

Dog Control Policy and Practices Report

1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

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.

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 always use or carry a leash.
- 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 residential 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

An in-house Dog Control Officer has been employed by Council providing dog control services during office hours (8.30am – 5.00pm) since January 2022. Cougar Security continue to provide contracted services afterhours and during public holidays, weekends, and periods of leave.

There were 6779 dogs registered during the 2022/2023 financial year, reflecting a 0.22% reduction when compared to the previous year, however there has been a 4.48% increase to 4496 dog owners.

Service Requests

The service requests received through the year generally related to roaming/wandering, barking dogs and aggressive behaviour, with two reports of dogs worrying stock.

Roaming dogs and barking remain the principal issues reported. 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 fees. The registration fees for the 2022-2023 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.

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 6.1% increase (237) in dogs being microchipped:

- 4108 dogs are microchipped.
- 2671 dogs are not microchipped, or no microchip number recorded in Reg the Dog

63 of the dogs not microchipped are required to be, with the remainder currently registered as working dogs (2608) and are exempt from microchipping.

This is a continued area of focus for 2023–2024, 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.

There are no probationary owners in the Central Otago District.

Menacing and Dangerous Dogs

There is one dog classified as dangerous for the 2022-2023 registration period that transferred into the district in 2022.

There are 13 dogs classified as menacing under Section 33A (observed or reported behaviour) and two dogs identified as menacing under Section 33C (based on type or breed) of the Dog Control Act in 2022/2023.

PART 3 – STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Council received a total of 392 service requests including 57 owners notifying of lost dogs. This is an increase of 10.1% to the previous year, which maybe a reflection of public confidence in Council as a result of the increased level of service (pro-active patrols) provided with our community.

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	2022-2023	2021-2022
Public Safety related complaints		
Dog attack on people - minor	6	3
Dog attack on people - serious	1	0
Dog attack on animal - minor	11	2
Dog attack on animal - serious	7	2
Dog attack on stock (worrying)	2	2
Dog rushing	16	28
Wandering/roaming dogs	83	183
General concern	30	16
Non-safety Concerns		
Barking	104	88
Fouling	4	8

Attacks

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

The number of dog attacks over the last year has increased however there has been a decrease in roaming and rushing dogs.

Wandering and Roaming Dogs

The number of roaming dogs remains the largest issue, however there was a 55% decrease (100) from the previous year. 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 18% (16) increase in the number of complaints received. This may be reflective of our increased dog numbers and our community acknowledging Councils active response.

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

Impounding

There were 18 dogs impounded during the 2022-2023 registration period in the Central Otago District, which were either united with their owner or re-homed. This is a 125% increase compared to the previous year.

Prosecutions

There were no prosecutions undertaken during the 2022/2023 financial year.

Infringements

There has been slight 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.

However, there has been a significant increase in the number of infringements for dogs roaming and following a dog attack, as a result of increased enforcement.

OFFENCE	2022-2023	2021-2022
Failure to comply with classification	2	0
Failure to register dog	3	16
Failure to keep dog controlled or confined	23	0
Failure to keep dog under control	4	1
Failure to comply with any bylaws authorised by the section	7	0