

## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Environment & Planning Committee

**FROM:** Annie Brown, Administration Officer - Regulatory

**REFERENCE:** D402

**SUBJECT:** **DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES JULY 2008 – JUNE 2009 - REPORT EP09/08/08** - Report prepared for meeting of 27 August 2009

---

### 1. REASON FOR REPORT

The Dog Control Act requires territorial authorities to publicly report annually on dog control policy and practices as outlined under Section 10a of the Dog Control Act 1996. This report contains information and statistics on Council's dog control activity for the year 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009.

### 2. DOG CONTROL AND ENFORCEMENT PRACTICES IN TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Control Services (Nelson) Ltd carries out Council's dog control activities, providing 24 hour, seven day per week coverage for the Tasman District. Three full time dog control officers are employed by Control Services to implement Council's policy and practices throughout the Tasman District. Nine casual or part-time staff attend to the emergencies and/or after hours activities in the outlying areas of Murchison (three), Golden Bay (two), Motueka (two) and the Tapawera and Wakefield districts (two).

Control Services work closely with local veterinarians, the three SPCA branches in the district and Department of Conservation staff. Good relations are also fostered between Dog Control and the Police and Dog Obedience Clubs.

Dog Control Officers provide regular educational visits to local schools and other organisations, reinforcing the message of ensuring safety around dogs in the home and in the wider community.

### 3. DOG REGISTRATION, ENFORCEMENT AND SERVICE REQUEST STATISTICS FOR TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>3.1</b>	Total number of dog owners in the district	6,304
	Number of probationary owners	Nil
	Number of disqualified owners	Nil

<b>3.2</b>	Number of registered dogs in the Tasman District Council	10,116
	Number of rural dogs	4374
	Number of urban dogs	5742
	Number of dogs not charged fee	11
<b>3.3</b>	Number of dogs classified as dangerous under Section 31	7
	s31 1(a) due to owner conviction	Nil
	s31 1(b) due to sworn evidence	5
	s31 1(c) due to owner admittance	2
<b>3.4</b>	Total number of dogs classified as menacing	76
	Dogs classified as menacing under Section 33A	35
	(Section 33A 1(b) - the territorial authority considers the dog may pose a threat to any person, stock, poultry, domestic animal, or protected wildlife).	
	Dogs classified as menacing under Section 33C:	41
	(Section 33C (1) - the territorial authority has reasonable grounds to believe that the dog belongs wholly or predominantly to one or more breeds or types listed in Schedule 4 of the amendment Act 2004).	
<b>3.5</b>	Number of Infringement notices issued	178
	Failing to register a dog	150
	Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	4
	Failure to keep dog under control	4
	Failure to implant microchip transponder	19
	Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	1
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Number of Impounded Dogs</b>	
	Dogs Impounded	108
	Claimed	75
	Re-homed	19
	Disposed of	8
	Still in Pound (June 2009)	6

#### **4. SERVICE REQUESTS**

Service Requests include complaints, but can relate to dogs lost by owners and/or found by members of the public, requests for advice or dog owner education etc. These annual statistics have also been included in the breakdown below.

#### 4.1 Number of Service Requests received as Complaints

*Barking / Whining (of these 331 relate to a boarding kennel)	701
Aggressive Behaviour / Rushing	81
Wandering/Fouling	276
Attack on Persons	33
Attack on Stock	29
Attack on Pets	38
Unregistered	13
Welfare Concerns	152
In Restricted Area	17
Not on Leash	5
Excess Dogs on Property	3
Seized	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1350</b>

\*A substantial number of the "Barking/Whining" complaints are associated with a rural boarding kennel. Further monitoring has been carried out since last year and Council staff remain of the opinion that this barking is not unreasonable in the context of that activity.

#### 4.2 Other Service Requests

Found dogs	588
Lost dogs	461
Education	43

#### 5. DOGS PROHIBITED, LEASH ONLY AND DOG EXERCISE AREAS

The Dog Control Bylaw 2004 sets out the areas in the District which are "Dog Prohibited", "Leash only" and "Controlled Dog Exercise Areas". Council's Policy on Dogs and the Bylaw are currently being reviewed. Two changes have been proposed to the exercise areas designated in the existing Policy and Bylaw to more clearly define the areas concerned. The proposed wording in the Policy on Dogs has also been simplified. The Dog Control Bylaw 2009 is proposed to be operative by early September 2009.

Council continues to work in co-operation with Department of Conservation to monitor areas where protected wildlife could be at risk. A limited number of Department of Conservation Rangers are warranted under the Dog Control Act 1996 as they work in the remote areas where stray dogs occasionally appear.

Council continues to use its fortnightly newsletter as a tool for informing both dog owners and the community of any issues relating to dog control. These articles also serve to remind dog owners of their responsibilities as well as providing educational items on the care and control of dogs.

## **6. DOG REGISTRATION AND OTHER FEES**

The registration fees for dogs are set each year as part of the Council's Annual Plan Process. In 2008/2009 the registration fees were \$37.00 for Urban Dogs and \$26.00 for Rural Dogs which included the fees to cover the National Dog Database costs. Tasman District Council continues to provide one of the most cost effective fee structures in the country for its dog owners.

## **7. FURTHER COMMENTS ON REVIEW OF THE POLICY ON DOGS AND DOG BYLAW**

Council is aware of its twofold responsibility under the Dog Control Act 1996 to provide areas where dogs may be exercised, as well as striving to minimise the potential danger, distress and nuisance uncontrolled dogs may cause to the community generally.

In reviewing its Policy and Bylaw, Council has set out to better achieve these objectives through using simpler language and providing maps so that both dog owners and the general public know whether an area has a particular designation in relation to dogs.

Council will replace and renew signs over the next few years in areas where dogs may or may not be allowed.

## **8. PROPERTY VISITS**

Property visits to all dog owners in Residential areas were carried out during 2008/2009. Whilst this has provided valuable contact with dog owners, it is proposed that a more targeted approach be adopted next year to allow more time to follow up on unregistered dogs and owners who fail to meet their obligations.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That this report required pursuant to Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996, be received and adopted by Council.
2. That the adopted report be publicly notified and be made available on the Council's website with a copy being sent to the Secretary for Local Government.

Annie Brown  
**Administration Officer**