

Kaipara District Council

Annual Animal Management Report 2024-2025



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Annual Report

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires each territorial authority to report on its dog control policy and practices and to provide specific statistical information. This report fulfils this statutory requirement and provides an update to all stakeholders on the progress and performance of the Kaipara District Council's Animal Management Team for the dog registration year 1 July 2024 to the 30th of June 2025.

1.2 Background

All Dog Control functions in the district are carried out by Kaipara District Council, this includes administration, field, and shelter services (Note SLA with Whangarei Kennels when support is required). In 2024/25 Kaipara District employed a total of Four Animal Management Officers across the district.

The Animal Management team is responsible to undertake duties related to the Dog Control Act 1996, Impounding Act 1955, code of Welfare Temporary Housing and relevant animal management bylaws and policies, including but not limited to complaints about dogs at large, aggressive dog behavior including attacks, dog registration, encouraging responsible dog ownership and education.

The Kaipara District covers a significant geographical area which includes both urban and rural dog owners, the Animal Management team continues to work hard to ensure timely response to complaints while also managing high risk events or emergency after-hours.

2 KDC Council's Dog Control Policy and Practice

2.1 Council adopted its Dog Management Policy in November 2019

On 1 November 2019, the new Policy on Dogs 2019 and the Dog Management Bylaw 2019 came into effect. The objective of the new policy is to see dogs as a positive part of the life in the Kaipara district by:

- Maintaining opportunities for owners to take their dogs into public places.
- Adopting measures to minimise risk around dog behavior, and
- Protecting dogs from harm and ensuring their welfare is taken care of.

Together, the policy and bylaw have:

- Provided a consistent approach to multiple dog ownership.
- Provided a consistent monitoring approach in parks and beaches.
- Provide a balanced approach to dog access in Council controlled public places.

2.2 Our Services and Fees

According to policy, dog registration, fines and impound fees aim to contribute up to 80% of the cost of Animal Management in Kaipara District. The Council does provide discounted registration rates for owners of 'working dogs'; and for those who pay registration prior to end of August. These fees provide for several animal management services:

- Dog Management activities including law enforcement, investigations, and prosecutions.
- Dog incident prevention (including proactive patrols and property checks) classification and enforcement of menacing and dangerous dogs.
- Kennel Services and maintenance of the Kennel facility (adoption/rehoming and microchipping).
- Providing education to the public relating to dog control and other animal management issues
- Control of livestock on roads under the Impounding Act 1955
- Dog Registration and database administration

3 Key Achievements

3.1 Responding to complaints (SR/Requests)

Dog-related complaints decreased in 2024/2025, with notable reductions in both wandering dog reports and dog attacks. A total of **1,950 dog control service requests** were received during the year, down from **2,151** in 2023/2024.

The largest category of activity was **proactive officer-led work**, which is not initiated by customer complaints. Among customer-initiated service requests, **barking complaints saw a significant increase**, overtaking wandering dog complaints for the first time in 2024/2025.

The Animal Management team maintained strong performance in response times, achieving an average of **95% compliance with targets for urgent requests** (including dog attacks and aggressive behaviour), meeting the district's service level target.

3.2 Registration

Kaipara District Council has achieved a milestone in the 2024/2025 registration year, recording a total of **5,194 registered dogs** - the first time the district has surpassed 5,000. The known dog population also increased by 229 dogs, reaching a record high of **5,450**. This growth reverses a four-year decline and reflects the success of proactive efforts by the Animal Management team.

Officers identified **280 previously unknown dogs** through proactive patrolling and property checks, contributing significantly to the updated population figures. Thanks to the team's dedicated work, **95.3% of known dogs were registered** during the 2024/2025 period - demonstrating a

strong commitment to maintaining high compliance and supporting responsible dog ownership across the district.

3.3 Enforcement Activities

In the 2024/2025 registration year, 116 infringements were issued under the Dog Control Act. This marks a 70% decrease from the 391 infringements issued in 2023/2024. The reduction is attributed solely to a change in approach regarding registration offences. Unlike previous years, blanket infringements for non-registration were not issued. Instead, officers focused on engaging with owners - particularly those new to the system - to understand and address barriers to registration, especially in light of current financial pressures. This approach helped maintain a high registration rate of over 95%, while promoting education and compliance. In contrast, infringements related to wandering dogs, dog attacks, and bylaw breaches increased due to targeted enforcement activities. This reflects a strategic shift in focus toward risk reduction and community safety.

In response to the rise in dog attack complaints since 2020 Kaipara District council has shifted some of our focus to risk reduction through proactive work. These include patrolling high-risk areas, conducting property checks, and focusing on reducing indicator offences such as wandering dogs, which are often precursors to aggression-related incidents. While long-term trends will better illustrate the impact of this work, early results are promising: wandering dog complaints have decreased by 65% compared to 2023/2024.

Where aggressive dog incidents have occurred, the team has made a concerted effort to hold owners accountable. In 2023/2024, only 15 dogs were impounded following 67 attacks. In 2024/2025, 35 dogs were impounded in response to 38 attacks, demonstrating a stronger enforcement stance. Overall, dog attacks have decreased by 43% year-on-year, a significant achievement attributed to proactive compliance work.

Importantly, Kaipara District Council has initiated its first prosecution for a dog attack. This milestone represents a major step forward in enhancing accountability and improving service delivery to our community. While the team remains cautiously optimistic, we believe that the continued expansion of our proactive approach will further reduce harm and suffering caused by dog attacks, contributing to safer and more resilient communities across Kaipara.

3.4 Impounded Dogs

During the 2024/2025 year, 116 dogs were impounded at Kaipara District Council's kennel facilities—an increase of 21 compared to the previous year. This rise is largely attributed to officers' proactive patrolling, particularly in urban areas, and a firmer stance on wandering dogs. Additionally, more dog owners were held accountable for aggressive dog behaviour, with impoundment occurring wherever a dog involved in an attack could be identified.

The increased number of impounds has placed pressure on kennel capacity, with facilities now operating close to their limits. This has the potential to impact service levels if the trend continues.

Despite these challenges, the Animal Management team remains committed to achieving positive outcomes for all dogs in our care. Officers work tirelessly to ensure owners are given every opportunity to reclaim their dogs and address behavioural issues. However, due to voluntary surrenders and cases where dogs cannot be safely rehomed, 46 dogs were euthanised during the year - comparable to the previous year's total of 43.

3.5 Menacing Dogs

Under the Dog Control Act 1996, all dogs must be classified as menacing that belong to a breed or type currently listed in schedule 4 of the Act, or if the local authority considers that the dog poses a threat to people or other animals and wildlife due to its behavior. A classified dog must be muzzled when in a public place and be de-sexed. De-sexing menacing dogs is a key component of reducing dog-related harm.

A total of 43 dogs have been classified in the district as menacing under section 33C of the Act, this is an increase of 60% on the prior year. The majority are classified by breed being primary of the American Pitbull Terrier type. The number of dogs that are classified as menacing based on reported behavior increased to 20 in 2024/25 year.

3.6 Planned Activities for 2024/2025

- Continued focus on comprehensive and early intervention in response to negative dog behaviors, such as wandering, and aggressive behaviors, rushing and dog attack numbers.
- Continued focus on proactive work carried out by Animal Management in terms of enforcement in relation to unregistered dogs especially in relation to dogs that are unknown to council.
- Implementing our dog safety education programme in primary schools, starts in November.
- Continued priority on ensuring all dogs that are required to be classified, are identified
- Training and development of our officers, especially around prosecutions and investigations.
- Project to improve our Animal Management Kennel facilities

4 Summary

During the 2024/2025 registration year, Kaipara District Council's Animal Management team continued to face significant challenges related to workload and recruitment, operating 24/7, 365 days a year, we responded to over 2,200 compliance service requests, maintained kennel operations, and provided care for impounded dogs. In early 2025, the team also managed a serious dog attack incident, which added further pressure to an already demanding environment.

Despite these challenges, the team remained committed to delivering high-quality, proactive enforcement. This approach has made a measurable difference in reducing dog-related risks across our communities, notably, the significant decrease in wandering dogs, thanks to increased proactive patrolling, identification of repeat offenders, and targeted engagement with dog owners under the Dog Control Act. These efforts have contributed to a reduction in dog attacks across the district - an encouraging outcome, especially as many regions continue to struggle with dog-related harm. Looking ahead our hope is that the expansion of our approach in the 2025/2026 registration year will continue to reduce the harm that accompanies dog attacks contributing to healthier, safer and thriving Kaipara communities.

5 Dog Management Statistics

1 Registrations Tables

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Registered Dogs	4,812*	4,995	5,194
Known Dogs	5,347	5,221	5,450

**Correction annual report known dogs reported as registered*

2 Classification Tables

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Dog Owner Classifications			
Warning letters	0	0	1
Probationary Owners	1	0	0
Disqualified Owners	0	1	1
Dangerous Classifications			
Dangerous Dogs - still active	2	3	3
▪ by Owner Conviction under s31(1)(a)	1	1	1
▪ Dangerous by Sworn Evidence s31(1)(b)	1	1	1
▪ Dangerous by Owner Admittance in writing s31(1)(c)	0	1	1
Menacing Classifications			
Menacing Dogs – active total	28	27	43
▪ under s33A(1)(b)(i) – i.e., by behaviors	5	5	15
▪ under s33A(1)(b)(ii) – by breed characteristics	1	0	5
▪ under s33C(1)(ii) by Schedule 4 breed	22	22	23

3 Requests for Service (RFS) Tables

3.1 Service Requests

Type of Service Request breakdown	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Animal management administration	348	479	495
Dog attack	69	67	38
Dog rushing	39	36	32
Dog wandering	537	767	265
Dog not under control	76	101	107
Dog worrying stock	16	29	21
Dog in refuse	2	6	4
Dog Other i.e police request/registration	8	0	7
Dog barking	144	220	367
Dog fouling	7	7	13
Bylaws	233	64	117
Other	76	115	111
Proactive patrols and property checks	356	260	373
Total request numbers	1,903	2,151	1,950

Total # of Service Requests for the year	2022-023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Service Request received	1,547	1,891	1,577



4 Enforcement - Tables

4.1 Prosecutions

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Number of Prosecutions	0	0	1

4.2 Infringement Notices

Description of offence			
Description of offence	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Obstruction of a Dog Control Officer (AMO)	0	1	0
Fail to supply or willfully provide false information	1	0	0
Failure to comply with Council's Dog Policy	0	0	0
Failure to comply with Dangerous Dog Classification	0	0	0
Failure to comply with Menacing Dog Classification	0	2	0
Failure to implant microchip in dog	2	7	0
Kept an unregistered dog	360	297	36
Failure to keep a dog controlled or confined	23	49	56
Failure to keep a dog under control	1	0	1
Failure to provide proper care	0	0	0
Failure to comply with barking dog abatement	0	0	3
Failure to comply with Bylaw	1	0	20
Other	3	3	0
Total number of dog infringement issued	391	359	116

5 Animal Shelter – Tables

5.1 Impounded Dogs

Impounded Dogs	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Impounded	51	34	95	113
Returned to owner	30	17	40	56
▪ % dogs returned to owners	59%	50%	42%	50%
Adopted	11	6	12	11
▪ % dogs adopted	21%	18%	13%	9%
Euthanised	10	9	43	46
▪ % dogs euthanised	20%	27%	45%	41%
Reasons for impounded dogs				
Attacked person or animal	12	10	15	35
Wandering	33	22	56	58
Surrendered/abandoned	0	0	24	14
Other – non-reg/barking/classification	2	2	8	6
Where impounded				
Whangarei DC	35	11	5	9
(KDC) Dargaville	16	23	90	104
Total	51	34	95	113

Acknowledgements

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