

**QLDC Council  
26 November 2015**

**Report for Agenda Item: 14**

**Department: Finance & Regulatory**

**Dog Control Policy and Practices Report 2014 – 2015**

**Purpose**

To inform Council on the dog control policy and practices undertaken in the 2014/2015 financial year in accordance with Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

**Recommendation**

That Council:

1. **Note** the contents of this report;
2. **Adopt** the Dog Control Policy and Practices report 2014/2015, in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996, Section 10A;
3. **Approve** the publication of the Dog Control Policy and Practices report 2014/2015; and
4. **Direct** Council staff to forward a copy of the Dog Control Policy and Practices report 2014/2015 to the Secretary for Local Government.

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11/11/2015

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11/11/2015

## Background

- 1 The Dog Control Act 1996 (the “Act”) requires Council to report on the administration of its dog control practices and dog control policy each financial year.
- 2 The report must include details regarding:
  - The number of registered dogs, probationary owners and disqualified owners in the district;
  - The number of dogs classified menacing or dangerous as a result of their actions, and the number of dogs classified as menacing by the type or breed; and
  - Infringement notices issued, the type and number of complaints received and prosecutions taken.
- 3 The Act also requires that the report of these activities must be publicly notified in one or more daily newspaper circulating in the district, or one or more newspapers that have at least an equivalent circulation in the district to that of daily newspaper.
- 4 A copy of the report (Attachment A) must also be forwarded to the Secretary for the Local Government within one month after adopting the report.
- 5 The report details the dog control activities undertaken by Queenstown Lakes District Council in the 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015 financial year.

## Comment

- 6 Council has identified dog control as a primary area of focus within its recently adopted Enforcement strategy and Enforcement Action Plan (26 June 2014). The specific objective of the Enforcement Strategy associated Enforcement Action Plan is to “ensure a safe environment from roaming and aggressive dogs for our community”.

<http://www.qldc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Council-Documents/2014-Full-Council-Agendas/26-June-2014/Item-09/9-Enforcement-Strategy-covering-report.pdf>

The key statistics within the report are:

- a) There was an increase of 4.8% (4143 dogs) in the number of registered dogs;
- b) The number of registered dogs with no microchip has escalated this year to 1197 with the number of new dogs registered within our district. This is a project that needs working on throughout the 2015 / 2016 financial year;
- c) There were 3 dangerous dogs registered and an increase of 5 menacing dogs registered from 21 to 26;

- d) There was a 26% (120) increase in the number of attacks reported. There were 16 attacks on people, 77 attacks on animals, 2 cases of dog worrying stock and 25 reports of rushing dogs.
- e) The number of roaming dogs remains the single largest issue with a 29% increase from 337 to 436;
- f) There was a 61% increase in the number of complaints regarding barking dogs from 137 to 220;
- g) The number of impounds has increased 26% from 130 in 2013/2014 to 164 in 2014/2015 with the majority of impounds being in response to roaming dogs. There were 102 in Queenstown and 62 in Wanaka.

### ***Options***

- 7 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.
- 8 Option 1 Adopt the Dog Control Policies and Practices Report 2014/2015.

#### *Advantages:*

- 9 Legislative compliance. This enables Council to comply with Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

#### *Disadvantages:*

- 10 Public notification. The report must be publicly notified.
- 11 Only one option is considered for this decision as it is a statutory responsibility for the Council to adopt and publicly notify its annual dog control and policy report.

### ***Significance and Engagement***

- 12 This matter is of low significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy because there is a small impact on our environment and culture. The community interest has increased and can be seen in the increased level of requests for service. As a result of the increased number of requests for service and the current vacancies, we are currently reactive rather than proactive regarding dog control.

### ***Risk***

- 13 This matter related to the operational risk OR004 – Serious injury to a member of the community, as documented in the Council's risk register. The risk is classed as moderate. This matter relates to this risk because of the risk from roaming dogs throughout our community.
- 14 The recommended option mitigates the risk by: Treating the risk - putting measures in place which directly impact the risk.

## **Financial Implications**

15 There are no financial implications resulting from the decision as there is already budget in place to cover public notification costs.

## **Council Policies, Strategies and Bylaws**

16 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- Dog Control Policy – This policy provides the principal rules regarding dog control throughout the district;
- Significance and Engagement Policy – the decision is not significant, as the report is to be noted and does not detail further;
- Council Enforcement Strategy and Prosecution Policy – This policy outlines Council's enforcement approach and options available.

17 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policy/policies.

18 This matter is included in the 10-Year Plan/Annual Plan

- Volume 1 – Regulatory Functions and Services

## **Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions**

19 The recommended option:

- Will help meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses by raising awareness of the educational and enforcement matters identified;
- Can be implemented through current funding under the 10-Year Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not alter significantly 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.

## **Consultation: Community Views and Preferences**

20 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are dog owners, visitors, and the wider residents /ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes District.

21 The Council will publicly notify the report, in addition to placing a copy on the Council's website.

## **Legal Considerations and Statutory Responsibilities**

22 Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires the Council to adopt a dog control policy and practices report annually. A copy of the report must be sent to

the Secretary for Local Government, and the report must be publicly notified following its adoption.

**Attachments**

A Dog Control Policy and Practices Report 2014/2015



## **DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT**

### **2014 – 2015 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 in December 2014 and establishes Council’s criteria to be followed regarding controlling dogs.

#### **Key changes in the new Policy are:**

- The requirement for all dogs classified as menacing to be neutered;
- Dogs must be on a leash in public places except Rural General Zones (unless they are at a cemetery or a playground) or any dog exercise area (Generally, most Council Controlled Track and Reserves);
- 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 Councils satisfaction that the full period is unnecessary;
- The criteria for issuing multiple dog licences have been clarified;
- Fees for dog registration, have changed to recognise and reward behavior that complies with the Dog Control Act 1996.

#### **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 Councils Enforcement Strategy.

#### **DOG REGISTRATION**

Council registration fees provide 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 significant increase (4.8%) in the number of registered dogs over the last year, which is consistent with the increasing trend over the previous years.

During 2014 – 2015, 319 dogs were re-classified as dead and 501 were transferred out of our district. “Transferred” was a new status added into Council’s recording system in August 2015 therefore, we cannot provide an accurate number for the full 2014-2015 period.

Category	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015
Total number of Registered Dogs	3713	3728	3874	4073
a) Dangerous by owner conviction under s.31(1)(a)	0	1	1	1
b) Dangerous by sworn evidence under s.31(1)(b)	2	0	0	1
c) Dangerous by owner admittance in writing under s.31(1)(c)	0	0	0	1
Total number of Dangerous Dogs	2	1	1	3
a) Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) – Behaviour	14	8	19	17
b) Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii) - Breed characteristics	0	0	0	7
c) Menacing under s33C(1) - Schedule 4 Breed/Type	1	2	2	2
Total number of Menacing Dogs	15	10	21	26
Total number of Probationary Owners	0	1	0	0
Total number of Disqualified Owners	0	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 were 3 dangerous dogs registered for the 2014-2015 registration period and an increase in the number of menacing dogs registered. The increase was from 21 to 26. The increase in dogs classified as menacing is a result of dog attacks reported to Council.

### **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 the QLDC Enforcement Strategy 2014. The priorities are:

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

Category of Complaint	2011 - 2012	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015
<b>Public Safety related complaints</b>				
Dog attack on people - minor	4	5	15	13
Dog attack on people – serious	4	1	4	3
Dog attack on animal – minor	12	6	14	42
Dog attack on animal – serious	13	8	13	35
Dog attack on stock (worrying stock)	4	4	0	2
Dog rushing	17	8	19	25
Roaming dogs	158	348	337	436
General concern	31	22	59	67
<b>Non-safety Concerns</b>				
Lost dogs	184	197	300	364
Barking	152	123	137	220
Fouling	17	21	2	11
<b>Total complaints</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1218</b>

### **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 a significant increase in the overall number of attacks. There were 46 attacks reported in 2012/13 which increased to 95 in 2013/13 and has significantly increased again to 120 this year. This increase has generated significant demand on the animal control service, which has led to a corresponding increase in the number of dog classifications and infringements 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 and we have seen an increase in amount of roaming dogs from 337 to 436.

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. We have a system in place to ensure all urgent requests for service are dealt with in the required timeframe or sooner.

### **Barking Dogs**

There was a significant increase in the number of complaints received from 137 to 220. The Council continues to provide a free bark collar to dog owners to use to assist in addressing this issue however complaints have increased significantly.

### **Impoundings**

There were 130 dogs impounded in 2013/14 and the number of impounds have increased significantly this year to 164 impounded with the majority of impounded dogs being in response to roaming dogs. There were 102 in Queenstown and 62 in Wanaka.

### **Prosecutions**

There were 3 prosecutions initiated for the 2013-2014 period following attacks. Two were completed, one leading to a conviction and destruction order.

### **INFRINGEMENTS**

There was an overall significant increase in the number of infringements issued. This is a result of identifying a significant amount of non-compliance with the Dog Control Act 1996.

<b>OFFENCE</b>	<b>2011 - 2012</b>	<b>2012 - 2013</b>	<b>2013 - 2014</b>	<b>2014 - 2015</b>
Failure to comply with classification	0	2	2	0
Failure to register dog	98	83	0	25
Failure to advise of address change	0	0	0	0
Failure to keep dog controlled/confined on owners property	23	12	21	34
Failure to keep dog under control	2	5	16	10
Failure to carry a leash in public	0	0	0	0
Falsely Notifying death of dog	0	0	0	1
Failure to supply owner information	0	0	0	1
Failure to comply with any bylaws authorized by the section	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>72</b>