

10A Report 2019/2020

**Report on the Administration of
Hastings District Council's
Policy and Practices in Relation to the
Control of Dogs for the year
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020**

Pursuant to:

(Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996)

REG-1-14-20-99



1. Background

The policy is made under section 10 of the Dog Control Act 1996. Council adopted the “Dog Control” Policy 6 August 2009. The policy underwent a review and public consultation in conjunction with the Dogs Bylaw and was submitted to Council for adoption on 25 August 2016. The policy is currently under a five year review in conjunction with the Consolidated Bylaw 2016 as required under section 158 of the Local Government Act 1974 and section 10AA of the Dog Control Act 1996.

The purpose of the policy is to provide a framework for the care and control of dogs throughout Hastings District with regard to:

- a) *“the need to minimise danger, distress and nuisance to the community generally; and*
- b) *the need to avoid the inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to public places that are frequented by children, whether or not the children are accompanied by adults; and*
- c) *the importance of enabling, to the extent that is practicable, the public (including families) to use streets and public amenities without fear of attack or intimidation by dogs; and*
- d) *the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners”*

The anticipated outcomes of the policy are:

1. Minimising the potential for danger, distress and nuisance to the community from dogs;
2. Promoting responsible dog ownership;
3. Promoting effective dog control, particularly in public places where children or families are present;
4. Minimising the risk of intimidation and attacks by dogs;
5. Promoting positive interaction between dog owners and members of the community;
6. Providing for the exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires Territorial Authorities to publically report each financial year on the administration of their dog control policy and practices.

2. Dog Prohibited Areas

Dogs are prohibited from the following areas:

1. Hastings District Council Civic Building
2. Hastings District Council Public Libraries

3. Hastings District Council Swimming Pools
4. Children's playing areas under the control of Hastings District Council
5. All areas under the control of Hastings District Council set aside for organised games or sports and all other areas zoned as sports parks in the Hastings District
6. Rangaiika Beach at Ocean Beach / Cape Kidnappers.

Prohibited areas are established to prevent conflict with other users, or areas with sensitive ecological value. Very few complaints are received regarding non-compliance as the majority of dog owners are responsible people and comply with the requirements.

3 Dog Exercise and Leash Control

There are currently areas where dogs are required to be leashed and areas where they may free run (under control of the owner). Council does not provide specific dog exercise areas. The majority of dog owners are responsible and considerate.

Council has the philosophy that dogs which have easy access to open spaces and are exercised regularly are less likely to display anti-social behaviour such as aggression and excessive barking. To achieve this, there is a limited number of dog prohibited areas and leash control areas other than areas of high public usage or biodiversity significance.

4 Dog Aggression

A focus is on encouraging dog owners to understand the true nature of dogs, to recognise the potential that all dogs have and to comply with their obligations under the Dog Control legislation, in particular Section 5(f) –

to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the dog does not injure, endanger, intimidate, or otherwise cause distress to any person.

All complaints of aggression reported to Council are given priority and are thoroughly investigated. Action ranges from written warning, infringements, menacing dog classification, dangerous dog classification or prosecution.

5 Dog Control Statistics

| Year | % increase | Registered | Impound | Claimed |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 19/20 | 2.1% | 12,769 | 947 | 69.8% |
| 18/19 | 1.6% | 12,640 | 1,131 | 64% |

NB: Impounded does not include dogs relinquished

The increase in the number of dogs is simply in line with the increase in growth in the area.

The decrease in the number of impounded dogs is also attributed to Covid-19.

The claim rate is a reflection of the number of dogs suitable for adoption.

| Complaints | 18/19 | 19/20 |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Person Attacked | 52 | 67 |
| Person Rushed | 90 | 129 |
| Animal Attacked | 135 | 147 |
| Roaming | 2,033 | 1,701 |
| Barking | 604 | 487 |
| Fouling | 2 | 6 |
| Other | 262 | 194 |
| Total | 3,178 | 2954 |

Complaint numbers are down however complaints of aggression are slightly up. The Person attacked & rushed records can fluctuate without any justified reason.

Animal attack records reflect an unprecedented spate of stock attacks experienced in the district from July 2019 to June 2020.

Roaming dog and barking dog complaints are down because of Covid-19

Other complaints are made up of several miscellaneous topics like unleashed dogs in leash control areas, reported unregistered dogs, dangerous dogs, unmuzzled etc.

| Owner Classification | 18/19 | 19/20 |
|--|-------|--------------|
| Probationary owners s21 | 0 | 0 |
| Disqualified owners s25 | 5 | 9 |
| Menacing s33A 1b(i) – (Behaviour) | 27 | 25 |
| Menacing s33A 1b(ii) – (Breed Characteristics) | 0 | 0 |
| Menacing s33C – (Government listed breeds) | 190 | 181 |
| Dangerous s31 (1)(a) – (Conviction under s57) | 0 | 1 |
| Dangerous s31 (1)(b) – (Sworn evidence) | 11 | 10 |
| Dangerous s31 (1)(c) – (Owner admits in writing) | 22 | 19 |

| | Infringements | Prosecutions |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 19/20 | 204 | 49 |
| 18/19 | 691 | 15 |

As mentioned above, there was an unprecedented spate of stock attacks. Several of these incidents resulted in summary prosecution involving multiple dogs and multiple offences. Of the 49 charges there were only 19 dogs involved and 15 people were prosecuted.

| Offence | Attack Stock | Attack Person | Rushing | Failing to Control | Unreg | Unmuz |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Number | 13 | 4 | 3 | 19 | 9 | 1 |

Infringement offences are down as staff shortage and Covid-19 prevented processing unregistered dogs, hence the lower percentage of registration compliance.

Registration categories

| Category | 18/19 | 19/20 |
|----------|--------|---------------|
| Urban | 6,828 | 7,126 |
| Rural | 6,524 | 6,518 |
| Other | 16 | 16 |
| Total | 13,368 | 13,660 |

6 Fees

Dog registration fees are set by Council resolution.

Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees are used to fund dog control.

A reduced dog registration fee is offered to those who register their dogs before 1 August and a reduced fee is offered to those owners on the Selected Owner Scheme.

27% of the dog control activity is funded from the general fund in recognition of the public good benefit.

7 Education

Education is offered to all offenders by way of one-on-one consultation and a series of educational brochures are available.

Dog bite prevention and responsible dog ownership addresses are undertaken free of charge to schools, kindergartens and any other community groups. This training is also offered contractors and internally to HDC staff.

A copy of Council's dog control policy is available on our website together with other educational material.

