

# Whangarei District Council Annual Report on Dog Control Policy and Practice 2017/2018



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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Purpose**

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 acts as a medium for this information and is an update on the progress and processes of the Whangarei District Council Dog Control unit.

## **1.2 Background**

Whangarei District Council has contracted Armourguard to undertake the council's regulatory duties under the Dog Control Act 1996, Impounding Act 1955 and relevant animal management bylaws and policies.

Armourguard commenced providing dog control services for the council from 16 September 2016. This team has now completed both a full calendar and financial year as the Animal Management unit.

The contractor employs four dedicated Animal Management staff who are warranted under the Dog Control Act 1996.

Dog control services operates 24 hours from a council owned Animal Management Shelter based in Kioreroa Road, Whangarei.

This team is responsible for the field services of the department, including but not limited to the reactive response to complaints about animals at large or causing nuisance, ensuring compliance with the Dog Control Act 1996, encouraging responsible dog ownership and registration of dogs as well as community education.

This year has seen a focus on dog education in schools and ensuring compliance of the districts menacing dogs.

The contractor also provides enforcement services across parking, noise and all other council bylaws.

# **2. The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices**

## **2.1 Council adopted the Dog Management Policy in May 2013**

The policy provides vision and guidance to ensure;

- The prevention of danger, distress and nuisance to the community by uncontrolled dogs in public spaces
- providing for the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners
- the protection of kiwi and other indigenous wildlife
- encouragement of good dog ownership in regards to compliance and welfare

## **2.2 Fees**

Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees aim to contribute 55- 75% of the cost of dog control in Whangarei District. The council provides a discounted rate for dog owners that de-sex their dog and for those who pay registration prior to 1 August.

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)
- Education programs for schools and community groups
- Signs for the Council's Dog Management Bylaw and Dog Management Policy
- Shelter Services (including lost and found, adoption and micro-chipping)
- Running the annual dog registration renewal program

## **Key Achievements 2017/2018**

### **Responding to complaints (CRM)**

There has been a total of 4,717 dog control customer requests for service received over the 2017/2018 period. This is 1400 more individual requests for service than the previous year.

This increase is largely a result of property visits recorded to proactively check for unregistered dogs. This work is reflective in successfully registering more than 1,600 dogs than in 2016/2017.

There has also been a significant increase in barking complaints received. This could be due to an increase in repeat complaints. This is being addressed within a new operational process designed to provide better service, by working with the dog owner in the first instance and improving the education collateral

89% of the CRM's received were responded to within the optimum time frames. The time frames are based on location of complainant (Inner city, Inner Coastal Rural and Outer areas) and the priority of the request.

### **Enforcement**

There has been a total of 976 infringements issued for offences under the Dog Control Act 1996. This is up by 168 from the 2016/2017 and is again reflective of the good proactive work done in the dog registration space.

### **Impounded dogs**

There was a total of 388 dogs impounded at the council shelter, which is 113 more than the previous period. Significantly the return to owner and adoption rate has increased which is a credit to the shelter staff, and thus reducing percentage of dogs having to be euthanased.

The business case for the scope for the new Animal Management Shelter was completed this year for the tendering process to begin in 2018/2019 and constructed in the 2019/2020 period. This build will be a catalyst to increase the levels of service available at the shelter and an opportunity to change the perception of the community towards council run shelters. These levels of service will focus on and benefit animal welfare, health and safety and community education and service.

## **Dog re-homing**

Armourguard in collaboration with the SPCA are getting great outcomes for dogs that enter the shelter that can be rehomed. When suitable dogs are identified the SPCA provide temperament tests on the dogs to determine the best home environment and provide a preliminary health check including vaccination. The dogs are then promoted by the SPCA. Applicants have a property inspection and if successful the dogs will go to their new family once de-sexed and microchipped. Ongoing support and monitoring is provided by the SPCA. 40 dogs were rehomed from the shelter in 2017/2018.

## **Dog Safe Communities**

Dog education in schools – In 2016/2017 there were 853 students within the Whangarei District that underwent the dog safety and dog bite prevention program run by Armourguard. In 2017/2018 this number has increased to 989 students.

Armourguard staff are trained instructors for the 'Kids Safe with Dogs' program. This involves the staff going in to schools to educate children on dog safety and interacting with dogs to prevent dog bites. Assistant dogs are also assessed and temperament tested to accompany the educator on these visits to make interaction possible for children to practice their new skills.

Armourguard proactively contact primary schools, in the district offering this free service. Due to the positive response that the program has received this service has also been requested by local Early Childhood Centre's, Kohanga, Guide and Brownie groups.

## **Bylaws**

The Whangarei District Council Dog Management Bylaw 2013 and Dog Management Policy 2013 is scheduled to be reviewed in 2019. A substantive part of this work will be working with DOC on the environmental concerns regarding dog access within the district due to the high level of need to protect kiwi and other indigenous wildlife balanced with providing shared spaces and exercise areas for dogs.

## **Neutering Menacing Dogs**

132 dogs were classified in the District as menacing dogs under section 33C of the Dog Control Act 1996. These dogs were of American Pitbull Terrier type.

In September 2016, Central Government announced the National Action Plan to Reduce the Risk and Harm of Dog Attacks. Thus, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) launched a nationwide campaign for the neutering of menacing dogs. Whangarei District Council have been able to access some of this remaining funding via collaboration with Auckland Council to fund the neutering of classified menacing type dogs in the district.

Under the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) all dogs must be classified as menacing if it belongs to a breed or type currently listed in schedule 4 of the Act, or if the local authority considers the dog poses a threat to people or other animals and wildlife due to its behavior. De-sexing menacing dogs is a key component of reducing dog-related harm.

## Planned Activities for 2018/2019

- Complete the review of the standard operating procedures to provide efficient and consistent customer centric processes for the delivery of Animal Management services.
- Review of the Dog Management Policy and Dog Management Bylaw.
- Explore further opportunities to make the Whangarei District Animal Shelter a point of contact for people wanting a dog to increase adoption rates. This will include a dedicated face book page for adoptable dogs as well as lost and found.
- Further engagement with community groups and schools to provide dog safety education to high risk and hard to reach communities.
- Continue the successful proactive registration and compliance action plans to increase registration rates and identify unknown dogs as well as ensuring compliance with classifications.
- Implement registration payment options within the field to encourage compliance (mobile eftpos machines)
- Dog related pages on the council's website reviewed to enable a more customer friendly interaction

## Summary

The Councils regulatory contractor Armourguard, has now completed both a full calendar and financial year as the Animal Management unit for the Whangarei District. There has been a focus on business improvement, initially starting with a review and documentation of processes to deliver the Animal management services.

Future work will be focused on encouraging responsible dog ownership, concentrating on the registration and compliance of dogs, with clear action plans in place.

There has been a significant increase in the number of registered dogs from the previous year and the classification of all known menacing type of dogs has been completed.

Going forward, the animal management team aims to achieve a continued improvement in all these areas as well as focusing their resources on consistency in operations and improving value for the customer in the 2018/2019 year.

## Dog Control Statistics

Table one: Registration/Classification related data

	Total 2017/2018	Total 2016/2017
Dogs Registered	9,081	7,423
<b>Dog Owner Classification</b>		
Probationary	0	0
Disqualified	1	0
<b>Menacing Classification</b>		
- By breed	132	0
- By Deed	2	0
Combined	<b>134</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Dangerous Classification</b>		
Section 31(1) a	0	0
Section 31(1) b	2	0
Section 31(1) c	0	0
Total Dangerous	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table two: Request for Service data**

Customer request breakdown by job type		
Job Type	2017/2018	2016/2017
Wandering	1653	1623
Barking	1541	1142
Attacks	272	209
Rushing	154	167
Unregistered dog check	996	119
Miscellaneous	101	57
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,717</b>	<b>3,317</b>

**Table three: Compliance Data**

	2017/2018	2016/2017
<b>Prosecutions</b>		
Number of people prosecuted (note there may be more than one charge)	1	0
<b>Infringement offence</b>		
18 Willful Obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	2	0
19(2) Failure or refusal to supply information or willfully providing false particulars	2	0
19A (2) Failure to supply information or willfully provide false about dog	0	0
20(5) Failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by the section	0	0
23A (2) Failure to undertake dog owner education program of dog obedience course (or both)	0	0
24 Failure to comply with the obligations of a probationary owner	0	0
28(5) Failure to comply with the effects of disqualification	0	0
32(2) failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as dangerous	0	0
32(4) fraudulent sale or transfer of dangerous dog	0	0
33EC (1) Failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as menacing	0	0
33F (3) Failure to advise person of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	
36A (6) failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	259	245
41 False statement in relation to dog registration	0	0
41A Falsely notifying death of dog	0	0
42 failure to register dog	557	404
46(4) Fraudulent procurement or attempt to procure replacement dog registration label or disc	0	0
48(3) Failure to advise change of dog ownership	0	0
49(4) Failure to advise change of address	0	0
51(1) Removal, swapping or counterfeiting of registration label or disc	0	0
52A Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	146	149
53(1) Failure to keep dog under control	8	10
54(2) failure to provide proper care and attention, to supply proper and sufficient food, and to provide adequate exercise	0	0
54A Failure to carry leash in public	0	0
55(7) Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	2	0
62(4) Allowing dog known to be dangerous to be at large unmuzzled or unleashed	0	0
62(5) Failure to advise of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0
72(2) releasing dog from custody	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>808</b>

**Table four: Shelter data**

	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>
Impounded Total	388	275
Total number of returned to owner	164	68
% dogs returned to owners	42%	25%
Total number of adopted dogs	40	29
% dogs adopted	10%	11%
Total number of euthanised dogs	184	178
% dogs euthanised	47%	65%