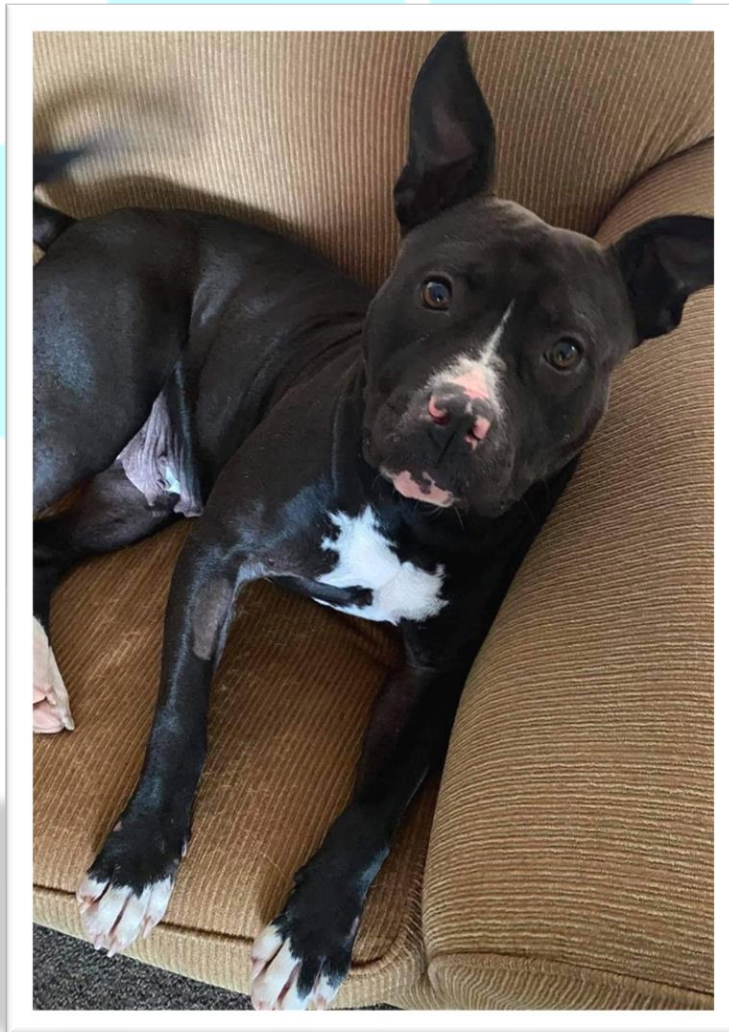


Far North District Council Annual Report on Dog Control Policy and Practice **2021/2022**



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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

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 2021 to 30 June 2022 and provides an update on the progress and processes of the Far North District Council Animal Management services.

1.2 Background

All Dog Control functions in the district are carried out in-house which includes the administration, field and shelter services. FNDC have a total of ten Animal Management Officers across the district, which includes a Team Leader and two Senior Officers.

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.

2. The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices

2.1 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

2.2 Fees

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 2021/2022

Responding to complaints (RFS)

AMOs responded to a total of 2,611 dog control customer requests for service over the 2020/2021 period. This does not include proactive work. This is 198 less individual requests for service than the previous year.

The Animal Management team completed the year meeting response times with an average of 95.3% for urgent RFS (attacks and aggressive RFS) and 96.5% for non-urgent.

Dog Registration

The number of known dogs in the district remains steady at 10,917. Of these 8,347 were registered for 2021/2022 period. This is a decrease of 602 registered dogs from the previous year giving 76% compliancy with registration down from 81% in 2020/2021.

This decrease is largely due to the limited availability of the Animal Management team to take an early focussed proactive effort on following up unregistered dogs due to covid restrictions and staff vacancies in the second and third quarter of the year.

Historically approximately 50% of the noncompliant dogs are either deceased or left the area with no notification to Council.

The popular social media campaign (AROHA) promoting dog registration and responsible dog ownership was again launched in May 2022. This campaign was continued with an information insert 'Kuri Kārere Doggo Digest' included with dog registration reminder notices. Images were also run at the Kerikeri Cinema.



Probationary and Disqualified Owners

There are five Disqualified owners in the district and no Probationary owners.

Anybody who has received three or more infringement notices within a two-year period, or who has been convicted of any offence under the Dog Control Act 1996 may be classified as a Disqualified Owner.

Enforcement

Animal Management has a range of enforcement measures that can be taken for offending. These can be as simple as sending 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 199 infringements issued for offences under the Dog Control Act 1996. This is 32 less infringements issued than in 2020/2021.

The Far North District Council initiated one prosecution during the year against a dog owner for a serious breach of the Dog Control Act 1996 which involved a dog attack against a person. A hearing date is still to be set for this case.

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 171 menacing dogs in the district, this is a decrease of 20 dogs from the previous year.

154 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 are two classified dangerous dogs in the district. One classification is a result of sworn evidence attesting to the aggressive behaviour of the dog, and the other by owner admittance. This second dog was classified by another territorial authority and transferred into district.

Impounded Dogs

A total of 337 dogs were impounded in the council shelter in 2021/22. This is 86 less dogs than the previous year.

69% of impounded dogs were either returned to their owners or rehomed.

107 (32%) of dogs impounded at the shelter were euthanised due to not being claimed by an owner and not being suitable for rehoming. This is 5% higher than last year and is attributed to the reduction in claimed dogs and the type of dogs impounded not meeting the adoption threshold.

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.

65 dogs found new homes via the FNDC adopt a dog Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/adoptadogFNDC>. This page now has over 4,500 followers.

This is a credit to the Animal Management team and something we are very proud of. Rehomed dogs are temperament tested, vaccinated, microchipped registered and desexed prior to going to their new homes. New owners are also vetted, and properties checked to endeavour to match appropriate dogs with the right owner.

The first new Animal Shelter for the Far North District was officially opened and became operational on 23 July 2021 and has received the entire districts impounded dogs since 1 August 2021.

FNDC was awarded \$1 Million for animal shelter projects through a successful bid for funding from the Provincial Development Unit (PDU) as part of the shovel-ready projects.

A second shelter in Kaikohe is expected to be operational mid-2023.



Concept Drawing Southern Animal Shelter - Kaikohe

Community Engagement

Covid restrictions did not allow for an organised community Ngā Kuri event. To enable a continued focus on desexing dogs within the Far North district the allocated Ngā Kuri budget was used in a 'voucher' desexing scheme managed by Animal Management Officers that saw 53 dogs desexed across the district.

Planned Activities for 2021/2022

- Focus on engaging further with remote rural communities across the district, to connect with dog owners and assist communities to take steps towards compliance and reduce unwanted dogs.
- Continue proactive registration and compliance action plans to increase registration rates and identify unknown dogs as well as ensuring compliance with classifications.
- Complete the build and refurbishment of a second new Animal Shelter for the district in Kaikohe.

Summary

Covid restrictions and staff shortages across the year limited the planned proactive registration work. The focus in 2022/23 will be further engaging with remote rural communities to promote responsible dog ownership.

Going forward, the Animal Management team aim to achieve a continued improvement in all areas as well as focusing their resources on consistency in operations and improving value for the customer.

Dog Control Statistics

Table one: Registration/Classification related data

	Total 2019/2020	Total 2020/2021	Total 2021/22
Dogs Registered	11,119 Known 8,284 Registered	11,069 Known 8,949 Registered	10,917 Known 8347 Registered
Dog Owner Classification			
Probationary	0	0	0
Disqualified	1	5	5
Menacing Classification			
- By breed	201	159	154
- By deed	36	32	17
Combined	237	191	171
Dangerous Classification			
Section 31(1) a	0	0	0
Section 31(1) b	1	1	1
Section 31(1) c	0	1	1
Total Dangerous	1	2	2

Table two: Request for Service (RFS) Data

Customer request break down by RFS type			
RFS Type	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Attacks	172	201	229
Straying	318	486	446
Rushing	30	54	89
Barking	180	323	285
Aggressive	100	128	100
Miscellaneous Enquiries*	438*	869*	671*
Lost and Found	240	252	281
Pick-Up Request	373	416	424
Dog Welfare	38	80	86
Grand Total	1908	2809	2,611

* Miscellaneous Enquiries includes adoption queries (223), refund requests, infringement notice enquiries, bylaw enquiries/patrols, signage, general information etc.

Table three: Compliance Data

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Prosecutions	5	1	1
Infringement Offence			
18 Wilful Obstruction of dog control officer or ranger	0	0	1
19(2) Failure or refusal to supply information or wilfully providing false particulars	0	1	1
19A (2) Failure to supply information or wilfully provide false about dog	0	0	0
20(5) Failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by the section	19	12	17
23A (2) Failure to undertake dog owner education program of dog obedience course (or both)	0	0	0
24 Failure to comply with the obligations of a probationary owner	0	0	0
28(5) Failure to comply with the effects of disqualification	0	0	0
32(2) failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as dangerous	0	0	0
32(4) fraudulent sale or transfer of dangerous dog	0	0	0
33EC (1) Failure to comply with the effects of classification of dog as menacing	0	0	0
33F (3) Failure to advise person of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0	0
36A (6) failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	0	0	0
41 False statement in relation to dog registration	0	0	0
41A Falsely notifying death of dog	0	0	0
42 failure to register dog	110	179	131
46(4) Fraudulent procurement or attempt to procure replacement dog registration label or disc	0	0	0
48(3) Failure to advise change of dog ownership	0	0	0
49(4) Failure to advise change of address	0	0	0
51(1) Removal, swapping or counterfeiting of registration label or disc	0	0	0
52A Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	8	4	6
53(1) Failure to keep dog under control	29	35	43
54(2) failure to provide proper care and attention, to supply proper and sufficient food, and to provide adequate exercise	0	0	0
54A Failure to carry leash in public	0	0	0
55(7) Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	0	0	0

62(4) Allowing dog known to be dangerous to be at large unmuzzled or unleashed	0	0	0
62(5) Failure to advise of muzzle and leashing requirements	0	0	0
72(2) releasing dog from custody	0	0	0
Total	166	231	199

Table four: Shelter data

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Impounded Total	373	423	337
Total number of dogs returned to owner	151	178	117
% dogs returned to owner	40%	42%	35%
Total number of dogs to Rescue Groups	95	64	48
Total number of dogs adopted via Council	19	69	65
% dogs to Rescue Groups/Adopted	31%	31%	34%
Total number of dogs euthanised	108	112	107
% dogs euthanised	29%	27%	32%