



**GREAT LAKE TAUPŌ**  
Taupō District Council

**Taupō District Council**  
**Annual Dog Control**  
**Report 2020/21**  
**Dog Control Act 1996 Section 10A**

This report has been prepared by:

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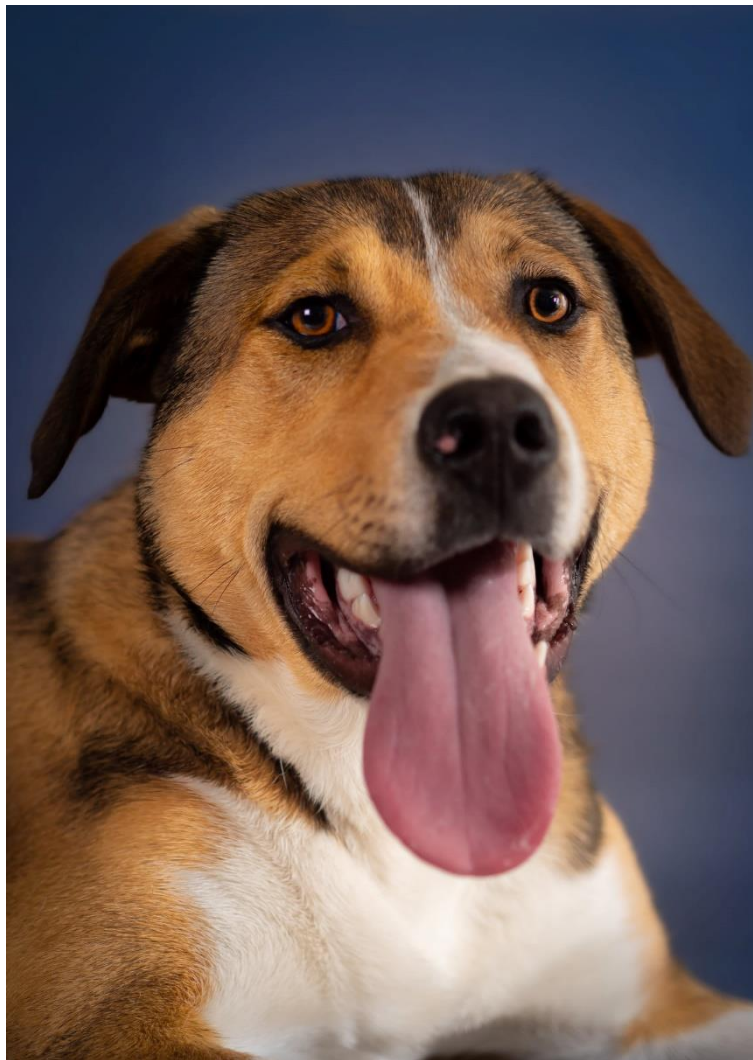


## 1. Introduction

In accordance with section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act), territorial authorities are required to report each financial year on the administration of their dog control policy and dog control practices.

The report must include information relating to:

- The number of registered dogs in the territorial authority district;
- The number of probationary owners and disqualified owners in the territorial authority district;
- The number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as dangerous under section 31 and the relevant provision under which the classification is made;
- The number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as menacing under section 33A or section 33C and the relevant provision under which the classification is made;
- The number of infringement notices issued by the territorial authority;
- The number of dog related complaints received by the territorial authority in the previous year and the nature of those complaints; and
- The number of prosecutions taken by the territorial authority under the Act.



## 2. Section 10A(1)(a) Dog Control Policy

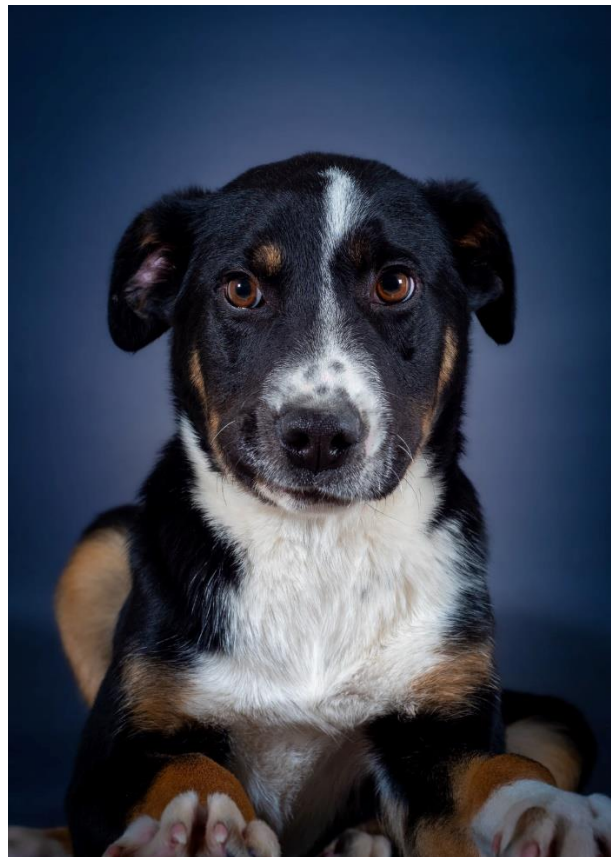
Taupō District Council updated the Dog Control Policy in 2021. The objectives of this Policy are:

- To provide for exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.
- To minimise the fear of dogs attacking or intimidating people.
- To avoid danger from uncontrolled dogs entering children's play areas.
- To minimise danger, distress and nuisance caused by dogs.
- To have all dogs registered and micro-chipped.

The principles of the Policy are:

- Taupō District Council places a high priority on ensuring that dogs are registered.
- Taupō District Council recognises that the large majority of dog owners are very responsible and, as a result, the interaction between dogs and the public is generally positive.
- Dogs need the ability to exercise unrestrained and within a social setting. There are designated dog exercise areas throughout the District. Dog owners are encouraged to act responsibly, evaluate the circumstances and then to take all reasonable steps to ensure that their dogs do not cause a nuisance, in these areas.
- Taupō District Council believes that conflicts can be resolved and managed in a way that protects the public, manages the pet population, prevents cruelty to animals and balances the interests of many people in the community.

The Compliance Team is committed to supporting the Policy, Legislation and Bylaws and how it relates to the control of dogs alongside the obligations of the Taupō District Council.



### **3. Section 10A(1)(b) Summary of Practices**

The Animal Control functions of the Dog Control Act 1996 are managed by our Compliance Team. This is made up of:

- A Team Leader;
- A Senior Compliance Officer;
- 4 x Compliance Officers;
- A Pound Keeper Compliance Officer; and
- A Part time Pound Assistant

The Council Animal Control facility is located at 131 Centennial Drive Taupō along with the Pound/ Animal Shelter. There is also a small Pound/ Animal Shelter located at Turangi, this is not open to the public and houses dogs on a temporary basis only.

This Taupō facility is operated by Council staff and acts as a welfare centre for day to day care of animals as well as being available for companion animals during a major event such as a natural disaster. It has kennelling for 42 dogs, an exercise yard and three amnesty drop cages.

The Council Animal Control facility is co-located next to the Taupō SPCA which we work closely with when dealing with animal welfare issues and rehoming of dogs. Rehoming is also undertaken with other animal rescue centres, pet shops and through our own dedicated Facebook page.

Registration services are available at the Animal Control facility as well as low cost micro-chipping, leads and collars.

### **4. Summary of Animal Control Activity in 2020/21**

Compliance Officers aim to build great relationships with our community and promote the benefits of compliance which we enforce with reason and compassion, taking into account individual circumstance where appropriate.

This creates a better place to be for our community, and Compliance Officers get an opportunity to interact with the public and hand out education cards that provide information about dogs and the Taupō district.

#### **Insights into a portion of our 2021 activity**

##### **New Policy and Bylaw**

A new Dog Control Policy was adopted by Council in 2021. All Territorial Authorities must adopt a Dog Policy under the Dog Control Act which must have regard to the need to minimise danger, distress, and nuisance to the community through ensuring proper control of dogs. At the same time ensuring that there are appropriate areas to exercise and fulfil recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

A new Control of Dogs Bylaw was adopted by Council in 2021. Although the Bylaw was not due to be reviewed until 2023 some minor changes had occurred that required updating, including a demand for new dog exercise areas. The purpose of the Control of Dogs Bylaw 2021 is to give effect to the Dog Control Policy 2021 by prescribing minimum standards for the keeping and control of dogs, to ensure the health and safety of any persons, and to protect the public from nuisance.

## **Dog Registration**

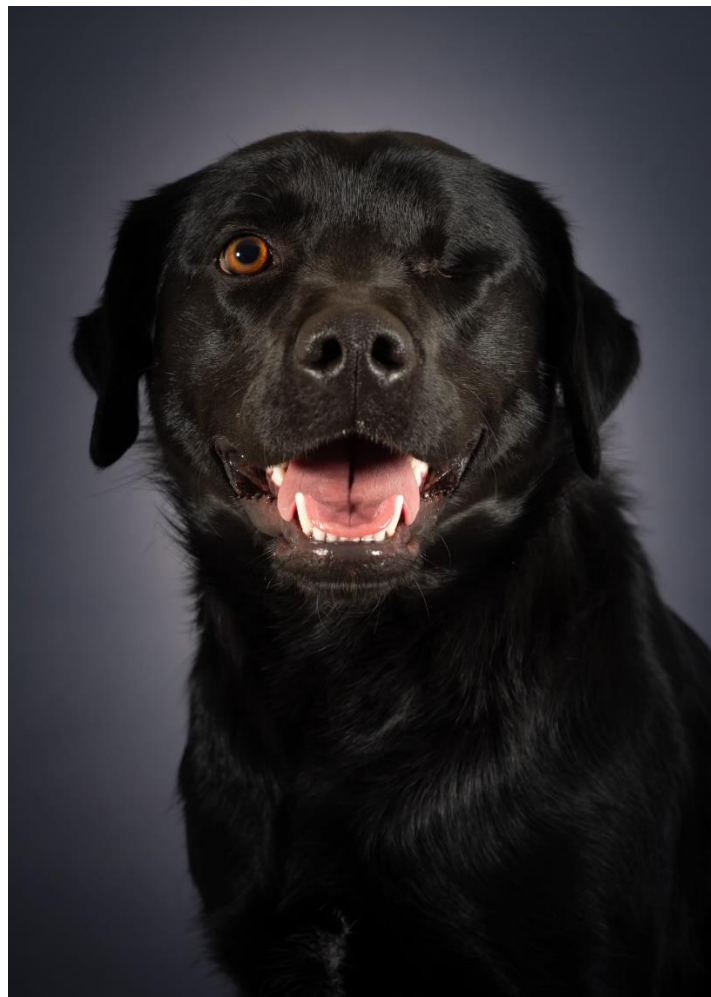
Dog registration for the 2020/21 year was completed at 99.7 percent of known dogs in the district – this is another successful registration period. The result was achieved through solid communication with our dog owners, education, patrols and proactive compliance action.

The process involved an initial letter and then a reminder letter and or phone call. If dog owners continue to fail to register their dogs, they are infringed and the dog(s) are then seized and impounded unless they are able to pay immediately and provide proof of payment. Owners whose dogs have been seized are required to complete registration in order to have the dog released from the pound.

## **Our Pound**

We continue to monitor our procedures for the care of dogs, delivered in line with the best most up to date methods. We focus on the way the facility is cleaned and maintained to ensure that the appropriate precautions are taken to mitigate the introduction of illness and diseases such as Parvovirus etc.

We have secured funding to bring our facility up to a higher standard, this includes changes to our kennelling to ensure that it is safe for our staff and the dogs along with upgrading equipment that is used in the care of dogs.





## **Our response to complaints**

We continually seek to improve our practices to ensure that the response from Council is fair, measured and in the best interest of the community. We aim to gain cooperation from the community so they are willing to be good dog owners before the need to arise to have compliance which requires some form of enforcement. This is generally achieved by interacting with dog owners in a positive way, assisting and educating dog owners rather than relying on infringements or issuing of notices or warnings.

Our Compliance Officers respond (in most cases) immediately to complaints and conduct patrols across the district's reserves and open spaces to achieve greater compliance. Our work is not always appreciated or recognised as it can be difficult to quantify, it is hard on staff and sometimes dangerous.

Patrols are increased during our district's busy summer and holiday periods which assist Council to achieve its aim of balancing the needs of dogs and their owners, while minimising any potential issues to the community and environment.

## **Barking Dogs**

Nuisance barking complaints account for a large number of our complaints. Most are resolved quickly once the owner is advised of the issue and our team are able to engage with dog owners to provide advice on methods to resolve the issue.

We require a complainant to make an initial complaint with a follow-up complaint if the barking continues for a further 30 minutes, this has reduced time taken up by those complaints which may not be valid. We also developed a Barking Notice in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996 to provide a step in our enforcement process and if nuisance barking is not resolved, an Abatement Notice may then be required (as provided by the Act).

## **Roaming Dogs**

Our Compliance Officers generally attempt to engage with and provide advice to dog owners and assess why the dog was able to roam.

In most instances if a registered dog is picked up the dog might be returned to the owner with a warning, rather than impounding. This means that less dogs are required to be processed through the pound. Reducing the risk of bringing contamination into our facility and less strain on our team and our resources.

Where we encounter repeat offenders we maintain the ability to enforce through warning notices and or infringements.

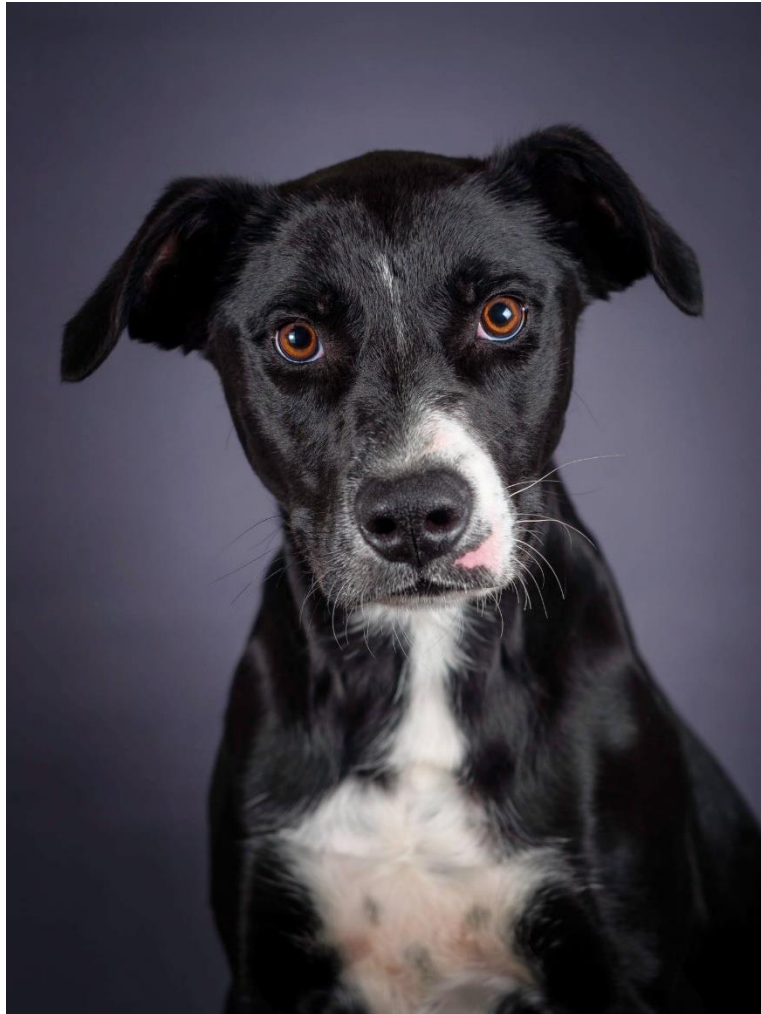
## **Dog Attacks and Aggressive Behaviour**

Every reported incident is investigated, and a report completed (including an attack rating matrix). Upon completion of the investigation and reporting, a decision is made as to what action is appropriate in accordance with the requirements of the Dog Control Act 1996. Our primary aim is the safety of the community and other animals and each incident is assessed on its merits.

## **Dog Education**

Dog education is provided by the Compliance Team and continues to grow its audience. The Dog Smart Programme is presented mainly to primary school and preschool age children and community groups. This has been impacted by the Covid 19 environment and we are reassessing how we may deliver this in different ways.

Relevant information for dog owners of their responsibilities are displayed through signage and regular features through the Council information systems, local newspapers and radio advertising.



## **Rehoming and Adoption of Dogs**

Our staff have worked hard throughout the year to find the best possible homes for dogs in their care that were suitable for adoption. We work closely with rescue organisations across the country and also have many people visiting our facility in the hope of adopting a dog.

We also utilise our official Facebook page Taupo District Adopt a Dog to find as many suitable homes as possible. We have a photographer that takes professional images of the dogs available and draws great attention to the posts which are shared by many users to a variety of other Facebook pages. Our Pound Keeper also posts great write ups to go with the images that expresses the personality of each dog along with some humour. The page has a great online presence with 4,982 followers.



### **Our success story for 2020/21**

'Milo' was found in our amnesty cage and was injured. He was assessed by a vet and it was discovered his leg was broken and was at risk of needing an amputation. The vet cast the leg and our team took excellent care of this lovely natured little pup. We had no person come forward to claim ownership of the dog so the team continued to care for him and ensure that he had the opportunity to recover prior to seeking a forever home.

As soon as we could we attempted to relay Milos story to our community and they responded with enthusiasm when we announced that he was ready for adoption. We found a wonderful forever home for Milo every member of our team was happy to see his journey continue beyond our care.

It's never easy for our team when faced with having to make decisions about the future of animals in our care and something the team take seriously and we always want the best outcome. Success stories such as Milo's are extremely rewarding for the team and often go unnoticed by the community.



### **Covid 19 Response**

During this report period the Compliance Team again dealt with the challenges presented by the Covid-19 Pandemic and various levels of lockdown.

As essential workers, our team found new ways of interacting with our community and the other agencies we deal with, while maintaining their own health and safety. Complaints were responded to remotely when possible. Our team was provided and required to use PPE and abide by all safety guidelines during the course of their duties.

All dogs where appropriate that were impounded or found roaming were returned to their owners. Although during higher levels our facility is required to be closed to the public our staff continued to provide the best possible care for dogs that had no owner. We also implemented 'contactless' dog returns at the owners address to return dogs in the safest possible way.

5. Section 10A(2)(a-g)

<b>Dog Control Act 1996 Section 10A Report - End of Financial Year 2020/21</b>		
<b>10A(2)(a)</b>	The number of registered dogs	7,377
	The number of owners	5,155
<b>10A(2)(b)</b>	The number of probationary owners	3
	The number of disqualified owners	4
<b>10A(2)(c)</b>	<b>The number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as dangerous under section 31 and the relevant provision under which the classification is made:</b>	29
	Section 31(1)(a) Conviction under Section 57A(2)	1
	Section 31(1)(b) Sworn Evidence	21
	Section 31(1)(c) Owner admission	7
<b>10A(2)(d)</b>	<b>The number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as menacing under section 33A or section 33C and the relevant provision under which the classification is made:</b>	145
	Section 33A	92
	Section 33C	53
<b>10A(2)(e)</b>	<b>The number of infringement notices issued by the territorial authority:</b>	870
<b>10A(2)(f)</b>	<b>The number of dog related complaints received by the territorial authority in the previous year and the nature of those complaints:</b>	
	Animal Care/Welfare	22
	Dogs/Animal Management and After Hours	214
	Attack	95
	Barking	282
	Lost/Found	255
	Pound/Impounding	500
	Registration checks	472
	Roaming/Fouling	428
	Rushing/Aggression	65
<b>10A(2)(g)</b>	<b>The number of prosecutions taken by the territorial authority under this Act.</b>	0

# ANNEX A

## Dog Control Act 1996 Section 10A

### Territorial authority must report on dog control policy and practices

**(1)** A territorial authority must, in respect of each financial year, report on the administration of—

(a) its dog control policy adopted under section 10; and

(b) its dog control practices.

**(2)** The report must include, in respect of each financial year, information relating to—

(a) the number of registered dogs in the territorial authority district:

(b) the number of probationary owners and disqualified owners in the territorial authority district:

(c) the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as dangerous under section 31 and the relevant provision under which the classification is made:

(d) the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as menacing under section 33A or section 33C and the relevant provision under which the classification is made:

(e) the number of infringement notices issued by the territorial authority:

(f) the number of dog related complaints received by the territorial authority in the previous year and the nature of those complaints:

(g) the number of prosecutions taken by the territorial authority under this Act.

**(3)** The territorial authority must give public notice of the report—

(a) by means of a notice published in—

(i) 1 or more daily newspapers circulating in the territorial authority district; or

(ii) 1 or more other newspapers that have at least an equivalent circulation in that district to the daily newspapers circulating in that district; and

(b) by any means that the territorial authority thinks desirable in the circumstances.

**(4)** The territorial authority must also, within 1 month after adopting the report, send a copy of it to the Secretary for Local Government.

**Please contact the Taupō District Council Compliance Team if you have any questions regarding this report.**