



*Tauranga* City

**TCC Policy and Practices in Relation to the  
Control of Dogs for the Year  
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020  
(Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996)**

**Attachment A**

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## 1. Background

The total number of registered dogs in Tauranga continues to grow, despite this, we have seen a continued downward trend in complaints received about barking and roaming dogs, attacks on people and animals rushed at.

Some of this can be attributed to the COVID lockdown which saw a reduction in complaints across our sector, but even factoring that into account we consider that proactive initiatives and monitoring by Council staff has contributed to a general improvement in dog behaviour across the city.

### **Barking Dogs**

We have implemented changes to our processes to reduce the length of time it takes to resolve barking dog complaints. This, together with the sale of cost-effective bark collars has contributed to a decrease in the number of complaints received.

### **Roaming Dogs**

We have also taken a firmer approach against owners of dogs that were repeat roamers or repeatedly impounded, this has reduced the number of impounded and roaming dogs and has potentially contributed to the reduction in attacks on people.

During this same period, we experienced an unexpected increase in the number of persons rushed at and attacks on domestic animals. This is against the trends for the last 5 years which had these complaint types declining. It is noted that in March 2020 double the number of animals were rushed at than any other month, April and May also experienced higher than normal reported incidents.

Many of these incidents can be reduced if owners ensured their dogs were secure on their property and by following “best practice” by ensuring they place their dog on a lead whenever approaching other people or animals. This will be a focus of our dog owner education for the coming year at events such as Pet Expo and planned dog walks during summer.

## 2. Education

- The number of school educational visits were limited by the impact of COVID 19 in that school bookings at the time were cancelled during the shutdown period and this limited our ability to interact directly with children and bring to them our bite prevention program.
- During the year we visited 6 schools and spoke to over 663 children teaching them how to act around dogs, how to avoid being bitten by dogs and what to do if they want to pat a dog.
- 118 employees of 6 businesses who work in the community were provided with skills to manage dogs that they may encounter in their day to day business. This included TCC staff, nurses and postal workers.
- We also instigated a campaign to encourage all dog owners to microchip their dogs and provide Council with the chip number. Not only is this a legal requirement but provides the dog owner with some assurances of ownership should the dog be stolen or lost and increases the return rate from the pound. To help with this we have commenced Microchip Mondays at the pound where

owners can get their dog scanned to check the chip or have one implanted for \$22 if they don't.

### **3. Dog Prohibited Areas**

Dogs are prohibited from certain specified areas. The following areas are assessed for consideration as dog prohibited areas:

- Children's playgrounds.
- Areas of intense public use.
- Areas of ecological sensitivity.
- Any other areas as resolved by Council.

#### **Comment**

Studies are showing that the mere presence of dogs in the vicinity of ecologically sensitive areas can impact on the viability of nesting birds to lay fertilised eggs and raise their young. Consultation between the Spaces and Places team and Animal Services staff have identified some key areas for protection. By utilising new provisions in our Dog Management Bylaw, we have implemented temporary leash control and dog prohibited areas to protect wildlife during these critical periods. These areas include sections of the Waikareao Estuary, Gordon Carmichael Reserve and Waimapu Estuary

### **4. Dog Exercise and Leash Control**

While dog owners can exercise their dogs off leash in many areas of the city and most of the parks and beach, it is important they realise they are responsible to ensure their dog cannot cause nuisance or danger to any animals or people.

Many owners don't appreciate that other people don't want their dog running up to them, even if it is a lovely dog.

Best practice for dog owners is to leash their dog whenever approaching another animal or person and obtaining permission before allowing their dog to approach. This would reduce the number of complaints about dogs rushing at people and attacking other domestic animals.

### **5. Fees**

All dogs must be registered by the age of three months. When buying or acquiring a dog the new owner should be aware that if it is not registered, they must do so immediately.

Dog registration fees are set by Council resolution. Tauranga City has an administratively simple fee structure which is equitable and transparent with standard registration being \$87 increasing to \$130 if not registered by 1 August and \$131 for a Classified Dangerous dog increasing to \$196.50 if not registered by 1 August.

Owners of unregistered dogs face a \$300 fine together with the cost of registration. Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees are used to fund dog control.

## 6. Trends in Dog aggression

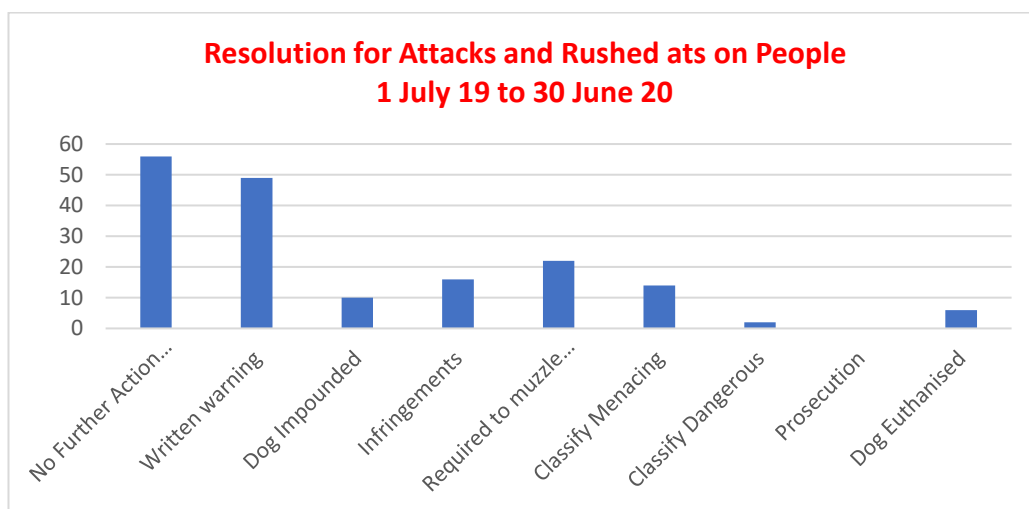
At 30 June	Attacks on people	Rushing People	Attacks on Domestic Animals	Total	Total Known Dogs	Aggression as a % of Total Known Dogs
2016	79	108	100	287	12024	2.39%
2017	84	91	132	307	12672	2.42%
2018	84	101	123	308	13082	2.35%
2019	63	92	94	249	13493	1.85%
2020	60	104	127	291	14246	2.04%

- 557 dogs were impounded. This includes dogs roaming, captured and trapped. 469 dogs were released to their owner or adopted and 88 were euthanised (release rate 84.2%).
- We are continuing to develop our adoption program which rehomes many unwanted dogs each year. Staff have established strong liaisons with other adoption groups with our dogs finding new homes in Levin, Auckland, Waikato and New Plymouth.

“Love my new home”



- We utilise a range of tools to encourage owners to control their dogs to minimise repeat offending. The following graph depicts the outcome for the 164 reported incidents where people were attacked or rushed at by a dog. The good news for this year was the fact that it was the first year that we didn't have an attack on a person that was serious enough to prosecute, however we did have a prosecution for a serious dog attack on another animal.



Note: NFA (No Further Action) is where the complainant cannot be contacted or no longer wants us to proceed or is unwilling to give evidence if required or where the dog owner can't be identified.

## 7. Complaints

	2019/2020	2018/2019
Total number of registered dogs	13594	12962

Total number of probationary owners	0	0
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Total number of disqualified owners	18	16
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Total number of dogs classified as dangerous		
▪ S.31 (1)(a) Section 57A conviction	1	1
▪ S.31 (1)(b) Sworn evidence	5	5
▪ S.31 (1)(c) Owner admits in writing	12	14

Total number of dogs classified as menacing because of:		
▪ S.33A(1)(b)(i) Observed or reported behaviour (deed)	67	61
▪ S.33A (1)(b)(ii) Characteristics associated with breed	0	0
▪ S.33C Dog breeds listed in schedule four of the Dog Control Act 1996	140	149

Number of infringement notices issued	445	281
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<b>Number of dog related complaints received</b>	<b>4236</b>	<b>4551</b>
▪ Attacks on people	60	63

▪ Attacks on domestic animals	127	94
▪ Person rushed at	104	92
▪ Other animals or vehicles rushed at	41	47
▪ Barking dogs	969	1240
▪ Bylaw (excludes roaming dogs)	70	46
▪ Roaming dogs	1337	1471
▪ Unregistered dogs	286	308
▪ Miscellaneous*	1242	1190

\* NB: Miscellaneous complaints are made up of customer messages, registration enquiries, requests for dog traps etc.

Number of summary prosecutions commenced	1	5
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