000.00 with an order that 50% of the fine be payable to Council.
- Attack causing serious injury charge – one hundred hours of community work.
- Emotional reparation for the victim in the sum of \$2,500.00.

Although prosecution numbers are low it is preferable not to be prosecuting. Prosecutions are used only as a last resort where it is necessary to ensure community safety.



MENACING AND DANGEROUS DOGS

There are 291 classified menacing dogs in the district, an increase of 119 dogs from the previous year. The increase is largely due to a focused effort on database cleansing to ensure the classifying of dogs that had been missed in previous years.

Of this total, 195 of these dogs are classed as 'menacing' under section 33C of the Dog Control Act 1996. Section 33C of the Act requires dogs listed as a particular breed or type of dog in Schedule 4 of the Act to be classified as menacing.

The remaining ninety-six were classified menacing due to the Animal Control team considering the dog poses a threat to people or other animals and wildlife due to its behaviour.

All dogs in the district that have been classified as menacing in the district must be neutered and muzzled in a public place.

There are twenty-eight classified dangerous dogs in the district, with twenty-one dangerous dog classifications based on sworn evidence and seven classifications from owner admittance.

As well the requirement to be de-sexed and muzzled in public, dogs classified dangerous must always be on a leash in public and have additional containment criteria at their residing address.

IMPOUNDED DOGS

A total of 758 dogs were impounded in the council pound in 2024/25. Fifty four percent of impounded dogs were either returned to their owners or rehomed.

Of the 758 dogs impounded at the shelter, 351 (46%) were euthanised due to not being claimed by an owner and not being suitable for rehoming. A percentage of those euthanised can also be apportioned to dogs having contracted parvovirus, which was reported in high numbers across the district throughout the year.

These impounding and outcome numbers are similar to the previous year, despite operating with only one pound for the period.

All unclaimed healthy dogs are put through the same behavioural assessment program and if they are designated for euthanasia its likely they failed this behavioural assessment test.

REHOMED DOGS

184 of the total dogs impounded found new homes via the Waikato District Council Pound Pups Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/waikatopoundpups/>. This page now has over 27,000 followers.

The ongoing success of rehoming is credit to the ongoing dedication and passion of the Animal Control team.

Rehomed dogs are temperament assessed, vaccinated, microchipped, registered and desexed prior to going to their new homes. New owners are also vetted, and properties checked to endeavour to match appropriate dogs with the right owner.

DESEXING DOGS

To enable a continued focus on desexing dogs within the Waikato district The Preventing Unwanted Puppies Programme (PUP) desexed 184 dogs across our district this year, an increase of fifty-six from the previous year.

OUR EVENTS

We hold several events throughout the year providing an opportunity for our Animal Control Officers to engage with dog owners and to promote responsible dog ownership.

Dirty Dog 2024

In July 2024, animal control in conjunction with Hamilton District Council ran the ever-popular Dirty Dog Challenge with 521 people and 401 dogs participating in the 2.5km or 6km mud run. This event raised over \$6,000 to go towards the PUP desexing Programme.



POOL PARTIES

Animal control hosted its annual Pound Pups Pool Parties in April 2025. Over 220 dogs and their families enjoyed a day out at the public pools in Ngaaruawaahia and Tuakau. The event was held at the end of the swimming season prior to the pools closing for the winter so that the dogs are the last to enter the water before the winter shutdown.

EDUCATION

There were 132 education and engagement visits completed across the district in 2024/25. These visits focused on how to care for and control dogs, as well as bite prevention and safety.

The Waikato District Council Animal Control Education and Engagement Officer (Zoey Jackson) was recognised for her work advocating for responsible pet ownership by Companion Animal NZ, by winning the 2024 Te Tohu Maimoa Award. Read more here: [Te Tohu Maimoa Award](#)





SUMMARY

The Animal Control team is now at full capacity allowing for increased proactive field work, more regular patrolling of problem areas, door to door checks for unknown and unregistered dogs.

A full team lifts visibility within communities and our ability to connect with dog owners around their responsibilities and issues they may be having.

The team is better placed to engage and collaborate with high-risk communities across the district, to connect with dog owners and assist communities to take steps towards compliance, reducing dog related harm and reduce unwanted dogs.

We will continue to focus on timely and proactive registration and compliance action plans to increase registration rates and identify unknown dogs as well as ensuring compliance with classifications.

DOG CONTROL STATISTICS

Table one: Registration/Classification Data

Registration	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Known Dogs in District	16,016	16,079	16,030
Registered Dogs	14,089	12,550	13,273
Percentage Registered	87.96%	78.05%	82.8%
Dog Owner Classification			
Probationary	0	0	0
Disqualified	1	2	4
Menacing Classification			
By Breed	74	78	194
By Deed	83	91	96
Total Menacing	157	169	290
Dangerous Classification			
Section 31(1)a	0	0	0
Section 31(1)b	18	19	21
Section 31(1)c	3	6	7
Total Dangerous	23	25	28

Table two: Request for Service (RFS) Data

RFS Type	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Dog Nuisance (Barking)	242	473	501
Roaming/Stray/Trespass	1,215	1,574	1,486
Property Visit (unregistered/classifications etc)	339	313	371
Dog Welfare	101	114	71

RFS Type	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Trap Request	21	15	18
Dog Collection (surrender)	146	114	134
Dog Attack/Aggression	309	418	412
PUP Desexing Requests	82	128	162
Other*	886	721	869
Total	3,341	3,920	4,027

*Other includes customer queries (registration/adoption/infringement/missing dog reports etc)

Table three: Compliance Data

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Prosecutions			
Initiated	2	2	2
Completed	2	2	2
Infringement			
18 Wilful Obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	0	0	0
19(2) Failure or refusal to supply information or wilfully providing false particulars	0	0	0
19A (2) Failure to supply information or wilfully provide false about dog	0	0	0
20(5) Failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by the section	25	16	21
23A (2) Failure to undertake dog owner education program of dog obedience course (or both	0	0	0
24 Failure to comply with the obligations of a probationary owner	0	0	0

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
28(5) Failure to comply with the effects of disqualification	0	0	4
32(2) failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as dangerous	3	1	0
32(4) fraudulent sale or transfer of dangerous dog	0	0	0
33EC (1) Failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as menacing	6	0	17
33F (3) Failure to advise person of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0	0
36A (6) failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	0	0	0
41 False statement in relation to dog registration	0	0	0
41A Falsely notifying death of dog	0	0	0
42 failure to register dog	102	43	358
46(4) Fraudulent procurement or attempt to procure replacement dog registration label or disc	0	0	0
48(3) Failure to advise change of dog ownership	0	0	0
49(4) Failure to advise change of address	0	1	1
51(1) Removal, swapping or counterfeiting of registration label or disc	0	0	0
52A Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	60	79	160
53(1) Failure to keep dog under control	18	19	49
54(2) failure to provide proper care and attention, to supply proper and sufficient food, and to provide adequate exercise	1	1	0

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
54A Failure to carry leash in public	0	0	0
55(7) Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	0	0	0
62(4) Allowing dog known to be dangerous to be at large unmuzzled or unleashed	0	0	0
62(5) Failure to advise of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0	0
72(2) releasing dog from custody	0	0	0
Total	215	159	612

Table four: Shelter Data

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Impounded Total	884	770	758
Total number of dogs returned to owner	367	214	221
% dogs returned to owner	42%	28%	29%
Total number of dogs rehomed	181	184	185
% dogs rehomed	20%	24%	25%
Total number of dogs euthanised	332	372	351
% dogs euthanised	38%	48%	46%



CREATING
LIVEABLE, THRIVING
+ CONNECTED
COMMUNITIES

