

Otorohanga District Council

Section 10A Dog Control Act 1996: Annual Report on Dog Control Policy and Practices - 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016

1. Overview

The number of dog owners and dogs has remained at a constant level over recent years. As of 30 June 2016 there were 1296 owners and 2355 registered dogs in Otorohanga District. Of these totals 325 urban owners have 407 registered dogs.

Otorohanga District Council contracts its dog control duties to Otorohanga District Animal Control Services. There is one full time warranted Dog Control Officer and Poundkeeper. The contractor has part time staff on call to provide cover or extra staffing when required.

During the year the contract for Animal and Dog Control services was awarded to a new contractor. The previous contractor ceased operations in December 2015 and the new service provider commenced duties on 1 April 2016. During the interim period Council staff with dog and animal control experience were appointed as dog control officer and poundkeeper on an temporary basis. The new contractor has extensive experience in animal control and enforcement roles.

Council has one dog pound located in Otorohanga.

2. Enforcement Practices

The Dog Control Officer provides monthly reports on dog control matters. During the year the animal control contractors reported receiving and responding to 160 complaints on dog control matters. This total does not cover the entire year due to the change in contractors and the interim period when Council staff were appointed to the role. A detailed breakdown of these complaints is not available.

The Council call centre logged 96 complaints about dogs. These complaints are listed by type in Part 2 of this report. Some of these complaints will also have been included in the total number of complaints that the contractors received.

Complaints cover a wide range of issues. Many relate to stray or wandering dogs that have been secured and require pick up. Urban area calls include dogs roaming, barking dogs and animal welfare matters. Rural owners generally report on wandering dogs and an occasional incident involving stock worrying. Any reports of dogs acting in a threatening or aggressive manner are responded to immediately as required by the conditions of the contract.

During the year 28 infringement notices were issued. Of these notices 18 were issued for failing to register in the months following the annual dog registration in July, the balance being for other breaches of the Act such as failing to keep a dog under control. No prosecutions were taken by Council for breaches of the Dog Control Act.

3. Dogs Prohibited, Leash only and Exercise Areas

The main street of Otorohanga, the harbour foreshore and the Jervois St playground, both in Kawhia are designated as prohibited areas in the Otorohanga District Dog Control Policy.

Designated dog exercise areas are located on a section of Waipa River flood bank in the middle of Otorohanga and along the beach from Kawhia to Aotea in the morning and the evening. At all other times and during public holidays the beach area is a leash control area. The Otorohanga exercise area is becoming increasingly popular and additional directional signs have been installed.

All other public spaces in the District are deemed to be leash control areas.

4. Dog Registration Fees.

The following dog control fees were approved by Council for the 2015-2016 financial year. There was no increase to the fees set the previous year.

<i>Urban Dogs</i>	<i>\$124 per dog</i>
<i>Urban Dogs - Neutered</i>	<i>\$ 98 per dog</i>
<i>Urban Dogs - Special Owner Scheme</i>	<i>\$ 98 per dog</i>
<i>Urban Dogs - Neutered and Special Owner Scheme</i>	<i>\$ 54 per dog</i>
<i>Rural Dogs</i>	<i>\$ 98 per dog</i>
<i>Rural Dogs - Special Owner Scheme</i>	<i>\$ 54 per dog</i>

5. Dog Education and Dog Awareness

There are no dog training providers in the District. An initiative introduced by the new contractor has seen the creation of a pool of surplus dog kennels which are provided at no charge to approved owners. Many barking and roaming dog complaints have a lack of suitable housing for the dog as a key factor. This programme has seen positive feedback for Councils Dog Control Officer and in conjunction with the efforts of the Waitomo District Dog Control Officer some 16 kennels have so far been placed in both communities.

6. Disqualified and Probationary Owners

There are no probationary owners or people who have been disqualified from owning a dog living in the District.

7. Menacing and dangerous dogs.

At the end of the year there were 38 menacing dogs and no dangerous dogs registered in the District. These dogs have 31 owners and all properties where menacing dogs are kept are inspected by the Dog Control Officer to ensure fencing is adequate to contain the dogs. 28 menacing dogs are kept on properties within the urban area. There has been a small increase in the number of menacing dogs. In another programme to promote compliance the new Dog Control Officer is providing microchipping at a reduced rate to owners whose dogs have been classified as menacing. Microchipping a dog can impose a significant financial burden and compliance barrier. This programme has also been extended to outlying areas such as Kawhia where the cost of transporting a dog to town for microchipping is a further disincentive to complying with the provisions of the Dog Control Act. In some instances muzzles are provided to the owners of menacing dogs to reinforce the message that extra responsibilities are attached to owning classified dogs.

During the year Council declined an objection against classification from a couple who live in Otorohanga and own two dogs that were classified as menacing by behaviour by the Dog Control Officer.

8. Other information.

Council places a high priority on controlling dogs roaming around urban areas in Otorohanga and Kawhia. The dog control contract specifies a minimum number of street patrols to be conducted every month. During the year the Dog Control Officers logged 31 night time patrols and 301 day time patrols in addition to their normal duties.

Andrew Loe
Environmental Services Manager
Otorohanga District Council

Part 2 Statistical information

	At 30 June 2015	For period 1 July 15 to 30 June 2016	Comments
Total number of registered dogs	2349	2357	
Number of urban dogs	403	407	
Total number of dog owners	1283	1296	
Number of urban owners	303	325	
Probationary owners	Nil	Nil	
Disqualified owners	One	Nil	Left District
Dangerous dogs	Nil	Nil	
Menacing dogs	33	38	
i) s33A(1)(b)(I) By breed	18	20	
ii) s33C(1) By behaviour	15	18	
Total number of infringement notices	27	28	
Total number of complaints received by Animal Control contractor	229	160	Due to change of contractor total is only for 7 months
Total number of complaints received by Council call centre	72	96	
By Category			
Roaming	45	36	
Barking	23	24	
Other	4	9	
Total number of Prosecutions	Nil	Nil	