

DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT 2022 – 2023 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 and sets out specific requirements for how the policy is to be adopted and what it must cover. The Council's current policy was adopted on the 25th of June 2020. The policy establishes Council's criteria to be followed regarding controlling dogs.

Policy – Key Aspects:

- The requirement for all dogs classified as menacing and dangerous to be neutered.
- Dogs must be on a leash in public places except Rural General Zones or any dog exercise area (generally, most Council Controlled Tracks and Reserves). However, these two exceptions do not apply to playground or cemeteries.
- The expectations for dog owners to maintain owner responsibility during an emergency.
- That any probationary and disqualified owners shall be classified for the maximum period, unless they can demonstrate to Council's satisfaction that the full period is unnecessary.
- The criteria for issuing a multiple dog licence have been clarified.
- Fees for dog registration have been set to recognize and reward dog ownership behaviour that complies with the Act.

MICRO-CHIPPING

All dogs registered for the first time on or after 1 July 2006 (excluding working dogs) and all dogs classified as dangerous or menacing since 1 December 2003 are required to be microchipped.

At the end of the 2022/23 registration year, there were 169 dogs without microchip numbers compared to 129 in 2021/22. The Animal Control Officer's (**ACO**) have observed that the majority of dogs they deal with are microchipped. The Animal Control team will continue to take enforcement action on those who do not comply with the Act to get their dogs microchipped.

DOG REGISTRATION

Council registration fees are set out to recognise and reward responsible dog ownership and provide a discounted registration fee to dog owners that classify in the low-risk category. For example, if the dog's property is fenced, the dog is neutered, and the dog has positive history e.g. no impounding history.

There was a 2.24% increase in the number of registered dogs from 5962 in 2021/22 to 6099 in 2022/23. Historically there has generally been a 5% increase in new dog registrations each year.

Council was notified of 388 deceased dogs and 358 dogs that were transferred out of the Queenstown Lakes District.

Category	2018 - 2019	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022	2022- 2023
Total number of Registered Dogs	5033	5388	5728	5962	6099
a) Dangerous by owner conviction under s.31(1)(a)	2	1	1	0	0
b) Dangerous by sworn evidence under s.31(1)(b)	2	3	3	4	3
c) Dangerous by owner admittance in writing under s.31(1)(c)	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of Dangerous Dogs	4	4	4	4	3
a) Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) – Behaviour	16	17	13	13	14
b) Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii) - Breed characteristics	0	0	0	0	0
c) Menacing under s33C(1) - Schedule 4 Breed/Type	1	0	0	0	0
Total number of Menacing Dogs	17	17	13	13	14
Total number of Probationary Owners	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of Disqualified Owners	1	1	1	0	0

DISQUALIFIED AND PROBATIONARY DOG OWNERS

There was no probationary or disqualified dog owners classified in 2022/23.

MENACING AND DANGEROUS DOGS

There were three newly classified menacing dogs and no new classified dangerous dogs in the 2022/23 registration period. All three of the menacing classifications were for Menacing under S.33A. One for an attack on a human and two for attack on an animal.

There were two menacing dogs and one dangerous dog notified as deceased. As a result, the total overall figure for dangerous and menacing has been consistent with the year previous.

DOG CONTROL RESPONSE

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

Category of Complaint	2018 - 2019	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021 - 2022	2022- 2023
Dog attack on people – Minor	16	8	14	12	24
Dog attack on people – Serious	4	0	2	2	3
Dog attack on animal – Minor	37	44	25	25	39
Dog attack on animal – Serious	3	9	9	10	12
Dog attack on stock (Worrying stock)	4	1	4	2	4
Dog rushing	25	31	37	29	42
Roaming dogs	498	506	552	463	611
General concern	69	28	66	61	94
Lost dogs	334	242	256	180	222

Barking	159	164	251	268	267
Fouling	12	17	22	30	17
Total complaints	1161	1050	1238	1082	1333

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 previous registration year, there has been an increase in reported dog attacks increasing from 49 reports in 2021/22 to 78 reports in 2022/23. Whilst there has been an increase in minor attacks, the level of serious attacks have been relatively low. There has also been a new policy implemented by the postal companies to report all dog related incidents to us which has contributed to the increase. The number of serious attacks has stayed relatively the same given the number of dogs in the district has increased. The ACO's have also noticed that as more education is provided in the community around dog attacks, people are more inclined to report an attack. Previously there was more hesitancy due to the fear that the dog may face more serious repercussions such as prosecution or euthanasia.

ROAMING DOGS

Roaming dogs can frighten, intimidate, or annoy others, in addition to attacking other animals and people. The number of roaming dogs remains the single largest issue within the district. The number of reports received from the community of roaming dogs has increased from 463 in 2021/22 to 611 in 2022/23. ACO's have understood the increase of roaming dogs may be impacted by people working from the office compared to last year where more people were observed working from home. There has additionally been an increase in impounding's this year as a result of the increase in roaming dogs. The Animal Control team have a focus this year on education on control of dogs in residential areas which should assist with reducing the number of complaints and better control of dogs in 2023/2024.

LOST DOGS

The number of lost dogs reported to Council has increased from 180 in 2021/22 to 222 in 2022/23. As the community get to know the Animal Control team through strategies like the community dog walks, and understand our approach is education through to enforcement, as prescribed in the Queenstown Lakes District Council Enforcement Strategy and prosecution policy, there is less reluctance to call lost dogs through to council.

BARKING DOGS

The number of complaints received for barking dogs has stayed relatively the same from 268 in 2021/22 to 267 in 2022/23. Council continues to provide the free use of anti-bark devices to dog owners as required.

IMPOUNDINGS

There has been an increase in the number of dogs impounded from 31 dogs in 2021/22 to 67 dogs in 2022/23 which correlates to 1.09% of registered dogs in the district. When compared to the previous year's data of 0.52% of registered dogs, this number has increased.

ACO's continue to issue infringements for second time offences for impounding, however where appropriate, on first offences the ACO will return the dog home and provide education to the owners.

PROSECUTIONS

There were no prosecutions in 2022/2023, However, there are currently two cases that could result in prosecution, that are on-going and will be reported in due course.

GENERAL CONCERNS

Council received 94 general dog concerns in total for the 2022/23 registration year. 51 involving animal welfare concerns and 43 general enquiries relating to animals.

The general dog enquiries have stayed at a similar amount only slightly increasing from 39 in 2021/2022. However, welfare concerns have seen an increase from 34 reports in 2021/22 to 51 reports in 2022/23. ACO's have a good relationship with the SPCA and pass on any concerns of welfare to them to follow up further.

INFRINGEMENTS

There has been an increase in the number of infringements issued from 89 in 2021/22 to 99 in 2022/23. The majority of these infringements have been issued for failure to register dog (39) or failure to implant microchip transponder in dog (35). There were 10 for failure to keep dog under control and 1 for failure to comply with any bylaw authorized by the section.

Whilst 35 infringements were issued to dog owners for failure to implant microchips, 23 of these infringements were written off due to compliance from the dog owners.

The increase in failure to control or confine infringements relate to the increase in roaming dogs and increase in number of impounds.

Offence	2018 - 2019	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022	2022- 2023
Failure to comply with classification	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to register dog	18	43	36	39	39
Failure to advise of address change	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to keep dog controlled/confined on owner's property	8	3	3	5	14
Failure to keep dog under control	2	4	4	3	10
Failure to carry a leash in public	0	0	0	0	0
Falsely notifying death of dog	2	0	0	0	0
Failure to supply owner information	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to comply with any bylaws authorized by the section	2	0	0	4	1
Failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	5	0	0	38	35
Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	1	3	0	0	0
Total	38	53	43	89	99