Dog Control Policy and Practices Report
1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

1 The Dog Control Act 1996

The Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) requires Council to report on dog control policies and practices as outlined under section 10A. Section 10 A requires a territorial authority to prepare a report detailing the following:

- The number of registered dogs in the district.
- The number of dogs that have been classified as dangerous and menacing.
- The number of infringement notices issued by the Westland District Council.
- The number and nature of dog related complaints received by the Westland District Council.
- The number of prosecutions taken by Westland District Council.

2 Dog Control Policy and Bylaw

The current policy outlines the Councils requirements regarding dog control. There have been no reviews or amendments made to the Policy or Bylaw during this reporting period.

Council's objective is to ensure dogs are kept under control, particularly in public places through responsible dog ownership.

3 - Administration

3.1 Personnel

Council employs one Animal Control Officer (ACO) to provide dog control services during office hours (8.30am to 4.30pm), afterhours as well as coverage during public holidays and weekends. A casual ACO assists with the on call service to cover leave and illness as required.

During November 2025 to February 2026 Council employed a part-time ACO who concentrated on door knocking to identify unregistered dogs in selected areas. During this period, approximately 20% of the properties visited had unregistered dogs.

3.2 Hours of operation

The animal control service is provided from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday. ACO's respond to complaints 24 hours a day on rostered days, weekends, and statutory holidays, ensuring Council can provide service delivery expectations throughout the year.

3.3 Dog Pound

Westland District Council as a dog pound located in Hokitika. This consists of five cages and an associated exercise area.

Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of its pound assets and facilities also the stewardship and feeding of any dogs coming into its care.

The pound operates 24/7 with public access by appointment to be re-united with any dog(s) that have been impounded.

Council also maintain a kennel and run at Franz Josef Police station and one at the Haast Police station. These are used infrequently to ensure dogs are housed safely and securely until the ACO can attend to collect the dog.

4. Registration Fees and Charges

The dog control service is funded through a combination of dog registration fees and rates. The registration fees for 2025/2026 were as follows, with a 20% discount for owners 65 or over for non-working dogs:

Animal Control	Fee (GST inclusive) 2025/2026
Certified Disability Assistance Dog	Nil
Unneutered dog	$115
Neutered dog	$80
First working dog **Additional working dog/s**	$80 $40
Registration Dangerous Dog	Standard Registration Fee plus 50%

5.Dog Registrations

There were 2158 dogs registered during this period, this is a 3% (70 dogs) decrease compared to the 2024/2025 registration period.

This reduction includes a large number of dogs recorded as deceased or being transferred out of the district and registered elsewhere.

Non-payment of registration fees within the required timeframe incurs a 50% penalty added to the initial registration fee, followed by issue of infringement notices ($300). Unpaid infringement fines are referred to the Courts for collection and any outstanding dog registration fees are added to the new registration year.

6. Service requests and complaints

There was a 22% reduction (40) in the total number of service requests during this period. This is attributed to the introduction of the new 'Doggone' service, where roaming dogs are re-united with their owners without the need for the ACO to attend.

Complaints Received	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Dog Attack stock	6	4	5	4
Dog Attack - - person	0	0	0	1
Rushing/Threatening	1	0	1	4
Roaming	150	110	90	44
Barking	25	20	20	21
Welfare	4	8	10	8
General	40	60	58	62
Total	**226**	**202**	**184**	**144**
Doggone – Reunites				**50**

6.1 Barking complaints

Barking dogs are among the most frequently made complaints to Council. The ACO provides advice to the dog owner regarding this, with a graduated response to addressing these, where the owner is educated about why the dog may be barking. Vibrating anti bark collars are available to hire for free or to purchase if the problem persists, with Infringements being issued as a last resort.

6.2 Impounding

17 dogs were impounded during the reporting period of which seven were returned to their owners. The others were handed to SPCA to be rehomed.

Impounded 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 becomes the property of WDC and is then assessed for rehoming suitability.

Dog can also be surrendered, where the ACO works with the SPCA, to desex, vaccinate and microchip dogs as necessary for before re-homing.

6.3. Classification of Dog owners

Council did not classify any dog owners as disqualified or probationary owners during this period.

There are currently no registered ‘disqualified’ or ‘probationary’ owners within the Westland District.

6.4 Classification of Dogs

There were 0 dogs classified as Dangerous for the 2025-2026 registration period.

There are five dogs that were classified as Menacing under Section 33A (observed or reported behaviour).

There are 0 dogs that have been identified as Menacing under Section 33C (based on type or breed) of the Dog Control Act in 2025/2026.

6.5 Infringements

There was a 58% (92) reduction in the overall number of infringements issued. This is attributable to a number of factors including, increased owner education and additional signage being installed in areas where people have often had dogs off leash. There have also been increased proactive site visits to discuss outstanding dog registration with dog owners.

Infringement Offence	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Fails to comply with any bylaw	16	20	25	8
Fails to comply with effects of classification	8	0	0	1
Falsely notifying dog death	0	0	2	0
Fails to register dog	106	111	124	53
Fails to keep dog under control	3	5	9	6
Total	133	136	160	68

7. Other services and activities

7.1 Education

During November and December 2025, the ACO visited Primary Schools within the Westland district to discuss an education programme to about “Being safe around dogs” at school. This programme will be progressed over the next registration period.

7.2 Doggone and lifetime tags

Lifetime tags were introduced during this period in conjunction with Doggone. This is a service, where if a dog is roaming and found by a member of the public, the dog’s finder calls the Doggone number on its registration tag. Doggone then shares the phone number of the dog owner with the finder (with approval from the dog owner who signs up to this free service) and the finder calls the dog’s owner to reunite the dog and owner without Council involvement.