

ANIMAL CONTROL

1 July 2020
- 30 June 2021



Photo by Wort & Flea Pet Photography



Waikato

District Council
Te Kaunihera aa Takiwaa o Waikato

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires each local council to report on its dog control policy and practices each financial year. This report is for the Waikato District Council Animal Control team, from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

DOGS IN OUR DISTRICT

The Waikato district covers more than 400,000 hectares – both rural and urban. In the past 5 years the known numbers of dogs in our district has been steadily increasing every year. This reflects the continued growth in our communities.

There were 15,344 known dogs in the Waikato district, owned by 13,825 owners, as of 30 June 2021. This is an increase of 608 dogs from the previous year.

Approximately 12.4% of the registered dogs in our district are registered on a Farm Owner Policy.

OUR TEAM

As of 30 June 2021, we had 12 staff to deliver animal control services in the district:

- 1 Team Leader
- 8 Animal Control Officers
- 2 Pound Keepers
- 1 Education & Engagement Officer.

The team is supported by administrators in the Community Safety Support team (2 staff members dedicated to the Animal Control team).



Waikato District Council staff at the Dirty Dog Challenge in June 2021

OUR POLICIES & RULES

The Waikato District Council 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
- Impounding Act 1955.

Note: The Waikato District Council Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw are currently being reviewed and we will be consulting on these in the next 6 months. The revised documents are due for publication in 2022.

OUR SERVICES

Our Animal Control team provide a 24 hour/7-day service. Staff have a work roster to cover after-hour emergencies.

OUR APPROACH

We follow the '3E' approach: engagement and education before enforcement.

This means our staff take the approach of engaging with our customers in the first instance, taking every opportunity to educate them about responsible dog ownership. Then, if necessary, we take the appropriate enforcement action.

We have seen a number of benefits from using this approach:

- better relationships with dog owners in our communities
- an improved culture of dog ownership in the district
- less aggression towards staff
- registration compliance remains high
- we are able to build relationships in communities that previously would not have engaged with Animal Control.

RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 our team responded to 3,529 requests from members of the public. This is an increase of 155 requests from the previous year.

These complaints included dog attacks, threatening dogs, barking nuisances, surrenders, welfare and roaming complaints. As well as responding to complaints and requests, our team also carried out proactive patrols during their daily routine activities.

COVID-19 & OUR SERVICES

The Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020/2021 were challenging for Waikato District Council because the northern part of our district falls within the Auckland boundary and therefore we had areas with different alert levels. As a result, we had to provide different levels of service across our district.

While in Alert Level 3 and 4, the Animal Control team can only provide an essential service. This means the team can only respond if there is a public safety risk such as dog attacks, stock on roads and urgent dog welfare requests.

Education visits in schools and our Dogs in Libraries programme can only proceed in Level 1 due to the inability to ensure social distancing. During this time our Education & Engagement Officer focused on adoptions, engaging with our communities through our social media channels and supporting the Animal Control Officers.

OUR FUNDING: DOG REGISTRATION & OTHER FEES

DOG REGISTRATION 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 offer a reduced registration fee for dog owners who have registered their dogs before 20 July.

Of the 15,344 known dogs in our district, there are 14,107 registered – a percentage of 91.94%. The Animal Control team engages with dog owners who have not registered their dogs in an appropriate time frame to ensure compliance is achieved. It is a continued focus for the team to increase this overall compliance percentage.

Facebook competition

In September 2020 we encouraged people to share a photo of their dog wearing its current registration tag on the Waikato Pound Pups Facebook page.

Everyone who shared a photo went in the draw to win one of five prize packs, provided by some of our suppliers. We had 49 entries.



One of our education dogs with the prize packs

OTHER FEES

Our fees for impounding, seizure, sustenance and microchipping are based on a user-pays system. This means that dog owners who offend will pay the most towards our animal control services in the district.

DESEXING - PUP PROGRAMME

Of every dog registration, \$1 goes towards our desexing programme known as PUP – Prevent Unwanted Puppies. This initiative was approved by Waikato District Council in 2017.

Owners who hold a community services card can access discounted desexing for their dog at a rate of \$80.

In the 2020/2021 financial year, 52 dogs were desexed for families that otherwise could not afford it. This has many benefits for our community, including fewer unwanted dogs. Desexed dogs are also less likely to roam.

PROHIBITED, LEAD ONLY & OFF-LEAD 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-lead.

PROHIBITED DOG AREAS

Dogs are prohibited from the following areas:

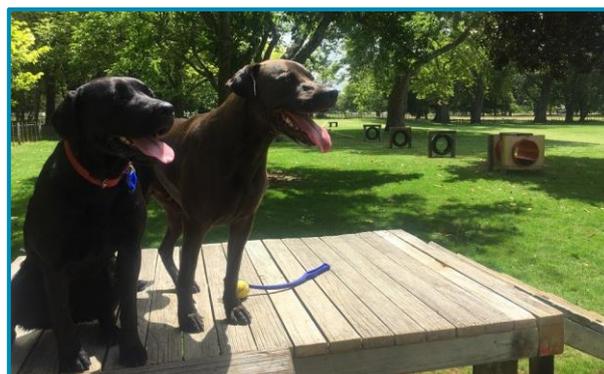
- CBD Huntly
- CBD Ngaruawahia
- recreation domain area in Raglan
- within 10 metres of permanently installed children's play equipment
- areas which are developed or marked out as sports fields.

OFF-LEAD EXERCISE AREAS

We have 25 dog exercise areas in the Waikato district – 7 fenced parks and 18 unfenced areas where dogs can be run off-lead, but they must be under control. Here is a list of our off-lead exercise areas:

- Karioitahi Beach
- Sunset Beach, Port Waikato
- Tuakau:
 - Les Batkin Reserve
 - Alexandra Redoubt Reserve
 - Kowhai Reserve
 - Centennial Park
- Pokeno Domain (fenced)
- Huntly:
 - on the shore of Lake Hakanoa (fenced)
 - dog park on the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Graham Place (fenced)
 - grassed area at Riverview Reserve
- Te Kauwhata Recreation Reserve (fenced)
- Ngaruawahia:
 - on the corner of Great South Road and Ellery Street (fenced)
 - Regent Street Reserve
 - Lower Waikato Esplanade Reserve to Belt Street
 - Waipa Esplanade Reserve

- Horotiu:
 - AFFCO park on Horotiu Road and State Highway 1 (fenced)
 - Riverside Reserve on Horotiu Bridge Road
 - Bob Byrne Park, Taupiri
 - Te Awa Reserve, Tamahere (Note: this area has issues with erosion)
- Whatawhata Recreation Reserve
- Te Kowhai Recreation Reserve
- Raglan:
 - Aro Reserve, John Street (fenced)
 - from the boat ramp in the Opotoru inlet to the Aerodrome bridge
 - from Wainui Reserve carpark to just south of the Ngarunui Beach walkway
 - the beach area from the wharf, the Cliffs, Cox's Bay, Lorenzen Bay, The Doughboys and Moonlight Bay.



Horotiu Dog Park

ON-LEAD/SUPERVISED DOG AREAS

In all other areas, dogs are required to be on lead and under control at all times.

DOG POUND FACILITIES

We have two facilities where we impound dogs – one in Ngaruawahia and one in Pukekohe for the northern part of our district.

The Pukekohe facility is leased from Auckland Council and can hold 40 dogs. The pound facility at Ngaruawahia can hold 25 dogs.

All staff have the necessary skills to handle dogs of all natures and maintain a high standard of cleanliness and welfare within the facilities.

CHANGE TO POUND HOURS

The Animal Control team changed their pound hours this year to accommodate people needing to pick up children from school. This has made it easier for people collecting dogs from the pound or viewing adoption dogs.



NUMBER OF IMPOUNDED DOGS

While the number of impounded dogs has been steadily decreasing over the previous 5 years, this year there has been an increase.

Our team impounded 763 dogs this year, an increase of 91 from the previous year (which was 672). The number of dogs returned to owners increased by 83 dogs.

Of the 763 dogs impounded:

- 390 were returned to owner
- 184 were adopted
- 184 were euthanised
- 5 are being held subject to the outcome of prosecution.

FOCUSING ON SAVING LIVES

In the past financial year our team has continued to focus on rehoming as many impounded dogs as possible (they must be a suitable breed and temperament). We work closely with local rescue organisations including Fundraising for Impounded Dogs, Humane Society, Paws 4 Life, DC Rescue, Fostered Paws, Vada's Angels Animal Rescue, Tokoroa Animal Rescue and Auckland Puppy Rescue.

With the help of social media and strong relationships with rescue groups, we were able to rehome 184 dogs that were not claimed by owners. This is particularly important work for our Animal Control Officers and Engagement & Education Officer.

These dogs are thoroughly temperament tested, vaccinated, treated for fleas and worms, micro-chipped, registered and desexed prior to going to their new homes. The new owners are vetted, their properties are checked and every effort is made to ensure the appropriate dog is matched with the right owner.

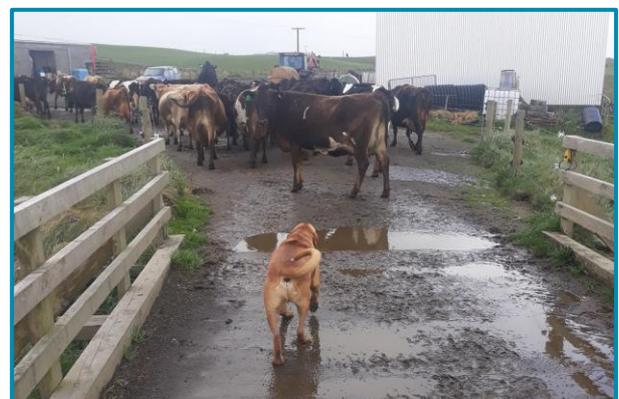
We charge a \$300 fee for adoption dogs. Our adoption dogs are rehomed throughout New Zealand and we work closely with other territorial authorities to ensure comprehensive checks are done.

SOME OF THE DOGS WE REHOMED IN 2020/2021

MORTY

Morty is a German Shepherd/Mastiff cross. He loves his new life on the farm and has learnt lots of farm skills from his fur-sister, a 12-year-old German Shepherd called Ruby.

Morty also loves the river and beach, and is now helping to train Daisy, a young kelpie/Mastiff cross. Morty's Mum and Dad say he's the best boy.



Morty, working on the farm



Morty, loving life

SIA

In October 2020 our Animal Control team received a call about a dog hiding underneath a house. When we went to retrieve it, we discovered it was a puppy who had been shot multiple times with an air gun. The puppy was immediately taken to the vets for emergency treatment and then transferred to the Hamilton SPCA for further treatment and care. The puppy has since made a full recovery.



SALLY

In June 2021 Sally was surrendered to Animal Control due to behavioural issues. She was in great health but was fearful and unsure of the world, due to her sheltered upbringing.

Thanks to Fundraising for Impounded Dogs and Eureka Dog Services, Sally got the training she needed. She learned how to communicate with dogs and engage with people and this sweet girl has now found her forever home.



HOLLY

Holly was adopted in August 2019 and is loving life as a heading dog. Here's what Holly's owners, Anthony and Briar, have to say:

“She keeps an eye on the livestock next to our South Auckland lifestyle block and likes herding the larger dogs at the dog park. Vera, a 9-month-old Beardie X Staffy followed in May 2020 and Holly was stoked to have a younger sister to boss around. It took her a few days to come to terms with not being the only dog in the family, but they are now inseparable.

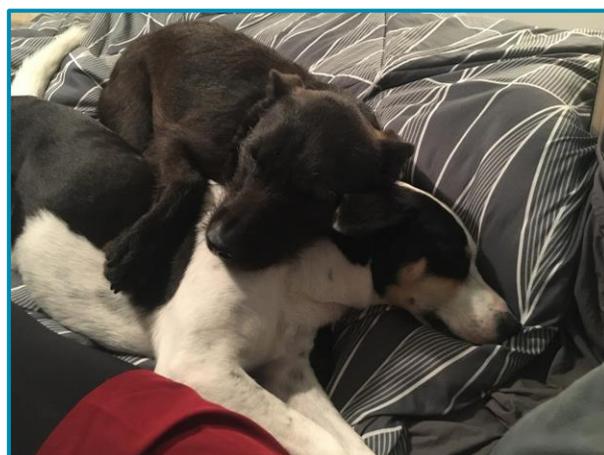
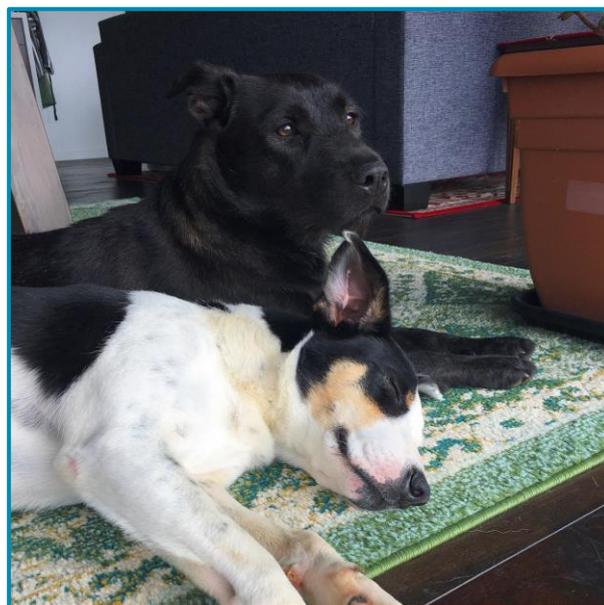
The Waikato Pound team were fantastic, organising the initial visits, site inspection and vet appointments. Everything is straight forward, and you can tell that the top priority is the wellbeing of the animals in their care.

Holly and Vera have settled in nicely. Both love long walks, chasing birds, greeting the postie at the gate and sleeping in front of the fire. They are currently in training, learning how to be more focused on their humans when walking instead of cars and other dogs. We attended the Dirty Dog challenge in June which Vera enjoyed especially, because being muddy is her favourite activity – although they weren't quite so happy with the bath that followed. We've found the whole process extremely rewarding. Having dogs is a very social activity and a lot of our friends have also adopted dogs, with many playdates lined up as soon as we come out of lockdown.

Thanks to the team at Waikato Pound for connecting us with our girls. We still follow the Waikato Pound Pups Facebook page closely and it's always very tempting to adopt a third! “



Anthony and Holly



Holly and Vera

OUR PROGRAMMES

DOG SMART PROGRAMME

We offer free 'Dog Smart' presentations to local schools. The Dog Smart programme teaches children the basic responsibilities of dog ownership, and how to keep themselves safe around dogs.

Our Education & Engagement Officer presented to a number of education facilities around our district in 2020/2021, including early childcare centers, primary and high schools.

We plan to offer this programme in te reo in the future.



Zoey, our Education & Engagement Officer, at Waerenga Primary School with Salty, one of our education dogs

DOGS IN LIBRARIES

Our 'Dogs in Libraries' reading programme continues to be very popular. People can practice their reading skills by reading aloud to one of our education dogs, at any of the libraries in the Waikato district.

This type of programme has been shown to increase a person's relaxation while reading because it is a lot less intimidating than reading to other people and you can proceed at your own pace.

Research shows that sitting down and reading to a friendly dog has been found to help a person's fear of being judged and over time their reading ability and self-confidence improves.

The dogs we use are owned by some of our Animal Control Officers and they are all previously Pound dogs.

They have been extensively tested to make sure they have the right temperament, to ensure Council provides a safe environment. Our Education & Engagement Officer is always present to help facilitate the session.

While it is very popular with children, the programme is also available to adults or new immigrants that want to practice their reading.

In the past financial year we held 40 Dogs in Libraries sessions at our 6 libraries. By the end of 2021 we plan to also offer it at the new Tamahere Council & Community Space.



Education dog Salty enjoys listening to a book at one of our Dogs in Libraries sessions

OUR EVENTS

We regularly hold a range of community events so that dog owners can enjoy a fun and safe day out with their dog.

FUNDRAISING EVENT AT POKENO AND LAKE KAINUI

All decked out in pink, approximately 80 people and their dogs joined the Animal Control team to raise money for the Breast Cancer Foundation in October 2020.

At the event in Pokeno, the rain stayed away and it was a great day for all, including the adoption dogs from our Pound. In Horsham Downs the following day, walkers dressed in pink enjoyed a stroll around the picturesque Lake Kainui.

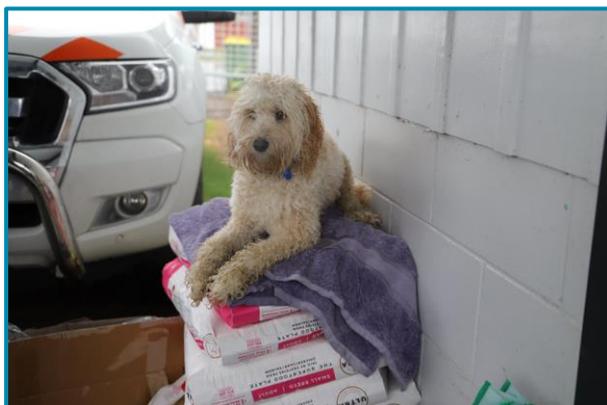


These events raised more than \$400 for the Breast Cancer Foundation. We are planning to hold this event again in October 2021.

POUND PUP POOL PARTIES

Our team held two Pool Parties at the end of the swimming season, before the pools closed for winter.

The first event was held at Tuakau Centennial Pool on Sunday 24 March 2021. Dogs of all breeds came along for a dip, and they didn't seem to mind the rain.



This soggy doggy enjoyed drying off with a towel

On Sunday 31 March, approximately 70 dogs went for a swim at the Ngaruawahia Pool, including a number of dogs previously adopted from our pound.

Our team love to meet the dogs in our district, and it was great to see some of our adoption dogs again.



Hendrix (formerly known as Luther), enjoying getting his paws wet

DIRTY DOG CHALLENGE

We were thrilled to hold the Dirty Dog Challenge this year, after having to cancel the event in 2020 due to Covid-19 lockdowns. The event is organised by Waikato District Council and Hamilton City Council and its popularity continues to increase.

We had more than 380 dogs attend the event this year, with people travelling from all over the central North Island to play with their dogs in the mud. We created more obstacles and changed the track to give our repeat customers a different challenge.



*2021 Dirty Dog Challenge
(Cover photo taken by Wort & Flea Pet Photography)*

FUTURE PLANS

We plan to hold more dog park events in the next financial year. We are also planning to take our education dogs for regular visits to local rest homes.

ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES ONLINE

WAIKATO POUND PUPS INSTAGRAM PAGE

We have 1525 people following our Instagram Page. This page helps us to find loving homes for our available adoption dogs and to promote our community events. Our followers are from all around New Zealand – we even have a few followers who have moved to Australia with their adopted dogs. We hope to have 2000 followers by the end of 2021.

WAIKATO POUND PUPS FACEBOOK GROUP

We currently have more than 21,000 people following our Waikato Pound Pups Facebook page. This number has increased by more than 2000 in the past year and continues to grow. Our followers are from all around New Zealand.

This page helps us to find loving homes for our Pound dogs, and to promote our community events. During the Covid-19 restrictions we used this forum to engage with our community.



We work closely with animal welfare groups so that dogs like Zeek can get the help they need



It's not just dogs we re-home. Cool dude Gary has found a great home

DOG ATTACKS

After an increase in dog attacks during the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2019/2020, the number of dog attacks has since decreased.

However, there has been an increase in serious attacks during this financial year. These included attacks on humans and on stock. As a result, the Animal Control team seized 6 dogs.

Animal Control has a range of measures that can be taken for this offending. These range from an infringement notice for lower levels of offending, to enforcement action and prosecution for more serious incidents. This can result in a criminal conviction for the dog owner, destruction of the dog and disqualification as a dog owner for 5 years.

In the 2020/2021 year, two dog owners were made probationary, 4 prosecutions were initiated, and 2 prosecutions were completed.

WANDERING STOCK

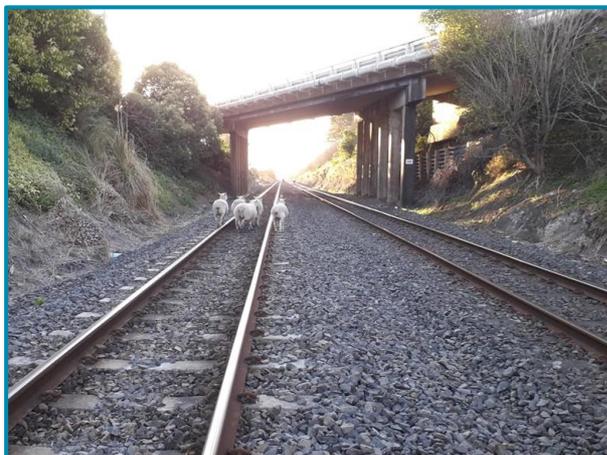
As well as dealing with dogs, our Animal Control team also respond to incidents of wandering stock.

Livestock on roads is a risk to public safety and it's our priority to keep our communities safe.

Our staff attended more than 300 stock related jobs in 2020/2021. These included horses, cows, sheep, goats and pigs.

Here are some of the incidents our team responded to:

- A cattle beast on a busy road at 7.30am, in the fog. It was impounded.
- A sheep on the side of a busy road had to be lifted over the fence, back into its paddock.
- Two yearling colts were found wandering and our team ran them back into cattle yards.
- A group of cattle were found in the Waipa River with no way out. The rescue mission involved our Animal Control team, the local fire brigade and a local digger driver.
- A family of piglets was rounded up after creating havoc in gardens and reserves in a residential area.
- A group of sheep were running on the train tracks between Pokeno and Tuakau. Our team herded them into a paddock with the help of a local farmer and Police.



Sheep on the run

IN SUMMARY

This financial year has been another eventful, but successful year for the Animal Control team.

The Animal Control team has continued to attend urgent jobs in the required timeframes, and we feel we are adding value to the safety of our community.

We continue to build positive relationships in the community and, with the PUP scheme, we are successfully changing patterns of historically poor dog ownership and improving dog welfare, one dog at a time.



Happy dog, happy owner

2020/2021: THE NUMBERS IN DETAIL

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE	
Dog Nuisance	330
Stray/Trespass	1,244
Property Visit (owner classifications/unregistered etc.)	363
Dog Welfare	86
Trap Required	21
Dogs to collect (surrendered)	77
Dog Attack	328
Other (includes Animal charges for impounded dogs, missing dog reports etc.)	1028
Subsidised Dog Desexing Project - PUP	52
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	3,529

REGISTRATION	
Total number of known dogs	15,344
Total number of registered dogs	14,107
Percentage of registered dogs	91.94

PROSECUTIONS	
Number of prosecutions initiated	4
Number of prosecutions completed	2

IMPOUNDED DOGS	
Total number of impounded dogs	763
Impounded dogs returned to owner	390
Impounded dogs euthanased	184
Impounded dogs rehomed	184
Held pending prosecution	5
CLASSIFICATIONS	
Total Number of Probationary Owners	2
Total Number of Disqualified Owners	10
Total Number or dogs classified as Dangerous	27
Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under S31(1)(a)	0
Dangerous by Sworn Evidence S31(1)(b)	27
Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing S31(1) (c)	0
Total Number of Dogs Classified as Menacing	173
Menacing under S33A(1)(b)(i) by Behaviour	80
Menacing under S33A(1)(b)(ii) by Breed Characteristics	4
Menacing under S33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed	89

INFRINGEMENTS ISSUED		
SECTION	NUMBER	OFFENCE
18	Wilful obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	4
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	74
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
28(5)	Failure to comply with the effects of disqualification	0
32(2)	Failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	2
32(4)	Fraudulent sale or transfer of dangerous dog	1
33EC(1)	Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog	14
33F(3)	Failure to advise person of muzzle and leashing requirement	0
36A(6)	Failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	0
41	False statement in relation to dog registration	0
41A	Falsely notifying death of dog	1
42	Failure to register dog	211
46(4)	Fraudulent procurement or 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	56
53(1)	Failure to keep dog under control	27

54(2)	Failure to provide proper care and attention, to supply proper and sufficient food, and to provide adequate exercise	6
54A	Failure to carry a leash in public	0
55(7)	Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	1
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		397