

**Report on the Administration of  
Hastings District Council's  
Policy and Practices in Relation to the  
Control of Dogs for the year  
1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024**

Pursuant to:

(Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996)



## 1. Background

This 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 Dog Control Bylaw, August 2016 and again August 2021.

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 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 publicly report each financial year on the administration of their dog control policy and practices.

## 2. Dog Prohibited Areas

Dogs are prohibited from the following public areas:

- a. Hastings District Council Civic Building
- b. Public libraries
- c. Swimming pools and paddling pools
- d. Children’s playing areas
- e. Sports fields. NB: Sports field means – *any part of a public place which is laid or set aside for playing organised games or sports and includes an area used for practising a sport or game but, for the avoidance of doubt, does not include an area beside a sports field used by spectators.*
- f. 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 off-leash (under control of the owner).

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	Total Dogs	Registered	Impound	Claimed
<b>23/24</b>	<b>13,436</b>	<b>12,958</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>70.70%</b>
22/23	13,664	13,415	832	78.87%

NB: Impounded does not include dogs relinquished (66)

The decrease in the number of dogs is considered a result of the increased cost of living and the financial impact Cyclone Gabrielle had on dog owners.

The claim rate is considered a reflection of the decrease in adoptions due to the increased cost of living. This was noticeable across all territorial authorities.

<b>Complaints</b>	22/23	<b>23/24</b>
Person Attacked	48	<b>72</b>
Person Rushed	142	<b>125</b>
Animal Attacked	118	<b>118</b>
Roaming	1,365	<b>1419</b>
Barking	478	<b>511</b>
Fouling	6	<b>14</b>
Stock Roaming	123	<b>146</b>
Other	164	<b>160</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,444</b>	<b>2,565</b>

There was an increase in the number of dog attacks which had a direct impact on the Animal Control Officers availability attending other duties.

Generally, when barking dog complaints increase, this is an indication dogs being restrained.

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

<b>Owner Classification</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>
Probationary owners s21	0	<b>0</b>
Disqualified owners s25	19	<b>17</b>
Menacing s33A 1b(i) – (Behaviour)	19	<b>18</b>
Menacing s33A 1b(ii) – (Breed Characteristics)	0	<b>0</b>
Menacing s33C – (Government listed breeds)	149	<b>157</b>
Dangerous s31 (1)(a) – (Conviction under s57)	0	<b>0</b>
Dangerous s31 (1)(b) – (Sworn evidence)	5	<b>6</b>
Dangerous s31 (1)(c) – (Owner admits in writing)	27	<b>25</b>

	<b>Infringements</b>	<b>Prosecutions</b>
<b>23/24</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>2</b>
22/23	629	4

There was a marked decrease in the issuing of infringements which would normally have been issued during the non-registration process, however Animal Control Officers were responding to the increase in dog attacks, roaming dog complaints and barking dog complaints.

The two prosecutions each involved one dog versus and one person.

One prosecution resulted in the charges being withdrawn after two conditions were met and the second resulted in conviction and an order for the destruction of the dog.

<b>Offence</b>	Attack Person
<b>Number</b>	2

### **Registration categories (total dogs)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>
Urban	7,308	<b>7,221</b>
Rural	6,338	<b>6,190</b>
Other	18	<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,664</b>	<b>13,436</b>

## **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 dog owners 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 internally to HDC staff.

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