



REPORT ON DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES

This report is prepared pursuant to the provisions of Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 for the year ended 30 June 2015. This is the eleventh annual report prepared pursuant to the Act.

Statistics:

	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
The number of registered dogs in the District.	1455	1449	1441	1489	1484	1511	1458	1561	1729	1777
The number of probationary owners and disqualified owners.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The number of dogs classified as dangerous.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
The number of dogs classified as menacing.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	9	9
The number of infringement notices issued by the Council.	26	10	11	18	26	19	16	70	60	53
The number of dog related complaints received by the Council and (since August 2007) the Contractor.	47	51	130	109	86	110	133	184	212	148
The number of prosecutions taken by the Council under the Act.	6	3	11	18	13	12	1	27	26	0

Staff

The Council re-tendered the contract for dog control services throughout the District in March/April 2015. The contractor has, since August 2010, been the Hokitika Branch of the Royal New Zealand SPCA. Following the re-tender process the SPCA was successful in retaining the dog control contract which was renewed for a period of three years.

The new contractual arrangements will provide at least the same level of general service but with an increased number of patrols in key areas, an improved consistency of data collection/reporting and greater clarity around roles and processes.

The Council values the contractual relationship with the SPCA, as Council believes that a better standard of dog control can be achieved by having an emphasis on animal welfare and education as well as the statutory dog control function. The contractor's performance is monitored on a monthly basis.

Policy on Dogs

The current Policy on Dogs was adopted in April 2010 after completing the Special Consultative Procedure.

The Policy highlighted the movement towards a more effective relationship with the SPCA, with a strategic alliance focusing on education and animal welfare. The Council has always regarded "dog control" as the statutory minimum, and the policy seeks an overall improvement in animal welfare knowledge and practice, leading to an improvement in dog control.

The Policy on Dogs has not been amended during the year ending 30 June 2015 and is considered to be accurate, with the exception of a couple of outdated references to the relationship with the SPCA.

Dog Control

Dog Control is based in the Hokitika area, although increased numbers of dog patrols have been negotiated with the contractor for Kaniere, Kumara, Ross and Franz Josef. The sheer size of Westland makes the provision of the same levels of service at the southern extremity of our district very difficult to achieve.

The number of complaints received about dogs has dropped 28% from the previous year. This could simply reflect the manner in which this information is collected and forwarded to our contractor. Complaints to Council are now being directed through the Customer Service Centre which ensures that all complaints are recorded and forwarded to the contractor in the appropriate manner.

The availability of specialist contractor staff can be a challenge in a geographically remote area such as Westland. The contractor was without a full complement of staff for about three months during the year. With the appointment of replacement SPCA staff it is anticipated that the numbers of actions taken, particularly proactive work, will increase significantly.

There is some anecdotal evidence that people are becoming less tolerant of the damage and nuisance caused by dogs in the community as demonstrated by a rise in the number of complaints about dogs barking persistently or wandering regularly during the latter part of the year. The number of impounded dogs for example increased significantly from 76 in 2013-2014 to 125 in 2014-2015.

In the year ending 30 June 2015, Council focused on ensuring that all known dogs were registered and microchipped and on implementing a graduated enforcement system. This is based on the premise that education along with the provision of information is the best method of ensuring long term compliance for the vast majority of dog owners. Should that not prove effective, Council can then utilise a range of tools such as written warnings, infringement notices, classifications (menacing dog, dangerous dog), probationary dog ownership, through to disqualification as a dog owner or a prosecution in the District Court in order to obtain compliance with the Dog Control Act 1996.

The 2015/2016 year will see improved training of staff and the implementation of a procedures manual that will provide for a more consistent approach in terms of action taken across the district. We will also implement a programme to locate those dogs that are not currently known to Council and thus are not registered. It is widely accepted that unregistered dogs cause a disproportionately greater amount of harm and nuisance in the community than registered dogs.

Dog Registration

Dog control fees for the year remained at \$74.00 for dogs registered within the Hokitika and Kaniere Townships and \$58.50 for dogs registered in other areas. Dog registration fees also included a 50% penalty additional to the registration fee for late payment. The costs associated with dog registration and dog control are funded entirely by dog registration fees.

External Satisfaction Survey

An external satisfaction survey has generally been undertaken on a biannual basis but was not undertaken in 2014/2015 due to Council's financial constraints. The results of the last biannual external satisfaction survey in 2012 indicated that 35% of residents are 'very satisfied' or 'just

satisfied' with the control of dogs in the District, 27% were 'not very satisfied' or 'not at all satisfied,' and 38% did not know. The Council looks forward to the results of the next external satisfaction survey, planned for 2016.

Adopted 29th October 2015