

DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT

2013 – 2014 Financial year

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 (“Act”) requires that Council reports on its dog control policies and practices over the financial year.

DOG CONTROL POLICY

Section 10 of the Act requires Council to develop a policy on dogs, which establishes Council’s philosophy for dog control throughout the district.

The current policy was adopted on 11 April 2006 and establishes Council’s criteria to be followed regarding controlling dogs.

Micro-chipping

All dogs registered for the first time on or after 1 July 2006 and all dogs classified as dangerous or menacing since 1 December 2003 are required to be micro-chipped. Council introduced a new initiative to provide micro-chipping at cost (\$10) and has been working with dog owners to ensure all dogs are micro-chipped as part of a new Enforcement Strategy.

Council is currently reviewing its Policy on Dogs (and associated Bylaw).

DOG REGISTRATION

Council introduced new registration fees, which provided a discount to dog owners with no negative history for the previous two years e.g. impounding of a dog and also for having effective fencing at the property.

There was a slight increase (4%) in the number of registered dogs over the last year, which is consistent with the increasing trend over the previous years. This includes 276 dogs that were transferred out of the district and 240 that died.

Category	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014
Total number of Registered Dogs	3713	3728	3874
a) Dangerous by owner conviction under s.31(1)(a)	0	1	1
b) Dangerous by sworn evidence under s.31(1)(b)	2	0	0
c) Dangerous by owner admittance in writing under s.31(1)(c)	0	0	0
Total number of Dangerous Dogs	2	1	1
a) Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) – Behaviour	14	8	19
b) Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii) - Breed characteristics	0	0	0
c) Menacing under s33C(1) - Schedule 4 Breed/Type	1	2	2
Total number of Menacing Dogs	15	10	21
Total number of Probationary Owners	0	1	0
Total number of Disqualified Owners	0	0	0

DISQUALIFIED & PROBATIONARY DOG OWNERS

There were no probationary or disqualified dog owners in the district within this financial period.

MENACING AND DANGEROUS DOGS

There was 1 dangerous dog registered for the 2013-2014 registration period, however there was a significant increase in the number of menacing dogs registered, which increased from 10 to 21. Two dogs moved into the district that were classified as menacing by another Council, with the remainder being classified as a result of the increase in dog attacks reported to Council.

There were no appeals to the classifications made during this period. There were also no classifications rescinded during this time.

DOG CONTROL RESPONSE

This section describes the number and type of complaints received and the manner in which Council has responded to address the complaints and general issues regarding dogs over the last year.

Dog Control is a priority area of focus within a newly established Enforcement Strategy. The priorities are:

- a) To have all dogs that live in the district registered;
- b) Ensure all dogs are kept under control at all times; and
- c) Reducing ignorance and apathy of dog owners to their responsibilities.

Category of Complaint	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014
Public Safety related complaints			
Dog attack on people - minor	4	5	15
Dog attack on people – serious	4	1	4
Dog attack on animal – minor	12	6	14
Dog attack on animal – serious	13	8	13
Dog attack on stock (worrying stock)	4	4	0
Dog rushing	17	8	19
Roaming dogs	158	348	337
General concern	31	22	59

Non-safety Concerns			
Lost dogs	184	197	300
Barking	152	123	137
Fouling	17	21	2

Total complaints	496	743	900
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Attacks

When an attack occurs on a person or animal, the incident can be extremely distressing for all parties and it is imperative that there is a fast response to such matters.

Over the last year we have seen an increase in the overall number of attacks from 24 to 46, which has generated significant demand for the animal control service, which has led to a corresponding increase in the number of dog classifications issued.

Requests for service regarding dog attacks are a priority and are responded to immediately.

Roaming Dogs

The number of roaming dogs remains the single largest issue. Roaming dogs can frighten, intimidate or annoy others, in addition to attacking other animals and people.

The primary reason for dog attacks was due to the dogs roaming ie 36 of the 46 reported.

The response to requests for service is a newly established key performance indicator as part of the enforcement strategy, with a target of an officer being on site within 2 hours of receiving an urgent or priority request.

Barking Dogs

There was a slight increase in the number of complaints received; and Council continues to provide a free bark collar to dog owners to use to assist in addressing the issue.

Impounding's

There were 130 dogs impounded in response to the requests for service, with the majority of impounded dogs being in response to roaming dogs.

Prosecutions

There were no prosecutions initiated for the 2013-2014 period.

INFRINGEMENTS

Whilst there was an overall reduction in the number of infringements issued, this was a result of a Council working closely with the community during the registration period to ensure all dogs were registered, and therefore it was not necessary to infringe for non-registration.

However, there has been a significant increase in the number of infringements issued for dog owners failing to control or confine their dogs correctly and control their dogs while in public.

OFFENCE	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014
Failure to comply with classification	0	2	2
Failure to register dog	98	83	0
Failure to advise of address change	0	0	0
Failure to keep dog controlled/confined on owners property	23	12	21
Failure to keep dog under control	2	5	16
Failure to carry a leash in public	0	0	0
Total	123	102	39