

Annual Dog Control

Report to Secretary

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2016/17

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Palmerston North City Council

This report has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 ('the Act').

The report covers the 2016/17 financial year.

Policy on Dogs

Pursuant to the Dog Control Amendment Act the Council adopted a Policy on Dogs and Bylaw in 2011, which was amended in 2013.

The objectives of the Policy are to –

- a. Minimise danger, distress and nuisance to the community generally;
- b. Avoid the inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to public places that are frequented by children, whether or not children might be accompanied by adults;
- c. Enable, as far as practicable, the public (including families) to use streets and public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs;
- d. Provide for the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

A review of the Dog Control Policy (2011) was commenced in June 2017. The review will result in a new Dog Control Bylaw.

Accommodation

The Animal Control Office is located in Palmerston North City's central administration building situated on The Square in central Palmerston North. The Council Pound is located at Totara Road Palmerston North, at the back of the race course adjacent to the waste water treatment plant. This facility has kennelling for 36 dogs and 6 puppies, with an administration area and exercise yard.

Personnel

The Animal Control team is based within the Customer Services Unit and reports to the Head of Environmental Protection Services. The team comprises 1 Team Leader/ Senior Animal Control Officer and 3 Animal Control Officers. Administrative support is provided by Business Support Officers employed in Customer Services Support Services.

Hours of Operation

Officers work on a roster system which provides for an Officer to be on duty from 7 am to 6 pm on week days. After hours animal control services for dog attacks, secured dogs and aggressive dogs are provided by a contractor.

The Pound is open to the public between 8.00 and 9.00am and 2.30 and 3.30pm Monday to Friday. The emergency release of animals outside of these hours is available, but subject to an additional fee.

Dog Registration

8,130 dogs were registered in 2016/17 to 6,548 owners. This was an increase of 0.5% registered dogs from the previous year.



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Fees

The Palmerston North City Council have fee categories for general registration, approved preferred owners, rural non-working and rural working dogs with discounted fees in all categories except rural working dogs for de-sexed dogs. Disability assist and special working dogs have no fees.

Fees and charges are reviewed annually and were increased by 3.0%. Fees under the Impounding Act 1955 were increased from 4 May 2016 and those in terms of the Dog Control Act 1996 were increased from 1 July 2016.

Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees contribute 93% to the cost of animal control in Palmerston North City.

Preferred Owners

There is a financial benefit, with reduced fees, by being classified as a "Preferred Owner" (PO). A PO must:

1. have had the dog registered for the last 12 months;
2. provide a satisfactory secure environment in respect to fencing, sleeping quarters and exercise space;
3. demonstrate an understanding of basic dog welfare and owners obligations;
4. not had more than one dog impounded or found roaming in the last 12 months;
5. not have had more than one substantiated complaint about the dog or dogs in the last 12 months;
6. have paid dog registration fees on time; and,
7. provide access to a door on the property without the dog(s) being able to approach people when they enter.

In general, PO status remains in place if the owner pays the registration on time, is at the same address and there are no material changes to the property.

In 2016/17 there were 3,023 preferred dog owners, which is 55% of those eligible, which excludes rural owners. (Rural dogs do not attract preferred ownership due to the already reduced fees and impracticality at many rural properties of providing access independent of the dog(s).

De-sexing Programme

Palmerston North City Council received funding from Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) of \$9,230 to desex 42 dogs classified as menacing at the Massey University Veterinary Teaching Hospital. As at 30 June 2017, 29 dogs had been de-sexed in the programme. DIA have approved the carryover of the unspent funding to complete the programme in 2017/18

Complaints

A total of 4257 complaints or investigations were conducted during the year. The number of reported dog attacks decreased by 15% from previous years. The most significant source of complaint was in relation to roaming or uncontrolled dogs (36%) followed by barking dogs (27%). The number of barking dog complaints received by Council increased by 20% from the previous year after reductions during the previous two years.

Impounded dogs

In 2016/17 553 dogs were impounded. Of these 365 (66%) were collected by their owner, 121 (22%) were euthanized and 57 (10%) were rehomed, sold to a new owner or transferred to the SPCA. The remaining 2% were dogs that were wrongfully impounded or those that died in the pound through illness.

Infringements

Council continued with its focus to ensure that all known dogs were registered. Infringements were issued to multiple offenders and in some cases dogs were impounded. In 2016/17 333 infringement notices were issued with 89 of these waived or cancelled due to prompt compliance or extenuating circumstances.

Prosecutions

No prosecutions were initiated during the year.



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Dog Parks

In 2016/17 doggie doo bag dispenser and signage were installed at Linklater Reserve. Work on a public toilet which will have a dog wash down area was also commenced.

Community consultation was initiated to look at the opportunities for dog walking, agility and socialisation as part of the Waitoetoe Park development.

Council purchased some land on the esplanade reserve along the Turitea Stream that extends the dog off leash walking area there. This will be classified in the review of the Policy and Bylaw.

Customer Satisfaction

During the year 91% of 289 respondents to the Council's Customer Satisfaction survey were satisfied with the Animal Control programme. The key areas of dissatisfaction related to responsiveness and the resolution of barking dog complaints. As noise is a subjective reasonableness test it is often very difficult to achieve outcomes that will satisfy everyone.

Improvement Opportunities

In May the Head of Environmental Protection Services and Senior Animal Control Officer visited the Napier City Council and viewed their Animal Control Operation. This identified a number of opportunities for improving the Council's Pound operation. The development of a Facility Manual and updating the TQM procedures are considered priorities for action. The need to review/change operational work practices and procedures was also identified as a result of several incidents that did not meet customer expectations.

2017/18 Programme

The focus for 2017/18 will be:

- the review of the Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw;
- assessing the compliance of the Council's Pound with the Code of Welfare for Temporary Housing of Companion Animals and develop a programme to implement required improvements;
- identifying opportunities to introduce technology to provide services simpler, faster and better; and,
- identifying and implementing opportunities to improve customer satisfaction levels.
- full review of all procedures and work practices to ensure business and customer needs are being met.



Summary

For the period 2016/17, in terms of the operation of Council's Dog Control Policy and practices the following is reported, as required under the Dog Control Act:

Number of Registered Dogs	8130
Number of Disqualified Owners	4
Number of dogs classified as dangerous under Sect 31 of the Act	7
Number of dogs classified as menacing under Sect 33A of the Act	111
Number of Dog related Complaints (See Appendix 1 for details)	4257
Number of Prosecutions	0
Number of Infringements	333

Attached as Appendix 1 are details of dangerous and menacing dogs.

Attached in Appendix 2 is a comparative summary of Dog Control Statistics for the period 2013/14 to 2016/17.

This contains the information above with the addition of a breakdown of types of complaints processed by staff.



Appendix 1:

Dangerous and Menacing Dog Details

Dog Control Act 1996 S 31 – Dangerous Dogs

Section 31 requires the territorial authority to classify a dog as a dangerous dog if:

- the owner of the dog has been convicted of an offence in relation to dog attack;
- the territorial authority has reasonable grounds to believe that the dog constitutes a threat to the safety of any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife; or,
- the dog owner admits in writing that the dog constitutes a threat to the safety of any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife.

Dogs within the jurisdiction of Council that were classified as dangerous under S 31 were as follows:

Breed	Number
Alaskan Malamute	1
Siberian Husky	2
Labrador Retriever	2
American Staffordshire Terrier	1
American Pit Bull Terrier	1
Total	7



Dog Control Act 1996 S 33A – Menacing Dogs

Section 33A menacing dogs are dogs that have not been classified as a dangerous dog but the territorial authority considers may pose a threat to any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife because of any observed or reported behaviour of the dog or any characteristics typically associated with the dog's breed or type.

Dogs within PNCC that were classified as menacing under S33A, were as follows:

Breed	Number
Akita	1
Boxer	2
Bulldog, American	1
Dobermann	1
Dogo Argentino	1
Mastiff, Bull	3
Mastiff, Neapolitan	1
Retriever, Labrador	8
Rhodesian Ridgeback	1
Rottweiler	10
Shar Pei	2
Shepherd, German	2
Siberian Husky	5
Terrier, American Pit Bull	61
Terrier, American Staffordshire	1
Terrier, Bull	2
Terrier, Fox (Smooth)	1
Terrier, Staffordshire Bull	8
Total	111

Note: American Pit Bull Terriers and Dogo Argentinos are by default classified as menacing under section 33c (Breed) of the Dog Control Act but as the behaviour of some individual dogs was of concern then the classification for menacing was changed to Section 33A (behaviour). This was to ensure that all officers were aware that the dog(s) in question had temperament problems.



Dog Control Act 1996 S 33C – Menacing Dogs

Under section 33CA the territorial authority must classify as menacing any dog that the territorial authority has reasonable grounds to believe belongs wholly or predominantly to 1 or more of the following breeds or types:

- Brazilian Fila
- Dogo Argentino
- Japanese Tosa
- Perro de Presa Canario
- American Pit Bull Terrier

Dogs within the jurisdiction of Council that were classified as menacing under S33C, were as follows;

Breed	Number
Dogo Argentino	6
Terrier, American Pit Bull	58
Total	64



Appendix 2: Dog Control Statistics 2013/2014 to 2016/2017

Serial	Topic	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
1	Number of Dogs Issued with a Registration Tag (Registered Dogs)	7812	7982	8091	8130
2	Number of Disqualified Owners	0	0	1	4
3	Number of Probationary Owners	0	1	1	0
4	Number of Dogs classified as dangerous under S31 of the Act	2	1	3	7
5	Number of Dogs classified as menacing under S33A of the Act (Behaviour)	80	91	94	111
6	Number of Dogs classified as menacing under S33C of the Act (Breed)	82	69	38	64
7	Number of Dog Complaints or investigations initiated by public or ACO. (Refer to below for details)	4256	4289	4208	4257
7a	<i>Aggressive/Rushing Dogs</i>	217	199	174	191
7b	<i>Dog Attacks</i>	104	124	101	86
7c	<i>Barking Dogs</i>	1084	994	965	1155
7d	<i>Roaming Dogs</i>	1801	1682	1666	1512
7e	<i>Lost Dogs</i>	324	442	454	431
7f	<i>Property Checks</i>	366	319	320	307
7g	<i>Other Dog Related Incidents</i>	8	10	18	11
7h	<i>Identified/Reported Unregistered dogs</i>	352	519	510	564
8	Number of Prosecutions	1	1	1	0
9	Number of Infringements	127	127	175	333



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Comments

Serial 2: The increase in disqualified owners was due to people moving into the city from other areas.

Serial 4: All except one of the dangerous dogs moved into the city from other areas.

Serials 5 & 6: The increase in registered menacing dogs was due to an increased effort in ensuring correct classification in the registration process. Twelve dogs were newly registered as an outcome of the DIA funded desexing programme for dogs classified as menacing.

Serial 7b: The cause of the reduced number of dogs attacks is not known but may be linked to the reduction in roaming dogs. This indicates more dogs are being kept under control.

Serial 7c: The cause of the increased number of barking dog complaints is not known. This may be linked to the reduction in roaming dogs, as more dogs are being restrained on their property. There have also been a number of difficult to resolve situations where a property has been the subject of multiple complaints.

Serial 9: The increased number of infringements has been due to more active enforcement in respect to unregistered dogs.





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