



Opotiki District Council Dog Control Practices and Policy:

1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017

1 Introduction

This report contains information and statistics on the Council's dog control activity for the year 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

2 Statistical Information

	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
a. Registered Dogs	1461	1580	1442
b. Probationary owners	Nil	Nil	Nil
c. Dogs classified as dangerous	8	6	3
d. Dogs classified as menacing	85	54	42
e. Number of Infringements issued	96	139	161
f. Number of Dog service requested	332	393	577
g. Number of Prosecutions	Nil	Nil	Nil

The number of registered dogs decreased by 119 this year, which is a 9% drop. Staff believe this can be attributed to an increased focus on making direct contact/follow up with identified stray dog owners, the ongoing euthanasiation programme, combined with the Department of Internal Affairs funded De-sexing Programme.

3 Administration of the Dog Control Activity and the Ōpōtiki District Council Policy on Dog Control

The Animal control function forms part of the Planning and Regulatory Group of Council. Council has approximately 1.0 FTE dedicated to Dog Control, with the same officer also managing horse and stock control. In addition, support is provided by two other staff within the Regulatory team, although this is not their core function.

Limited afterhours support is provided by Independent Security Consultants Ltd (ISCL).

Since early June 2017, Council have contracted ISCL to provide cover for Animal Control during normal business hours, due to staff being on extended sick leave.

The team are supported by the Customer Service Team of Council who undertake the administration of the Dog Database and manage the customer enquiries.

In July 2017, approval was given to commence recruitment for a second full time Animal Control Officer for a 12 month fixed term. It is expected that having the second FTE will allow for more proactive monitoring and education to be undertaken, and also to provide capacity to increase presence along the East Cape.

4 Pound Statistics

The table below shows the activity at the pound over the last three years:

Activity	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Dogs euthanized	280	294	426
Dogs stolen from pound	5	1	8
Dogs returned to owner	98	95	134
Dogs rehomed	39	54	34
Dogs impounded	422	444	602

Dog Control Enforcement Practices

The Opotiki Town Centre is patrolled at least three times a day. The purpose of these patrols is to identify non-compliance with the Dog Control Act, the Dog Control Bylaw and Policy. In this reporting period there have also been some after-hour patrols undertaken.

The patrols are also an opportunity to get out into the community and talk to dog owners about their responsibilities on an individual basis.

Patrols are also carried out to include the wider Opotiki Township, Woodlands and East Coast settlements such as Te Kaha, Waihau Bay, Ohiwa, Bryan's Beach and Paerata Ridge. East of Te Kaha patrols are undertaken on an as needed basis often through a Service Request or via N.Z. Police.

There were 96 infringement notices issued by the Animal Control Officers over the 2016-17 year. This was a 31% reduction on the number issued during the previous reporting period, and only 40% of the numbers issued during 2014/15. Details are as follows:

Type of Infringement	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Failure to register Dog	72	91	86
Failure to keep dog under control	23	43	60
Wilful Obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	Nil	Nil	Nil
Failure to comply with effects of classification of dog as dangerous dog	1	3	3
Failure to comply with a Bylaw	Nil	Nil	1
Falsely notifying death of a dog	Nil	1	Nil
Wilfully providing false information about a dog	Nil	1	161
TOTAL	96	139	241

5 Dog Registration Fees

Dog Control Fees for the 2016/17 financial year remained the same as last year and are as follows:

Type	Cost
Complete dog	\$110.00
Neutered dog	\$55.00
Working Dog	\$40.00

Late payment penalty is set at 50% of the above fees.

6 De-sexing Programme

Desexing of dogs is one way to modify aggressive behaviour in dogs; it also reduces the number of unwanted puppies.

In late 2016 Council entered into an agreement with the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) to run a de-sexing campaign for dangerous dogs. The agreement saw DIA provide funding of approximately \$12,000 to partially cover the costs associated with the de-sexing of the dogs. Opōtiki District Council supported the programme through administration costs, staff time and advertising.

In addition, Council offered a reduced registration fee, microchipping and de-sexing for those unregistered dogs that we became aware of through the campaign. Registration of the dogs expires in July 2017. For the 2017/2018 year dog owners will be required to re-register their animals.

Information about the programme was released to the public in early 2017. In excess of 80 vouchers were given out to dog owners within the community over the first 6 months of 2017. The vouchers required the owners to book their dogs in to a Veterinary Clinic for neutering and microchipping by the end of June 2017.

As of 28 June 2017, 52 dogs had been de-sexed under the scheme.

By early June 2017, the number of redeemed vouchers had exhausted the DIA funding. A media release was issued in mid-June requesting voucher holders book in before the end of June 2017 to meet the requirements of the scheme. Funding to honour any remaining vouchers will be sourced from within existing Council budgets.

The recent response from the public about the scheme has been very positive, and there have been informal requests for Council to continue with a similar scheme into the future. There has been no allocated funds to continue a scheme through the 2017/18 financial year, so any further schemes would require either external funding, or be considered through the 2018/19 Annual Plan process.

7 Customer Service Requests

Animal Control related service requests continue to decline as shown in the following table:

Service request type	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Dog Control	332	393	577

8 Conclusion

Dog Control is an activity of Council that will always require a proactive approach to ensure that Dog owners fulfil their responsibilities under the Dog Control Act in particular

- ensure that their dogs are registered,
- ensure dogs do not wander and therefore reducing the likelihood of attacks.