



## **DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL'S ANIMAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS FOR PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2024**

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### **Dog Control Policy and Practices**

1. The Dunedin City Council (DCC) covers a large geographical area, which includes both urban and rural dog owners. As of 30 June 2024 there were 18,552 registered dogs. This is a decrease of 324 dogs on the previous year.
2. To deliver an animal control service, the DCC had an Animal Services Unit consisting of a Manager, Team Leader, and six FTE Animal Services Officers. The team was supported by the Compliance Solutions Administration Team. All Animal Services Officers were trained to deliver education in schools and workplaces.
3. The Animal Services Unit worked alongside key stakeholders in the community such as the Society for the Protection of Animals, local veterinarians, Police, Department of Conservation, Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust and Dog Rescue Dunedin.

### **Dog Control Enforcement Practices**

4. The Animal Services Unit operated a seven-day service from 7.00am to 8.00pm during the summer (daylight saving) and between 8.00am and 5.00pm during the winter. The unit contracted a 24-hour standby service for emergency call outs on evenings, weekends and public holidays.
5. Over the last 12 months the Animal Services Unit responded to 2,193 dog complaints, down 349 from last year. Complaints included aggression, attacking, barking, fouling and wandering dogs and dogs that were 'contained' by members of the public. Of the total number of complaints 31% were in relation to barking and 30% in relation to wandering dogs.
6. In addition, 160 dogs were impounded over the review period, a decrease of 32 on the previous year.
7. During the administration of the dog control legislation and bylaws, 334 infringement notices were issued to dog owners, an increase of 26 on the previous year. No owners were prosecuted for a breach of the Dog Control Act 1996 (The Act) over the 12-month period.

### **Dogs Prohibited, Leash Only and Dog Exercise Areas**

8. Most Dunedin dog owners complied with the respective 'leash-only' area requirements and didn't exercise their dogs in prohibited areas.
9. The DCC has three small and six large dog exercise areas, that were well patronised daily. Positive public feedback confirmed that they successfully encourage both dog socialisation and community interaction.

10. Each of the dog exercise parks has a unique design and has been built to maximise the use of the topography of the area. The surrounding areas are regularly maintained and upgraded. The ratio of dog exercise parks to known dogs (registered and unregistered) was one park to 2,154 known dogs.
11. All the parks have:
  - a. Double gates (air lock) to provide safe access and exit for dog owners using the parks.
12. Most parks have:
  - a. Drinking fountains
  - b. Shelters and seating for dog owners
  - c. Agility equipment
  - d. Solar lighting
  - e. Re-fillable dog waste bag dispensers.

### **Dog Registration and Other Fees**

13. Dog registration fees were **not** increased in 2023/2024. The 2023/2024 pet dog registration fee was \$109. The fee for the first working dog was \$53 and the second and subsequent working dogs was \$28. The annual rebate for registered neutered dog/s remained at \$10. Dogs registered as “Special dog” (Disability Assist, Police or Search and Rescue) were registered free of charge.
14. Owners that didn’t register their dogs within the required timeframe were issued with reminder notices and if possible, contacted via telephone. Confirmed unregistered dogs were issued an infringement notice.

### **Dog Education**

15. The DCC’s Responsible Dog Owner (RDO) Policy exists to recognise and encourage responsible dog ownership. Providing the dog owner has not received any valid complaints in the previous two years about the management of their dog, they may apply for RDO status, which makes them eligible for a 44% discount on future dog registration fees. During this period 30% of pet owners were classified as Responsible Dog Owners.
16. Part of the RDO assessment process requires an owner to be present during an inspection of their property by an Animal Services Officer. The inspection seeks to ensure that the property meets the required adequate fencing standard. It also tests the dog owner’s knowledge of their responsibilities under the local bylaw and the Act.
17. The Animal Services Unit is also very proactive in conducting newspaper, radio and social media advertising programmes promoting dog owners’ responsibilities. This was found to be a positive and effective medium to assist in having dogs accepted by the public in an urban environment.
18. A series of four educational videos with tips for dog owners were created using advice from the Animal control officers and shared via social media and on the DCC website. These “Best Friend, Best Behaviour” videos offered tips for dog owners for managing aggressive behaviour, barking, wandering, and socialising their dogs.
19. The DCC also ran a school and community group education programme, offering free dog safety education sessions to improve public safety and encourage responsible dog ownership. These sessions were available to primary, intermediate and pre-school children as well as workplaces

who may come into contact with dogs during their work. During this period 65 education sessions were provided to schools or kindergartens, and seven workplaces.

### **Disqualified and Probationary Dog Owners**

20. Over the last 12 months there was one dog owner classified as a probationary owner. There were no dog owners disqualified from owning a dog.

### **Menacing and Dangerous Dogs**

21. The DCC has 159 dogs classified as menacing (20 were classified over the last 12 months). Of that total, 17 were classified as menacing due to behaviour and the remaining three were classified by breed under section 33C(1) Schedule 4 of the Act.
22. The DCC has 15 dogs classified as dangerous which is four more than the previous year. During the last 12 months, seven dogs were classified as dangerous by sworn evidence<sup>1</sup>.

### **Pound Facility**

23. The pound facility continued to be provided by an external contractor based at a local boarding kennel. There were no recorded security incidents last year.

### **General Information**

24. As of 30 June 2024, a total of 11,039 pet dogs have been neutered in Dunedin. This is 61% of the total number of pet dogs, 1% less than the previous year.
25. The DCC promoted a dog neutering programme for owners who would have difficulty meeting the costs. The full cost of the operation was paid by the DCC and the number of dogs neutered in the last 12 months was 81. This service is put out to tender to local veterinarians to ensure a competitive price is obtained.
26. Over the last year, 95% of impounded dogs (152 of 160) were either claimed (120) or adopted out (32). Two dogs were being held for a court case on 30 June 2024. One dog died due to a medical event while in custody in the pound. The remaining 3% of dogs (5) were either not claimed by their owners or signed over to the DCC. These dogs were classified as menacing by breed (therefore not permitted to be re-homed) or when assessed by staff, were found to be unsuitable to be re-homed.
27. 94% of dogs were microchipped which is the same as the previous year. This includes 100% of the classified dangerous dogs and 96% of the classified menacing dogs.
28. When dog owners registered a dog, they were given information brochures that contain advice on how to care for their dog and their responsibilities as a dog owner.
29. Dog Rescue Dunedin continued to work alongside the DCC's Animal Services Unit under a Memorandum of Understanding, helping to provide homes for unwanted or unclaimed pound dogs.
30. Trail cameras were being used on rural properties to assist Animal Control Officers to gather evidence when dogs have attacked stock.
31. Due to the high number of barking complaints received annually by the Animal Services Unit, the Animal Services Officers continued to use bark boxes to record barking. This device was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sworn evidence' - evidence given by a person who witnessed the event.

found to be invaluable when dealing with barking complaints, particularly when dog owners were often not at home and didn't realise how often their dog/s were barking.

## DOG CONTROL STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Section 10A (2) of the Act requires territorial authorities to publicly report each financial year on a variety of dog control related statistics in a tabular format.

Column B shows the total number of 30 June 2024 on DCC record and Column C shows the number recorded during the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. For example, as of 30 June 2024, the DCC has 15 dangerous dogs on record. This number changes each year as some dogs may have died and others may have moved district.

CATEGORY (A)	(B) Total in Dunedin City as of 30 June 2024	(C) Period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024
1) Total # Registered Dogs	18,552	Statistics not required
2) Total # Probationary Owners	1	1
3) Total # Disqualified Owners	6	0
4) Total # Dangerous Dogs	15	7
Dangerous by Owner Conviction	5	0
Dangerous by Sworn Evidence	9	7
Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing s31(1)(c)	1	0
5) Total # Menacing Dogs	159	20
Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) - i.e. by Behaviour	100	17
Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii) - by Breed Characteristics	0	0
Menacing under s33C (1) by Schedule 4 Breed	59	3
6) Total # Infringement Notices	Statistics not required	334
7) Total # Complaints Received	Statistics not required	2,193
Aggressive	Statistics not required	205
Attack	Statistics not required	186
Barking	Statistics not required	671
Fouling	Statistics not required	20
Wandering + Patrols	Statistics not required	666
Dogs Contained	Statistics not required	438
Dogs unregistered	Statistics not required	7
8) Total # Dogs Impounded	Statistics not required	160
9) Total # Prosecutions Taken	Statistics not required	0
10) Total # Pet Dogs	Statistics not required	18,101
11) Total # Pet Dogs Neutered	Statistics not required	11,039
12) Total # Responsible Dog Owners	Statistics not required	4,616
13) Total # Schools Visited	Statistics not required	20
Number of Classes	Statistics not required	65
13) Total # Dog Exercise Areas	Statistics not required	9
Ratio of Known Dogs to Exercise Areas	Statistics not required	2,154