



## **Annual Report**

### **Dog Control Policy and Practices**

**1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025**



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## BACKGROUND

1. 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 [Section 10A(1)]; and
  - a variety of dog control related statistics [Section 10A(2)].
2. While not explicitly stated in the Dog Control Act, one of the primary purposes for preparing this report is to allow communities to see how Council is managing its dog control responsibilities.

## Current Situation – Dog Control in City/District

3. Council is responsible for the enforcement of regulations relating to the keeping, welfare, and control of dogs within the Gisborne District. Council is required under the Dog Control Act to make provision for the registration and control of dogs.
4. Impounding of dogs is an activity required by the provisions of the Dog Control Act and associated Gisborne District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2010 and Dog Control Policy 2010.
5. The Council has a responsibility to respond to complaints relating to dogs. Council's long-term focus for dog control activities is to ensure a safe living environment is maintained through the monitoring and enforcement of legislation, regulations and bylaws.
6. Council adopted its Dog Control Policy in 2010. The policy provides a practical framework for the care and control of dogs throughout the district while minimising any danger, distress and nuisance to the community.
7. The policy outlines expected standards and behaviours from dog owners and provides information about how Council will administer dog control. Specific dog control functions include:
  - dog registration
  - impounding of dogs
  - 24-hour ranging service
  - targeted education
  - enforcement of the Act and Council Dog Control Bylaw
  - issuing of infringements and prosecutions.
8. Council has four full-time and one part-time Gisborne-based Animal Control Officers. The Council's Te Puia Springs office has two full-time and one part-time Coast based Animal Control Officers. The Animal Control Officers are responsible for a land area of 8,360 square kilometres.
9. Both urban and rural properties are regularly visited to check for unregistered dogs and dog/owner changes for compliance.
10. All properties within Gisborne city with more than two dogs require a multiple-dog licence. The licence is issued on meeting the Dog Control Policy's criteria. Extra care is taken to ensure the dogs' welfare needs are met and there are no noise problems for neighbours.
11. During this reporting period Animal Control Officers visited and checked 58 properties for special owner applications. Applications to become a special owner must be completed prior to 1 May annually, allowing time to adjust fees for invoicing. These owners are entitled

to a special discounted annual registration fee (2024/25: \$73). The regular 2024/25 registration fee was \$105.

12. Animal Control Officers no longer accept applications from selected owners to become New Zealand licensed dog owners as at 1 July 2019. This is stated in our fees and charges and is due to the lack of resources now available domestically to inform both staff and applicants of criteria. Existing licensed owners continue to be entitled to a discounted dog registration fee (2024/25 fee \$62).
13. In the 2021/22 registration period a discount for desexed dogs was introduced and set at approximately 10 percent of the invoiced fee. Owners are required to produce proof of the neuter and the discount is applicable across the fee matrix; excluding Dangerous Dog as neutering is a legal requirement.
- 14.

2024/25 DOG REGISTRATION FEES			
Class	Fee	Desex	Description
Ordinary dog	\$105	\$95	Family pet dog, including those in rural areas not required for rural livelihood
Working dog	\$58	\$53	Rural livelihood, income from dogs - breed Huntaway or Heading
Selected Owner SOP	\$73	\$66	Must <u>meet the criteria</u>
Superannuitants	\$69	\$63	Over 65 years
Selected Owner Superannuitants	\$59	\$54	Over 65 years, <u>must meet the criteria of SOP</u>
Licensed Owner	\$62	\$56	NZ Licence, must have been <u>SOP owner for 1 year</u>
EC Pig Hunters	-	-	This fee has been removed from our matrix, please see Note 14.
Probationary Owner	\$156	\$141	Court fined - rural and urban
Guide and Hearing	\$0	\$0	Guide and police dogs
Dangerous dog*	\$158	\$143	Dog with a history and is classified dangerous * rural and urban

15. There are 6,085 dog owners within the district who own 10,213 registered dogs, in the following categories. Transient dog owners fluctuate regularly.

<b>DOG COUNT BY CATEGORY 2024/25</b>	
For all dogs with a current status of CURRENT OWNED	
<b>Dog Use Category</b>	<b>Number of Dogs</b>
Dangerous dog	21
Guide and Hearing	1
Licensed Owner	131
Ordinary	4,442
Pensioner	1116
Pig Hunters Club	-
Probationary Owner	-
Special Owner	743
Special Owner/Pensioner	180
Working (includes Police)	3579
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,213</b>

16. With the introduction of the National Dog Database (NDD), all dog registrations and information are automatically transferred to the database on a nightly basis.
17. The NDD holds information on all registered dogs including registration detail, microchip number (if applicable), breed and year of birth. The name, address and date of birth details of owners are also recorded.
18. This database is maintained by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).

### **Council's Relationship with Key Stakeholders in the Community**

19. GDC has a strong working relationship with the Police.
20. The Animal Control section has a good relationship with schools in the district. Officers visited five schools presenting a "Dog Education" programme.
21. Animal Control staff help SPCA with reported welfare incidents at their request.
22. Veterinarians have a close working relationship with Animal Control concerning microchipping records, neutering of menacing and dangerous dogs plus up-to-date information regarding dog health problems.
23. Animal Control has formed an alliance with Gisborne Mutts and Moggies. This is a voluntary organisation which rehomes dogs.
24. With the introduction of the Fred Lewis Desexing programme, we have solidified an already strong relationship with Fred Lewis and as a contact have been able to help hundreds of owners and their dogs in our community.

## Dog Control Enforcement Practices and Statistics

25. There were 927 dogs impounded during the year.

Dogs that were	Numbers of dogs
Claimed	332
Destroyed in the field	3
Returned to owners	51
Rehomed	88
Picked up by SPCA	14
Euthanised	439
<b>Total</b>	<b>927</b>

26. Officers make every effort to find homes for unwanted, impounded dogs that are suitable for rehoming. Initiatives involving Facebook and Council website advertising for dogs suitable for adoption have seen the number of rehomed dogs increase.

27. Any dogs that are wholly or predominantly of the five restricted menacing breeds or type as specified in the Dog Control Act, Schedule 4, are classified as menacing under type or breed. Compliance must be met by muzzling in public, neutering and control.

28. The restricted breeds and type are:

- American Pit Bull Terriers/Pit Bull Terrier Types
- Dogo Argentino
- Brazilian Fila
- Japanese Tosa
- Perro de Presa Canario

29. Microchipping of these and dangerous dogs is enforced. Microchipping of all dogs first registered from 1 July 2006 (except working farm dogs) is carried out. There were 272 dogs microchipped for the 2024/25 year.

## Education

30. An Animal Control Officer is available on request for speaking engagements and presentations. Educational presentations have been made to postal staff, electricity meter readers, contractors, schools, district and flight nurses who attend patients' properties, new staff and reminders to existing staff. As well as GDC staff.

31. Animal Control Officers are available to educate and provide support to all owners in our region.

32. A copy of the Dog Control Policy and Dog Control Bylaw are available to every dog owner through the Council website and include information regarding dog exercise areas. These publications are also available on request in hard copy.

## Dogs Prohibited, Leash Only and Dog Exercise Areas

33. Council has made provision for areas where dogs are prohibited, permitted on leashes or allowed freedom for exercise purposes. Public education of these areas will be increased this year. These areas are regularly patrolled.

34. The Council provides six designated off-leash exercise areas and two beach exercise areas across the city. The criteria used to determine these areas includes:
- The area is not used extensively for sporting or other purposes.
  - The area is of significant size and has appropriate access
  - There are sufficient sight lines
  - The area is well buffered from adjacent areas
  - There is no potential risk to other groups.

### Dog Control Enforcement Practices

35. The Council generally enforces its dog control policy and bylaws by educating the owners of dogs through individual property visits, school visits, public information, responding to complaints and by routine inspections and patrols of selected locations identified as problem areas. 2714 complaints relating to dogs were received during the 2024/25 year. The following table relates to the specific categories reported on for the DIA, however, it does not include other general dog complaints that come under unreported categories:

Category	2023/24	2024/25
Dog attack People	39	45
Dog attack Animals	78	68
Rushing at people	102	79
Rushing at Animals	2	6
Roaming	616	527
Barking	417	371
Welfare	34	68
General Dog Complaints	1825	1550
<b>Total</b>	<b>3113</b>	<b>2714</b>

36. 740 infringement notices (down from 921 last year) were issued for the following:

Infringement	2023/24	2024/25
Failure or refusal to supply information or wilfully providing false particulars	1	1
Failure to comply with Bylaw	2	1
Failure to comply with effects of disqualification	0	0
Failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	10	1
Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	28	30
Failure to comply with class as menacing dog	5	5
Failure to Register a Dog	875	699
Failure to Keep Dog Under Control	0	1
Wilful obstruction of officer or ranger	0	0
Falsely notifying of death of dog	0	0
Failure to comply with class as dangerous dog	0	2
Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	0	0
Failure to advise change of owner / address	0	0



Failure to carry leash / advise of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>740</b>

## Trends and Analysis

### Menacing Dogs

37. The number of dogs classified as 'Menacing' in 2024/25 was 19. The number of dogs classified as 'Dangerous' in 2024/25 was 5.
38. Officers continue to impose menacing classifications as a mitigation measure to prevent harm to people, other animals and wildlife. We have increased monitoring of classified dangerous and menacing dogs ensuring compliance with all conditions relating to the classification.

### Dog Related Complaints (antisocial behaviour)

39. Attacks on people and stock or domestic pets (107) have declined from last year's figure of 117.
40. Complaints received regarding dogs rushing at people (79) has declined from last year's total of 102.
41. All reported complaints of dog aggression were investigated during the year.
42. Roaming dog numbers (527) are down from 616 recorded in 2024.

### Infringement Notices

43. Continued focus by Council on registration, education and compliance continues to see infringements issued for a wide range of offences. Ongoing emphasis on unregistered dogs has seen an increase in compliance and a significant decrease of infringements for unregistered dogs from last year. All unregistered dog owners are issued infringements should they fail to register their dog.
44. Council's current approach acknowledges that the first step to responsible dog ownership is dog registration.

### Prosecutions

45. There have been no Council prosecutions of dog owners for a serious dog attack on a person in this period. To note, though, Council supports the Police and other agencies when asked for help involving prosecutions.
46. The effective use of enforcement options such as infringements has resulted in no prosecutions during this review period.

### Other Information

47. Officers continue to issue permits for two or more dogs at the same address when required.
48. Dogs roaming after-hours are controlled by dog trapping and attendance by our on-call officers.
49. Officers monitor public areas and beaches, especially during summer months, for owners who do not clean up after their dog defecates and to educate visitors to our town on our bylaw. Increased patrolling in central business areas for dogs breaching the dog prohibited areas also continues to be a focus.

## Financial

### Fees and Charges

50. Dog registration fees are set by Council resolution.
51. Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees contributed towards the cost of dog control in the Gisborne district. This includes the costs of running the Council pound, Council's use of the NDD, and costs of prosecutions when required, ensuring a safer community, investigating dog-threatening or attack incidents, and removing roaming dogs from public areas.
52. The funding policy for the 2024/25 year and beyond includes a 20% proportion from targeted rates to recognise public benefit of the activity.
53. The Council operates a responsible dog owner scheme which provides a discounted rate for dog owners who meet the relevant criteria.

Summary of Information Required by Section 10A	
Description	Number
Number of registered dogs	10213
Number of probationary owners	0
Number of disqualified owners	0
* Number of dogs classified as dangerous under Section 31	21
♦ S.31 (1)(a) dangerous by owner conviction	16
♦ S.31 (1)(b) dangerous by sworn evidence	5
♦ S.31 (1)(c) dangerous by owner admittance in writing	0
* Number of dogs classified as menacing under Section 33A	99
♦ S.33A (1)(b)(i) observed or reported behaviour	58
♦ S.33A (1)(b)(ii) observed characteristic - associated with breed	41
* Number of dogs classified as menacing under Section 33C S33C(1), S33E(1)(a) wholly or predominantly belongs to one or more breeds or types restricted (listed by Schedule 4 breed)	96
Number of infringement notices issued – for failing to register a dog	699
Failure to control	31
Obstruction	1
Non-compliance with classification	5
Non-compliance with disqualification	0
Non-compliance with dangerous dog conditions	2
Others	2
Total number of infringements issued	740
Dog attack	113
Rushing/Threatening	85
Roaming	527
Barking	371
Welfare	68
General Dog Complaints	1550
Total number of complaints received	2714
Number of prosecutions	0

\* Total number of dogs with this classification on the register as at the end of the reporting period, reflecting the rolling cumulative total.