

Westland District Council Annual Dog Control Policy and Practices Report 2024/2025

1. The Dog Control Act 1996

The Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) requires Territorial Authorities to publicly report on Dog Control Policies and Practices as outlined under Section 10A.

This report contains information and statistics on the Westland District Council's Dog Control activity for the year 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. I have changed all the years to the new period

2. Dog Control Policy and Bylaw

There have been no reviews or amendments made to the Westland District Council Dog Control Bylaw or Dog Control Policy during this reporting period.

3. Administration

3.1. Personnel

Council employs one full-time Warranted Animal Control Officer (ACO). Rostered after-hours, and annual/sick leave cover has been carried out by the Council's Health and Safety Advisor. A casual employee who is warranted was available to provide cover when the ACO was absent.

A business case was prepared to recruit a second part-time ACO on a 6-month arrangement.

3.2. Hours of Operation

The Animal Control Officer generally works from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday, and responds to appropriate animal complaints. A response to complaints is provided 24 hours a day on rostered days, weekends, and statutory holidays, ensuring Council has appropriate cover to provide service delivery expectations throughout the year.

3.3. Dog Pound

Council continues to manage three designated pound/kennels, one within the SPCA facility on Hau Hau Road, one kennel situated at the Haast Police Station, and one kennel situated at the Franz Josef Police Station. A rental is paid for the use of part of the SPCA building.

Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of its own pound assets and facilities, and the stewardship and feeding of any dogs coming into its care. The pound operates 24/7 with public access by appointment only via the on-duty ACO, to claim any dog/s under their ownership that have been impounded.

Access to the Pound facilities is restricted to Authorised Council personnel.

Dogs are only released to owners on full payment of due fees (registration and penalty fees), and the cost of microchipping if required.

Any dog not claimed within seven days is deemed to be abandoned and is assessed for rehoming suitability.

All dogs are assessed by an ACO Officer, and if applicable, a suitable qualified officer of the SPCA or equivalent abandoned animal care facility, to determine suitability for rehoming.

4. Fees and Charges

The fees and criteria were set in 2019/2020 and remained unchanged for several years.

The following fees and charges were adopted by Council for the delivery of Animal Control services for the 2024/2025 year.

There has been a modest increase in fees to ensure that the animal control operations are close to cost-neutral. The responsible dog owner policy was removed due to low uptake and reorganisation of the registration system. Gold card discount is 20% off the registration fee.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Entire | \$115.00 |
| Neutered | \$80.00 |
| Registration of Dangerous Dog | Standard Registration Fee plus 50% |
| Late Registration – 1 August | Standard Registration Fee plus 50% |
| First Impounding Offence | \$82 |
| Second Impounding Offence | \$164 |
| Third Impounding offence | \$245 |
| Feeding/Day | \$30 |
| Call-out for Dog Reclaiming | \$150 per hour |

5. Dog Population Analysis

A total of 2046 dogs and 1433 owners are recorded in the Council Database for the reporting period. It is unknown how many dogs are unregistered in Westland.

6. Enforcement

The format for reporting of complaints, impounding, classification, infringements, and court proceedings was modified for the 2018/19 period and continues in use for this reporting period.

Fees for prosecution have increased as per the letter from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Where applicable, generalised figures from previous years have been included in the tables below. “NR” identifies where specifics were ‘Not Recorded’ by category.

6.1. Complaints

A total of 184 complaints were received during the 2024/2025 reporting period, compared to previous years, as shown.

| Complaints Received | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Dog Attack | 5 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Rushing/Threatening | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Roaming | 40 | 150 | 110 | 90 |
| Barking | 13 | 25 | 20 | 20 |
| Welfare | 0 | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| General | 5 | 40 | 60 | 58 |
| Total | 65 | 226 | 202 | 184 |

6.2. Impounding

16 dogs were impounded during the reporting period, all of which were returned to their owners. There were 31 dogs and puppies that were surrendered.

6.3. Classification of Dog Owners

The Council did not classify any dog owners as 'disqualified from owning a dog' in the 2024/2025 year. There are no registered 'disqualified' or 'probationary' owners within the Westland District.

6.4. Classification of Dogs

Dogs can be classified in three different ways:

- Menacing classifications under Section 33A of the Act are applied to a dog which the Council considers may pose a threat to any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife due to observed or reported behaviour; or any characteristic associated with the dog (their behaviour).
- Menacing classifications under Section 33C of the Act are applied to a dog which belongs wholly or predominantly to one or more breeds or types listed in Schedule 4 of the Act (their breed).
- Dangerous dogs under Section 31 of the Act are applied to a dog if the owner is convicted under 57A(2), if there is evidence that the dog is aggressive, or the owner admits that the dog is aggressive.

There are 28 dogs registered as 'Menacing' in the Westland District.

For the reporting period, 5 dogs were registered as 'Menacing' under Section 33A, none registered as 'Menacing' under Section 33C.

1 dog from the Westland District was classified as Dangerous by the Greymouth Council for an attack that happened there.

Under Council's Dog Control Bylaw, all dogs classified as menacing must be neutered and muzzled when in a public area.

| | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Menacing S 33A | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Menacing S 33C | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dangerous S 31 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

6.5 Infringements

A total of 133 infringement notices were issued for the following offences:

| Infringement Offence | 21/22 | 22/23 | 23/24 | 2024/25 |
|---|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Fails to comply with any bylaw | 0 | 16 | 20 | 10 |
| Fails to comply with effects of classification | 3 | 8 | 0 | 2 |
| Fails to register dog | 11 | 106 | 111 | 103 |
| Fails to keep dog under control | 4 | 3 | 5 | 18 |
| Failure to provide proper care | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

6.6. Court Proceedings

There were no court prosecutions undertaken for offences under the Act for the 2024/2025 reporting period.

7. Other Services

7.1. Multiple Dog Permits (3+ Dogs – Urban Zone)

A permit is required to keep more than two dogs on a property in an urban area. The issue of a permit is conditional on the suitability of an owner, their property, and obtaining approval from affected neighbours.

7.2. Dog Gone

The Dog Gone system was introduced at Westland District Council on 1 July 2025. This system has been adopted by several Councils around New Zealand, and it has helped to reunite owners and dogs without Council intervention or the dogs being impounded.

Council is notified when a reunification of a dog with its owner takes place. The system allows the owner to register the dog and the option to provide their contact details to Dog Gone, who holds that information on their database. When a dog is found, people follow the clear instructions on the dog's tag, and the dog's owner receives a notification that their pet has been found safe and sound. They then receive information from Dog Gone that is needed to reunite the owner and dog.

Dog Gone has saved the Animal Control Officer from being called to pick up and impound dogs, which in turn has saved on issuing infringements and charging impoundment fees. The system has been working successfully since its introduction, and there have been 3 dogs reunited with their owners in Westland since the new system was implemented.

8. Fees and finance

Animal control fees had not been adjusted for several years, and there was a need to raise fees generally.

Westland District Council fees are very low compared to other councils on the West Coast. This impacts adversely on the costs of the animal control budget which is being topped up by ratepayers. Revenue collected from dog owners does not cover costs.