

# Annual Dog Control Report

2024/25



**ROTORUA**  
LAKES COUNCIL

# Annual Section 10A Report - 2024/2025

## Dog Control Policies and Practices

Rotorua Lakes Council as a territorial authority, is required to manage and enforce the provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act). This report meets the requirements set under Section 10A of the Act which requires councils to report on dog control policies and practices and covers the period of 1 July 2024 through to 30 June 2025 (the 2024/25 dog registration year).

### Policy on Dogs

Rotorua Lakes Council (Council) is required under the Dog Control Act 1996 to have a dog policy and an associated bylaw which gives effect to the policy. Council's policy and bylaw were reviewed in late 2024 and help to keep our community safe. The Bylaw and Policy work together in relation to the effective control of dogs and set expectations and the rules for council to enforce.

The 2024 review of the bylaw and policy ensured clearer alignment and consistency between these documents and resulted in the subsequent inclusion of the following improvements:

- Enabling Council to extract DNA samples (hair and/or saliva) from impounded dogs (to help prove or disprove a dog's involvement in an incident), and
- Enabling Council to enforce the desexing of dogs that have breached clause 5 of the bylaw – Control of Dogs two or more times in a 12-month period.

Public consultation was conducted via a special consultative procedure as required by the Dog Control Act 1996 section 10(8) and included hearings for submitters that wished to speak to their submissions.

Consultation was held from 16 August to 17 September 2024 with 483 submissions received, 72% of submitters supported the proposed changes. 13 submitters presented their views in person.

The revised bylaw and policy were adopted at a Council meeting on 25 September 2024 and came into effect on 9 October 2024.

### Dog Control Practices

Council provides a comprehensive 24/7, year-round response to all high-priority requests. Animal Control staff operate on a rotating roster and proactively patrol the district while also attending to issues such as roaming dogs, attacks, and complaints related to aggressive or nuisance behaviour, including rushing and barking.

### Personnel

The Animal Control team is part of Council's Community Safety and Regulatory Services group. The Team Leader of Animal Control is primarily focused on service delivery, legislative compliance, customer experience and operational improvement for the benefit of our customers. Supporting the Team Leader are two Senior Animal Control Officers, six Animal Control Officers and one Pound Keeper who is also warranted to undertake the duties of an Animal Control Officer.

## **Hours of Operation**

Standard working hours are 8.00am to 4.30 Monday through to Sunday with additional coverage from an On-Call Officer and Stand-by Officer to attend to priority jobs outside of the standard working hours. This coverage provides a 24/7 service every day of the year to Rotorua residents and visitors.

## **Dog Pound**

Council operates a Dog Pound where 50-70 dogs (depending on size) can be contained and cared for pursuant to the Animal Welfare Act 1999. Wherever possible and appropriate we aim to reunite dogs with their owners as quickly as possible. Impounded dogs are kept for the required statutory minimum timeframe of 7 days. If they remain unclaimed by their owners, we attempt to re-home suitable dogs to loving new homes. The remainder are humanely euthanized.

The Pound facility is open to the public for visiting and/or retrieval of impounded dogs Monday to Friday between the hours of 11.00am to 1.30pm, except public holidays. Owners wishing to recover dogs outside of hours do so by arrangement with the on-duty Animal Control Officers.

Staff maintain the Pound to a high standard of hygiene at all times. This is particularly important given that many of the dogs coming into Council's care, have not been vaccinated for diseases such as Parvo Virus which is a debilitating and often fatal canine disease. Stringent hygiene controls provide a more pleasant stay for dogs and decrease the chance of possible infection.

## **Adoption and Rehoming**

Each year, Council cares for dogs of various sizes, ages and breeds. Some of these dogs are great candidates for rehoming. Council's dedicated Animal Control team do their utmost to place as many suitable dogs as possible into loving new homes.

Dogs are selected for rehoming based on their health status and temperament to help ensure a successful and long-term adoption. In some cases, dogs are fostered by a third party until a permanent home can be found. Rehomed dogs are also vaccinated, desexed and microchipped before leaving the pound to ensure they get the best new start possible.

Rotorua Lakes Council is grateful to have the support of Vada's Angels Animal Rescue, Pound Hounds, Rescue-Revive-Rehome (RRR), German Shepherd Rescue, Rottweiler Rescue, Bull Terrier Rescue, Labrador Rescue, Bull Breeds Rescue, PetStock, Animates and Bunnings.

These organisations have either assisted with fostering or have hosted adoption days with Council and is greatly appreciated. This support has enabled Council to hold three adoption drives over the reporting period contributed to the successful placement of one hundred and thirteen dogs and puppies. The success rate of this challenging but rewarding work is also credited to Council's dedicated Pound Keeper.

## **Prohibition of Dogs in Public places**

Council's policy and Bylaw requires dogs in public places to be on a lead at all times unless in a specified dog exercise area. There are some exceptions from the Bylaw provisions, which relate to working (e.g. Police) and hunting dogs whilst each are engaged in the respective activities.

Dogs are allowed to be off lead in specified dog exercise areas provided they are at all times under the full command of the person in charge of the dog either by way of voice or whistle command or by hand signal. There is a reasonable level of adherence with the leash requirements with first time breaches generally

being dealt with by way of a warning/education. Infringement notices are typically reserved for further or repeated breaches and to encourage future compliance.

Dogs are prohibited from the entire Inner-City area in Rotorua. Inner-City residents can apply to Council for an exemption which may allow them to walk their dog, on lead in specified areas and during specified times only. Dogs are also prohibited from reserves including but not limited to the Government Gardens and Lakefront, along with all school grounds, public barbeque areas and children's playgrounds.

## Fees

Dog Registration fees are set by the Council each registration year. The fees are set at a level that:

- Acknowledges the different levels of service needed to achieve dog control in the Rural and Urban areas of its District.
- Meets the cost of providing an Animal Control service after taking into account whatever portion of General Rates that may also be applied towards Animal Control.
- Recognises responsible dog ownership by providing a reduced registration fee to owners who qualify as Selected Dog Owner status.
- Considers any adjustment in the Consumer price Index and any additional direct costs that Council incurs in its administration of the Dog Control Act 1996.

Fees are used for:

- Dog control activities including patrols and complaint investigations.
- Providing and maintaining Pound facilities.
- Providing free of charge Doggy doo bags.
- Education and advice to dog owners and residents.
- Providing targeted dog safety education to specialist groups such as schools.
- Prosecutions.

The 2024/2025 dog registration fees are:

| Category                     | Fees 24/25 |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Urban                        | \$121.28   |
| Rural                        | \$87.10    |
| Selected Dog Ownership (SDO) | \$87.10    |
| Rebate for desexing          | \$11.03    |
| Rebate for super annuitant   | \$11.03    |
| Replacement tag              | \$11.03    |
| Microchip Implant            | \$33.08    |

The 2024/25 registration year was subject to particularly low registration levels with just over a thousand dog owners not registering their dogs. These dog owners were then infringed for non-payment and where required, escalation through to the District Court.

In recognition of responsible dog ownership practices and history, dog owners who meet the relevant qualifying criteria which demonstrates good dog ownership, may apply to Council for Selected Dog Owner (SDO) status. This status must be applied for each registration year provides a discounted registration rate.

## Appendix 1: Dangerous and Menacing Dog Classifications

### Dog Control Act 1996 S31 – Dangerous Dogs

Section 31 requires the territorial authority to classify a dog as a dangerous dog if:

- The owner of the dog has been convicted of an offence in relation to a dog attack,
- The territorial authority has sworn evidence and reasonable grounds to believe that the dog constitutes a threat to the safety of any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife; or,
- The dog owner admits in writing that the dog constitutes a threat to the safety of any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife.

No additional dogs were classified as dangerous in Rotorua during the 2024/25 year. Table 1 below contains a summary of the total number of dogs classified as Dangerous at the end of the reporting period:

**Table 1:** Total classified Dangerous dogs.

| Primary Breed                   | Number |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Bulldog, American               | 2      |
| Greyhound                       | 1      |
| Mastiff, Bull                   | 2      |
| Rottweiler                      | 2      |
| Terrier, American Pit Bull      | 2      |
| Terrier, American Staffordshire | 1      |
| Terrier, Fox (Smooth)           | 1      |
| Terrier, Staffordshire Bull     | 2      |
| Total                           | 13     |

### Dog Control Act 1996 - Menacing Dogs

At the end of the reporting period, a total of 317 dogs were classified as ‘menacing’ under S33A or S33C of the Dog Control Act 1996. A description and breakdown of this total is provided in the following sections.

#### Dog Control Act 1996 - S33A

Section 33A relates to dogs that have not been classified as dangerous, but the territorial authority considers that they may pose a threat to any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife because of any observed or reported behaviour of the dog, or any characteristics typically associated with the dog’s breed or type.

Table 2 below contains a summary of the total number of dogs (139) classified as menacing at the end of the reporting period (due to observed or reported behaviour only). 60 of these were classified during the 2024/25 registration year.

**Table 2:** Total classified menacing dogs (by observed or reported behaviour only).

| Primary Breed     | Number |
|-------------------|--------|
| Akita             | 1      |
| Australian Kelpie | 1      |
| Boxer             | 2      |
| Bulldog           | 10     |
| Bulldog, American | 10     |



|                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Cattle, Australian              | 2          |
| Chihuahua, Long Coat            | 1          |
| Collie, Bearded                 | 1          |
| Collie, Border                  | 4          |
| Dogo Argentino                  | 2          |
| Greyhound                       | 2          |
| Heading                         | 3          |
| Huntaway                        | 6          |
| Mastiff                         | 6          |
| Mastiff, Bull                   | 5          |
| Mastiff, Neapolitan             | 3          |
| Pointer, German Short Haired    | 1          |
| Poodle, Standard                | 1          |
| Retriever, Labrador             | 15         |
| Rottweiler                      | 13         |
| Shar Pei                        | 8          |
| Shepherd, German                | 6          |
| Siberian Husky                  | 4          |
| Smithfield                      | 1          |
| Terrier, American Pit Bull      | 7          |
| Terrier, American Staffordshire | 4          |
| Terrier, Fox (Smooth)           | 5          |
| Terrier, Jack Russell           | 1          |
| Terrier, Staffordshire Bull     | 14         |
| Thai Ridgeback                  | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>139</b> |

### Dog Control Act 1996 - S33C

Under section 33C the territorial authority must classify as menacing any dog that the territorial authority has reasonable grounds to believe belongs wholly or predominantly to one or more of the following breeds or types:

- Brazilian Fila.
- Dogo Argentino.
- Japanese Tosa.
- Perro de Presa Canario.
- American Pit Bull Terrier Type.

Due to the inability to 100% accurately and reliably differentiate between the American Pitbull Terrier and the American Staffordshire terrier, the American Staffordshire terrier is considered in Rotorua as a “Pitbull type” and attracts a menacing classification unless NZ Kennel Club papers can be produced confirming four generations of purebred American Staffordshire Terrier lineage. This additional proof provides reasonable assurance of expected behavioural traits.

177 dogs were classified as menacing under S33A at the end of the reporting period, with 6 of these classified during the 2024/25 registration year as detailed in Table 3 which follows.

**Table 3.** Total classified menacing dogs under S33C (by breed and type only):

| Primary Breed                                              | Number     |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Bulldog, American                                          | 1          |
| Shar Pei                                                   | 1          |
| Terrier, American Pit Bull                                 | 133        |
| Terrier, American Staffordshire (no NZ Kennel Club Papers) | 41         |
| Terrier, Staffordshire Bull                                | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                                               | <b>177</b> |

## Appendix 2: Dog Control Statistics 2020/21 to 2024/2025

### Total Known Dogs

|                                      | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number                               | 10,959  | 11,589  | 11,936  | 12,198  | 12,151  |
| Percentage change from previous year | -5.7%   | -2.9%   | -2.1%   | +0.3%   | n/a     |

### Number of Probationary Owners

|        | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number | 1       | 6       | 3       | 2       | 0       |

### Number of Disqualified Owners

|        | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number | 19      | 28      | 19      | 22      | 19      |

### Number of Dogs Classified as Dangerous

| Category                                           | 2024/25   | 2023/24   | 2022/23   | 2021/22   | 2020/21   |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Dangerous by owner conviction s31(1)(a)            | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1         |
| Dangerous by sworn evidence s31(1)(b)              | 9         | 12        | 12        | 17        | 20        |
| Dangerous by owner admittance in writing s31(1)(c) | 3         | 3         | 4         | 6         | 8         |
| <b>Total Dangerous dogs Classified</b>             | <b>13</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>29</b> |

### Number of Dogs Classified as Menacing

| Category                                         | 2024/25    | 2023/24    | 2022/23    | 2021/22    | 2020/21    |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Menacing by behaviour s33a(1)(b)(i)              | 131        | 118        | 128        | 111        | 157        |
| Menacing by breed characteristics s33a(1)(b)(ii) | 9          | 11         | 8          | 9          | 8          |
| Menacing by schedule 4 breed s33c(1)             | 177        | 239        | 301        | 298        | 449        |
| <b>Total Menacing dogs</b>                       | <b>317</b> | <b>368</b> | <b>437</b> | <b>418</b> | <b>614</b> |

### Number of Infringements

| Year   | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number | 2,420   | 2,041   | 606     | 817     | 933     |

### Number of dog related complaints

| Year                       | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total number of complaints | 6,053   | 5,852   | 5,855   | 5,325   | 5,637   |

### Number of Prosecutions

| Year   | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number | 4       | 3       | 1       | 1       | 2       |

### Pound

| Category          | 2024/25 | 2023/24 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Returned to Owner | 531     | 394     | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     |
| Rehomed           | 159     | 73      | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     |
| Euthanised        | 531     | 478     | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     |
| Total Impounds    | 1,189   | 945     | N/A     | N/A     | N/A     |