



Report

Date : 23 August 2022
To : Mayor and Councillors
Tararua District Council
From : James Single
Regulatory Services Manager
Subject : **2021/2022 Annual Report on Dog Control Policy and Practices**
Item No : **11.6**

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 *That the report from the Regulatory Services Manager dated 27 June 2022 concerning the 2021/2022 Annual Report on Dog Control Policy and Practices (as circulated) be received and adopted.*

2. Reason for the Report

- 2.1 This report informs Council about its Dog Control service delivery and practices for the financial year 2021/2022.
- 2.2 It seeks Council adopt this annual report on the administration of dog control and to comply with reporting requirements under the Act.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Tararua District Council is required to manage and enforce provisions under the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) and subsequent amendments in 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2010.
- 3.2 Section 10A of the Act requires the Council to produce an annual report on its dog control policy and operations. This section requires Council to report on several statistical aspects of its dog control policy responsibilities and make the report publicly available.
- 3.3 This report fulfils the statutory requirement for the dog registration year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. Additionally, this report allows the community to see how Council is managing its dog control responsibilities.

3.4 Additional information is provided in relation to reports of uncontrolled dogs, dog bites and dog impound data. The Council is required to report each financial year on its dog control policies and practices, and statistical information under Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

3.5 Council must give public notice of the report and make the report publicly available.

4. Bylaw and Policy on Dogs

4.1 The Council reviewed its Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw earlier this year and both were adopted on 30 March 2022, to take effect from 1 July 2022.

5. Significance Assessment

5.1 This item does not trigger Council's significance and engagement policy, and it has no financial impacts on the approved Long Term Plan

6. Discussion

6.1 Council is responsible for the enforcement of regulations relating to the keeping, welfare and control of dogs within Tararua district. Council is required under the Dog Control Act to make provision for the control of dogs and the damage they can cause.

6.2 Impounding of dogs is an activity required by the provisions of the Dog Control Act and associated Tararua District Council Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy.

6.3 The Council has a responsibility to respond to complaints relating to dogs. Council's long-term focus for dog control activities is to ensure a safe living environment maintained through the monitoring and enforcement of legislation, regulations and bylaws.

6.4 Council adopted a new Dog Control Policy earlier this year. The policy provides a practical framework for the care and control of dogs throughout the district while minimising any danger, distress and nuisance to the community.

6.5 The policy outlines expected standards and behaviours from dog owners and provides information about how Council will administer dog control. Dog practices and specific dog control functions include:

- Dog registration
- Impounding
- Cleaning the pound
- Feeding and providing care for impounded dogs
- Returning, rehoming or euthanising impounded dogs
- 24-hour service
- Targeted education
- Investigation of complaints
- Enforcement of the Act and Council Dog Control Bylaw

- Issuing of infringements and prosecutions
- Other duties also include roaming stock

- 6.6 Council has 3 full-time Animal Control Officers and an Animal Control Support Officer to cover administration. The Officers are responsible for dog control responsibilities throughout the district and are on duty from 8am to 5pm weekdays. After hours is covered 24/7 by a contractor, including weekends and public holidays.
- 6.7 Properties are checked for unregistered dogs and dog/owner changes by spot check compliance at both urban and rural properties.
- 6.8 All properties within the district with more than two dogs require a multiple dog licence (working dogs exempt). The licence is issued on meeting the dog control policy criteria. Extra care is taken to ensure dogs' welfare needs are met and there are no noise problems for neighbours. Generally, neighbouring property owner consent is required.
- 6.9 Animal Control Officers visited and checked 31 properties of 'Preferred Owner' registration category applicants. Applications to become a Preferred Owner must be completed prior to 1 May each year, allowing time to adjust fees for invoicing. Preferred Owners are entitled to a special discounted registration fee. There are 6362 registered dogs in the district of which 556 are registered under the Preferred Owner scheme. All dog registration information is automatically transferred to the National Dog Database on a nightly basis.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1 Animal Control helps SPCA officers with reported welfare incidents on their request. We currently work with SPCA operating our dog rehoming programme, finding suitable homes for unclaimed dogs of good temperament.
- 7.2 We have a close working relationship with veterinarians concerning microchipping records, neutering of menacing and dangerous dogs and sharing up to date information regarding dog health problems.
- 7.3 We do our best to have an active presence across the district by way of monitoring in each area and by responding quickly to reports and complaints.
- 7.4 In March this year, Council adopted a new Dog Control Bylaw and Dog Control Policy. Registration fees reduced for most dog owners with significant discounts available for those owners meeting strict criteria.

8. Education

- 8.1 Animal Control Officers are available on request for speaking engagements and presentations. Educational presentations have been made to schools, elderly groups and other Council staff.

- 8.2 Educational brochures are available from the Animal Control office and the public counter. Multiple articles were published in the Bush Telegraph, to provide dog education. Articles covered dog registration, dog safety, nuisance barking, microchips and preferred ownership.
- 8.3 A copy of the Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw is available to every dog owner through the Council website and includes information regarding dog exercise areas. These publications are also available on request in hard copy. New dog owners are given an information brochure when registering their dog.
- 8.4 An 'Information for Dog Owners' brochure was included with recent registration invoices.
- 8.5 Several submitters on the Dog Control Policy gave feedback about the lack of dog exercise areas. Council is working with interested communities to explore options for further exercise areas. Currently the Council operates one dog exercise area at Mangatera in Dannevirke, which is well used by dog owners.

9. Dog Registration

- 9.1 3,076 people are known to own dogs in the district. The number of owners has decreased compared to the previous year (3,271).
- 9.2 6,362 dogs are known to be in the district. The number of dogs has decreased compared to the previous year (6,953).
- 9.3 66 dogs (previously registered) remained unregistered at the end of the year. The number of unregistered dogs has decreased compared to the previous year (73).

10. Fees

- 10.1 Council's Revenue and Financing Policy requires the activity be 85% funded by dog registration and pound fees with the balance funded from general rates.
- 10.2 Fees and charges under the Impounding Act 1955 and Dog Control Act 1996 are reviewed annually. The table below compares the dog registration fee categories.

Category	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Urban	\$95	\$115	\$130 (entire) \$110 (desexed)
Over 65's Canine Companion	N/A	N/A	\$85 (new category)
Preferred Owner	\$50	\$65	\$75 (entire) \$65 (desexed)
Rural Domestic	\$40	\$50	\$75
Working Dog	\$40	\$50	\$50 (first 5 dogs only, extra dogs at tag fee)
Disability Assist	Free	Free	Free

10.3 All dogs are required to be registered by 1 August. A 50% penalty fee is applied for late registration after this date. After three months, the owners of any unregistered dogs are served with infringement notices, which are referred to the district court for collection if unpaid.

11. Preferred Owners

11.1 There is a financial incentive with reduced fees by being classified as a 'Preferred Owner'. A Preferred Owner must have an adequately fenced property to confine their dogs, adequate accommodation for their dogs, and demonstrate good dog management practices.

11.2 556 dogs were classified in the preferred owner category. These dogs are considered a lower risk to public safety. The number of these dogs has decreased compared to the previous year (617).

12. Complaints

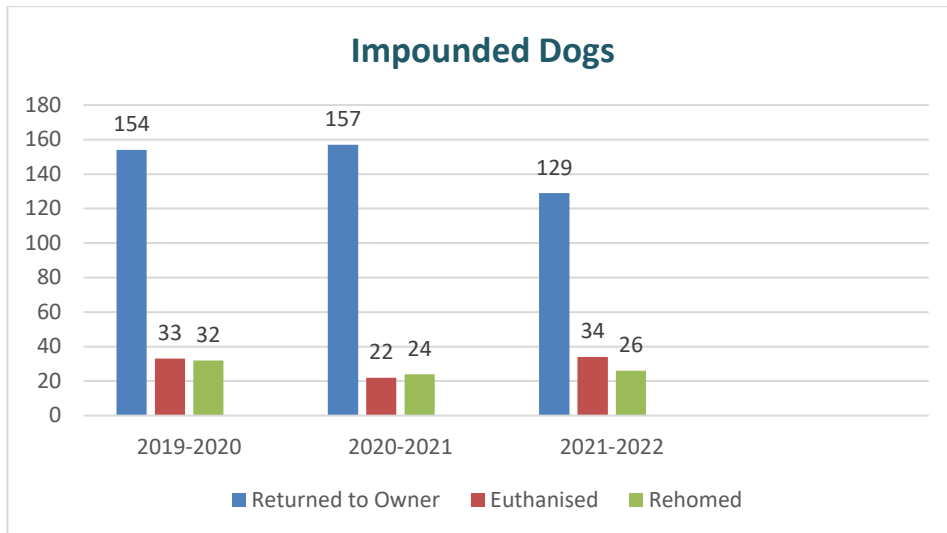
12.1 790 complaints were received about dogs. Complaints have increased compared to the previous year (738).

12.2 56 complaints were received about dogs attacking/biting or rushing people or other animals. These complaints have decreased compared to the previous year (83).

12.3 The majority of the complaints (458) were in relation to barking and roaming. The number of these complaints have decreased from the previous year (606).

13. Impounded Dogs

13.1 189 dogs were impounded during the year.

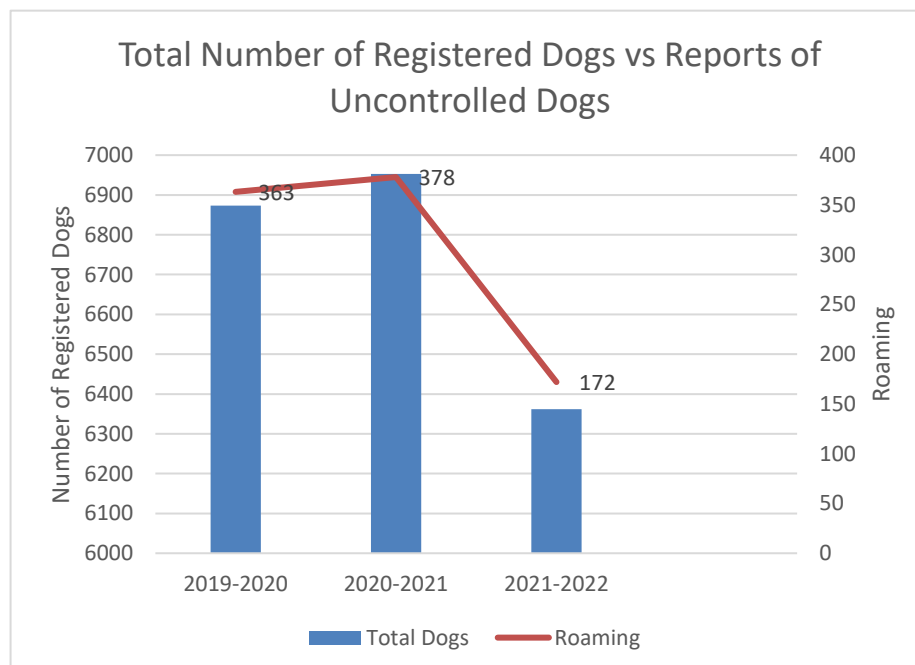


13.2 Of the 189 impounded dogs that were resolved during the year 129 were collected by their owner, 26 were rehomed, and 34 were euthanised.

14. Uncontrolled Dogs

14.1 An uncontrolled dog is generally defined as either a dog reported as being out roaming or has been found and is held by a member of the public for collection.

14.2 Our records show a decrease of 206 uncontrolled dog requests when compared to last year.



15. Dangerous and Menacing Dogs

15.1 All owners of dangerous and menacing dogs are recorded on the Council's dog database.

15.2 Owners are written to at the time of the dangerous or menacing classification being applied, advising them of their legal responsibilities as the owner.

15.3 6 dogs were classified as dangerous and 22 dogs were classified as menacing during the year, consisting of 16 classified by deed because of observed or reported behaviour of the dog and 6 by breed or type which were mainly American Pit Bull Terriers.

16. Infringements

16.1 During the year 174 infringement notices were issued. This is an increase from the previous year (43).

17. Prosecutions

17.1 9 prosecutions were initiated during the year for dog attacks.

18. Probationary and Disqualified Owners

18.1 There were no probationary and 5 disqualified dog owners during the year.

19. Conclusion

19.1 Council consider and adopt this annual report on the administration of dog control policies and practices and statistical information.

Attachments

1. Statistical Information on Dog Control Practices 2021/2022

Statistical Information on Dog Control Practices 2021/2022

This information shows Tararua District Council's implementation of dog control functions during the 2021/22 financial year. Statistics from two previous financial years are included for comparison.

		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
(a)	Total registered dogs*	6873	6953	6362
	No. of Owners	3209	3271	3076
(b)	Probationary owners	0	0	0
	Disqualified owners	3	8	5
(c)	No. of Dogs Classified Dangerous (s31)	11	10	6
(d)	Menacing dogs classified because of their observed or reported behaviour or characteristics (s33A)	34	42	16
	Menacing dogs classified because they are listed in schedule 4 of the Act (s33C)	79	86	6
(e)	Infringement notices issued	43	33	174
(f)	Service requests, the nature of which were:	874	738	604
	Barking	380	228	287
	Roaming / Secured	363	378	172
	Rushing	24	18	16
	Attack or Bite	62	65	56
	Aggressive Behaviour	33	35	43

	Dog Welfare	12	14	30
(g)	Prosecutions	5	5	9

*Cumulative total across the financial year