

# Kaipara District Council

## Annual Animal Management Report 2022-2023



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## Executive Summary

Kaipara District Council's Animal Management Annual Report on dog control activities during the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, is required by section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

The 2022-2023 registration year proved to be highly successful despite staffing disruptions and shortages. KDC's animal management team have managed to ensure registration of 90% of known dogs.

### Total number of dogs

The 2022-2023 registration year has seen an increase 2.1% in the total number of known dogs in the Kaipara district, which has gone from 5,237 dogs in 2021-2022 to 5,347 dogs this year (an increase of approximately 110 dogs).

Our ongoing and immediate focus is to capture the registration of the remaining 10% unregistered dogs. This result can be attributed to the proactive and customer focused measures taken by the Animal and Compliance Services Team (A&C Team) and the Animal Management Officer's (AMOs) persistence and tenacity.

### Harm caused by dogs.

The highest priority for our team is to keep all Kaipara residents and visitors to our district safe from harm caused by dogs. The A&C Team has seen an increase in all aggression-related incidents, from the previous year of 39 to 69 this year. There are increased efforts to reduce these numbers through education and communication and increased irregular patrols.

### New Policy and Bylaw

On 1 November 2019, the Policy on Dogs and the Dog Management Bylaw 2019 came into effect. The aim of this policy and bylaw is primarily to create consistent rules and controls for multiple-dog ownership, and new rules for some of our parks and beach areas. 356 patrols were undertaken at these locations, which meant there has been a greater opportunity for education and create a more positive customer experience.

### High-risk dogs

It is a high priority for our team to get full compliance from dog owners with high-risk dogs, which includes menacing and dangerous dogs. At the end of the registration year, a total of 28 dogs were classified as menacing, while one dog was classified as dangerous. Further ongoing compliance with the neutering requirement for all menacing and dangerous dog classifications will be attributed to any funding arrangements from the Northland Dog Rescue subsidised neutering campaign and support from the SPCA. The reduced availability of veterinary services during the past three years continues to affect this rate of compliance.

## Service Response

The A&C Team responded to 1,550 requests for service during the year (not inclusive of patrols = 356), this is an increase of 80% over the previous year. KDC increased its proactive work relating to beaches, parks, reserves and other public places, and visits throughout the district from 149 to 356 patrols.

A total of 34 dogs were impounded this year, 11 of which were held by Whangarei District Council and 23 in Kaipara District Council (KDC) animal shelters, 51 impounds were completed in the previous year – a decrease of 33%.

Of the 34 impounded dogs - 6 dogs were adopted, 17 were returned to their owners and 9 dogs were euthanised. Two dogs remained impounded at the KDC kennels at the cross over of the financial year.

Nuisance barking complaints have increased, with 144 complaints responded to (as opposed to 95 in the previous year). We believe the increase can be partially attributed to the fact that many dog owners have returned to work (the COVID19 pandemic saw many people at home with their animals or introduced new animals during this period and continue to work remotely throughout last year), many animals continue to adjust to their owner's absence and as a result AMOs have attended more barking complaints than usual.

## Supporting Communities and Education

Several planned events with Kaipara schools were cancelled this year because of the unprecedented weather and flooding events that severely affected our district early 2023.

We encourage a proactive and collaborative approach to Animal Management ensuring the community is aware of regulations, fees, charges, and processes around dog ownership, and how to notify us if community members notice a breach or nuisance.

Additionally, the team has adapted its approach to patrols by including door knocking, patrolling at irregular times and hours, and committing to increased patrols in local hot spots.

The A&C team work closely with KDC Communications and ensures an education first approach through all KDC standard communication channels.

The A&C Team are looking at further opportunities to carry out community education. Outdoor community events are in planning to raise public awareness of responsible dog ownership and safety around dogs, as well as finding suitable homes for some of the dogs available for adoption from our shelters to rehome.

The A&C Team are working extensively on fostering partnerships with community groups.

## Future projects

KDC Animal Management is committed to improving processes and work practices that ensures a safer Kaipara, a much-improved customer experience and value for money service. This year, the team looked at ways we can assist the organisation to save money and maximise resources during the 2022-2023 registration year.

KDC kennels/shelter opened in May 2022. KDC finds that holding dogs locally has been a success for our community, local dog owners and staff. We have identified the need for an isolation unit for unregistered, non-micro chipped dogs and any that may be suffering from illnesses.

Welfare-related complaints increased during the year, which was partially a result of the cost-of-living

crisis i.e., expenses relating to and the reality of dog ownership. The team worked with partnership organisations, including Northland and Auckland animal shelters, NZ Armed Forces, SPCA and the NZ Police, to address issues before dogs relating to welfare complaints were impounded, which would have increased their occupancy beyond sustainable levels.

## Part 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of the Annual Report

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

This report acts as a medium for this statutory requirement, and to provide an update to all stakeholders on the activities and performance of the Kaipara District Council's Animal & Compliance Team.

### 1.2 Achievements and activities of the 2022-2023 year

- **Registration and Classification** - *Promote dog registration across all of the Kaipara district. 2022 - 2023 has seen a successful year with 90% of known dogs registered.*
- **Responsible Dog Ownership** – *Education on beach patrols, district monitoring to inform dog owners how to take care of their dogs.*
- **Dog Access Principles** – *The A&C Team provides a balanced approach to dog access in Council-controlled public places.*
- **Refurbished dog kennels and shelter** – *The project to refurbish and rejuvenate the Dargaville kennels / shelter was successful to open and identify further improvements for disease control.*
- **Monitoring measures of success** - *Annually reporting to Council's Governing Body (through a public agenda report) and to the Department of Internal Affairs as required by the Dog Control Act 1996.*

### 1.3 Policy on Dogs 2019 and Dog Management Bylaw 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 the problems caused by dogs, 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, and
- Monitoring measures of success Annually reporting to the Governing Body (through a public agenda report) and to the national government as required by the Dog Control Act 1996.

This annual report represents a thorough and reliable account of all Animal Management activities during the financial year period of 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023.

## 1.4 Our Services

The A&C Team's main function is to ensure that dogs and other animals are sufficiently controlled to prevent harm and nuisance to the public. This helps to fulfil the overall goal and business plan for the Monitoring & Compliance Services Team (M&CS) by protecting Kaipara district's residents and public, keeping them free from nuisance and harm, as well as improving, protecting, and promoting the health of the community.

These goals are achieved via several animal management services:

- Providing information and education to the public relating to dog control and other animal management issues
- Dog registration and database administration
- Monitoring dog access to public places
- Dog classification and monitoring of menacing and dangerous dogs.
- Complaint response and resolution (including aggression, rushing, roaming, and barking nuisance complaints)
- Shelter services and maintenance of the shelter facility (including lost and found, adoption / rehoming and microchipping).
- Enforcement and infringement activities (involving investigation for breaches of the Dog Control Act 1996 and the Council dog management bylaw)
- Control of livestock on roads under the Impounding Act 1955
- Upkeep and maintenance of the stock yards as required by the Impounding Act 1955

## 1.5 The Animal Management Team Structure

The Kaipara district-wide A&C Team currently has a total of three AMO's reporting to the Team Leader and Part-time Technical support officer. The three AMO's operate across the west and east coasts of the Kaipara district. The team is responsible for all field services including a proactive response to patrols, key projects, and a reactive response to investigations of complaints about dogs that are not under control, or those that are causing a nuisance.

KDC animal management services are now fully autonomous, although KDC continues to operate with WDC in a two-way Service Level Agreement (SLA) as an alternative, in case of need and alongside Waipu Wandering Angel's animal shelter for rehoming purposes.

AMO's also deal with stray or roaming livestock on all our roads, and sometimes must deal with stock trespassing on private property.

KDC's A&C Team is a multi-functional team that delivers the management of education, barking, and acting on general complaints as a regulatory arm. Other responsibilities include ensuring compliance with the Dog Control Act 1996, encouraging responsible dog ownership, and actively enforcing the registration of all dogs in our region.

KDC has brought the registration services contract in house and in doing so implemented its 'dog registration hub', which operates at the beginning of every new registration year through the Monitoring & Compliance Services technical support team, who provide the administrative customer support.



KDC AMOs regularly patrol areas with a high volume of complaints. Proactive work includes visits to popular off leash and dog walking areas.

The team provides a 24/7 response to all urgent and high priority requests. The AMOs provide support for property inspections for dogs that are required to be returned to owners and or for adoptions/rehoming from the dog kennels and animal shelters.

Both WDC and KDC shelters are responsible for the care and management of impounded animals. These animals may be the subject of legal prosecutions, or alternatively impounded for being found wandering at large, not registered, microchipped or were surrendered by their owners.

KDC's AMO's promote the adoption of unclaimed, suitable dogs and work collaboratively with other welfare and rescue agencies to find the best possible outcome for these dogs. Various desexing campaigns and other veterinary services have been offered to the community through the work of the officers and the animal shelter.



**Additional Specialist resources** – Other officers available for their input from the M&CS team include Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) / Monitoring officers (MO's) for noise, the M&CS Team Leader, and the Enforcement Panel for any legal advice, if enforcement action is required to resolve any escalated and ongoing complaints.

## 1.6 Animal Management Population growth

The known dog population in Kaipara increased by 110 dogs in the last year (2.1%). Based on the projected estimated growth of expected dogs and unknown dogs, this population growth will continue to place an ever-increasing strain on team resources and workload in the future.

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## Part 2: Policy Objectives

### 2.1 Registration and Classification

*\*It is a key focus for Kaipara District Council's Animal & Compliance Team for all dogs known, and unknown to be registered.\**

#### 2.1.1 Dog registrations

The Dog Control Act requires all dog owners to register their dogs every year, and it also requires every territorial authority to keep a register of all dogs. Having dogs registered significantly increases Council's ability to manage dog-related safety and nuisance issues.

The annual dog registration year runs from 01 July to 30 June the following year. Failure to register a dog can result in a \$300 infringement notice, or a court may impose a fine of up to \$3,000.

Our A&C Team continued to focus on dog registration compliance during the 2022-2023 year through phones and door knocking. The number of known dogs in the Kaipara district equated to 5,347 dogs (an increase of 110 dogs) for this registration year. A further total of 391 dog infringement notices were issued relating to late or non-registration. We have also increased our patrols in areas of dogs where they are reported excessively barking and or wandering (early mornings and late afternoon evenings) of dogs.

Dog registration and animal management fees remained the same since the 2019-2020 and, therefore, we expect to see a rise in the next financial year.

#### 2.1.2 Classification of high-risk dogs

It is a requirement of the Act that all menacing dogs are classified either by behaviour or breed. The majority of KDC's classifications are by breed. All menacing dogs living in the Kaipara district are required to be neutered, even if the classification by another territorial authority does not require it.

A total of 28 dogs were classified as menacing. Overall compliance with the classifications increased compared to the previous year. A total of 36% of all menacing dogs are currently neutered, and our officers continue to educate and encourage owners to comply with this direction by supporting a Neutering Campaign.

#### 2.1.3 Neutering campaign

A total of 40 dogs were neutered during the year under the neutering campaign and programme, we are hopeful this will continue to be rolled out for the coming year. In previous years, the success of our desexing campaign was due to receiving support and funding from the North Auckland Dog Rescue (NADR). Although funding was discontinued for the 2022-2023 year, we are hopeful to facilitate another subsidised neutering programme, for the oncoming 2023-2024 year.



## 2.2 Dog Access Principles

### 2.2.1 Policy

The Policy on Dogs and Dog Management Bylaw 2019 has simplified access to most beaches, parks, and reserves for dog owners. A review of all signage at beaches, parks, and reserves has recently been undertaken. The AMO's are assisting the policy department in identifying and documenting inaccurate, missing, or damaged signs.

### 2.2.2 Working with the community

Our A&C Team continued to focus primarily on reducing harm caused by dogs. Specific 'high-risk' areas have been targeted as part of the intelligence-led approach taken by our AMO's.

## 2.3 Monitoring Measures of Success (see tables in Part 5 below)

This annual report represents a thorough and reliable account of all Animal Management activities during the 2022-2023 financial year. KDC is required to annually report to the Governing Body (through a public agenda report) and to the Central Government (DIA) as required by the Dog Control Act 1996.

## Part 3: Service Delivery and Activities

### 3.1 Education and Community Events

The Animal & Compliance Team work extensively on fostering partnerships with community groups and planning to meet the community needs and attending events.

#### 3.1.2 At-risk workers

KDC endeavors to provide refresher training alongside agencies and organisations with 'at-risk' workers, including FENZ, SPCA, Housing New Zealand, New Zealand Post and the New Zealand Police. This year, the A&C Team is engaged with local animal charities to enhance and improve their rehoming scheme and partnerships.

### 3.2 Animal Shelter Services

#### 3.2.1 Impounds

During this registration year both WDC and KDC animal shelters have impounded 34 dogs. The return to home policy was also high for first offenders where and when deemed practicable. This does not always correlate or directly link to the number of service requests received, as well with the number of offences detected by our field officers. There were 34 dogs impounded in the WDC and KDC animal shelters throughout the region during the 2022-2023 year.

A total of 17 dogs were returned to their owners, or 50% of all impounds.

#### 3.2.2 Adoptions

KDC AMO's have worked hard throughout the year to find the best possible homes for dogs in their care that were suitable for adoption. Partnership animal shelters and AMO's continue to work closely with rescue organisations and utilise other social media or internet platforms, like Facebook, etc. to find as many suitable homes as possible.

### 3.2.3 Projects

The business case to rejuvenate KDC's kennels and shelter was successful and is now part of the complete animal management in-house service. This project was completed and opened in 2022.

Bringing the kennels in-house has created a total Kaipara Animal Management Service. One that provides a consistent customer experience, with services that will be maintained locally for the community and gain efficiencies across the Animal Management Services i.e. less travel time between sites.

The benefits include:

- Cost savings, and
- Agile, flexible, and local management that will provide consistency for staff and community.

By repairing and rejuvenating existing redundant kennels we have provided a cost-efficient customer service and much improved customer experience to the Kaipara community.

The rejuvenated facility provides for six kennels and two mobile kennels, giving kenneling for a total of eight dogs if needed. Included in the facility is a large, fenced exercise area and a general administration office.

To note – Lessons learned we have now identified a need for an isolation unit to be included on site.



## 3.3 Field Services

### 3.3.1 Proactive work

The AMO's proactively visit and patrol most of the popular beaches that have a high volume of visitors. A total of 356 proactive beach patrols were carried during the year across the district from the West coast to East coast.

### 3.3.2 Response to requests for service

The AMO's experienced a busy year dealing with animal management issues with a record number of patrols and SR's, however the team also recorded a reduction in serious incidents.

- The AMO's responded to 1,551 requests for service – an increase in 50% from the year before.
- A total of 69 dog attacks were investigated which resulted in an increase of 30 dog attacks on other dogs, stock and people than the previous year.
- The largest volume of all service requests related to wandering dogs with AMO's responding to a total of 537 wandering dog complaints.

### 3.3.3 Enforcement activities

The A&C Team operates on a graduated educational and enforcement model, which includes educational warnings, infringement notices, and in serious cases – prosecutions.

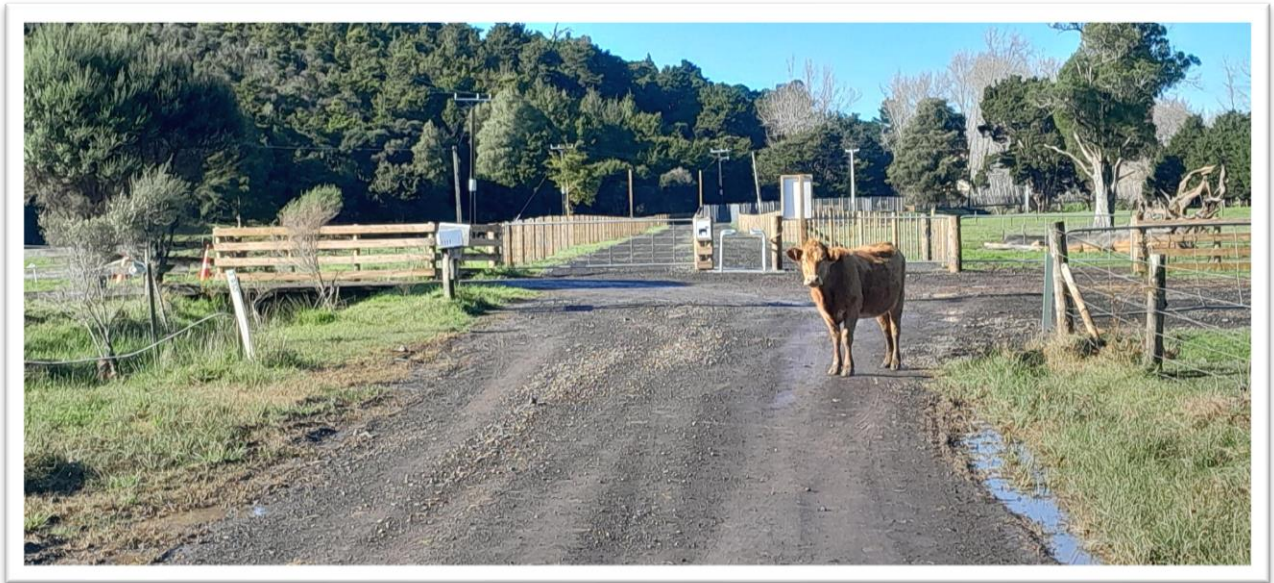
During the year, our AMO's issued a total of 391 infringement notices under the Act. The total number of infringement notices issued increased by 47% from the previous year.

No prosecutions were brought against dog owners for serious offences against the Act for the 2022-2023 year.

### 3.3.4 Other Duties

Our AMO's duties also include dealing with stray or roaming livestock on roads and other public places, throughout the entire Kaipara district, including the highway network. This work is time-consuming, sometimes dangerous and can account for a large part of the officers' after-hours response times.

The officers responded to 68 incidents of stray or roaming stock during the year. The majority of these incidents related to animals roaming at large on the highway network.



## 3.4 Nuisance Issues

### 3.4.1 Barking complaints and bylaws

A total of 144 barking complaints were received in the 2022 – 2023 year.

Dog owners who fail to reduce the barking of their dogs are monitored and educated for ongoing compliance before issued with infringement notices.

## Part 4: The Kaipara District – our people and their dogs

### 4.1 Dog owners in Kaipara

As at the 30 June 2023, the Kaipara District had a total of 3261 known dog owners.

#### 4.1.1 Menacing and dangerous dogs

We have experienced a total increase of 30 dog attacks from the previous year.

Incidents where dogs rushed to people or other animals, but did not result in an attack, increased from 23 in the previous year to 39 this year.

### Acknowledgements

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