

# Rangitikei District Council Report pursuant to Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996

for the period 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

## PART 1 – Dog Control Policy and Practices

### 1. Dog Control in the District

- Number of dog owners in District – 2225.
- Number of registered dogs in District – 4914 comprising, 2645 working dogs, 2103 Good Dog Owners and 164 non working dogs.
- The Council employs five Animal Control Officers and one Senior Animal Control Officer.
- A shared service for animal control has continued with the Manawatu District Council. Two Animal Control Officers are based in the Rangitikei, and two in the Manawatu. One rotates through both districts. The Senior Animal Control Officer supervises activities in both districts.
- During the year assistance has been given to the Whanganui and Tararua District Councils, in the form of occasional staffing and also advice/guidance.
- Animal Control Officers respond to priority one calls after hours. Priority one calls include dog attacks and securing wandering dogs.

Continued efforts have been made to improve education surrounding dog registration and dog behaviour in general in the District. This has included a drive towards 'public engagement' and involvement in reporting offences, although there has been a very slight decrease in request for service overall (1.1%) compared to last year it shows that the public is still consistent with regards to reporting non compliance.

The number of infringements notices is considerably higher than last year. This is primarily the result of taking a stronger line with owners of unregistered dogs, particularly those who continue trying to evade their responsibilities. Visiting all properties where dogs are known to be held has been a major factor in this. It has also resulted in an increase in the number of dogs classified as menacing by breed.

The number (and proportion) of infringements sent to Court for recovery as a debt have also increased considerably, Court action is permitted once the infringement fine is 56 days overdue. Previously it was rare for this action to be taken. However, withdrawing an infringement (so that people avoid the filing penalty added by the Courts) can be interpreted as Council being soft and an encouragement for people served with infringement notices not to pay.

Wandering dogs still relate to nearly 39% percent of all requests for service (which is a very small decrease from last year). However, the owner of a wandering dog now typically receive an infringement on a second (and subsequent) incident during the year. While some wandering dogs

are identified during patrols, we are largely dependent on people reporting them. It is vital that those who report an incident have confidence to speak up and know that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken.

## **2. Dog Control Enforcement Practices**

- Animal Control Officers responded to 1064 service requests/complaints during the reporting period in response to the following:
  - 76 attacks (human and animal – includes rushing)
  - 120 barking
  - 403 wandering/stray
  - 84 Animal Welfare/Property Investigation
  - 94 Found
  - 154 Lost
  - 5 Stock Worrying
  - 128 Other (e.g. microchipping, Good Dog Owner status)
- 159 infringement notices were issued.

## **3. Dogs Prohibited, Leash Only and Exercise Areas**

The problem of dogs in public places or otherwise prohibited areas is not one that is common within this District. When dogs are reported as wandering unaccompanied within such areas, the Animal Control Officers respond promptly.

## **4. Dog Control Registration and Other Fees**

- Non working dogs registration increased from \$175 to \$180.
- Non working neutered/spayed decreased from \$161 to \$120.
- Good Dog Owner non neutered/spayed decreased from \$69 to \$56.
- Good Dog Owner neutered/spayed increased from \$55 to \$56.
- Working Dogs increased from \$38 to \$39.

Council's intent is that the direct costs of registration and impounding are fully recovered through dog registration and impounding fees. The dog registration fees reflect the respective levels of service required by each category of dog owner. Reduced fees therefore apply to working dogs and dogs belonging to good dog owners. The good dog owner system aims to provide an incentive within the registration fee structure that promotes responsible dog ownership. The fee structure will reward dog owners who:

- adequately fence their section,
- de-sex their dog,
- have a good record of dog ownership,
- register their dog on time, and
- care for their dogs properly, i.e. provide them with a secure yard and a kennel that is weatherproof, of sufficient size, clean and sanitary.

Council's approach to dogs that remained unregistered after the usual warnings and penalties etc. is for the Animal Control Officers to visit all known properties previously recorded as housing a registered dog. Checks are made to ascertain whether a dog was still housed at that property. If such a visit verifies that a dog is still owned, infringements are sent to owners, and in some cases, dogs have been impounded. There has been a significant increase in infringements for unregistered dogs in this reporting period.

## **5. Dog Education and Dog Obedience courses**

The Council contracts an instructor to deliver quality dog safety based and targeted training to schools within the Rangitikei District. Training programs were delivered to seven schools, and they have provided positive feedback on them.

## **6. Disqualified and Probationary Dog Owners**

No owners were classified as disqualified or probationary during the year.

## **7. Menacing and Dangerous Dogs**

- The Council has not had any issues with owners of menacing dogs not complying with the requirements relating to their classification.
- There are 2 dogs classified as dangerous in the District.

## **PART 2 – Statistical Information**

<b>Category</b>	<b>As at 30 June 2015</b>	<b>As at 30 June 2016</b>
1) Total Registered Dogs	4847	4914
2) Total Probationary Owners	Nil	Nil
3) Total Disqualified Owners	Nil	Nil
4) Total Dangerous Dogs	2	2
Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under s31(1)(a)	Nil	Nil
Dangerous by Sworn Evidence s31(1)(b)	2	2
Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing s31(1)(c)	Nil	Nil
5) Total Menacing Dogs	22	53
Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) – i.e. by behavior	2	6
Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii) by Breed Characteristics	Nil	Nil
Menacing under s33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed	20	47
6) Total Infringement Notices	23	159
7) Total Complaints Received	1075	1064
8) Total Prosecutions Taken	Nil	Nil
9) Infringements Sent to Court	7	67