

QLDC Council

1 June 2023

Report for Agenda Item | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take [2]

Department: Assurance, Finance & Risk

Title | Taitara : Animal Control Fees 2023/2024

Purpose of the Report | Te Take mō te Pūroko

The purpose of this report is to set Animal Control fees in accordance with Section 37 of the Dog Control Act which allows Council to set fees by way of resolution.

Recommendation | Kā Tūtohuka

That QLDC Council:

1. **Note the contents of this report;**
2. **Accept** the recommendation of the 2023/24 Annual Plan Hearings Panel (being the Council as a whole) to Approve the proposed fees [outlined in attachment A] in accordance with Section 37 of the Dog Control Act 1996; and
3. **Note** the commencement date of the new structure of **1 July 2023**.

Prepared by:



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1 May 2023

Reviewed and Authorised by:



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Title: Assurance, Finance and Risk General
Manager
12 May 2023

Context | Horopaki

1. Section 37 of the Dog Control Act allows Council to set fees by way of resolution.
2. Animal Control deals primarily with control of dogs in the district.
3. QLDC provides the Animal Control service, which is funded largely by user fees (70%) with the balance coming from rates. Due to increased inflation and increased overheads, it is necessary to make an adjustment to the user fees to align with the agreed cost recovery in the Revenue and Financing Policy.
4. The Animal Control activity covers the costs of providing for three full time Animal Control Officers; three animal control vehicles; uniforms and PPE; an afterhours response service; two pound facilities to secure roaming dogs; dog training sessions organised yearly for Wānaka and Queenstown; a yearly dog walk event for both Wānaka and Queenstown; school education on dog safety; dog bark collar loaning service; signage on our trails and reserves related to dog control matters; poo bag dispensers and the lifelong tags for registration. The Animal Control Officers respond to public requests regarding dogs and stock and will if required, investigate and action breaches of the Dog Control Act 1996.
5. It is not proposed to change the structure of the fee schedule as it promotes a high level of compliance and control of dogs within the district.
6. Consultation on this matter was undertaken as part of the draft 2023-2024 Annual Plan process, with Animal Control fees being specifically highlighted in the Consultation Document and supporting documents as a proposed increase. Submissions were sought on the proposed increases. The Council sat as the hearings panel on Monday 22 May and deliberations were completed on Wednesday 24 May. The recommendation of the panel during deliberations was that Council adopt the new fees. This report has been prepared under the assumption that Council will agree to the fee increase proposal in the Annual Plan when presented for adoption on 29 June. If Council does not agree to the fee increase proposal in the Annual Plan this paper will be withdrawn.
7. It is necessary for Council to have set the animal control fees at this meeting to enable the invoices for 2023/24 to be issued in the normal timeframe.

Analysis and Advice | Tatāritaka me kā Tohutohu

8. Each cost centre (e.g. animal control) receives an allocation of QLDC shared service costs and also an allocation of directorate administration costs. QLDC overheads for shared services include costs for customer services, finance, knowledge management, human resources, legal and council offices. These shared service costs have increased from the 2022-23 annual plan. Regulatory directorate administration costs have also increased due to additional FTE for regulatory support and due to increases in insurance premiums. Direct costs associated with animal control costs have not significantly changed, however the increase in overheads has

required a review of the charges to align with the cost recovery target set in the Revenue and Financing Policy.

9. The proposed fees for 2023/24 are included in Attachment A. The only increase to the Animal Control fees will be dog registration.
10. Fifty-four per cent of all dogs in the district fall under the de-sexed, pet, fenced, positive fee category and will be charged \$85 under the proposed Animal Control Registration Fees 2023/24. Twenty-four per cent of all dogs in the district fall under the pet, fenced, positive fee category and will be charged \$110 under the proposed Animal Control Registration Fees 2023/24. Finally, 7.5% of all dogs in the district fall under working, pet, fenced, positive fee category and will be charged \$55 under the proposed Animal Control Registration Fees 2023/24
11. The existing fee structure allows for a reduction in fees for having a neutered dog, a fenced property and a dog with positive history with QLDC.
12. Having a neutered dog and a fenced property reduces the likelihood of roaming dogs within the community. Roaming dogs can frighten, intimidate or annoy others, in addition to fouling and attacking other animals and people.
13. There has historically been a 5-7% increase of dogs registered each year. QLDC expects the number of dogs in each fee category to increase relative to the overall increase in dogs in the district in 2023/2024.
14. With the expected increase of dogs of between 5% and 7% in our district, an increase in each fee category is required of 31% per registration to meet the Revenue and Finance Policy split of 70% user pays. The fees need to be reviewed to ensure that the cost recovery targets in the Revenue and Financing Policy are met.
15. Council has deferred budgeted Animal Control Officer resource by 12 months to avoid a 40% increase to dog registration.
16. This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002.
17. Option 1 Accept the recommendation of the 2023/24 Annual Plan Hearings Panel (being the Council as a whole) to approve the proposed fees [outlined in attachment A] in accordance with Section 37 of the Dog Control Act 1996.

Advantages:

- Is consistent with the feedback through the Annual Plan consultation process.
- The registration fees will align with the Revenue and Finance Policy.
- 2023/ 2024 budgets will be met.
- No additional cost to Ratepayers.

Disadvantages:

- There will be an increase in dog registration fees, which may not be popular with some dog owners.
- Non-compliance in dog registration may increase.

18. Option 2 Do not accept the recommendation of the 2023/24 Annual Plan Hearings Panel (being the Council as a whole) to Approve the proposed fees [outlined in attachment A] in accordance with Section 37 of the Dog Control Act 1996 and retain the existing Animal Control fee structure (Status Quo).

Advantages:

- There will be no increased cost to dog owners.

Disadvantages:

- The Revenue and Financing Policy will not be met.
- Animal Control service will need to be reduced to meet the lower budget.
- There will be additional costs to Ratepayers if the budget is overspent.
- Is not in line with the recommendation of the 2023/24 Annual Plan consultation feedback.

19. This report recommends **Option one** for addressing the matter because the current level of service for animal control is required to gain compliance against the Animal Control Act and Bylaw.

Consultation Process | Hātepe Matapaki

Significance and Engagement | Te Whakamahi I kā Whakaaro Hiraka

20. This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy because there is minimal impact on the environment, culture and people of the district and there is no impact on the objectives set out in the Financial Strategy, Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan. Section 37 of the Dog Control Act allows Council to set fees by way of resolution.

21. The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are dog owners and ratepayers.

22. It is considered that dog owners would have an interest in ensuring that dog registration fees are kept as low as possible. However, ratepayers will have an interest in ensuring that services used only by dog owners are not funded by general rates. For this reason, it is considered that the Council is aware of the general views in the community, and given the low significance of the matter, consultation is not required in accordance with sections 78 and 79 of the Local

Government Act 2002. Nonetheless, the proposed fees were presented to the community in the course of the 10 Year Plan consultation.

23. The review of fees and charges was signalled in the Consultation Document for the draft 2023 – 2024 10 Year Plan. The summary of Animal Control Fee submissions can be viewed in Attachment B: 23% were in support, 62% were neutral and 15% were against the proposed fees. The assumption in the draft budgets is that these fees will increase.

Māori Consultation | Iwi Rūnaka

24. The Council has not engaged with local Iwi due to the low significance. However, Iwi have had the opportunity to comment should they choose, through the draft Annual Plan consultation.

Risk and Mitigations | Kā Raru Tūpono me kā Whakamaurutaka

25. This matter relates to the Financial risk category. It is associated with RISK00025 (Ineffective Revenue and Financing Policy to set user charges) within the QLDC Risk Register. This risk has been assessed as having a moderate inherent risk rating.
26. The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing the risk to remain at its current level. This shall be achieved by increasing the fees to align with the Revenue and Finance Policy.

Financial Implications | Kā Riteka ā-Pūtea

27. Increasing the fees will ensure that the Revenue and Financing Policy is met, together with the Annual Plan and Long Term Plan for Animal Control services.

Council Effects and Views | Kā Whakaaweawe me kā Tirohaka a te Kaunihera

28. The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:
- Reference alignment with and consideration of the principles of the Vision Beyond 2050: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/vision-beyond-2050/>
 - Dog control Bylaw 2020
 - Dog Control Policy 2020
 - Revenue and Finance policy
29. The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policies.
30. This matter is included in the Ten Year Plan/Annual Plan:

Bylaw Enforcement

The Animal Control service includes responding to complaints of wandering dogs, stock on roads, barking dogs, lost and found services, registration information, patrolling and

education programmes. This ensures residents are safe, whilst the welfare of animals is protected.

Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions | Te Whakatureture 2002 o te Kāwanataka ā-Kiaka

31. Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. performing regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses by ensuring the Revenue and Finance Policy Split of payments between Private and Public is achieved. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.

32. The recommended option:

- Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not significantly alter the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

Attachments | Kā Tāpirihaka

A	Proposed dog registration fees for the 2023/24 year
B	Summary of annual plan submissions on dog fees