

**REPORT ON  
WAITOMO DISTRICT COUNCIL DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES  
2018/2019**

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**TO:** The Secretary for Local Government  
**FROM:** General Manager Strategy and Environment  
**SUBJECT:** Report on Waitomo District Council Dog Control Policy and Practices - 2018/2019  
**DATE:** 27 August 2019

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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This is Waitomo District Council's (WDC) annual report on Dog Control Policy and Practices for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, as required by section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

## **2 DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES**

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### **2.1 Dog Control in the District**

The total number of active dogs on WDC's Register at the end of the 2018/19 registration year was 3,401, a decrease of 67 dogs from 2017/18.

WDC provides a twenty-four hour Animal Control Service, with Animal Control Officers ("ACO") covering this function during normal business hours. Any urgent animal control service requests received after-hours (including weekends and public holidays) are responded to by an after-hour's Contractor. Training is provided to Contractors, with both providers working closely together on animal control matters.

WDC also maintains good working relationships with the local Police, veterinarians and the Waikato SPCA.

WDC employs one full time ACO and a Compliance Administrator. The Team Leader Compliance and Monitoring leads the Team, and performs the ACO role when required for operational reasons.

The ACO works predominantly in the field, whilst the Compliance Administrator oversees the administration of the WDC Database, the National Dog Database (NDD), and the registration process.

WDC operates a Dog Pound in William Street, Te Kuiti. The Pound equipment is updated on an as needed basis.

This year there was a decrease in the number of dogs impounded from the previous year. 153 dogs were impounded (compared to 185 in 2017/18), with 59 dogs returned to their owner, 35 dogs euthanized, and 57 re-homed. Two dogs remain impounded.

The Dog Owners of impounded dogs are required to pay an impounding fee, as well as registration fees if the dog is unregistered, plus micro-chipping fees if applicable. In addition, sustenance fees are charged for each day the dog is in the Pound.

Microchipping continues to be a key focus. It is noted that the Act requires dogs being registered for the first time to be chipped within two months of registration (with herding dogs exempt from the requirement), and classified dangerous and menacing dogs are also required to be microchipped.

Microchipping is carried out by the ACO who has the appropriate training to perform the task. Owners are charged a nominal fee of \$25 to cover costs.

The WDC Dog Control Policy and Bylaw was formally adopted in 2015.

## **2.2 Dog Control Enforcement Practices**

For this period, WDC received 349 dog control related complaints (426 in 2017/18) that required action.

WDC takes a pragmatic approach to enforcement, and generally attempts to educate dog owners in the first instance. For example, if a registered dog is picked up for a first wandering offence, the dog might be returned to the Owner with a verbal warning, rather than impounding.

Complaints relating to wandering dogs numbered 194 this year, a significant reduction from the 2017/18 period (277). In addition, 59 complaints were received in relation to barking dogs (40 in 2017/18), and 23 complaints were received for rushing/aggression. WDC works with complainants to identify and capture wandering dogs, sometimes using WDC owned cage traps if required.

In respect of barking complaints, most are resolved quickly once the owner is advised of the issue and has been provided advice on methods to resolve the issue. Where the issue is not resolved within a timely manner, an Abatement Notice is issued (as provided by the Act) and this has proven to be a useful tool in these circumstances. WDC has issued no Abatement Notices in this period.

WDC received 62 complaints related to attacks, rushing and/or aggressive dog incidents. Each incident is investigated, a report made (including an attack rating assessment). Upon completion of the investigation and reporting, a decision is made (and recorded) as to what action is appropriate as per the requirements of the Act. Each incident is assessed on its merits on a case by case basis.

For this period, 48 (51 in 2017/18) Infringement Notices have been issued and have since either been paid by the Dog Owner or sent to the Court.

The Infringement Notices were issued as follows:

- Three for breach of section 33EC(1) (failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog);
- 28 for breach of Section 42 (failure to register dog);

- Five for breach of Section 52A (failure to keep dog controlled or confined);
- 11 for breach of Section 53(1) (failure to keep dog under control); and
- One for breach of Section 20(5) (failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by Section 20(5))

### **2.3 Dogs Prohibited, Leash Only and Dog Exercise Areas**

WDC's Policy requires all dogs to be on a leash in public places.

The Policy also identifies dog prohibited areas (i.e. sports grounds, children's playgrounds and schools), and dog exercise areas. Signs are installed as appropriate to advise the public.

### **2.4 Dog Registration and Other Fees**

There were no changes to the Dog Registration fees for 2018/19.

Where dog owners have not registered their dogs within the required timeframe, these are followed up. The process involves an initial reminder letter and phone call / visit to the Owner. If dog owners continue to fail to register their dogs, the dog(s) are then seized and impounded. Dogs are only released from the pound once they are registered. If this approach is unsuccessful, dogs are seized and held until registered.

### **2.5 Education**

WDC proactively engages in education for dog owners on a monthly basis by a range of mediums including the local newspaper, Waitomo Way (a council newsletter) and WDC's two Facebook pages (one dedicated to Animal Control).

### **2.6 Disqualified and Probationary Dog Owners**

Waitomo District has one disqualified Dog Owner, and no probationary owners.

### **2.7 Menacing and Dangerous Dogs**

For this period, there are no classified dangerous dogs and 28 menacing dogs classified in the District out of a population of 3,401 dogs. Any new dog of a menacing breed/type is identified following registration, classified and referred for a compliance check.

In April 2017, WDC received funding from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) to run a Menacing Dog Campaign for the neutering of menacing dogs. As at 30 June 2019, 19 dogs have been neutered under this campaign (since the commencement in May 2017). The Campaign is ongoing while funding is available.

### **2.8 Other Information**

Council requires owners of more than two dogs on any urban property to apply for a permit from Council. Upon application, the Dog Owner's property is inspected in accordance with the requirements of the Dog Control Bylaw. If the requirements are met, the permit is issued subject to any necessary conditions. A permit may be reviewed by WDC at any time, and may be modified or revoked if any non-compliances with the permit are detected.

### 3 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Category	For period 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016	For period 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017	For period 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018	For period 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019
Total number of Registered Dogs	3,330	3,590	3,468	3,401
Total number of Probationary Owners	0	0	0	0
Total number of Disqualified Owners	0	0	1	1
Total number of Dangerous Dogs	0	1	0	0
▪ Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under s31(1)(a)	0	0	0	0
▪ Dangerous by Sworn Evidence s31(1)(b)	0	1	0	0
▪ Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing s31(1)(c)	0	0	0	0
Total number of Menacing Dogs	<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>
▪ Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) - i.e. by Behaviour	2	3	3	8
▪ Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii)- by Breed Characteristics	5	6	7	5
▪ Menacing under s33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed	13	17	18	15
Total number of Infringement Notices (excluding cancelled)	24	74	51	48
Total number of prosecutions	0	0	1	0
Complaints received:				
▪ Aggressive	0	2	8	21
▪ Bins/Signs	0	0	0	0
▪ Bite/attack	6	33	37	39
▪ Barking	50	93	40	59
▪ Breach of Council Bylaw or permits	0	4	3	2
▪ Lost Dog/other	0	1	26	18
▪ Rushing in public place	26	17	14	2
▪ Unregistered	0	0	4	5
▪ Wandering	241	314	277	194
▪ Worrying animals	0	19	1	1
▪ No water, shelter, food or exercise	25	35	16	8
<b>Total Complaints Received</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>349</b>

*Note: Variations in reporting numbers on aggressive, bite/attacks and rushing between years can occur as a result of how service requests are coded.*