

## Report

Date : 24 July 2019

To : Mayor and Councillors  
Tararua District Council

From : Craig Lunn  
Manager Regulatory Services

Subject : **Annual Dog Control Act Report to the Secretary of Local Government**

Item No : **11.4**

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### **1. Reason for the Report**

1.1 To obtain the Council's adoption of this annual report on the administration of dog control for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 necessary to comply with the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996.

### **2. Background**

2.1 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.

2.2 A copy of the report must be sent to the Secretary for Local Government within one month of the report being adopted by Council.

### **3. Policy on Dogs**

3.1 The Council reviewed and adopted a new Dog Control Policy and Bylaw on 5 November 2018. Changes were made to:

- Improve alignment between the policy and the Dog Control Act.
- Introduce remedies the Council can take when dealing with dogs causing a nuisance or affecting health or damaging property.
- Introduce rules for boarding and breeding kennels (kennels no closer than 10 metres from boundary, fenced exercise area, annual registration of the facility).

- Introduce a new power of Council to declare a temporary “dog prohibited area” for a specified period of time (for example, for use during an event).
- Allow owners classified as “probationary” to have the classification removed if they have attended an appropriate course.
- Require signage where dangerous dogs are kept.
- Dogs caught (and not destroyed) running at large amongst stock or poultry will be considered for classification as dangerous.
- Clarifying and expanding the dog control activities for which Council can charge fees.

#### **4. Accommodation**

4.1 The Council operates one dog pound located at Easton Street in Dannevirke. This facility has the capacity to kennel up to eighteen dogs with an administrative area and exercise yards.

#### **5. Personnel**

5.1 The animal control team is based within the Regulatory Services Department and reports to the Manager Regulatory Services. The team comprises one Team Leader, two Animal Control Officers, with one Animal Control Administrator for support.

5.2 The animal control team duties include investigating and resolving dog complaints and attacks; enforcement of dog control policy and law; education programmes around dog safety; cleaning the pound facility to prevent disease spread; feeding and providing care for impounded dogs; returning, rehoming or euthanising impounded dogs; and maintenance of Council’s dog registration and dog impounding databases. Other duties also include roaming stock.

#### **6. Operating Hours**

6.1 Officers are on duty from 8am to 5pm on week days. After hours animal control services for dog attacks and aggressive dogs are provided by a security contractor. The contractor also feeds impounded dogs and cleans the pound facility outside working hours.

#### **7. Dog Registration**

7.1 6,923 dogs were registered in 2018/19 to 3,195 owners. This is an increase of 85 additional registered dogs and 40 additional dog owners, compared to the previous year.

## 8. Fees

8.1 Council's Revenue and Financing Policy requires the activity be 80% funded by dog registration and pound fees with the balance funded from general rates.

8.2 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	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Urban Domestic Dog	\$80.00	\$82.00	\$84.00	<b>\$95.00</b>
Preferred Owner Dog	\$40.00	\$45.00	\$45.00	<b>\$50.00</b>
Rural Domestic Dog	\$35.00	\$36.00	\$32.00	<b>\$40.00</b>
Working Dog	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$32.00	<b>\$40.00</b>
Disability Assist Dog	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$0.00</b>

8.3 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.

## 9. Preferred Owners

9.1 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.

9.2 423 dogs were registered in 2018/19 to Preferred Owners. This is an increase of 60 registered dogs from the previous year.

## 10. Community Education

10.1 The animal control team published twelve education articles in 2018/19 in the Bush Telegraph. The topics covered registration, stock and public safety, microchipping, uncontrolled dogs, prohibited areas, nuisance barking, and preferred ownership.

## 11. Complaints

11.1 A total of 1,013 dog-related complaints were received in 2018/19.

The number of reported dog attacks increased by 7 from the previous year. The most frequent type of complaint was roaming/uncontrolled/secured dogs (45%) followed by barking dogs (43%). Complaints about barking dogs and roaming/uncontrolled/secured dogs have decreased.

## **12. Impounded Dogs**

12.1 In 2018/19 259 dogs were impounded. Of the 259 impounded dogs that were resolved during the year 169 (65%) were collected by their owner, 45 (17%) were rehomed, and 45 (17%) were euthanised.

## **13. Dangerous and Menacing Dogs**

13.1 All owners of dangerous and menacing dogs are recorded on the Council's dog database. Owners are written to at the time of the dangerous or menacing classification being applied, advising them of their legal responsibilities as the owner.

13.2 11 dogs were classified as dangerous and 123 dogs were classified as menacing in the 2018/19 year. All of these dogs were classified because of observed or reported behaviour of the dog. These breeds or types were mainly American Pit Bull Terriers.

## **14. Infringements**

14.1 In 2018/19 16 infringement notices were issued. This decrease is due to the team being short 1 full-time animal control officer for approximately 8 months, and recruiting a cadet rather than an experienced officer.

## **15. Prosecutions**

15.1 Two prosecutions were initiated during the year for dog attacks. One case was withdrawn by the Courts on the basis the alleged offender had completed an agreed diversion agreement. The second case is currently before the Court for a defended hearing.

## **16. Probationary and Disqualified Owners**

16.1 There were no probationary and two disqualified dog owners in the 2018/19 year.

## **17. Dog Parks**

17.1 The Council operates one dog exercise area at Mangatera in Dannevirke, which is well used by dog owners. No additional dog exercise areas were established during the year.

## **18. Statistical Information**

18.1 The table below is a comparative summary of dog control statistics, including a breakdown of types of dog related complaints.

<b>Category</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
No. of Registered Dogs	6,615	6,143	6,838	<b>6,923</b>

Category	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
No. of Owners	3,079	3,100	3,155	<b>3,195</b>
No. of Probationary Owners	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
No. of Disqualified owners	0	0	4	<b>2</b>
No. of Dogs Classified Dangerous (s31)	8	10	12	<b>11</b>
No. of Dogs Classified Menacing (s33A) – Behaviour or Characteristics	36	26	25	<b>32</b>
No. of Dogs Classified Menacing (s33C) - Breed	101	94	97	<b>91</b>
No. of Dog Complaints	1,181	1,061	1,130	<b>1,013</b>
<i>Dog Attack</i>	53	43	42	49
<i>Aggressive Dog</i>	30	31	46	35
<i>Rushing Dog</i>	21	31	26	18
<i>Roaming/Uncontrolled/Secured Dog</i>	512	453	533	459
<i>Barking Dog</i>	525	465	452	440
<i>Dog Bylaw Breach</i>	14	5	3	3
<i>Dog Welfare Concern</i>	26	33	28	9
No. of Infringements	0	82	74	<b>16</b>
No. of Prosecutions	0	0	3	<b>1</b>

## 19. Significance Assessment

- 19.1 This item does not trigger Council’s significance and engagement policy, and it has no financial impacts on the approved Long Term Plan.

## 20. Conclusion

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

## 21. Recommendation

- 21.1** *That the report from the Manager Regulatory Services dated 24 July 2019 concerning the Annual Dog Control Act Report to the Secretary of Local Government (as circulated) be received and adopted, and*
- 21.2** *That the report be posted on the Tararua District Council website, and*
- 21.3** *That public notice be given of the report’s availability as required by Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996, and*
- 21.4** *That the report be sent to the Secretary of Local Government by 31 August 2019.*



**Attachments**

Nil.