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# *Whangarei District Council*

## *Annual Report on Dog Control Policy and Practice*

2018 - 2019

## Table of contents

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Purpose.....	1
1.2	Background.....	1
2	The Council’s Dog Control Policy and Practices.....	1
2.1	Council adopted the Dog Management Policy in May 2013.....	1
2.2	Fees .....	1
3	Key Achievements 2018/2019 .....	2
3.1	Responding to complaints (CRM) .....	2
3.2	Enforcement.....	2
3.3	Impounded dogs.....	2
3.4	Dog re-homing .....	2
3.5	Dog Safe Communities.....	3
3.6	Neutering Menacing Dogs .....	3
3.7	Planned Activities for 2019/2020.....	3
4	Summary.....	4
5	Dog Control Statistics .....	5
5.1	Table one: Registration/Classification related data.....	5
5.2	Table two: Request for Service data .....	5
5.3	Table three: Compliance Data .....	6
5.4	Table four: Shelter data .....	7

## **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.

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

Dog control services operate 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 continued the focus on dog education in schools and ensuring compliance of the district's menacing dogs, along with a focus on increasing enforcement.

## **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

### **3 Key Achievements 2018/2019**

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

There were 4,802 dog control customer requests for service received over the 2018/2019 period.

While this represents an increase of 85 requests, it is a negligible increase compared to the increase in requests for service that occurred the previous year.

Between 2016/17 and 2017/18 an increase in 1400 individual requests for service was received.

The total number of registered dogs increased by 2,938 from 9,081 in 2017/18 to 12,019 in 2018/19.

Barking complaints received over the period decreased. This is likely due to a focus on working with, and educating, the owners of problem barking dogs.

#### **3.2 Enforcement**

There were 715 infringements issued for offences under the Dog Control Act 1996 in 2018/19. While this is down by 262 from 2017/2018 this is largely accounted for with infringements for failure to register. This likely reflects a pragmatic approach by officers to achieving greater registration compliance.

Infringements issued for failure to confine and control, however, increased during the period from a total of 154 in 2017/18 to a total of 212 in 2018/19.

#### **3.3 Impounded dogs**

During the year, there were 557 dogs impounded at the council shelter, which is 169 more than the previous period.

The shelter is currently running very close to capacity. The business case for the scope for the new Animal Management Shelter was completed in 2017/18 year. In 2018/2019 Council investigated and selected a preferred site for the construction of its purpose-built new animal shelter.

Council is currently finalising its due diligence for the acquisition of this new site, which hopefully will be finalised before the end of 2019. Following on from that, Council will have to provide suitable Long Term Plan funding for the construction costs of the new shelter. This building project 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.

#### **3.4 Dog re-homing**

Armourguard in collaboration with the SPCA are achieving 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.

Thirty-three dogs were rehomed from the shelter in 2018/2019.

In June 2019 an agreement was entered into with 'Saving Hope' a charitable trust which rescues, rehabilitates and rehomes dogs in order to also assist with dog re-homing which is expected to increase the number of dogs that can be rehomed in the future.

### **3.5 Dog Safe Communities**

In 2018/2019 there were 900 students within the Whangarei District that underwent the dog safety and dog bite prevention program run by Armourguard. While this is a small decrease from 2017/2018 with 989 students, it nevertheless represents a substantial number of students who have been reached through the program.

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.

### **3.6 Neutering Menacing Dogs**

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

Under the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) all dogs must be classified as menacing that belong 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.

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 was able to access some of this remaining funding up to 30 June 2019 via collaboration with Auckland Council to fund the neutering of classified menacing type dogs in the district.

This funding has now ceased but has been hugely beneficial and the Council would support the reintroduction of a similar program.

### **3.7 Planned Activities for 2019/2020**

- Continue to review the standard operating procedures where possible to provide efficient and consistent customer centric processes for the delivery of Animal Management services.
- Explore further opportunities to increase adoption rates.
- 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 to increase registration rates and identify unknown dogs as well as ensuring compliance with classifications.
- Continued focus on increasing prosecutions where appropriate to recognise the harm to victims and to function as a deterrent.
- Continued focus on the issue of infringements particularly in the area of wandering as a proactive measure targeted at reducing further escalating non-compliance.

- Dog related pages on the council's website reviewed to enable a more customer friendly interaction.

## 4 Summary

The Council's regulatory contractor Armourguard, has now completed almost three years as the Animal Management unit for the Whangarei District with a further year approved. 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 along with increased enforcement.

Once again there has been a significant increase in the number of registered dogs with a focus on the classification of menacing type dogs.

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 2019/2020 year.

## 5 Dog Control Statistics

### 5.1 Table one: Registration/Classification related data

	Total 2018/2019	Total 2017/2018	Total 2016/2017
Dogs Registered	12,019	9,081	7,423
<b>Dog Owner Classification</b>			
Probationary	1	0	0
Disqualified	1	1	0
<b>Menacing Classification</b>			
By Breed	67	132	0
By Deed	5	2	0
Combined	<b>72</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Dangerous Classification</b>			
Section 31(1) a	0	0	0
Section 31(1) b	2	2	0
Section 31(1) c	0	0	0
Total Dangerous	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

### 5.2 Table two: Request for Service data

Customer request breakdown by job type			
Job Type	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
Wandering	1883	1653	1623
Barking	1504	1541	1142
Attacks	293	272	209
Rushing	242	154	167
Unregistered dog check	812	996	119
Miscellaneous	68	101	57
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,802</b>	<b>4,717</b>	<b>3,317</b>

### 5.3 Table three: Compliance Data

	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
<b>Prosecutions</b>			
Number of people prosecuted (note there may be more than one charge)	5	1	0
<b>Infringement offence</b>			
18 Willful Obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	1	2	0
19(2) Failure or refusal to supply information or willfully providing false particulars	0	2	0
19A (2) Failure to supply information or willfully provide false about dog	0	0	0
20(5) Failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by the section	0	0	0
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
28(5) Failure to comply with the effects of disqualification	0	0	0
32(2) failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as dangerous	0	0	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	2	0	0
33F (3) Failure to advise person of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0	
36A (6) Failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	174	259	245
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	321	557	404
46(4) Fraudulent procurement or attempt to procure replacement dog registration label or disc	1	0	0
48(3) Failure to advise change of dog ownership	1	0	0
49(4) Failure to advise change of address	3	0	0



	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
51(1) Removal, swapping or counterfeiting of registration label or disc	0	0	0
52A Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	203	146	149
53(1) Failure to keep dog under control	9	8	10
54(2) Failure to provide proper care and attention, to supply proper and sufficient food, and to provide adequate exercise	0	0	0
54A Failure to carry leash in public	0	0	0
55(7) Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	0	2	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
<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>808</b>

#### 5.4 Table four: Shelter data

	2018 / 2019	2017 / 2018	2016 / 2017
Impounded Total	557	388	275
Total number of returned to owner	231	164	68
% dogs returned to owners	42%	42%	25%
Total number of adopted dogs	33	40	29
% dogs adopted	6%	10%	11%
Total number of euthanised dogs	293	184	178
% dogs euthanised	52%	47%	65%