

REPORT ON OPOTIKI DISTRICT COUNCIL DOG CONTROL PRACTICES AND POLICY FOR THE YEAR COMMENCING 1 JULY 2009 TO 30 JUNE 2010

Introduction

The Dog Control Amendment Act 2003 requires territorial authorities to publicly report on dog control policy and practices pursuant to section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996.

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 states that the report “.....*must, in respect of each financial year, report on the administration of -*

- (a) *its dog control policy adopted under section 10; and*
- (b) *its dog control practices.*

The report must also include, in respect of each financial year, information relating to-

- (a) *the number of registered dogs in the territorial authority district;*
- (b) *the number of probationary owners and disqualified owners in the territorial authority district;*
- (c) *the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as dangerous under section 31 and the relevant provisions under which the classification was made;*
- (d) *the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as menacing under section 33A or section 33C and the relevant provisions under which this classification is made;*
- (e) *the number of infringement notices issued by the territorial authority;*
- (f) *the number of dog related complaints received by the territorial authority in the previous year and the nature of those complaints;*
- (g) *the number of prosecutions taken by the territorial authority under this Act.*

Section 10A(3) specifies that “*the territorial authority must give public notice of the report in One (1) or more daily newspapers circulating in the territorial authority district.*”

Section 10A(4) requires the Council, “*within one month after adopting the report, to send a copy of it to the Secretary for Local Government*”.

This report contains information and statistics on the Council's dog control activity for the year 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010.

1 Dog Control in the District

From 1 September 2007 to 1 November 2009, Council employed a contractor working five days a week (Monday to Friday – 40 hours per week), with after hour coverage provided by a local security firm to deliver its dog control functions. This provided a 24 hour, seven days a week coverage to ensure compliance with the Dog Control Act 1996, Council's Dog Control Policy 2004 and Dog Control Bylaw 2008.

Since 1 November 2009 the two contracts that Council had in place for 'normal' and 'after hours' services were replaced with one contract in providing 24 hour, seven days a week coverage.

The contractor works closely with a local veterinarian and the SPCA. The Council provides funding assistance to enable the SPCA to look after the welfare of animals that are impounded.

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2 Dog Pound

The pound is open to the public from between 9.00am - 11.00am and 4.00pm - 5.00pm Monday to Friday. There are 10 individual holding pens for dogs and four exercise pens and nine kennels and runs. Dogs taken to the pound and wearing an identifiable tag, will result in the owner being contacted and/or a letter being sent to the owner requesting uplifting of the dog within seven days from the pound. Dogs not wearing a tag will be held for a minimum period of seven days awaiting possible enquiry from the owner or thereafter, re-homing of the dog can be considered.

Council's pound and the SPCA operate from one facility. The Council has a Memorandum of Understanding with the SPCA for the operation of the pound and provides funding assistance to the SPCA for their services. It is not possible to accurately separate Council's pound activity from that of the SPCA where people drop off unwanted dogs and pups to the SPCA for rehoming. The following figures therefore include both Council and SPCA activity in respect of pound operations.

Pound Statistics including SPCA Activity

The table below shows activity at the pound over the last two years. While there has been a decrease in the number of dogs impounded (in part due to the reduction of roaming dogs – refer table at the end of this report), there has been increased activity at the pound over the last year with a total 535 dogs going through the pound and SPCA. There has also been a substantial increase in the number of dogs that were euthanised, particularly pups.

Activity	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	% Change
Dogs Impounded	159	137	- 13.84
Dogs Stolen From Pound	10	1	- 90.00
Dogs Registered From Pound (including those from the SPCA)	29	45	+ 55.17
Registered Dogs Released to owners with Warning	65	56	- 13.84
Dogs Euthanised from the Pound (including those from the SPCA)	208 (includes 92 pups)	296 (includes 174 pups)	+ 42.31
Total Dogs Through Pound and SPCA	471	535	+ 13.59

In addition to the number of dogs and pups that were euthanised from the pound (as per the above table), an additional 27 dogs within the district were shot for acts such as worrying or attacking people, stock or poultry. This figure included four pups which were feral and were attacking and worrying poultry.

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3 Dog Control Enforcement Practices

This is undertaken either by the routine visitations (ranging) of the Dog Control Officer or during the investigation of complaints.

The Opotiki town centre is patrolled at least three times a day.

Patrols are also carried out to include the Opotiki Township, Woodlands and East Coast settlements such as Te Kaha, Waihau Bay, Ohiwa, Bryan's Beach and Paerata Ridge.

A total of 291 complaints or service requests were received by Council. Nearly all complaints were resolved within one day of being lodged with Council. The number of complaints or service requests dropped by a total of 41 or 12.35% compared with the previous year when 332 complaints or service requests were received by Council. The number of complaints and service requests has continued to decline since the Council contracted out its Animal Control functions. For the years (2005-2006 and 2006-2007) the number of complaints or service requests were in the order of 640.

There were 21 infringement notices issued by the Animal Control Contractor over the 2009-2010 year. Four have subsequently been resolved. It is hoped that the 17 remaining infringements issued will be resolved without the need to be referred to the Court for action. All infringement notices related to failure to register dogs.

4 Prohibited and Leashed Control Areas

The district is fortunate in having a number of varied locations where owners may freely exercise their dogs (providing they are under control and not causing annoyance to others) apart from the few areas where dogs are prohibited or restricted as outlined below. It is to be noted there is a large area (Volkner Island) between the Opotiki township and the Waioeka River where dogs are permitted off lead. Other off lead areas include the stop banks that protect the township from the Waioeka and Otara Rivers and beaches throughout the district, with the exception of those areas on beaches identified as dog prohibited areas.

Dog prohibited areas are specified in the Dog Control Policy as follows:

- Church Street from Kelly Street to Richard Street
- Hikutaia Domain
- Rose Garden Pre-School
- Effluent ponds (Snell's Beach)
- Upton Park
- Waioeka Spit (east end)
- Waiaua Spits (Both)
- Waiotahi Sopit (dotterel breeding area).

Dog restricted areas, where dogs are to be under leash control, are specified in the Dog Control Policy as follows:

- Burdett Park: dogs are permitted on a leash

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- Forsyth Park:
dogs are permitted on a leash
- Memorial Park: dogs are permitted when no games are being played
- Rose Garden: dogs are permitted on a leash
- Rugby Park/Princess Street Reserve: dogs are permitted when no games are being played
- Waioeka domain on Otara Road: dogs are permitted when no games are being played

Dogs are required to have permits in the conservation area at Ohiwa Spit.

5 Dog Registration

Registration fees approved for the 2009-2010 year resulted in a fees being set for rural dogs at \$50.00 and \$50 (neutered urban dog) or \$105 for an entire dog (urban). There is also a good owner discount of \$25 for entire dogs within the urban area. A good dog owner inspection fee is set at \$35.00.

There were 1,337 dogs recorded as being registered in the district during the 2009-2010 year. This is a reduction of 75 dogs (or around 5.31%) compared with the 2008-2009 year of 1,412.

Of the 1,337 dogs registered in the district around 462 or 34.55% are located within the Opotiki township (including Woodlands). The remaining 875 dogs are located within the rural area.

376 dogs are classified as 'working dogs'. This represents 28% of the district's dog population.

124 male and 156 female dogs within the Opotiki township (including Woodlands) are neutered or 61% of all urban dogs (280 out of 462 dogs). In the rural area 179 male and 202 female dogs have been neutered (381 out of 875 dogs or 44%).

6 Education Material and Programmes

Council assisted by paying for public notices to be placed in the local newspaper over the last year advertising the free de-sexing initiative arranged by the SPCA last year. Specific eligibility criteria applied.

Council has two pamphlets available to the public as follows:

- Changes to the Dog Control Act
- Dog Microchipping – the facts

Council regularly features articles in the Opotiki District "Panui" on dog control matters. The Panui is a Council publication that features Council activities and is distributed to all ratepayers four (4) times a year.

Dog obedience courses are organised in Whakatane. The contact person is Trish Funnel (07 308 6058).

7 Disqualified and Probationary Owners

No persons within the Opotiki district have been classified as disqualified or probationary owners.

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8 Menacing and Dangerous Dogs

Council classified 34 dogs in 2009-2010 as menacing in terms of section 33C (dogs belonging to breeds listed in Schedule 4). All of the dogs classified as menacing in terms of section 33C were American pitt bull terriers, both pure and cross breeds. All owners of dogs classified as menacing by breed were sent letters outlining requirements for the keeping of such dogs under the Dog Control Act.

One dog was classified as dangerous over the 2009-2010 year.

9 House to House Survey

During February-March 2010 the Opotiki District Council employed a local security firm to conduct a spot house to house survey within the Opotiki township, including Woodlands. 63 property owners within the Opotiki township (including Woodlands) were found to have dogs on their properties that did not concur with Council's database records. The Animal Control Officer visited all property owners and resolved issues with 42 of the owners. However, 21 infringement notices were issued (of which four have since been resolved). None has as yet been referred to the Court for action.

10 Micro-chipping

The number of dogs that are micro-chipped in the district has increased from 271 to 353 over the past year.

On 30 June 2009 19.2% of all dogs in the district (271) were micro-chipped compared with the national micro-chip rate of 31%.

At 30 June 2010, 353 or 26.4% of all the district's dogs were micro-chipped compared with the national average of 33%.

It is to be noted that the gap between the Opotiki micro-chip percentage and the national average at 30 June 2009 was 11.8. At 30 June 2010, the 'percentage gap' had been reduced to 6.6 (almost halved).

If the working dogs (376) are subtracted from the total dogs (working dogs are not required to be micro-chipped) the percentage of the district's dogs that are micro-chipped stands at 36.73%.

The Council provides a micro-chip service at a fee of \$15.00. The Council has also held two "cheap as chip clinics" over the last year. Council's Contract Dog Control Officer has been trained to provide the micro-chip service.

11 Pound Security

Pound Security has continued to be improved over the 2009-2010 year after being broken into several times during the 2008-2009 year. This has resulted in a reduction of dogs stolen from the pound from 10 to one during the 2009-2010 year.

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12 Statistical Information

The key points from the table below are:

- There has been a reduction in dog numbers of 5.31%.
- Complaints and service requests are down 12.35%.
- Complaints and service requests relating to roaming and fouling dogs are down 21.58%.
- Complaints and service requests relating to barking dogs are down 32.84%.

Category	For the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 (2008-2009 year's total in brackets)
1) Total # Registered Dogs	1337 (1412)
2) Total # Probationary Owners	-
3) Total # Disqualified Owners	-
4) Total # Dangerous Dogs	1 (2)
(a) <i>Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under s31(1)(a)</i>	-
(b) <i>Dangerous by Sworn Evidence s31(1)(b)</i>	-
(c) <i>Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing s31(1)(c)</i>	-
5) Total # Menacing Dogs	34 (33)
(a) <i>Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) - i.e. by Behaviour</i>	- (10)
(b) <i>Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii)- by Breed Characteristics</i>	-
(c) <i>Menacing under s33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed.</i>	34 (23) (American Pitt Bull Terriers, pure & cross breeds)
6) Total # Infringement Notices referred to Court	21 Infringement Notices were issued. Four have been resolved. None have been referred to the Court for action. All infringement notices related to failure to register.
7) Total # Complaints Received	291 (332)
(a) keeping dogs without consent	-

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(b) aggressive behaviour	9 (41)
(c) attack bird / poultry	7 (3)
(d) cat attack	3 (4)
(e) attack dog	12 (9)
(f) attack livestock	6 (6)
(g) attack person	15 (15)
(h) attack on protected wildlife	- (-)
(i) barking	45 (67)
(j) impounding on request	6 (6)
(k) failure to remove faeces	-
(l) failure to carry lead in public place	-
(m) leashed control area	-
(n) Miscellaneous	24 (13)
(o) neglect	18 (10)
(p) prohibited area	1 (5)
(q) roaming and fouling	109 (139)
(r) ripping open rubbish bags	15 (12)
(s) unregistered	2 (-)
(t) left in vehicle	1 (1)
(u) wandering	16 (1)
(v) Chase vehicle	2 (-)
8) Total # Prosecutions taken during the 2009 - 2010 year	- (-)

12 July 2010

Robert Schlötjes
ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING MANAGER