



INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL

DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES

DOG CONTROL ACT 1996 - SECTION 10 (A), ANNUAL REPORT - DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2015 TO 30 JUNE 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2015\2016 focussed on implementing a change in the service model from one of strictly enforcement to one that included a focus on dog education in settings such as schools, early childhood centres, work place and aged care.

Enforcement still played an important part of the service as the City's unregistered dog population remained a concern and proactive programs were still needed if the service was to maintain a reduction in dog compliant numbers.

In this period registration numbers now stand at 8,898 dogs. This is an increase of 5,210 dogs since the 2010/2011 period. The additional revenue generated as a result of the increased registration numbers and impoundment fees has enabled the Council to hold Registration Fees and, in the future, consider lowering fees for certain categories.

1 ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Policy on Dogs

As stated in the last report, a new Bylaw and Policy came into effect in 2015. These are now being enforced and no further amendments are proposed.

Fees and Charges were reviewed and no increase in Registration Fees proposed for the next period. The revenue generated as a result of increases made in Registration numbers and impoundment fees has enabled the Council to hold fees and, in the future, consider lowering fees for certain categories.

1.2 Accommodation

During this period Animal Services Staff relocated from the Invercargill City Council's Civic Administration Building to the Dog Care Facility situated in Lake Street, Invercargill.

The purpose of the move was to allow the public greater access to the facility to claim their dog and improve our rehoming service for unclaimed dogs. The facility is now open to the public five (5) days a week and Saturday morning

1.3 Personnel

The Animal Control Team is based within the Environmental and Planning Services Directorate and reports to the Environmental Health and Compliance Manager. The team comprises of one Team Leader and five (5) Animal Control Officers.

Permanent staffing of the Animal Control Team amounts to five full time employees.

1.4 Hours of Operation

Summer hours

Monday-Friday: 7.00 am–7.00 pm with after-hours coverage outside of these hours.

Saturday: 8am – 5pm with after-hours coverage outside these hours.

Winter hours

Monday-Saturday: 8.00 am-5.00 pm with after-hours coverage outside of these hours.

Animal Care Facility

The Animal Care Facility is open to the public to allow pick-ups of impounded dogs between 8.30 am–4.30 pm Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings.

Pick-ups outside of these hours can only be done by pre-arrangement.

2. SERVICES

2.1 Dog Registration

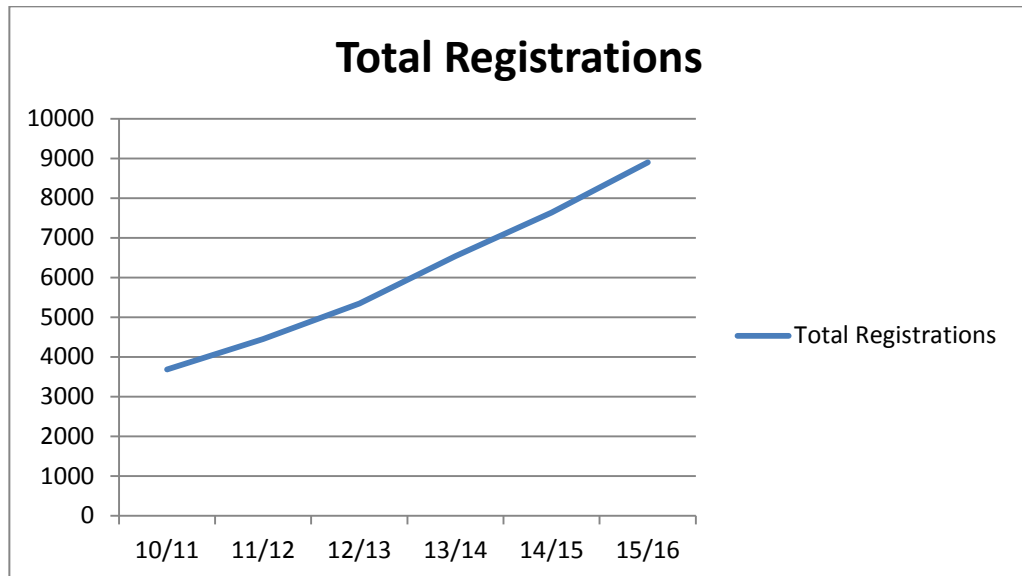


Fig 1: Dog Registration Trend

The continuation of an enforcement approach in relation to unregistered dogs remains effective with an additional 1,263 registration from last year's total being achieved.

During this year's dog registration period registrations are at 8,898. The target was 9000 registered dogs. This is a 140 % increase in registrations since the 2010/2011 period

Of these:

- 4 dogs were classed as Dangerous.
- 160 dogs classed as Menacing
- 368 Classified as Working Dog

2.2 Dog Licences

Licences are required to keep more than two dogs in residential areas. Licences are issued upon inspection of the property and with the consent of neighbours. Contested applications are heard by Council's Hearings Committee.

This period saw an increase in residents holding a licence to keep more than two (2) dogs. A total 1,385 residents currently have two or more dogs in the area.

2.3 Registration Fees based on Dog Owner Classifications

The Invercargill City Council has three Dog Owner classifications. The three categories are:

2.3.1 *Standard Dog Ownership*

All owners not classified as Responsible shall be classified as "Standard". Those owners who have classified dogs are included in this category in terms of the fee charged.

2.3.2 *Responsible Ownership*

Owners may be granted this category at the discretion of an Animal Control Officer when the Officer is satisfied that the owner has attained a suitable level of responsibility with consideration given to ownership and compliance history.

A lower registration fee is charged for this Category.

2.3.3 *Working Dog Ownership*

A dog shall be deemed to be a working dog as per the definition as outlined in the interpretation for a working dog in the Dog Control Act 1996.

A working dog classification shall not apply to dogs used solely for hunting or sporting activities.

3. ENFORCEMENT

A total of 2,576 complaints were registered as a Request for Service (RFS) from the public for this period. Refer to Fig 2

3.1 Complaints

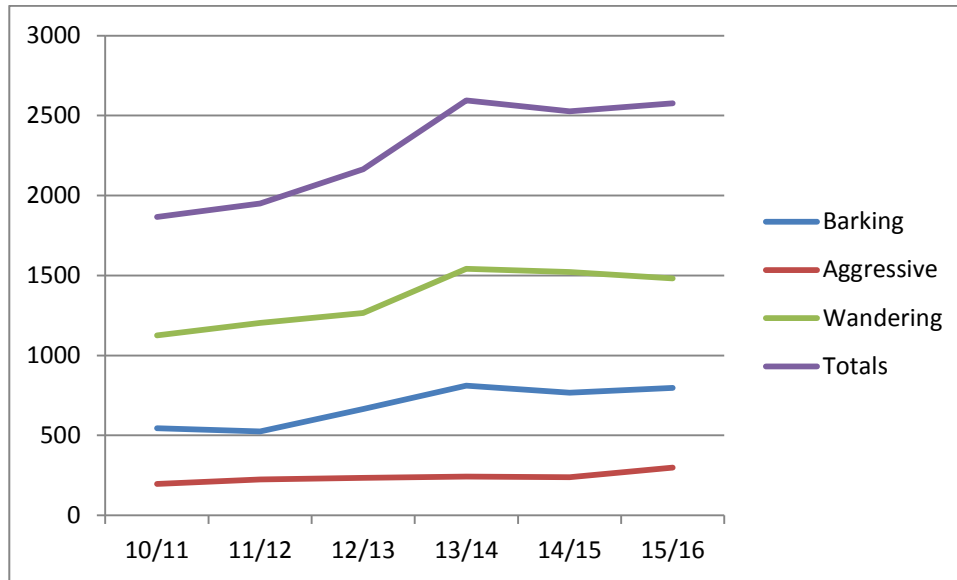


Fig 2 Dog Complaint Trend: Request for Services for Barking, Aggressive, Wandering Dogs

Activities continued to focus on improving public safety and reversing the upward trend in complaints. As Fig 2 shows complaints since 2011/2012 period have continued to trend upwards but from the 2014/2015 period a downward trend with wandering dogs is noted with aggressive and barking dogs showing a flattening out of complaints.

This is a pleasing result as it indicates that the enforcement programmes are still having a positive impact as for two years now complaints have shown a downward or levelling out trend.

3.3 Impounding

The total number of impounded dogs is 1059. This is up from the previous year by 56. Refer to Fig 3.

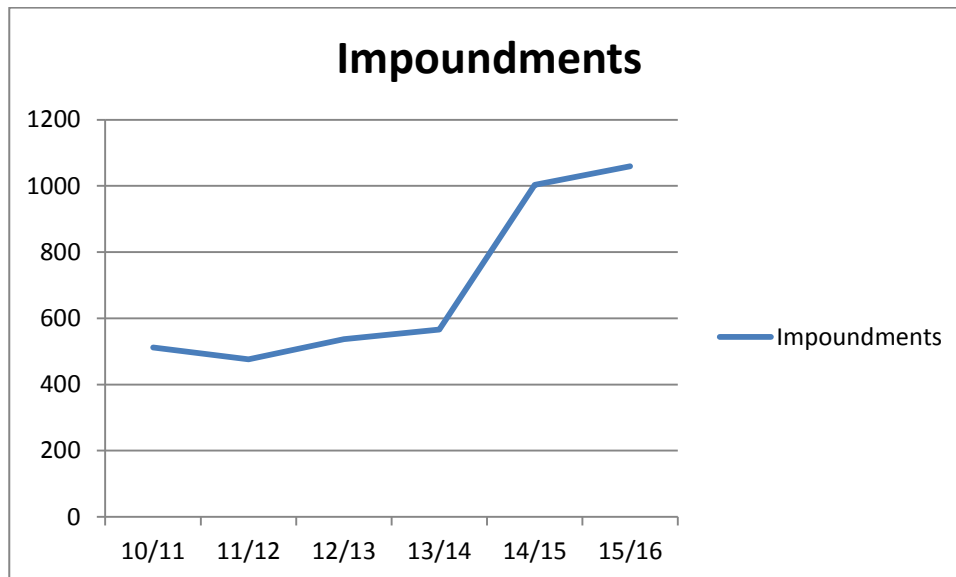


Fig 3: Impounding Trends

3.4 Legal Action

3.4.1 Court Proceedings:

Three matters were referred to the District Court during this period. All involved attacks against stock /animal.

Of these,

- One resulted in a plea of guilty
- One being disqualified owner for five years.
- One still pending

3.4.2 Infringements

- 269 Infringements were issued during the year.
- Of those 42 exemptions were given after compliance was achieved.

3.4.3 Classification of Dog Owners

As above one (1) disqualified owner

4. FUTURE DIRECTION

For the 2016/17 period the following will be undertaken

- Maintain the emphasis on street walking and other methods to reduce the number of unregistered dogs with a target of 10,000 registered dogs.
- Increased park patrols so all parks are visited once a week, Including ride/walk along with a Parks Ranger to an area nominated by them.
- Review of the after-hours contract.
- Move away from enforcement model with greater emphasis being placed on an education model
- Implement a new roster that will:
 - Ensure Complaints continue to be responded to in a timely manner.
 - Enable more educational activities to be delivered
 - Implement an improved Audit program of owner's properties who have classified dogs.
 - Enable more proactive programs.
 - Review our Re-homing programme, Facebook and Website.
 - Review of our Working dog classification and implement a strategy to better manage the application process.
- Review support with NZ Post and other agencies with dog intervention/animal awareness education programs.

APPENDIX 1

Dog Control Act 1996

Section 10A: Territorial authority must report on dog control policy and practices

- (1) A territorial authority 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.

- (2) The report must 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 provision under which the classification is made:
 - (d) the number of dogs in the territorial authority district classified as menacing under section 33A or section 33C and the relevant provision under which the 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.

- (3) The territorial authority must give public notice of the report-
 - (a) by means of a notice published in-
 - (i) 1 or more daily newspapers circulating in the territorial authority district; or
 - (ii) 1 or more other newspapers that have at least an equivalent circulation in that district to the daily newspapers circulating in that district; and
 - (b) by any means that the territorial authority thinks desirable in the circumstances.

- (4) The territorial authority must also, within 1 month after adopting the report, send a copy of it to the Secretary for Local Government.