

Dog Control Policy and Practices Report

1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 requires the Council to report on its dog control policies and practices for the financial year.

PART 1 – DOG CONTROL POLICY

The current policy was adopted in December 2020 and outlines the Council's requirements regarding controlling dogs. This policy and the dog control bylaw are currently under review.

Key Aspects of the policy are:

- The requirement for all dogs classified as menacing to be neutered
- When taking dogs out in public, owners must use or carry a leash at all times
- Specific dog exercise areas have been identified in Alexandra, Clyde, Cromwell, Ranfurly, Naseby, Roxburgh and Pisa Moorings
- A maximum of three dogs are permitted to reside on a private property, unless granted a licence
- Specific on-leash areas have been identified around town centres and sports ground playing surfaces

PART 2 – DOG CONTROL PRACTICES

Dog Control functions were carried out by All Pest from 1 July 2020 to 9 June 2021 and by Cougar Security under contract from 10 June 2021, along with Central Otago District Council staff.

There were 6563 dogs registered during the 2020/2021 financial year, reflecting a 5.2% increase of 341 dogs. There has also been an increase to 3750 dog owners, a 7.5% rise. Dog registrations were carried out using the online Reg the Dog system, which was purchased by Council in 2021.

Service Requests

The service requests received through the year related to roaming/wandering, barking dogs, aggressive behaviour and dogs worrying stock. Roaming dogs remains the main issue reported, with a slight increase. However, there has been a significant decrease (80%) in complaints relating to aggressive dog behaviour such as worrying stock and aggressive behaviour towards people.

These areas will continue to be a focus for the team for communications, education, patrols and enforcement for the coming year.

Dog Registration Fees

Dog control and enforcement activity is funded through dog registration and impounding fees. The registration fees for the 2020-2021 registration period remained the same as the previous year:

- Working dogs \$12.00
- Pet dogs \$55.00

Non-payment of registration fees within the required timeframe incurs a 50% penalty added to the initial registration fee, followed by issue of infringement notices. Unpaid infringement fines are referred to the Courts for collection.

298 deceased dogs were reported in the Central Otago District over this registration period.

Microchipping

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 microchipped.

Council has been working with dog owners throughout the year to microchip dogs as required by legislation, which resulted in an 8% increase (294) in dogs being microchipped:

- 3684 dogs are microchipped
- 2580 dogs are not microchipped or no microchip number recorded in Reg the Dog

1104 of the dogs not microchipped are required to be, with the remainder currently registered as working dogs and are exempt from microchipping. This is an area of focus for 2021 – 2022, as it appears some dogs have been previously registered as working dogs by the owners incorrectly, in that they do not appear to meet the statutory definition of a working dog.

Disqualified and Probationary Owners

There was one disqualified owner issued during this period. However, this is currently subject to an appeal to the district court and is ongoing.

There are no probationary owners in the Central Otago District.

Menacing and Dangerous Dogs

There are no dogs classified as dangerous for the 2021-2022 registration period.

There are 8 dogs classified as menacing under Section 33A (observed or reported behaviour) and no dogs identified as menacing under Section 33C (based on type or breed) of the Dog Control Act in 2021/2022.

PART 3 – STATISTICAL INFORMATION

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 high area of focus for the Central Otago District Council, which strives to undertake the following key factors:

- a. To have all dogs that live in the district registered
- b. Ensure all dogs are kept under control at all times
- c. Ongoing education of dog owners regarding their responsibilities and obligations

Category of Complaint	2020-2021	2019-2020
Public Safety related complaints		
Dog attack on people - minor	1	5
Dog attack on people - serious	0	5
Dog attack on animal - minor	2	8
Dog attack on animal - serious	4	5
Dog attack on stock (worrying)	2	10
Dog rushing	20	29
Wandering/roaming dogs	204	197
General concern	0	3
Non-safety Concerns		
Barking	64	60
Fouling	5	4

Attacks

When an attack occurs on a person or animal, the incident can be extremely distressing to all parties involved.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of dog attacks over the last year. Dog control officers are continuing to educate, patrol and enforce as required.

Wandering and Roaming Dogs

The number of roaming dogs remains the largest issue for dog control officers. Roaming dogs can frighten, intimidate and annoy the community in addition to potentially attacking people and other dogs. Additional patrols and communications on responsible dog ownership were undertaken through the year.

Barking Dogs

There was a slight increase in the number of complaints received relating to barking dogs during the 2020-2021 registration period.

The Council has leaflets to raise owners' awareness of the effects of boredom on dogs, and the nuisance aspects of barking dogs. In addition to a bark-box to use for properties with multiple complaints, bark collars are also available for owners to use at no cost.

Impoundings

There were 11 dogs impounded during the 2020-2021 registration period in the Central Otago District, which were either united with their owner or re-homed. This is a 62% reduction compared to the previous year.

Prosecutions

There were no prosecutions undertaken during the 2020/2021 financial year.

Infringements

There has been large reduction in the number of infringements issued for failure to register dogs, as officers worked through the education and enforcement process to ensure dogs are registered.

OFFENCE	2020-2021	2019-2020
Failure to Comply with classification	0	0
Failure to register dog	22	126
Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	10	12
Failure to keep dog under control	4	4
Failure to comply with any bylaws authorised by the section	0	0