

INSPECTION REPORT: SAPS K9 UNIT

Date of Inspection: 6 October 2026

Time: Approximately 13h30

Location: SAPS K9 Unit, Maitland

Inspector: Elani Steenkamp

Purpose: Follow-up inspection regarding compliance with previous warnings and outstanding animal welfare concerns.

1. INSPECTION AND DISCUSSION

On 6 October 2026 at approximately 13h30, I attended the SAPS K9 Unit in Maitland and met with Colonel Speelman, who had returned from leave.

I discussed with Colonel Speelman the issues and concerns experienced at the Unit during the preceding two weeks. Colonel Speelman indicated that he was aware of the situation.

I enquired whether Warrant Officer Meyer and Warrant Officer Pietersen had departed for Roodeplaat. Colonel Speelman confirmed that they had left for Roodeplaat the previous evening.

I requested confirmation of which dogs had been transported to Roodeplaat. Captain Kapank printed a list of the relevant dogs. I was not provided with a physical copy of the document but was able to photograph it for record purposes.

2. DOGS TRANSPORTED TO ROODEPLAAT

According to the information provided during the inspection, the following dogs were transported to Roodeplaat for final assessments:

- **Rogue (SK04/2026)** – Male German Shepherd
- **Kujo (SK01/2026)** – Male Rottweiler
- **Enya (SK04/2026)** – Female Malinois
- **Ace (SK07/2026)** – Male Belgian Shepherd
- **Ronan (SK06/2026)** – Male Belgian Shepherd
- **Mica (SK05/2026)** – Female German Shepherd
- **Roy (SK08/2026)** – Male Belgian Shepherd
- **Achita (B7669)** – Female German Shepherd

Photographs of the list were taken and are retained as supporting documentation.

3. VETERINARY EXAMINATIONS AND BEHAVIOURAL ASSESSMENTS

All dogs that I had previously requested be examined by a veterinarian have subsequently been examined by Dr Banderker.

However, none of the dogs had been assessed by a qualified animal behaviourist.

SAPS personnel advised that Brigadier Kekana and personnel at Roodeplaat conduct behavioural assessments and that the protocols followed at the Maitland SAPS K9 Unit stem from Roodeplaat.

It was further stated that donated dogs that do not pass the evaluation process during the current week would be returned to the persons who donated them. This reportedly includes dogs originating from a breeder.

4. RELIEF CAMPS AND SHELTER

During the follow-up, it was established that kennels/adequate shelter had been placed in all relief camps.

This addresses one of the previously identified concerns regarding shelter within these areas.

SAPS was, however, unable to produce an exercise and relief camp roster. I was advised that this matter would need to be addressed with Brigadier Kekana and that the relevant instruction or protocol would have to come from higher command.

I was further advised that there is currently only **one auxiliary member** available to clean the kennels and relieve the dogs remaining on site while Warrant Officer Meyer and Warrant Officer Pietersen are away.

This remains a welfare concern due to the need to ensure that all dogs receive appropriate daily cleaning, monitoring, exercise and relief.

5. PRESIDENTIAL DOGS

My most significant outstanding concerns relate to the presidential dogs referred to in my previous warnings.

SAPS Maitland personnel advised that they do not regard the presidential dogs as their responsibility, as the dogs fall under a different department and are only being accommodated in the kennels at the Maitland facility.

The person identified as being responsible for the presidential dogs is **Warrant Officer Alta Delport**, contact number: ***.

Irrespective of the internal SAPS departmental arrangements, the fact that these dogs are being housed at the facility raises concerns regarding who is responsible for ensuring their daily care and for implementing required veterinary or welfare interventions.

5.1 Evan – Male Malinois

Evan remains a significant behavioural welfare concern.

He has been observed displaying severe repetitive spinning behaviour indicative of kennel stress. This behaviour was observed even when Warrant Officer Meyer was alone with him.

Dr Pypers was subsequently consulted regarding Evan and, based on the information made available to her, advised that he appears to show signs consistent with obsessive-compulsive behaviour. She indicated, however, that she would need to assess Evan in person before providing a professional conclusion regarding his condition.

An independent in-person behavioural and veterinary assessment of Evan is therefore strongly recommended.

5.2 Ice – Female German Shepherd

Ice was examined by Dr Banderker on **30 September 2026**.

Following the examination, she was placed on treatment. It was further indicated that she required:

- Radiographs at Roodeplaat;
- Dental treatment; and
- Possible boarding at Roodeplaat, subject to confirmation by Roodeplaat.

Despite these recommendations, Ice was not transported to Roodeplaat with the other dogs and remains at the Maitland SAPS K9 Unit.

The reason for her remaining at Maitland and the current plan for completion of the recommended diagnostic procedures and treatment require urgent clarification.

6. PROPOSED INDEPENDENT VETERINARY AND BEHAVIOURAL ASSESSMENT

Dr Pypers, a qualified independent veterinarian and behaviourist, has agreed to conduct a joint visit to the SAPS K9 Unit on **Thursday, 8 October 2026**.

Dr Pypers has indicated that she is available before her meeting at UCT at 13h30.

It is strongly recommended that this opportunity be utilised to conduct an independent assessment of the animals and conditions at the Unit.

In particular, it is recommended that Dr Pypers:

1. Conduct an in-person veterinary and behavioural assessment of **Evan**, with specific attention to the repetitive spinning behaviour observed;
2. Assess **Drago**;
3. Conduct a walkthrough of the kennelling facility;
4. Observe the other dogs remaining on site for potential behavioural or welfare concerns; and
5. Provide an independent professional opinion on any concerns identified during the visit.

7. CONCERNS IDENTIFIED

The following matters remain of concern following the inspection:

1. None of the dogs had been assessed by a qualified animal behaviourist at the Maitland facility.
2. Evan continues to display severe repetitive spinning behaviour and requires an independent professional assessment.
3. Ice remains at Maitland despite the veterinary recommendation that she be sent to Roodeplaat for radiographs and further attention.
4. SAPS was unable to produce an exercise and relief camp roster.
5. Only one auxiliary member is reportedly available to clean and relieve the dogs currently remaining on site while WO Meyer and WO Pietersen are away.
6. Responsibility and accountability for the welfare and veterinary management of the presidential dogs remain unclear between SAPS departments.
7. Donated dogs that fail assessment are reportedly to be returned to their donors, including a breeder, which raises the need for further investigation into the origin and circumstances of these animals.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the inspection and information obtained, I recommend the following:

8.1 Independent Assessment

The joint inspection with Dr Pypers should proceed as a matter of priority on Thursday, 8 October 2026.

Evan and Drago should specifically be assessed, together with a general walkthrough and assessment of the other dogs remaining at the facility.

8.2 Ice

Urgent clarification should be obtained regarding why Ice was not transported to Roodeplaat following Dr Banderker's recommendation.

Confirmation should further be obtained regarding arrangements for her:

- Radiographs;
- Dental treatment;
- Continued medical treatment; and
- Transfer or boarding at Roodeplaat, if still required.

8.3 Exercise, Relief and Cleaning

Further information should be requested regarding the daily exercise and relief arrangements for all dogs remaining on site.

The requested exercise/relief roster or relevant operational protocol should be obtained from Brigadier Kekana or the appropriate SAPS authority.

The adequacy of having only one auxiliary member available to attend to the cleaning and relief requirements of the dogs during the absence of WO Meyer and WO Pietersen should also be assessed.

8.4 Presidential Dogs

Formal clarification should be sought regarding who has responsibility for the daily welfare, veterinary care and implementation of veterinary recommendations relating to the presidential dogs housed at Maitland.

8.5 Donated Dogs/Breeder

Once the current matter at the SAPS K9 Unit has been concluded, it is strongly recommended that an **experienced Inspector investigate the premises from which the donated dogs originate, particularly the breeder concerned.**

This should include establishing the origin of the dogs, the circumstances under which they were donated and the welfare conditions at the premises concerned.

9. CONCLUSION

Progress has been made in certain respects. The dogs previously identified as requiring veterinary examination have been examined by Dr Banderker, several dogs have been transported to Roodeplaat for final assessment, and adequate shelter has been placed within the relief camps.

However, several significant matters remain outstanding, particularly the absence of qualified behavioural assessments, the ongoing concerns regarding Evan, the outstanding veterinary recommendations relating to Ice, uncertainty surrounding responsibility for the presidential dogs, and the current exercise, relief and staffing arrangements at the Unit.

It is therefore recommended that the matter remain under follow-up until the outstanding welfare concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

The proposed independent veterinary and behavioural inspection by Dr Pypers on **8 October 2026** is strongly recommended as the next step, after which the findings can be considered to determine whether further Inspectorate action is required.

Report compiled by:

Elani Steenkamp

Inspectorate – Wildlife Supervisor

Cape of Good Hope SPCA

Date: 6 October 2026*