

WAITOMO DISTRICT COUNCIL DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT 2025/2026

1 INTRODUCTION

This is Waitomo District Council's (WDC) annual report on Dog Control Policy and Practices for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, as required by section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act).

2 DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES

Dog Control in the District

- 2.1 The total number of dogs on WDC's Register at the end of the 2025/2026 registration year was 2,809. A decrease of 137 dogs from the 2024/2025 period.
- 2.2 WDC provides a twenty-four-hour Animal Control Service, with Animal Control Officers (ACOs) 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. This is a long standing arrangement which works well.
- 2.3 WDC also maintains good working relationships with the local Police, veterinarians, and the Waikato SPCA, Waipa District Council and Pound Hounds.
- 2.4 The current team structure includes a Team Leader, one full time ACO and a Pound Officer with some Compliance Administrator support. A recent resignation of the Team Leader provides the opportunity to review the structure to ensure it meets organisational requirements.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 WDC operates a Dog Pound in William Street, Te Kuiti. The Pound equipment is updated on an as needed basis. Considerable improvements have been made to the Dog Pound in recent years to improve health and safety.
- 2.7 There was a decrease in the number of dogs impounded (141) from the previous year. (164 in 2024/2025), with 53 dogs returned to their owner, 68 dogs euthanized, 12 re-homed, 2 remain alive at the Pound for rehoming, 2 were classed as other and 2 surrendered to the SPCA. This data is not required for reporting purposes under the Dog Control Act so is not included in the section three Table.
- 2.8 The 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.

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 Microchipping is carried out by the ACO who has the appropriate training to perform the task. Owners are charged a nominal fee, as per fees and charges schedule, to cover costs.
- 2.11 The WDC Dog Control Policy and Bylaw were reviewed and formally adopted on 30 June 2025 and is not due to be reviewed until June 2035.

Dog Control Enforcement Practices

- 2.12 For this period, WDC received 453 dog control related complaints (561 in 2024/2025) that required action.
- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 Complaints relating to wandering dogs numbered 291 this year (391 in 2024/2025). In addition, 66 complaints were received in relation to barking dogs (50 in 2024/2025), and 32 complaints were received for rushing/aggression (32 in 2024/2025). WDC works with complainants to identify and capture wandering dogs, sometimes using WDC owned cage traps if required.
- 2.15 In respect of barking complaints, most are resolved quickly once the owner is advised of the issue has been provided with advice on methods to reduce the barking behaviour. 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 issued no barking Abatement Notices in this period.
- 2.16 WDC received 24 complaints related to attacks (30 in 2024/2025). Each incident is investigated, and a report completed (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.
- 2.17 For this period, 73 (50 in 2024/2025) Infringement Notices have been issued and have since either been paid by the Dog Owner or sent to the Court.
- 2.18 The Infringement Notices were issued as follows:
- None for wilful obstruction of officer
 - None for failure/refusal to supply info
 - Five for failure to comply with a bylaw
 - One for false statement of registration
 - Five for failure to comply with effects of the class
 - 52 for breach of section 42 (failure to register dog)
 - Two for breach of section 52A (failure to keep dog controlled or confined)
 - Eight for breach of section 53(1) (failure to keep dog under control)

Dogs Prohibited, Leash Only and Dog Exercise Areas

- 2.19 WDC's Policy requires all dogs to be on a leash in public places.
- 2.20 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.

Dog Registration and Other Fees

- 2.21 Dog registration fees have been updated for the 2026/2027 financial year.
- 2.22 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.

Education

- 2.23 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).

Disqualified and Probationary Dog Owners

- 2.24 Waitomo District has four disqualified dog owners, and one probationary owner.

Menacing and Dangerous Dogs

- 2.25 For this period, there are two dangerous dogs and 18 menacing dogs classified in the district out of a population of 2,809 dogs. Any new dog of a menacing breed/type is identified following registration, classified and referred for a compliance check.

Other Information

- 2.26 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 01/07/20 – 30/06/21	For period /07/2021 – 30/06/22	For period 01/07/22 – 30/06/23	For period 01/07/23 – 30/06/24	For period 01/07/24 – 30/06/25	For period 01-07-25 – 30/06/26
Total number of Registered Dogs	3,363	3,311	3,318	3,029	2,946	2,809
Total number of Probationary Owners	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total number of Disqualified Owners	3	3	2	2	4	4
Total number of Dangerous Dogs	2	2	2	2	2	2
▪ Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under s31(1)(a)	0					0
▪ Dangerous by Sworn Evidence s31(1)(b)	0					0
▪ Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing s31(1)(c)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total number of Menacing Dogs	27	27	25	15	21	18
▪ Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) - i.e. by Behaviour	6	10	11	2	8	6
▪ Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii)- by Breed Characteristics	5	3	3	0	0	0
▪ Menacing under s33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed	16	14	11	13	13	12
Total number of Infringement Notices (excluding cancelled)	31	62	22	0	50	73
Total number of prosecutions	2	1	0	0	1	0
Complaints received:						
▪ Aggressive	9	13	16	50	32	32
▪ Bins/Signs	0	0	0	0	0	0
▪ Bite/attack	29	30	37	28	30	24
▪ Barking	68	63	62	82	50	66
▪ Breach of Council Bylaw or permits	5	0	2	0	0	0
▪ Lost Dog/other	21	22	38	47	44	40
▪ Rushing in public place	8	0	0	0	0	0
▪ Unregistered	2	2	8	4	4	0
▪ Wandering	163	120	205	242	391	291
▪ Worring animals	3	0	0	0	0	0
▪ No water, shelter, food or exercise	11	3	6	6	10	0
Total Complaints Received	319	253	374	459	561	453

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