

WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

FILE NO and TRIM NO: ANC-06, GOV-01-07 / 230814124157

REPORT TO: DISTRICT PLANNING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 19 September 2023

AUTHOR(S): Billy Charlton, Environmental Services Manager

SUBJECT: Annual Report on Dog Control 2022 / 2023

ENDORSED BY:
(for Reports to Council,
Committees or Boards)


General Manager


Chief Executive

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. The report is to present to the District Planning and Regulation Committee for approval, the Annual Report for Dog Control for the financial year 2022/23.
- 1.2. Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 (The Act), requires that Waimakariri District Council (WDC) provides specific information to the Secretary for Local Government (Dept. of Internal Affairs (DIA)) by way of an annual report each financial year within one month of the Council adopting this report.
 - 1.2.1. This information is found in the attached Annual Report on Dog Control.
 - 1.2.2. Under Section 5(3) of the Act the statistics contained within the attached report will also be publicly available on the Council's website.

Attachments:

- i. 2022/23 Annual Report on Dog Control (Trim: 230814124162)

2. RECOMMENDATION

THAT the District Planning and Regulation Committee:

- (a) **Receives** Report No. 230814124157.
- (b) **Approves** the attached 2022/23 Annual Report on Dog Control to the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) (Trim: 230814124162).
- (c) **Circulates** a copy of this report to the Community Boards for information and publishes the report on the Council's Website.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The DIA collates Dog Control reports from Territorial Authorities (TAs) on an annual basis. This enables the DIA to maintain nationwide records and statistics in relation to dogs, dog numbers, the number of menacing and dangerous dogs, along with the number and type of dog related complaints received by TAs for each financial year.
- 3.2. A ten year review of the Waimakariri District Council Dog Control Bylaw was undertaken in November 2019, with the Bylaw being adopted by Council on the 3 December 2019 and came into force on the 16 December 2019. The objectives of the bylaw include:

- To encourage responsible dog ownership
- To provide for Dog Access to Public areas
- To enforce dog owner obligations
- To minimise any danger, distress, or nuisance from dogs to the community

4. ISSUES AND OPTIONS

- 4.1. Previous annual dog reports illustrate continued population growth across the district and that position remains a constant when presenting this report. Population growth is seen as the primary driver for the increase in registered dog numbers in the Waimakariri district. With the steady increase in dog numbers this year, 7.6%, up from 13190 in 2021/22 to 14199 in 2022/23, there has been an increase in overall complaints up from 1475 in 2021/22 to 1789 in 2022/23 which is a 24.29% increase compared to the previous year.
- 4.2. There has been an increase in incidents across nearly every category we report on to the DIA, with three areas which are notable. These are:
- 4.2.1. Barking Dog Complaints – an increase of 16.33% from 349 in 2021/22 to 406 in 2022/23.
- 4.2.2. Roaming Dog Complaints – an increase of 71.25% from 160 in 2021/22 to 274 in 2022/23.
- 4.2.3. Dog welfare complaints – an increase of 100% from 13 in 2021/22 to 26 in 2022/23.
- 4.3. There were only two categories that decreased in incidents. These were:
- 4.3.1. Dog rushing people – a decrease of 34.7% from 49 in 2021/22 to 32 in 2022/23.
- 4.3.2. Unregistered dogs resulting in infringements – a decrease of 21.42% from 112 in 2021/22 to 88 in 2022/23.
- 4.4. All complaints for the 2022/23 year have been dealt with through ESU's animal management processes. All 23 dog attacks on people have had an outcome which is discussed in detail below.
- 4.5. Dog numbers have increased by 7.6% in the 2022/23 financial year, while the increase in dog owners has gone up by 3.74%. There are no significant reasons that can be attributed to the overall higher increase in dog numbers compared to dog owner numbers. There have been no new dog breeders or new kennel clubs to account for any significant differences. We can only assume that more people have decided to own more than one dog. This is not uncommon across New Zealand. It has been anecdotally suggested that as more people work longer hours, some decide to have companion dogs for their original dog. We have not collected data as to why there is a higher percentage increase of dogs to dog owners.
- 4.6. The increase in dog numbers is not unique to Waimakariri as neighbouring Councils Selwyn and Christchurch City, have had increased numbers of dogs in recent year as their populations have grown. However, we will not know whether the 2022/23 financial year has seen a similar level of growth of dogs until each Council completes its respective Section 10A reports to their elected members, and subsequently reported to the DIA, and then finally, uploaded to their respective websites.
- 4.7. For information purposes, a definition of each classification reported to the DIA as complaints received by Council can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Definitions of Complaint categories reported to the DIA.

Dog Attacks on People	When a dog physically attacks a person regardless of any physical injury occurring.
Dog Rushing People	When a dog runs directly at a person
Dog Attacks on Stock	When a dog physically attacks stock
Dog Attacks on Dogs	When a dog physically attacks another dog
Barking Dogs	Persistent barking as defined in the Dog Control Act 1996
Roaming Dogs	A dog at large (unaccompanied) in a public place or private property
Dog Welfare Complaints	Complaint received regarding the welfare of a dog
Unregistered Dogs resulting in infringements	A dog that is known to Council and is not registered after education and warnings to register
Lost / Found	Dogs reported lost by owners, subsequently found and returned, or found before Council involvement.
Callers requesting advice	General advice sought by customers on anything dog related.
Dog Fouling	Dogs caught fouling in public places or on private property other than the location the dog usually resides.
Dog Threatening	Dogs that show aggression such as baring teeth or growling towards other dogs or people.

- 4.8. It is important to recognise that all dog attacks on people are investigated as serious. However, at times there will be mitigating circumstances which results in different approaches being taken. Of the 23 incidents of Dog Attacks on People the following outcomes were achieved:
- 4.8.1. 14 received a warning letter after investigation.
 - 4.8.2. Of the 14 mentioned in 4.8.1 (of the 23 original complaints), 7 were classified as menacing (warning letters) (muzzled in public at all times).
 - 4.8.3. Of the 14 mentioned in 4.8.1 (of the 23 original complaints), 1 received an infringement (and a warning letter).
 - 4.8.4. Of the original 23 Dog attacks on people 9 complaints resulted in no action after investigation due to the nature of the incident or lack of information to process further. One owner decided to euthanise their dog directly after the incident with the complainant happy that no further action was required.
- 4.9. The classification of Dangerous Dog means that a dog must be muzzled at all times unless it is in a secured dog run on the owner's property. There were no new dogs classified as dangerous in 2022/23 financial year. There are currently 4 dogs in the district that were classified as dangerous in previous years.
- 4.10. There is a difference between "Rushing" and "Threatening" as classification categories. These classifications have subtle differences; a dog may be classified as threatening if it shows aggression toward a person or another dog. This can include baring teeth, aggressive barking, pulling on a lead in public with aggressive intent. This can also occur in some cases when a dog is behind a fence when a member of the public walks by with or without a dog. The Animal Management Officer (AMO) will investigate all complaints and make decisions based on the situation and their experience.

- 4.11. A dog fits into the category of Rushing when the dog in question physically moves towards a dog or person in an aggressive way. Complainants can at times confuse categories when they log their complaint with Council. However, through the investigation this will be corrected by the AMO so the correct category is recorded for the purposes of reporting to the DIA. Therefore, the number of incidents in the categories of Threatening and Rushing are correct, based on AMO experience.
- 4.12. A workshop on the level of service for Dog Control has been programmed to occur in September 2023 as a presentation to the District Planning and Regulation Committee. The workshop will be to seek direction on the future level of service required by Council over the coming years.

Implications for Community Wellbeing

There are implications on community wellbeing by issues and options that are subject to this report. An increasing number of incidents across many aspects of Dog Control which are highlighted in sections 4.1 to 4.3 of this report. These issues will be discussion points when the Committee is briefed on 22 August 2023.

- 4.13. The Management Team has reviewed this report and support the recommendations.

5. COMMUNITY VIEWS

5.1. Mana whenua

Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri hapū are not likely to be affected by or have an interest in the subject matter of this report.

5.2. Groups and Organisations

There are no groups and organisations likely to be affected by, or to have an interest in the subject matter of this report. This report is a statutory requirement of the Council intended by the Act to provide a summary of dog control statistics to the public and the DIA. The information is collected district-wide and is not broken down into wards.

5.3. Wider Community

The wider community is not likely to be affected by, or to have any greater interest than normal in the subject matter of this report.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications of the decisions sought by this report. Council's Animal Management unit is funded entirely by dog registration fees.

6.2. Sustainability and Climate Change Impacts

The recommendations in this report do not have sustainability and/or climate change impacts.

6.3 Risk Management

There are no risks arising from the adoption/implementation of the recommendations in this report.

Health and Safety

There are no health and safety risks arising from the adoption/implementation of the recommendations in this report.

7. **CONTEXT**

7.1. **Consistency with Policy**

This matter is not a matter of significance in terms of the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

7.2. **Authorising Legislation**

Dog Control Act 1996: Section 10A -Territorial authority must report on dog control policy and practices

1. *A territorial authority must, in respect of each financial year, report on the administration of—*
 - a. *its dog control policy adopted under section 10; and*
 - b. *Its dog control practices.*
2. *The report must include, in respect of each financial year, information relating to—*
 - a. *the number of registered dogs in the territorial authority district:*
 - b. *the number of probationary owners and disqualified owners in the territorial authority district:*
 - c. *the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as dangerous under section 31 and the relevant provision under which the classification is made:*
 - d. *the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as menacing under section 33A or section 33C and the relevant provision under which the classification is made:*
 - e. *the number of infringement notices issued by the territorial authority:*
 - f. *the number of dog related complaints received by the territorial authority in the previous year and the nature of those complaints:*
 - g. *the number of prosecutions taken by the territorial authority under this Act.*
3. *The territorial authority must—*
 - a. *give public notice, as defined in section 5(1) of the Local Government Act 2002, of the report; and*
 - b. *make the report publicly available, as described in section 5(3) of that Act.*

7.3. **Consistency with Community Outcomes**

The Council's community outcomes are relevant to the actions arising from recommendations in this report.

Public spaces and facilities are plentiful, accessible and high quality, and reflect cultural identity -

- There is a wide variety of public places and spaces to meet people's needs.
- There are wide-ranging opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors.

7.4. **Authorising Delegations**

Delegation S-DM 1026:

The District Planning and Regulation Committee shall enjoy all the powers granted to a standing committee under this Manual and shall be responsible for determining policy within the following general jurisdiction:

- *Dog registration and control.*

Our Reference: ANC-06/230814124162

20 September 2023

The Secretary for Local Government
Department of Internal Affairs
PO Box 805
WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Secretary for Local Government

Waimakariri District Council: Annual Report on Dog Control 2022 / 23

In accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996, Section 10A, the following is a copy of the annual report for Waimakariri District Council's dog control policy and practices.

Dog Control Policy

A 10 year review of the Waimakariri District Council Dog Control Bylaw was undertaken in November 2019, adopted by Council on the 3 December 2019 and came into force on the 16 December 2019. The objectives of the policy include:

- To encourage responsible dog ownership
- To provide for Dog Access to Public areas
- To enforce dog owner obligations
- To minimise any danger, distress or nuisance from dogs to the community

Education

The Waimakariri Animal Management Team delivers education to schools in the District encouraging safe practices around dogs, including bite prevention.

Dog Parks

The Council currently maintains four dog parks:

- **Kaiapoi Dog Park** – This dog park was opened in Kaiapoi in November 2019. The park has been built on previous red zone land and has an area of 2.2 hectares (1.6h for large dogs and 0.6h for small dogs). The park features a variety of mature trees, shrubs, water outlets and seating.
- **Southbrook Dog Park** - This 9540m² dog park was established in Southbrook Park, Rangiora, in 2010. Access to the park is either from Coronation Street or the Southbrook Park car park. The park features a pleasant walking circuit leading to a large fenced area where dogs can run and exercise. Information signs, water and seating are provided.
- **Millton Memorial Park Dog Park** - This dog park, at the corner of Millton Avenue and River Road, Rangiora, covers 2.6 hectares and was opened in 2015. The park features a 'large dog area' and 'small dog area'.
- **Gladstone Road Dog Park** – This dog park was opened in early 2018 and covers approximately 2 hectares.

The dog parks have a Facebook community page www.facebook.com/RangioraDogParks/.

Dog Control on parks and reserves

To protect public safety and enjoyment, the Dog Control Bylaw 2019 classifies the district's parks and reserves into three categories: Dog Prohibited Areas, Leash Control Areas and Under Control Areas.

The First Schedule of the bylaw lists all the district's reserves and their classifications. Dog owners or any member of the public allowed to own a dog can exercise dogs off leash in Under Control Areas as long as the dog(s) is/are kept under continuous supervision and control.

Reporting Requirement	2021/22	2022/23
The number of registered dogs	13190	14199
The number of registered owners	9168	9511
The number of probationary owners and disqualified owners	0	0
The number of dogs classified as dangerous (section 31).	4	4
The number of dogs classified as menacing (section 33).	40	47

Dog Attacks on People	18	23
Dog Rushing People	49	32
Dog Attacks on Stock	20	23
Dog Attacks on Dogs	42	58
Barking Dogs	349	406
Roaming Dogs	160	274
Dog Welfare Complaints	13	26
Unregistered Dogs resulting in infringements	112	88
Lost / Found	537	588
Callers requesting advice	175	219
Dog Fouling	Not recorded	14
Dog Threatening	Not recorded	38
TOTAL	1475	1789

The number of prosecutions undertaken.	0	0
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The number of Infringement Notices issued.	129	96
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Yours sincerely

Billy Charlton
Environmental Services Manager