

ANNUAL SECTION 10A DOG CONTROL ACT REPORT 2020/2021

JULY 2021

PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL

This report covering the 2020/21 fiscal year, has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 ('the Act').

1.1 POLICY ON DOGS

There have been no amendments to the Council's dog control policy or bylaw this year. The policy is due for review in 2023, so preparation for this will start in 2021/22.

1.2 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, with a dog exercise area and administration space for two staff.

1.3 PERSONNEL

The Animal Management team is part of the Customer Unit and reports to the Head of Environmental Protection Services. A new Animal Management and Education Team Leader was appointed in April, to lead service efficiency improvements for the benefit of our customers. Supporting the Team Leader are three experienced Animal Control Officers and a Kennel Manager/Education Officer, who is also warranted as an Animal Control Officer.

1.4 HOURS OF OPERATION

Officers work on a roster system, which provides an on-duty officer from 8am to 5pm on weekdays. After-hours services are limited to responding to dog attacks, secured dogs, aggressive dogs and roaming dogs.

In February 2021, there was a change in contractor for afterhours service.

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.

1.5 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 89% of the cost of animal management in Palmerston North City in 2020/21. This is up 12% on the last fiscal year, partly because of changes made to the registration fee structure and officers' efforts to achieve registration compliance through education.

1.6 DOG REGISTRATION

There were 9021 dogs registered in 2020/21 to 7281 owners, this is an increase of 3.61% in registered dogs from the previous year.





1.7 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 2018/19 there were 3094 preferred dog owners, which decreased over two years by 5.9% to 2,912 in 2020/21. The number of preferred owners in the 2019/20 Annual Dog Control Report was incorrectly reported, as such the comparison given here is a two-year average. Tighter monitoring of preferred ownership criteria, leading to some losing their status, is believed to be the reason for the decline.

1.8 COMPLAINTS

A total of 3,157 complaints or investigations were conducted during the year, which continued the downward trend. The number of reported dog attacks increased by 7% from last year putting this year 5.5% above the five-year average. The most significant source of complaint was about roaming or uncontrolled dogs (43.7%), followed by barking dogs (22.8%). The number of barking dog complaints received by Council increased by 4.8% from the previous year.

1.9 DOG ATTACKS

There were 103 reported dog attacks during the year, 27 of these were attacks on a person. 21 were assessed as minor, two moderate and four were serious. There were 50 attacks on other dogs, with 37 assessed as minor, 11 as moderate and one as serious. There were 26 attacks on other animals, with 19 assessed as minor, six as moderate and one as serious.

1.10 IMPOUNDED DOGS

In 2020/21, 375 dogs were impounded compared with 380 for the previous year. Of these, 243 (64.8%) were returned to their owner, 42 (11.2%) were euthanised and 82 (21.8%) were rehomed or transferred to the SPCA or another rehoming agency. The remaining seven (1.9%) were dogs that were entered in error, with one dog (.3%) having been stolen from the Pound and later recovered.

In comparison with the 2019/20 figures, which saw 13.4% dogs euthanised and 11.8% rehomed with other agencies, euthanasia numbers are down while the number of dogs rehomed has increased.

1.11 INFRINGEMENTS

Council continued to focus on ensuring that all known dogs were registered. Infringements were issued to multiple offenders and in some cases, dogs were impounded.

In 2020/21, 182 infringement notices were issued for unregistered dogs, failing to have a dog under control or confined, or dogs not microchipped. Of the 182 infringement issues, 36 (19.7%) were waived or cancelled for compliance or because of extenuating circumstances.

1.12 MENACING DOG CLASSIFICATION APPEALS

During the year, two objections to the classification of dogs under section 33A were heard by Council's Hearing Committee. In both cases the classifications were upheld.

1.13 PROSECUTIONS

There have been no prosecutions brought before the courts in the 2020/21 year.

1.14 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

A residents' satisfaction survey for 2021 found 62% satisfied with the control of roaming dogs, while 28% were neutral, and 11% were dissatisfied. On the control of barking dogs, 58% were satisfied, 27% neutral and 16% dissatisfied. The survey had 437 independently selected respondents from across the city.

1.15 IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Code of Welfare amendment for the Temporary Housing of Companion Animals Code came into force in 2018. This meant the current dog pound was identified as not being fit for purpose. A Ministry for Primary Industries audit identified the most concerning matters, which were remedied in June 2020.

A project to build a new animal shelter is under way. Council officers anticipate lodging for consent in October 2021, before procuring a construction contractor.

1.16 COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The Animal Management team attended four community events this year, where they engaged with the public about Council's Animal Management programme.

Events attended were:

- Linton Family Day
- Rural Games in the Square
- Esplanade Open Day
- Wacky Water Day

Education

Educational events targeting bite prevention were offered to 43 local schools. Seven schools accepted the offer, and 11 presentations were given. Feedback from participating schools suggests this has been valuable and this service will continue to be offered to more schools in the coming year.

1.17 2021/22 PROGRAMME

Some additional points of focus are:

- Contributing to the final design and development of the new animal shelter to ensure that it is both fit for purpose and is compliant with the Code of Welfare: Temporary Housing of Companion Animals.
- 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.





SUMMARY

The reporting requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996 for the period 2020/21 are:

Number of Registered Dogs
Number of Disqualified Owners
Number of Probationary Owners
Number of dogs classified as dangerous under Sect 31 of the Act
Number of dogs classified as menacing under Sect 33A of the Act
Number of dogs classified as menacing under Sect 33C of the Act
Number of dog related complaints (See Appendix 1 for details)
Number of Prosecutions
Number of Infringements

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 2016/17 to 2020/21. This contains the information above with the addition of a breakdown of types of complaints processed by staff.

Kerry-Lee Probert
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SERVICES



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
German Shepherd	1
Rottweiler	2
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 jurisdiction that were classified as menacing under S33A, were as follows:

Breed	Number
Australian Koolie	1
Bulldog	1
Bulldog, American	5
Collie, Border	1
Greyhound	3
Heading	1
Mastiff	2
Mastiff, Bull	2
Mastiff, Neapolitan	2
Pointer English	1
Retriever, Labrador	10
Rottweiler	8
Shar-pei	3
Shepherd, German	2
Siberian Husky	4
Terrier, American Pit Bull	31
Terrier, American Staffordshire	3
Terrier, Bull	2
Terrier, Staffordshire Bull	5
Whippet	1
Total	88



Note:

American Pit Bull Terrier type and Dogo Argentino's are by default classified as menacing under section 33c (Breed and breed type) 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 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

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

Breed	Number
Dogo Argentino	4
Terrier, American Pit Bull Type	65
Total	69

APPENDIX B:

DOG CONTROL STATISTICS 2016/2017 TO 2020/2021

Serial	Topic	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
1	Number of Dogs Issued with a Registration Tag (Registered Dogs)	8130	8271	*8738 **8449	*9193 **8695	9021
2	Number of Disqualified Owners	4	4	5	5	2
3	Number of Probationary Owners	0	4	1	1	1
4	Number of Dogs classified as dangerous under S31 of the Act	7	6	5	7	6
5	Number of Dogs classified as menacing under S33A of the Act (Behaviour)	111	104	91	79	88
6	Number of Dogs classified as menacing under S33C of the Act (Breed)	64	79	71	77	69
7	Number of Dog Complaints or investigations initiated by public or ACO. (Refer to below for details)	4257	3859	3536	3110	3157
7a	Aggressive/Rushing Dogs	191	155	133	134	152
7b	Dog Attacks	86	114	88	96	103
7c	Barking Dogs	1155	987	724	758	722
7d	Roaming Dogs	1512	1516	1576	1309	1381
7e	Lost Dogs	431	429	367	327	290
7f	Property Checks	307	289	311	220	85
7g	Other Dog Related Incidents	11	7	24	31	52
7h	Identified/Reported Unregistered dogs	564	362	313	235	305
8	Number of Prosecutions	0	1	1	0	0
9	Number of Infringements	333	162	105	341	182

* Incorrectly reported statistics

** Corrected Statistics

Comments

- The total number of complaints or investigations bucked the downward trend with an increase of 1.5% on the 2019/20 totals. This is attributed to an increase in dog ownership during level 3 and 4 of Covid-19, and with owners returning to work, it is surmised that this has resulted in an increased number of dog complaints.
- Barking dog complaints saw a reduction, which may in part be attributed to improvements made to Council procedures.
- Rushing dog notifications increased slightly over the previous year but remain lower than the five-year average, while dog attack notifications have increased to sit 5.5% over the 5-year average.
- A change in approach to investigations and registrations saw more compliance through education meaning less infringements were issued.
- With preferred ownership applications attracting an application fee, customers appear to have taken a more considered approach to the lodgement of applications, however the quality of those lodged has been vastly improved.

