
10. Dog control policy and practices report 2024/25

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Summary

- The purpose of this report is related to the activities undertaken regarding dog control within Ashburton District for the period **1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025**
- The Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) requires that such a report be produced annually, publicly notified and made publicly available.

Recommendation

- 1. That** the Dog Control Policy and Practices report 2024/25 be received.

Background

1. The Act requires territorial authorities to publicly report each financial year on:
 - The administration of their dog control policy and their dog control practices (Section 10A (1)) ; and
 - A variety of dog control related statistics listed at Section 10A (2) (Tables 1 and 2).

Additionally:

- In accordance with Section 10A (3) the Territorial Authority must give public notice of the report in one (1) or more daily newspapers circulating in the Territorial Authority District.
- In accordance with Section 10A (4) the Council must send a copy of the report to the Secretary for Local Government within one month of adoption.
- This report contains information and statistics on the Council's dog control activity for the year **1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025**.

Dog Control and Practices in Ashburton

2. Dog control in Ashburton is carried out using Council staff and an approved contractor.
3. The contract for animal control services is with Talbot Security Group Limited (TSG), who took over the animal control services contract on 1 February 2022. The initial term of the contract was three years with Council having up to one right to renew the Term for a further three years. This right of renewal was granted in February with a new expiry date for the contract now set for 31 January 2028.
4. TSG currently employs four staff specifically trained for animal control, with three suitably trained security officers acting in support where necessary plus additional patrol staff to cover afterhours duties. The service provided covers all dog control callouts 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
5. Within Council we employ a warranted Animal Control and Enforcement Officer who is responsible for all administration relating to dog and stock control as well as leading on enforcement issues.
6. The Ashburton District Council (ADC) Dog Control Policy and Bylaw (2021), continues to provide greater clarity for dog owners of their obligations under the Act. Where those obligations are not met, Council officers apply the "exacerbator pays" principle e.g. dog owners who fail to control their animals effectively are fined under the Act and the funds channelled back into the animal control activity.

7. The ADC Dog Control Policy and Bylaw 2021 are both due for review in 2026.

Dog Pound Activity

8. The dog pound facility on Council owned land in Range Street continues to be operated by the appointed animal control contractor.
9. The reporting period saw 105 dogs impounded, 2 euthanised and 17 re-homed. There were four separate incidents of repeat impounding of the same dog caught wandering, resulting in increased impounding fees for those owners.

Fenced Dog Parks

Ashburton Dog Park

10. Extensive re-development work has previously been carried out at this facility with the provision of separate areas for small and large dogs plus activity facilities and walking tracks. A piped water supply plus dog bag dispensers and waste receptacles are available.

Methven Dog Park

11. The Methven Dog Park has a piped water supply with outlet for dogs to use and a dog bag dispenser with waste receptacle.

Range St - Landfill area

12. The fenced landfill area at the end of Range St was previously available for dog owners to access and exercise their dogs off the leash but is now considered unsuitable for use due to the ongoing maintenance needed for a landfill site.

Rakaia Community Dog Park

13. A community funded fenced dog park is also available for use at Rakaia. The park has separate areas for large and small dogs and Council has provided a dog bag dispenser and waste receptacle.

Dog Exercise Areas

14. In addition to the above fenced Dog Parks there are 8 unfenced areas in the district designated as Dog Exercise Areas, where dogs can be exercised off leash (but must still be under effective control). Designated Dog Exercise Areas are listed in our Animal Control Policy and Bylaw.

Dog Registration

15. The total number of active dogs on our data system for the reporting period was 6750. During that time 6646 dogs were registered equating to 98.45%, with enforcement action taken against owners of the remaining 104 dogs.

Dog Education and Obedience Courses

16. Ashburton District Council has not required any owners to undergo dog education or obedience courses.

Disqualified and Probationary Dog Owners

17. No persons were disqualified or classified as probationary dog owners during the reporting period.

Menacing and Dangerous Dogs

18. Ashburton District Council has 29 dogs classified as menacing and 4 dogs classified as dangerous.

Dog Control Act 1996 Hearings held in 2024/25

19. One Hearing was held during the reporting period and the following decisions made:
- a. Objection to Classification of Menacing. A Tinwald dog owner unsuccessfully appealed a menacing dog classification at a Hearing held on 11 July 2024. The dog remains classified as Menacing with the additional condition of a 2 year review date.

Dog Control Act 1996 Section 10A Statistical Information (Tables 1 and 2)

20. The Dog Control Act 1996 requires Territorial Authorities to include the following statistical information in their annual report:

Table 1: Breakdown of registered dogs and complaints received

Category	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
1) Total # Registered Dogs	6355	6935	6646
2) Total # Probationary Owners	0	0	0
3) Total # Disqualified Owners	0	0	0
4) Total # Dangerous Dogs	5	3	4
➤ Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under s31(1)(a)	1	0	0
➤ Dangerous by Sworn Evidence s31(1)(b)	3	3	4
➤ Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing s31(1)(c)	1	0	0

5) Total # Menacing Dogs	38	32	29
➤ Menacing s33A(1)(b)(i) - i.e. by Behavior	26	25	21
➤ Menacing s33A(1)(b)(ii)- by Breed character	3	3	1
➤ Menacing under s33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed.	9	4	7
6) Total # Infringement Notices.	144	146	269
7) Total # Complaints Received	706	839	977
Wandering	281	200	318
Barking	215	219	300
Lost	111	73	142
Welfare	7	1	4
Attack	27	44	37
Rushing	18	48	21
Other (e.g. found lost/found dogs, signage issues/dog waste issues)	47	254	155
8) Prosecutions	0	0	0

Table 2: Breakdown of infringement notices issued during the reporting period:

Serial	Offence	Fine Level	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
1	Failure to Register a Dog (Dog Control Act Sect 42)	\$300	120	106	238
2	Failure to Advise Change of Address (s.49(4))	\$100	0	0	0
3	Failure to Keep a Dog Controlled or Confined (s.52A/53(1))	\$200	24	33	29
4	Failure to Implant a Microchip transponder in a dog (s.36(A)(6))	\$300	0	0	0
5	Failure to Advise Change of Dog Ownership (s.48(3))	\$100	0	0	0
6	Failure or Refusal to Supply Information or Willfully Providing False Particulars (s.19 (2)).	\$750	0	0	0
7	Failure to Comply with menacing classification (s.33EC(1))	\$300	0	0	0
8	False statement relating to registration (s.41)	\$750	0	0	0
9	Failure to provide proper care and attention (s.54 (2))	\$300	0	0	0
10	Falsely notifying the death of dog (s.41 (A))	\$750	0	0	0
11	Willful Obstruction of a Dog Control Officer (s. 18)	\$750	0	2	0
12	Failure to Comply with any authorised bylaw (s. 22 (5))	\$300	0	4	1
13	Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice (s.55 (7))	\$200	0	1	0
14	Releasing dog from custody (s. 72 (2))	\$750	0	0	0
15	Allowed a dog known to be dangerous to be at large unmuzzled S62(4)	\$300	0	0	1

Legal/policy implications

21. It is a statutory requirement of the Dog Control Act 1996 for the Council to publicly report on the dog control activities referred to in this report.

Climate Change

22. The Annual Report for the Dog Control Act does not have a direct impact on climate change.

Strategic alignment

23. The recommendation relates to Council's community outcome of Social because it helps to create a safe community and that our current facilities meet the future needs.

Wellbeing		Reasons why the recommended outcome has an effect on this wellbeing
Economic	X	NA
Environmental	X	NA
Cultural	X	NA
Social	✓	Public spaces and facilities are available to meet the communities need and enjoy the outdoors

Financial implications

Requirement	Explanation
What is the cost?	The cost of monitoring the activity is included in the Animal Control budget
Is there budget available in LTP / AP?	Yes
Where is the funding coming from?	Fees and charges 95% General rates 5%
Are there any future budget implications?	No
Reviewed by Finance	

Significance and engagement assessment

Requirement	Explanation
Is the matter considered significant?	No
Level of significance	Low; not significant
Rationale for selecting level of significance	<i>1.</i> The recommendation is of low significance because it is only to receive information and no decision is being made
Level of engagement selected	<i>1.</i> Inform
Rationale for selecting level of engagement	The purpose of the report is to inform Council and the community of the activity's work over 2024/25. The report will be made publicly available.
Reviewed by Strategy & Policy	Toni Durham: GM Democracy & Engagement