

ANIMAL CONTROL

1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires each local council to report on its dog control policy and practices each financial year. This report covers the financial year 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

OUR DISTRICT

The Waikato district covers more than 400,000 hectares – both rural and urban. There are 14,736 known dogs in the Waikato district, owned by 9,688 owners (as of 30 June 2019). Approximately 15% of the registered dogs in our district are registered on a Farm Owner Policy.

OUR TEAM

We have 12 staff to deliver animal control services in the district:

- 1 Team Leader
- 8 Animal Control Officers
- 2 Pound Keepers
- 1 Education & Engagement Officer

The team is also supported by administrators in the Community Safety Support team (2 staff members dedicated to the Animal Control team).



OUR POLICIES & RULES

The Waikato District Council Animal Control team operates under the following policies and rules:

- Waikato District Council Dog Control Policy 2015
- Waikato District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2015

- Dog Control Act 1996
- Impounding Act 1955.

The Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw are currently under review and will be up for public consultation in the next 12 months. The revised documents are due for publication in 2022.

OUR SERVICES

Our Animal Control team provide a 24 hour/7 day service. Staff have a work roster to cover after-hour emergencies.

THE 3E APPROACH

We follow the '3E' approach: engagement and education before enforcement.

This means our staff take the approach of engaging with our customers in the first instance, taking every opportunity to educate them and then, if necessary, taking the appropriate enforcement action.

This approach has resulted in better relationships with dog owners in our communities. As a result, we have seen a number of key benefits:

- improved culture of dog ownership in the district
- less aggression towards staff
- registration compliance remains high
- We are able to build relationships in communities that previously would not have engaged with Animal Control.



OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

DOG SMART EDUCATION VISITS

Our Education & Engagement Officer has been focusing on keeping children safe around dogs by presenting our Dog Smart programme to education facilities around our district. They have also been developing and leading community events so that dog owners from all over the Waikato and beyond can come and enjoy a fun and safe day out with their dog. A future project is to present the program in Te Reo.



After a safety discussion on how to behave around dogs at Glen Massey Primary School, the class did an art project.

Each child selected a breed of dog with the right characteristics for a personal pet suited the child's lifestyle.

The artwork was displayed in the customer area of the Ngaruawahia office for 4 weeks and Mayor Sanson picked a winner!

DOGS IN LIBRARIES

Our 'Dogs in Libraries' reading programme continues to be very popular. In the last year we held 40 Dogs in Libraries sessions at our 6 libraries. People can practice their reading skills by reading aloud to one of our education dogs, at any of the libraries in the Waikato district.

This type of programme has been shown to increase a person's relaxation while reading because it is a lot less intimidating than reading to other people and you can proceed at your own pace.

The dogs we use are owned by some of our Animal Control Officers and they are all previously Pound dogs. The dogs have been extensively temperament tested to make sure they have the right temperament to ensure Council provides a safe environment. Our Education & Engagement Officer is always present to help facilitate the session.

While it is very popular with children, the programme is also available to adults or new immigrants that want to practice their reading.

TRUNK OR TREAT – HUNTLY KIDS HALLOWEEN

Trunk or Treat was a community event held in Huntly during October 2019 to provide local children with a safe and fun environment to experience an evening of trick or treating. Our Animal Control team went along with their horse truck of horrors – a makeshift horror scene where children could enter and engage with a number of Animal Control staff who were all dressed up in costumes. This event helped to build rapport and raise the profile of Animal Control in the Huntly community.

GET YOUR PUPS OUT FOR BREAST CANCER – POKENO AND HOROTIU

Our Animal Control team, along with more than 100 people and their dogs, hit the pavements of Pokeno and Horotiu in support of the Breast Cancer Foundation.

Decorated in pink, the event helped raise awareness of breast cancer but also provided a great atmosphere for people to get out and get some exercise with their dogs.

This event raised more than \$300 for the Breast Cancer Foundation and is currently booked in to take place again in October 2020.



THE EFFECT OF COVID 19 ON COMMUNITY EVENTS

At the end of March 2020, the pandemic was announced and, as a result, several of our engagement activities were stopped.

Schools cancelled all external providers and, under the Alert Level restrictions, the Dogs In Libraries programme was also suspended. Due to the close nature of the work involved, social distancing was not able to be observed. Rescheduling of these events had recommenced at level 1 however with the second outbreak they were both once again put on hold.

Our Pound Pup Pool parties, scheduled in Tuakau and Ngaruawahia in March, were cancelled. These events usually have 200 dogs attend each event.

The Dirty Dog Event scheduled for June 2020 was also cancelled. It was then rescheduled for September 2020 but was once again cancelled after the second outbreak of COVID 19. Council had successfully run this event for two years prior. The event is a chance for responsible dog owners to enjoy an organised event with their dogs. The dog owners and their dogs enjoy a 2.5 or 6km run in the mud at the Christian Youth Camp in Ngaruawahia. Waikato District Council run this event in conjunction with Hamilton City Council. Last year (in June 2019) more than 300 dogs attended the event.

These community events are well received, and it was with immense disappointment to all involved that the events had to be cancelled.



PROHIBITED, LEASH ONLY AND OFF-LEASH DOG EXERCISE AREAS

The Waikato District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2015 provides details of the areas where dogs are prohibited, where they are allowed for exercise and where they may be exercised off-leash.

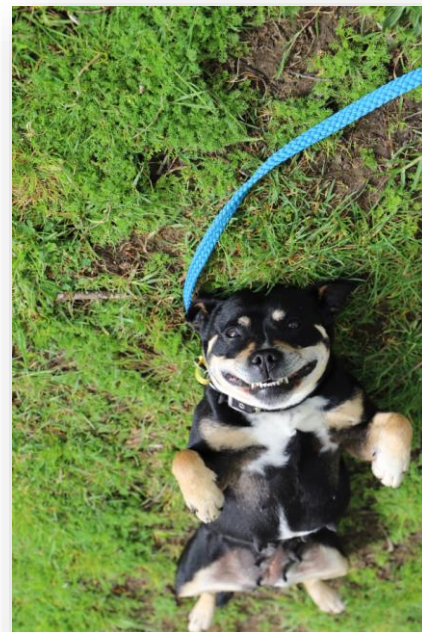
PROHIBITED DOG AREAS

Dogs are prohibited from the following areas:

- CBD Huntly
- CBD Ngaruawahia
- recreation domain area in Raglan
- within 10 metres of permanently installed children's play equipment
- areas which are developed or marked out as sports fields.

OFF-LEASH EXERCISE AREAS

We have 25 dog exercise areas in the Waikato district – 7 fenced parks and another 18 unfenced areas where dogs can be run off-leash but they must be under control.



Here is a list of our off-leash exercise areas:

- Karioitahi Beach
- Sunset Beach, Port Waikato
- Tuakau:
 - Les Batkin Reserve
 - Alexandra Redoubt Reserve
 - Kowhai Reserve
 - Centennial Park
- Pokeno Domain (fenced)

- Huntly:
 - on the shore of Lake Hakanoa (fenced)
 - dog park on the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Graham Place (fenced)
 - grassed area at Riverview Reserve
- Te Kauwhata Recreation Reserve (fenced)
- Ngaruawahia:
 - on the corner of Great South Road and Ellery Street (fenced)
 - Regent Street Reserve
 - Lower Waikato Esplanade Reserve to Belt Street
 - Waipa Esplanade Reserve
- Horotiu:
 - AFFCO park on Horotiu Road and State Highway 1 (fenced)
 - Riverside Reserve on Horotiu Bridge Road
- Bob Byrne Park, Taupiri
- Te Awa Reserve, Tamahere (suffering from erosion)
- Whatawhata Recreation Reserve
- Te Kowhai Recreation Reserve
- Raglan:
 - Aro Reserve, John Street (fenced)
 - from the boat ramp in the Oporuru inlet to the Aerodrome bridge
 - from Wainui Reserve carpark to just south of the Ngarunui Beach walkway
 - the beach area from the wharf, the Cliffs, Cox's Bay, Lorenzen Bay, The Doughboys and Moonlight Bay.

ON-LEASH/SUPERVISED DOG AREAS

In all other areas, dogs are required to be on leash and under control at all times.



OUR FUNDING: DOG REGISTRATION AND OTHER FEES

DOG REGISTRATION FEES

Waikato District Council has a scaled fee structure for registration. This rewards dog owners who have no history of offences, have continuously registered their dog/s and who meet the property requirements specified within our policies.

We also offer a reduced registration fee to dog owners who have registered their dogs before 20 July. The Animal Control team engages with dog owners that have not registered their dogs in an appropriate time frame to ensure compliance is achieved. We have 14,736 known dogs in our district and 13,735 of these were compliant with registration – a percentage of 93.21%

OTHER FEES

Our fees for impounding, seizure, sustenance and microchipping are based on a user-pays system. This means that dog owners who offend will be paying the biggest cost towards our animal control services in the district.

DESEXING - PUP PROGRAMME

In 2017 Council approved an initiative to give \$1 from every dog registration to a desexing programme now known as PUP – Prevent Unwanted Puppies.

Owners who hold a community services card are able to access discounted desexing for their dog at a rate of \$80. In the 19/20 year 51 dogs were desexed for families that otherwise could not afford to. This makes a huge impact on the greater community and will have the flow on effect of fewer unwanted dogs in our community.

This programme has also enabled us to assist people to keep the dog that they have. Desexed dogs are less likely to roam and are not a burden to the family by adding extra mouths to feed.



DOG POUND FACILITIES

We have two facilities where we impound dogs – one in Ngaruawahia and one in Pukekohe, which is leased from Auckland Council.

The pound facility at Ngaruawahia can hold 25 dogs while the Pukekohe/Tuakau facility can hold 40 dogs.

All staff have the necessary skills to handle dogs of all natures and maintain a high standard of cleanliness and welfare within the facility.

SAVING LIVES

In the last financial year our team has continued to focus on rehoming as many impounded dogs as possible (they must be a suitable breed and temperament). As a result we have kept euthanasia rates at a low level and this is something we are very proud of!

We work closely with local rescue organisations including Fundraising for Impounded Dogs, Humane Society, Paws 4 Life, DC Rescue, Tokoroa Animal Rescue and Auckland Puppy Rescue. Any profits made from our community events are given to one of our chosen charities to support the incredible work they do in our communities.

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

Here are some examples of the work we have done with local rescue organisations:

In December 2019, a female dog was surrendered to the Animal Control team. She was clearly heavily pregnant and was quite malnourished. Her people had tried to do the best thing for her, but circumstances had changed, and they were unable to give her the care and attention she needed. Overnight she delivered 8 little bundles. Despite the turmoil in her life, 'Joy' was a real hit with the Animal Control team. Fundraising for Impounded Dogs was contacted. They fundraised for ongoing costs including desexing and contacted Saving Hope Foundation. Saving Hope Foundation were able to take Joy and her family the very next day.



CareVets Glen Eden

June 17 · 🌐

We have a story for you today that although starts sadly has a beautiful ending. This gorgeous boy was found with a heavy chain embedded around his neck, painful enough on its own however he also had a broken leg, both conditions as you can imagine causing him considerable pain and suffering. Thanks to the amazing team at [Waikato Pound Pups](#) and the awesome work of [Fundraising for Impounded Dogs - New Zealand](#) he made his way to us today for our wonderful surgeon Boet to evaluate and surgically repair with a bone plating. Not an easy surgery as the fracture had been there for a while but Boet did an awesome job and this lucky boy can now look forward to a life where he will be loved and respected. We are expecting him to make a full recovery and once he has healed he will be able to run free chasing the wind and enjoying life with his new family. Massive thanks once again to everyone who so kindly donated funds for this boy, you have made a huge difference in his life and we are very grateful! ❤️

KEY HIGHLIGHTS: THE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

Between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020 our team responded to more than 3,370 complaints from members of the public. This is a reduction of approximately 100 from the previous year. These complaints included dog attacks, threatening dogs, barking nuisances, surrenders, welfare and roaming complaints. As well as responding to complaints and requests, our team also carried out proactive patrols during their daily routine activities.

IMPOUNDED DOGS

Our team impounded 668 dogs this year, a significant drop from the previous year which was 791. The number has steadily been decreasing for the past five years.

With the help of social media and strong relationships with various rescue groups, we are able to rehome 30% of impounded dogs. This is particularly important work for our Animal Control Officers and Engagement & Education Officer.

These dogs are thoroughly temperament tested, vaccinated, treated for fleas and worms, micro-chipped, registered and desexed prior to going to their new homes. Our new owners are vetted, their properties are checked and every effort is made to ensure the appropriate dog is matched with the right owner. Our adoption dogs are rehomed not only to Waikato district owners but across all of New Zealand and we work closely with other territorial authorities to ensure comprehensive checks are done.



We have also seen a large percentage of dogs returned to their owners as a result of the education we have been doing. Whilst fees do need to be paid for impounded dogs, we will engage with the dog owner to discuss options around ensuring containment and compliance.

Of the 672 dogs impounded:

- 307 were returned to owner
- 208 were adopted
- 155 were euthanased
- 2 are held subject to the outcome of prosecution currently ongoing

DOGS IN OUR DISTRICT

In the past 5 years the known numbers of dogs has been steadily increasing every year. This year we had a decrease of 227 dogs from the previous year.

We believe that the desexing work being done by the Animal Control team is having an impact on the number of dogs in our district. Our records show that 53% of our dog population is desexed.

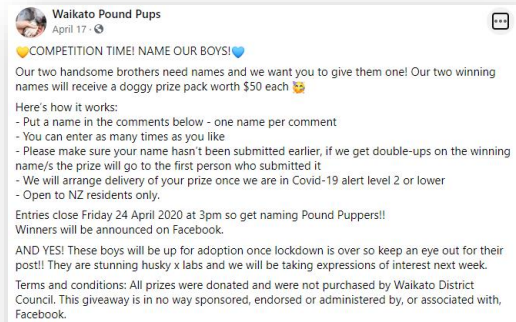
In the future we expect to see a continued increase in the numbers of dogs in our area due to the residential growth being seen in our district.

WAIKATO POUND PUPS FACEBOOK GROUP

We now have more than 18,400 people following our Waikato Pound Pups Facebook group. This number has increased by over 2000 in the past year and continues to grow every week. This page helps us to find loving homes for our available adoption dogs and to promote our community events. Our followers are from all around New Zealand.

During the pandemic restrictions we used this forum to engage with our community. Posts were put up giving helpful tips to be a responsible dog owner and a naming competition was run. The naming competition reached 12,909 people and had more than 570 comments. A local All Black and his family picked the winners.

Waikato Pound Pups has seen an increase in requests for adopting dogs since the start of the Alert Level system. Dogs have been adopted faster from our pound during this period.



DOG ATTACKS

The team has responded to a significant increase of dog attacks this year with 358 complaints lodged.

A large increase happened during the Alert Level 4 restrictions in place during April and May of 2020. During this time there was an increase in people walking their dogs in a public place. Reports included dogs rushing out at people walking past private properties and people walking dogs that had not had much experience with leaving the property.

We believe that the increase in reporting is also due to the ongoing education efforts of our team to encourage people to report incidents. Because of this, more people know what to do in these situations and they are now coming forward and reporting this type of incident so we can manage the situations appropriately.

Animal Control has a range of measures that can be taken as a result of such offending. These can be as simple as sending an infringement for lower levels of offending, or as serious as prosecuting the dog owner which can lead to a criminal conviction, destruction of the dog and disqualification as a dog owner for 5 years.

In the 2019/20-year, two dog owners were made probationary, 2 prosecutions were initiated and 2 prosecutions were completed.



WANDERING STOCK

Part of our job in keeping the public safe is to respond to incidents of livestock on roads. This includes horses, cows, sheep, goats, pigs and more

It is high priority for our staff to respond to wandering stock reports as this is a huge public safety risk to our community. Our staff attended more than 320 stock related jobs this year.

These include:

- A sheep tangled in black berry was released and returned to its paddock
- Nine 2-year-old 500kg steers were discovered on the Hakarimata Walkway. They were moved by stock trailer to the stock pound
- A kunekune pig was caught on the street and impounded
- 2 horses were found wandering in the construction area of a new expressway. The team loaded them on to trucks during the early hours of the morning, as there was no safe place to contain them
- A pig was returned to its property. Animal Control then worked with Monitoring to get fencing compliance
- A horse got itself stuck in an exceptionally boggy part of the paddock. 3 Animal Control Officers rolled up their sleeves and assisted the horse to safety.



IN SUMMARY

2019/2020 has been a challenging but fulfilling year for the Animal Control team. COVID 19 brought its own set of challenges, but the team stepped up and provided essential services throughout this period. Keeping the public safe is the number one priority and, with this in mind, all dog attacks, privately impounded dogs and welfare concerns were attended during this period.

We are thrilled to see that our community is becoming more dog savvy, we are seeing less dogs in the pound, and we are able to rehome a higher percentage of the dogs impounded and not claimed.

Animal Control is looking ahead to the future and is actively considering the changing needs of the Waikato District. We are proud of the spaces provided to the public for exercising dogs and proud of the engagement levels within our community.

THE NUMBERS IN DETAIL

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE	
Dog Nuisance	259
Stray/Trespass	1,220
Property Visit (owner classifications/unregistered etc)	368
Dog Welfare	75
Trap Required	20
Dogs to collect (surrendered)	66
Dog Attack	358
Other (includes Animal charges for impounded dogs, missing dog reports etc)	957
Subsidised Dog Desexing Project - PUP	51
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	3,374

REGISTRATION	
Total number of known dogs	14,736
Total number of registered dogs	13,735
Percentage of registered dogs	93.21

PROSECUTIONS	
Number of prosecutions initiated	2
Number of prosecutions completed	2

IMPOUNDED DOGS	
Total number of impounded dogs	672
Impounded dogs returned to owner	307
Impounded dogs euthanased	155
Impounded dogs rehomed	208
Held pending prosecution	2
CLASSIFICATIONS	
Total Number of Probationary Owners	2
Total Number of Disqualified Owners	12
Total Number of dogs classified as Dangerous	22
Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under S31(1)(a)	0
Dangerous by Sworn Evidence S31(1)(b)	22
Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing S31(1) (c)	0
Total Number of Dogs Classified as Menacing	187
Menacing under S33A(1)(b)(i) by Behaviour	84
Menacing under S33A(1)(b)(ii) by Breed Characteristics	3
Menacing under S33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed	100

INFRINGEMENTS ISSUED		
SECTION	NUMBER	OFFENCE
18	Wilful obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	0
19(2)	Failure or refusal to supply information or wilfully providing false particulars	0
19A(2)	Failure to supply information or wilfully providing false particulars	2
20(5)	Failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by the section	28
23A(2)	Failure to undertake dog owner education programme or dog obedience course (or both)	0
24	Failure to comply with obligations of probationary owner	0
28(5)	Failure to comply with the effects of disqualification	0
32(2)	Failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	1
32(4)	Fraudulent sale or transfer of dangerous dog	0
33EC(1)	Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as menacing dog	25
33F(3)	Failure to advise person of muzzle and leashing requirement	0
36A(6)	Failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	1
41	False statement in relation to dog registration	0
41A	Falsely notifying death of dog	0
42	Failure to register dog	279
46(4)	Fraudulent procurement or attempt to procure replacement dog registration label or disc	0
48(3)	Failure to advise change of ownership	0
49(4)	Failure to advise change of address	0
51(1)	Removal, swapping, or counterfeiting of registration label or disc	0
52A	Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	44
53(1)	Failure to keep dog under control	20
54(2)	Failure to provide proper care and attention, to supply proper and sufficient food, and to provide adequate exercise	5

54A	Failure to carry a leash in public	1
55(7)	Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	1
62(4)	Allowing dog known to be dangerous to be at large unmuzzled or unleashed	0
62(5)	Failure to advise of muzzle and leashing requirements	0
72(2)	Releasing dog from custody	0
Total Number of Infringements		407