

DOG CONTROL REPORT

2021/22

Annual Section 10A Dog Control Act Report 2021/22

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

The report covers the 2021/22 fiscal year.

Policy on Dogs

There have been no amendments to the Council's Dog Control Policy or Bylaw this year. The Policy and Bylaw is due for review in 2023, preparation for this will start in 2022/23.

Accommodation

The Animal Management Office is in Palmerston North City's Central Administration Building, which is on The Square. The Council Pound is on Totara Road, Palmerston North, at the back of the racecourse and next to the wastewater treatment plant. This facility has kennelling for 36 dogs and six puppies, a dog exercise area and administration space for two staff.

Personnel

The Animal Management Team is part of the Customer Unit and reports to the Environmental Protection Services Manager. The Animal Management Team includes a Team Leader, three experienced Animal Control Officers and a Kennel Manager/Education Officer, who is also warranted as an Animal Control Officer.

Hours of Operation

Normal working hours are 8am to 5pm on weekdays. After-hours services are limited to responding to dog attacks, secured dogs, aggressive dogs and roaming dogs.

The Pound is open to the public Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 9.30am and 2.30pm to 4.30pm. The emergency release of animals outside these hours is available but is subject to an additional fee.

Fees

The Palmerston North City Council has fee categories for general registration, with a reduced fee for de-sexed dogs, approved preferred owners and rural working dogs. Disability assist and special working dogs do not attract fees.

Under the Dog Control Act 1996, fees and charges are reviewed annually. As of 1 July 2021, there was an increase of 2% to 3.5% across all dog registration fee categories.

Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees contributed 90% of the cost of animal management in Palmerston North City in 2021/22. This is up 1% on the last fiscal year.

Dog Registration

There were 9,565 dogs registered in 2021/22 to 7,413 owners, this is an increase of 5.7% in registered dogs from the previous year.

Preferred Owners

The financial benefit of being a preferred owner is a reduction in the annual registration fees. In July 2020, changes were made to the structure of registration categories allowing both urban and rural pet dog owners to be eligible for this scheme.

In order to qualify as a preferred owner, the owner must;

- Have had the dog(s) registered for the past 12 months,
- Provide a satisfactory secure environment in respect to fencing, sleeping quarters and exercise space,
- Demonstrate an understanding of basic dog welfare and owners' obligations,
- Have no more than one dog impounded or found roaming in the past 12 months,
- Have no more than one substantiated complaint about their dog(s) in the past 12 months and
- Have paid dog registration fees on time.

In 2020/21 there were 2,912 preferred dog owners, which decreased by 0.6% to 2,739 in 2021/22. Leniency was extended towards the majority of dog owners this year due to the high number of Covid-19 related hardship requests, this meant that Council elected not to remove preferred ownership from those who struggled to pay on time.

Complaints

A total of 3,164 complaints or investigations were conducted during the year, this is an increase of 0.23% on last year. The number of reported dog attacks increased by 12% from last year putting this year 11.5% above the five-year average.

The most common complaint was about roaming or uncontrolled dogs 1,135 (35.8%) down 17.5% on the previous year, followed by barking dogs 710 (22.4%), down 1.7% on the previous year.

Dog Attacks

There were 117 reported dog attacks during the year, 45 of these were attacks on a person. 25 were assessed as minor, 16 moderate, 3 serious and 1 very serious.

There were 44 attacks on other dogs, with 28 assessed as minor, 14 as moderate and 2 as serious. There were 28 attacks on other animals, with 12 assessed as minor, 14 as moderate and two as serious.

Impounded Dogs

In 2021/22, 351 dogs were impounded, compared to 375 from the previous year. Of these, 247 (70%) were returned to their owner, 59 (17%) were euthanised and 38 (11%) were rehomed, with 12 being transferred to the SPCA or another rehoming agency. The remaining seven (2%) are dogs that are awaiting collection.

The number of impounded dogs that were euthanized has increased when compared with the 2020/21 figures which saw 11.2% of impounded dogs euthanised, this can be attributed to the increase in dogs handed over or not collected post attack. The number of dogs rehomed has increased from 8% in 2020/21.

Infringements

Council continued to focus on ensuring that all known dogs were registered and kept under proper control by their owners. Infringements were issued to multiple offenders and in some cases, dogs were impounded.

In 2021/22, 127 infringement notices were issued, 108 for unregistered dogs, 15 failing to have a dog under control or confined, and 4 for failing to comply with a classification. Of the 127 infringements issues, 15 (11.8%) were waived or cancelled because of extenuating circumstances.

Menacing Dog Classification Appeals

There were no appeals to any classification made during the 2021/22 year.

Prosecutions

There were no prosecutions brought before the courts in the 2021/22 year.

Customer Satisfaction

Council's residents' satisfaction survey¹ for 2022 found 63% of respondents were satisfied with the control of roaming dogs (62% in 2021), while 23% were neutral, and 14% were dissatisfied.

However, only 50% of respondents were satisfied with the control of barking dogs (57% in 2021), 33% neutral and 18% dissatisfied. The most common issue raised in the survey was related to barking dogs which is down 1.7% on the previous year. Educational campaigns and working with dog owners to reduce repeat offending will continue to further reduce the number of barking dog complaints.

Improvement Opportunities

The Code of Welfare amendment for the Temporary Housing of Companion Animals Code came into force in 2018. This resulted in the dog pound being identified as not fit for

¹ The survey had 506 independently selected respondents from across the city.

purpose. A Ministry for Primary Industries audit identified the most concerning matters, which were remedied in June 2020.

The construction of the city's new animal shelter facility will commence in November 2022 and is due for completion in December the following year. The existing facility will continue to operate during the construction period to allow for continuity of service.

The new facility will meet the requirements of the codes of welfare, while having provision for expansion opportunities to align with the city's animal management needs in the future.

Community Outreach and Education

No community events were attended during the year as the majority were cancelled or postponed due to Covid19 restrictions.

Two educational events were held at local schools targeting bite prevention, and one dog safety training was provided to a local agency. Feedback from all recipients suggested this was valuable and this service will be offered to additional schools and agencies in the coming year.

There has been a 31.4% increase in property checks. Educational phone calls to dog owners during complaint investigations have increased in an effort to reduce repeat offending, the result of which is seen in the reduction of barking (down 1.7%) and roaming (down 17.8%) complaints when compared to the 2020/2021 year.

2022/23 Programme

Key focus areas for the 2022/23 year include:

- Contributing to the final design detailing and development of the new animal shelter.
- To improve animal welfare, owner behaviour and the public's understanding of how to safely behave around dogs by continuing to deliver animal management and education.
- Contribute to the Dog Control Policy and Bylaw review.

Summary

The reporting requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996 for the period 2021/22 are:

| | |
|--|------|
| Number of registered dogs | 9565 |
| Number of disqualified owners | 0 |
| Number of probationary owners | 0 |
| Number of dogs classified as dangerous under Section 31 of the Act | 10 |
| Number of dogs classified as menacing under Section 33A of the Act | 116 |
| Number of dogs classified as menacing under Section 33C of the Act | 51 |
| Number of dog-related complaints (See Appendix 1 for details) | 3164 |
| Number of prosecutions | 0 |
| Number of infringements | 127 |

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 2017/18 to 2021/22. This contains the information above with the addition of a breakdown of types of complaints processed by staff.

Ross McDermott
Team Leader Animal Management + Education

Jason Rosenbrock
Environmental Protection Services Manager

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 sworn evidence and 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 are classified as dangerous under S31.

| Breed | Number |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Alaskan Malamute | 1 |
| German Shepherd | 1 |
| Greyhound | 1 |
| Rottweiler | 2 |
| Siberian Husky | 2 |
| Terrier, American Staffordshire | 1 |
| Terrier, American Pit Bull | 1 |
| Whippet | 1 |
| Total | 10 |

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.

A total of 116 dogs are classified under section 33A, of these, 37 classifications were made in the 2021/22 year.

Dogs within PNCC jurisdiction that are classified as menacing under S33A.

| Breed | Number |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Akita | 1 |
| Australian Koolie | 1 |
| Boxer | 1 |
| Bulldog | 2 |
| Bulldog, American | 6 |
| Catahoula Leopard | 2 |
| Collie, Bearded | 1 |
| Collie, Border | 1 |
| Greyhound | 3 |
| Heading | 1 |
| Mastiff | 3 |
| Mastiff, Bull | 3 |
| Mastiff, Neapolitan | 1 |
| Pointer, English | 1 |
| Poodle, Standard | 1 |
| Retriever, Labrador | 12 |
| Rottweiler | 11 |
| Shar Pei | 4 |
| Shepherd, German | 6 |
| Siberian Husky | 3 |
| Terrier, American Pit Bull | 36 |
| Terrier, American Staffordshire | 4 |
| Terrier, Bull | 2 |
| Terrier, Jack Russell | 1 |
| Terrier, Staffordshire Bull | 9 |
| Akita | 1 |
| Grand Total | 116 |

Note: Some dogs that would normally be classified under Section 33C are included above as they have displayed behaviours which better fit a classification under section 33A, this behaviour has been identified and confirmed through customer complaint investigations.

Dog Control Act 1996 S 33C – Menacing Dogs

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

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

A total of 51 dogs are classified under section 33C, of these, 8 were newly classified in the 2021/22 year.

Dogs within the jurisdiction of Council that are classified as menacing under S33C.

| Breed | Number |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Dogo Argentino | 3 |
| Terrier, American Pit Bull Type | 48 |
| Total | 51 |

Appendix 2: Dog Control Statistics 2016/2017 to 2021/2022

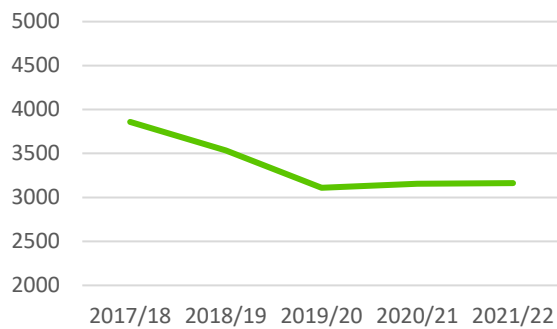
| Serial | Topic | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|--------|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 | Number of Dogs Issued with a Registration Tag (Registered Dogs) | 8271 | 8449 | 8695 | 9021 | 9565 |
| 2 | Number of Disqualified Owners | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| 3 | Number of Probationary Owners | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | Number of Dogs classified as dangerous under S31 of the Act | 6 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 10 |
| 5 | Number of Dogs classified as menacing under S33A of the Act (Behaviour) | 104 | 91 | 79 | 88 | 117 |
| 6 | Number of Dogs classified as menacing under S33C of the Act (Breed) | 79 | 71 | 77 | 69 | 51 |
| 7 | Number of Dog Complaints or investigations initiated by public or ACO. (Refer to below for details) | 3859 | 3536 | 3110 | 3157 | 3164 |
| | 7a Aggressive/Rushing Dogs | 155 | 133 | 134 | 152 | 146 |
| | 7b Dog Attacks | 114 | 88 | 96 | 103 | 117 |
| | 7c Barking Dogs | 987 | 724 | 758 | 722 | 710 |
| | 7d Roaming Dogs | 1516 | 1576 | 1309 | 1381 | 1135 |
| | 7e Lost Dogs | 429 | 367 | 327 | 290 | 244 |
| | 7f Property Checks | 289 | 311 | 220 | 85 | 124 |
| | 7g Other Dog Related Incidents | 7 | 24 | 31 | 52 | 56 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 7h | Identified/Reported Unregistered dogs | 362 | 313 | 235 | 305 | 632 |
| 8 | Number of Prosecutions | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | Number of Infringements | | 162 | 105 | 341 | 182 | 127 |

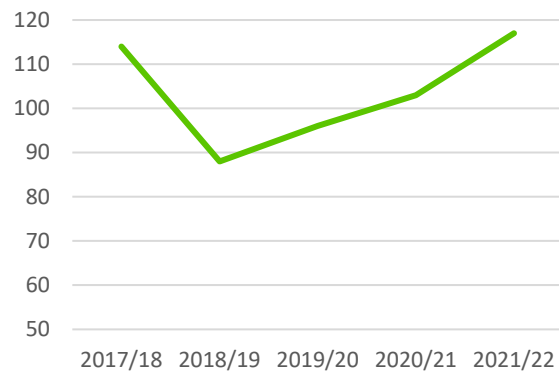
Comments

- The total number of complaints or investigations increased slightly, 0.23% on the 2020/21 totals.
- Barking dog complaints saw a slight reduction compared with 2020/21, which may in part be attributed to improvements made to Council procedures, and efforts to educate owners.
- Rushing and aggressive dog complaints decreased slightly over the previous year and sit just over the five-year average. The decrease partially aligns with the increase in attacks.
- Dog attack notifications have increased to sit 11.5% over the 5-year average.
- Roaming dog complaints continue to drop year on year, this is thought to be because it is favourable to advertise on social media over calling council, resulting in owners collecting their dogs without the involvement of council.
- The increase in unregistered dogs can be attributed to the Covid lock down in August / September 2021, follow up and penalty timelines were pushed out to after the lockdown.
- A change in approach to investigations and registrations saw more compliance through education meaning less infringements were issued.

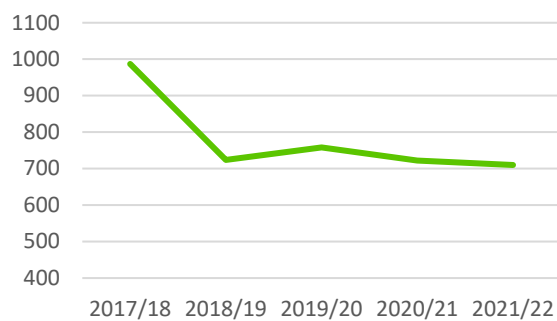
Number of Dog Complaints or investigations



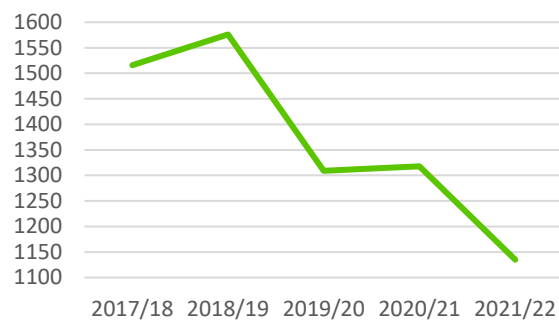
Dog Attacks



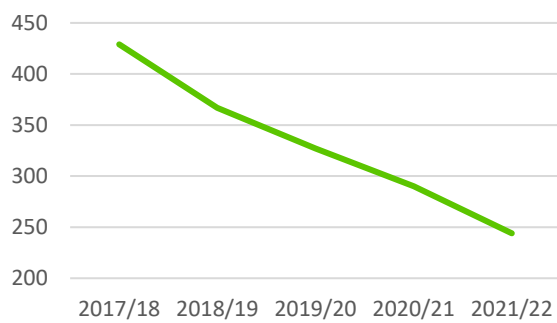
Barking Dogs



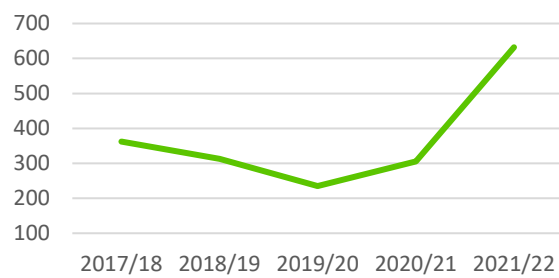
Roaming Dogs



Lost Dogs



Identified/Reported Unregistered dogs



Aggressive/Rushing Dogs

