Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o te Ika
Far North District Council

HE ARA TĀMATA
CREATING GREAT PLACES
Supporting our people

Annual Report: Dog Control Policy and Practice 2024/2025

Introduction

The Far North District Council, as a territorial authority is required to manage and enforce provisions pursuant to the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act).

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires each territorial authority to report on its dog control policy and practices and provide specific statistical information.

This report fulfils this statutory requirement for the dog registration year 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 and provides an update on the progress and processes of the Far North District Council Animal Management services.

Background

All Dog Control functions in the district are conducted in-house which includes the administration, field, and shelter services.

This team is responsible for the reactive response to complaints about dogs at large or causing nuisance, ensuring compliance with the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Far North District Council Dog Management Policy and Bylaw, encouraging responsible dog ownership, the registration of dogs as well as community education.

The Animal Management team have officers dedicated to either the north or south of the district which allows for the officers to interact with dog owners and the public in those areas. By having local knowledge, the officers can respond to complaints and request for service in a timelier way. The Animal Management team have a work roster to cover after-hour emergencies.

The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices

FNDC Dog Management Policy

The Council adopted a Dog Management Policy in February 2019 which outlines the Council's requirements regarding controlling dogs in public places. The policy is enforceable under the FNDC Dog Management Bylaw 2018.

Key objectives of the policy are:

- Prevent injury, distress, and nuisance from dogs
- Identify dog access areas

- Provide for the neutering of menacing dogs
- Minimise potential danger or distress to protected wildlife
- Promote responsible dog ownership

Dog Registration

The council provides a discounted rate for dog owners that de-sex their dog and those who pay registration prior to 1 September.

Fees are used for:

- Dog Control activities including law enforcement, patrols, and complaint investigation.
- Dog incident prevention (including finding unregistered dogs, and the classification and enforcement of menacing and dangerous dogs)
- Education programs for schools and community groups
- Signs for the Council's Dog Management Bylaw and Dog Management Policy
- Shelter Services (including lost and found, adoption and micro-chipping)
- Running the annual dog registration renewal program

Key Achievements 2024/2025

Responding to complaints (RFS)

AMOs responded to a total of 5,433 dog control customer requests for service over the 2024/2025 period. This includes proactive work and school education service requests.

The Animal Management team consistently aims to respond to Urgent RFS (attack and public safety concerns) within 1.5 hours and Non-Urgent RFS (administrative or general dog queries etc) within 3 days.

Dog Registration

The number of known dogs in the district has reduced to 9,368. This is a result of a focused data base clean up and an administrative focus on registration follow up. Proactive follow up at every registered address assisted in this, with a total of 87.3% of the known dog population being registered by the end of the financial year.

The team will again be taking a focussed proactive effort on following up all known unregistered dogs once the annual re-registration period has ended (1 September).

The popular social media campaign promoting dog registration and responsible dog ownership was launched in June 2025. This year's campaign focuses on Storm and her journey to a loving family. The campaign also runs on the council's social media channels to give residents plenty of notice of the payment period starting on 1 July.

This campaign was continued with an information insert 'Kurī Karere Doggo Digest' included with dog registration reminder notices.

Enforcement

Animal Management has a range of enforcement measures that can be taken for offending. These can be as simple as issuing an infringement for lower levels of offending, or as serious as prosecuting the dog owner which can lead to a criminal conviction, destruction of the dog and disqualification as a dog owner for 5 years.

FNDC follow the VADE (Voluntary, Assisted, Directed, Enforced) model to facilitate compliance.
This means our staff take the approach of engaging with our customers in the first instance, taking every opportunity to educate them and provide an opportunity to be voluntarily compliant, and then, if necessary, taking the appropriate enforcement action. This approach has resulted in better relationships with dog owners in our communities.

There has been a total of 672 infringements issued for offences under the Dog Control Act 1996. This is 248 more than issued than in 2024/2025. This is largely due to the early proactive administrative work following up noncompliance for dog registration. Infringements are issued if dog owners do not register within given time frames.

The Far North District Council have initiated two prosecutions for attacks that occurred in 2024/2025, against dog owners for breaching the Dog Control Act 1996. One resulted in a voluntary destruction of the dog and fees associated with the case. The other hearing will be held later in 2025 and is for a dog attacking a young child.

Although prosecution numbers are low it is preferable not to be prosecuting. Prosecutions are used only as a last resort where it is necessary to ensure community safety.

Menacing and Dangerous Dogs

There is a total of 93 menacing dogs in the district, this is a decrease of 27 dogs from the previous year.

88 of these dogs were menacing dogs under section 33C of the Dog Control Act 1996. These dogs were of American Pitbull Terrier type. Under the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) all dogs must be classified as menacing if it belongs to a breed or type currently listed in schedule 4 of the Act, or if the local authority considers the dog poses a threat to people or other animals and wildlife due to its behaviour. All dogs registered within the district and classified as menacing by Council, or any other territorial authority must be neutered.

There is one classified dangerous dog in the district.

Impounded Dogs

A total of 630 dogs were impounded in the council shelter in 2024/25.

41.8% of impounded dogs were either returned to their owners or rehomed.

376 (59.2%) of dogs impounded at the shelter were euthanised due to not being claimed by an owner and not being suitable for rehoming. 114 (20.9%) of these dogs were surrendered by the dog owner for euthanasia.

All unclaimed dogs are put through the same behavioural assessment program and if they are designated for euthanasia its likely they failed this behavioural assessment test.

The FNDC adopt a dog Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/adoptadogFNDC continues to have success in rehoming dogs that have been impounded. This page now has over 6,200 followers (a nearly 1000 follower increase from last year)

Rehomed dogs are temperament tested, vaccinated, microchipped registered and desexed prior to going to their new homes.

Desexing Dogs

FNDC continues to partner with SPCA to provide affordable desexing across the district. This initiative will continue into 2025/2026.

Planned Activities for 2025/2026

There will be a continuation of proactive registration and compliance action plans to increase registration rates and identify unknown dogs as well as ensuring compliance with classifications.

This work involves more regular patrolling of problem areas through more accurate reporting of roaming dogs. This gives the team more visibility within communities and the ability to speak with dog owners around their responsibilities and issues they may be having.

Payment plan options are proactively being explored to assist our community where financial barriers may exist.

School education programmes around dog safety were put together in the latter half of 2025. These valuable educational classes will be delivered into 2026 and develop into more community opportunities to promote dog safety and responsible ownership.

Dog Control Statistics

Table one: Registration/Classification related data

	Total 2021/22	Total 2022/3	Total 2023/24	Total 2024/2025
Dogs Registered	10,917 Known 8347 Registered	12,214 Known 8,618 Registered	10,484 Known 8489 Registered	9,368 Known 8177 Registered
Dog Owner Classification				
Probationary	0	0	3	0
Disqualified	5	7	2	1
Menacing Classification				
- By breed	154	175	100	88
- By deed	17	20	20	5
Combined	171	195	120	93
Dangerous Classification				
Section 31(1) a	0	1	0	0

Section 31(1) b	1	1	0	1
Section 31(1) c	1	1	0	0
Total Dangerous	2	3	0	1

Table two: Request for Service (RFS) Data

Customer requests break down by RFS type				
RFS Type	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Attacks	229	257	278	259
Straying	446	526	532	622
Rushing	89	108	125	0*
Barking	285	255	374	377
Aggressive	100	97	123	208
Miscellaneous Enquiries*	671**	698**	703**	596**
Lost and Found	281	273	223	360
Pick-Up Request	424	532	511	465
Dog Welfare	86	112	100	80
Grand Total	2,611	2,858	2,969	2,967

* Rushing statistics were not captured in the 2024/2025 year and are encompassed within other RFS codes a new RFS code specifically for rushing is being created.

** Miscellaneous Enquiries includes adoption queries, refund requests, trap requests, infringement notice enquiries, bylaw enquiries/patrols, signage, general information etc.

An additional 1473 requests for received for Dog Registration queries within the financial year.

Table three: Compliance Data

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Prosecutions	1	1	1	2
Infringement Offence				
18 Wilful Obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	1	2	8	7
19(2) Failure or refusal to supply information or wilfully providing false particulars	1	0	0	0
19A (2) Failure to supply information or wilfully provide false about dog	0	0	0	0
20(5) Failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by the section	17	29	24	28
23A (2) Failure to undertake dog owner education program of dog obedience course (or both)	0	0	0	0
24 Failure to comply with the obligations of a probationary owner	0	0	0	0
28(5) Failure to comply with the effects of disqualification	0	0	0	0
32(2) failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as dangerous	0	0	0	0
32(4) fraudulent sale or transfer of dangerous dog	0	0	0	0
33EC (1) Failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as menacing	0	3	0	8
33F (3) Failure to advise person of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0	0	0
36A (6) failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	0	1	0	0
41 False statement in relation to dog registration	0	0	0	0
41A Falsely notifying death of dog	0	0	0	0
42 failure to register dog	131	506	295	466

46(4) Fraudulent procurement or attempt to procure replacement dog registration label or disc	0	0	0	0
48(3) Failure to advise change of dog ownership	0	0	0	0
49(4) Failure to advise change of address	0	0	0	0
51(1) Removal, swapping or counterfeiting of registration label or disc	0	0	0	0
52A Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	6	0	8	10
53(1) Failure to keep dog under control	43	92	88	153
54(2) failure to provide proper care and attention, to supply proper and sufficient food, and to provide adequate exercise	0	0	0	0
54A Failure to carry leash in public	0	0	0	0
55(7) Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	0	0	0	0
62(4) Allowing dog known to be dangerous to be at large unmuzzled or unleashed	0	0	0	0
62(5) Failure to advise of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0	0	0
72(2) releasing dog from custody	0	0	0	0
Total	199	633	424	672

Table four: Shelter data

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Impounded Total	337	517	452	630
Total number of dogs returned to owner	117	161	115	169
% dogs returned to owner	35%	31%	25%	26.6%
Total number of dogs to Rescue Groups	48	76	33	62
Total number of dogs adopted via Council	65	39	23	27
% dogs to Rescue Groups/Adopted	34%	22%	12%	14%
Total number of dogs euthanised	107	241	281	376
% dogs euthanised	32%	47%	62%	59.2%