

Section 10A Report – 2018/19

Dog Control Policy and Practices

1. Dog Control in the Far North District

The Far North District Councils Dog Control Policy and Bylaws 2006 were successfully reviewed and amended following intensive community engagement. The new Dog Management Policy and Bylaws 2018 came into effect 4 February 2019 and included new rules for managing dogs in the Far North District which were designed to balance the safety of people, wildlife and other animals while catering for the recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

The Key changes included:

- Seasonal restrictions at popular beaches requiring dogs to be on leash between the hours of 10am and 5pm from 15 December to 31 January and including public holidays
- Dogs being required on-leash on reserves, unless otherwise stated
- Dogs being allowed off-leash on Council-owned and controlled sportsgrounds (provided they are under control). When these grounds are being used for sports, dogs must be on-leash
- Five off-leash and under control areas have been identified across Kerikeri and Kaikohe
- Dog owners will no longer require Council permission to have more than two dogs per property in built-up areas
- Promotion of responsible dog ownership.

Fees and charges are reviewed annually and set by resolution of Council. The fees and charges are in line with Councils funding policies and have regard to responsible dog ownership by way of providing discounted fees for registration compliance along with minimal impounding fees for first time offenders. In contrast the fees and charges for non-compliance and continual offending are set at a level that best reflects the actual costs.

Council provides dog owners with information that may assist them to further meet their obligations as a dog owner. Council officers are active in public education through community events and seminars that focus on safe practices around dogs and the general understanding of dogs with the view of increasing the awareness and understanding of dog behaviour.

The Animal Management department responds to all complaints from the public concerning dog behaviour and has categorised those complaints into 'aggressive' and 'non-aggressive'. All aggressive concerns are investigated and actioned according to the Councils 'Enforcement Action' procedures and performance measures. Where necessary the provisions of the Act are applied.

The Council operates closely with the SPCA organisation and assists and supports where possible. Dogs impounded are gauged as suitable for re-homing by undergoing an SPCA guided behaviour assessment program.

Council also introduced two new Facebook initiatives that promote dogs assessed as suitable for adoption called "Adopt-a-Dog" and an "Is This Your Dog" page that advertises dogs impounded where owners of those dogs are unknown

A key community stakeholder in the Animal Management operations are the local and national dog rescue groups with the Bay of Islands Rescue Group prominently featuring as an active

and mutual partner during the 2018-19 year. The Council looks forward to a continued beneficial partnership.

Due to the overwhelming community support of Councils 'dog days' or Nga Kuri Auau Council have committed to holding this community based program. The program involves Council offering free micro-chipping, free neutering via voucher re-emption and free registration with the 2018-19 event held in the town of Moerewa resulting in 123 dog neutering vouchers redeemed which was a 66% uptake.

2. Dog Control Enforcement Practices

Following the adoption of the Dog Management Policy and Bylaws in February of 2019 Council have undertaken to install a wider range of signage across the district to better inform the community.

Recently Council erected 67 new or replacement signs as tranche 1 of the implementation plan with almost 100 signs across the district planned for September 2019. Our district has never before had this many signs across the district providing this type of information

Council apply a fair and reasonable approach to enforcement of the regulations and laws and will apply the appropriate enforcement where necessary including the issuing of infringement notices and prosecutions. The 2018-19 year saw prosecutions also lodged for dogs not under control.

The number of reported attacks increased which reflects the communities' belief in Councils Animal Management services that in turn is further reflected in the number of prosecutions taken for dog attacks – 10 more than we did last year for dog attacks years. An overall total of 14 successful prosecutions.

3. Dogs Prohibited, Leash Only and Dog Exercise Areas

The amended Dog Control Policy and Bylaws have proven to be successful with dog owners enjoying a wider freedom of dog exercise zones where dogs can be off leash but under control.

Signage and education will be applied where required with the appropriate enforcement administered following investigation into non-compliance.

4. Dog Registration and other Fees

Council maintained the dog registration fees from the previous year and offered free registration for dog owners attending the Nga Kuri Auau days.

Animal Management Officers also focused on specific areas for registration non-compliance involving door to door checks. This process involves notices issued to register dogs with Infringement follow up where applicable. Dogs were also seized where necessary.

5. Dog Education and Dog Obedience courses

The 2018-19 year saw Council engage in 8 Community Awareness programs ranging from Expos offering public education to school book sponsorship of safety information around dogs

6. Disqualified and Probationary Dog Owners

Council will disqualify owners of dogs where they are satisfied that the circumstances of the offence warrant disqualification. Most commonly dog owners will consider disqualification following a conviction for a dog attack.

7. Menacing and Dangerous Dogs

Council will classify dogs as menacing or dangerous where they are satisfied that the classification is warranted. Most commonly dogs are classified as Menacing for both deed and breed.

The amended Dog Control Management Policy 2018 now requires all dogs classified as Menacing to be neutered before release from being impounded.

8. Other Information

The Animal Management operation identified areas of process improvement with the Dog Shelters resulting in passed SPCA audits for animal welfare and process

Part of that process improvement is the regular dog behaviour assessments that have resulted in a high percentage of dogs impounded being either adopted to new owners or transferred to rescue groups for future forever homes.

Statistical Information

Far North District Council	Year 01-07-18 to 31-06-19
# Registered Dogs	11,060 (Total number of dogs on our register)
# Probationary Owners	0
# Disqualified Owners	0
# Dangerous Dog Classifications total	1
• Upon conviction	0
• Based on sworn evidence	1
• Owner admittance	0
# Menacing Classifications S33A Total	25 (Includes 7 new dogs classified during 2018/19)
• Not previously classified as dangerous	0
• Observed or reported behavior	25 (Includes 7 new dogs classified during 2018/19)
• Behaviours typically associated with dogs breed or type	0
# Menacing Classifications S33C total	199
• Brazilian Fila	0
• Dogo Argentino	0
• Japanese Tosa	0
• Perro de Presa Canario	0
• American Pit Bull Terrier type	199
# Infringement notices issued	233
• Allow dangerous dog un-muzzled / 62(4)	0
• Fail to comply with Bylaw / 20(5)	29
• Failure to keep dog controlled or confined / 52A	11
• Failure to keep dog under control / 53(1)	40
• Failure to register dog / 42	150
• Failure to supply or providing false info / 19A(2)	0
• Wilful obstruction of a Dog Control Officer/18	1
• Failure to comply with a barking dog abatement notice	0
• Failure to comply with classification of menacing dog	1
# Dog related complaints received total	2165
• Attacks	223
• Straying	580
• Rushing	80
• Barking	349
• Other	473

# Prosecutions taken	14
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