



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 2014 TO 30 JUNE 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During this period Animal Control Officer numbers were increased from 3 to 5 Officers. The objective was to use the additional staff resource to enable the service to introduce targeted enforcement programmes to address the City's large population of unregistered dogs, reverse the spiralling upward trend of dog complaints and undertake greater monitoring of owners with classified dogs (Menacing and Dangerous).

Complaints to Animal Services continued to trend upwards with an observation that many of the complaints involved unregistered dogs.

To quantify the number of unregistered dogs a street by street survey was conducted by students over the Christmas period. The survey indicated that we had between 1000 and 3000 unregistered dogs within the City.

The survey work confirmed a need to focus on getting the City's dog population registered with an expected outcome that there would be a reduction in the number of dog complaints.

Animal Control Officers now, as part of their normal work, undertake regular foot patrols whereby officers walk the streets and where unregistered dogs were found they approached the owner using education tools to seek registration.

Strict enforcement action was taken with those owners who failed to register their dogs despite all encouragement and notices to do so. This included gaining search warrants and, accompanied by the Police, impound the unregistered dog(s). As a result impoundment numbers have increased significantly.

1 ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Policy on Dogs

In 2014 our Dog Control Bylaw and Policy was reviewed. As a result of the submission process a new Bylaw and Policy came into effect in 2015.

The main changes being in relation to:

- Improved conditions relating to the shelter of dogs.
- Providing a greater emphasis on Education as service, up until this time has been very much an enforcement model.
- Stricter rules around control of dogs

1.2 Accommodation

The Animal Control Office is located in Invercargill City Council's Civic Administration Building situated in Central Invercargill. The Dog Care facility is situated in Lake Street, Invercargill. The facility was purpose built and opened in September 2013. The facility has kennelling for 28 dogs, and is a shared service with Southland District Council to occupy five kennels. Impounded dogs are exercised outside of the facility by the Care Facility Operator, and are managed in accordance with the Dog Control Act 1996 and Dog Welfare Code.

1.3 Personnel

The Animal Control Team is based within the Environmental and Planning Services Department 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: 7.00am – 7.00pm with after-hours coverage outside of these hours.

Saturday and Sunday: 8.00am - 5.00pm with after-hours coverage outside these hours.

Winter hours

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

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

2. Registration and Classification

2.1 Dog Registration

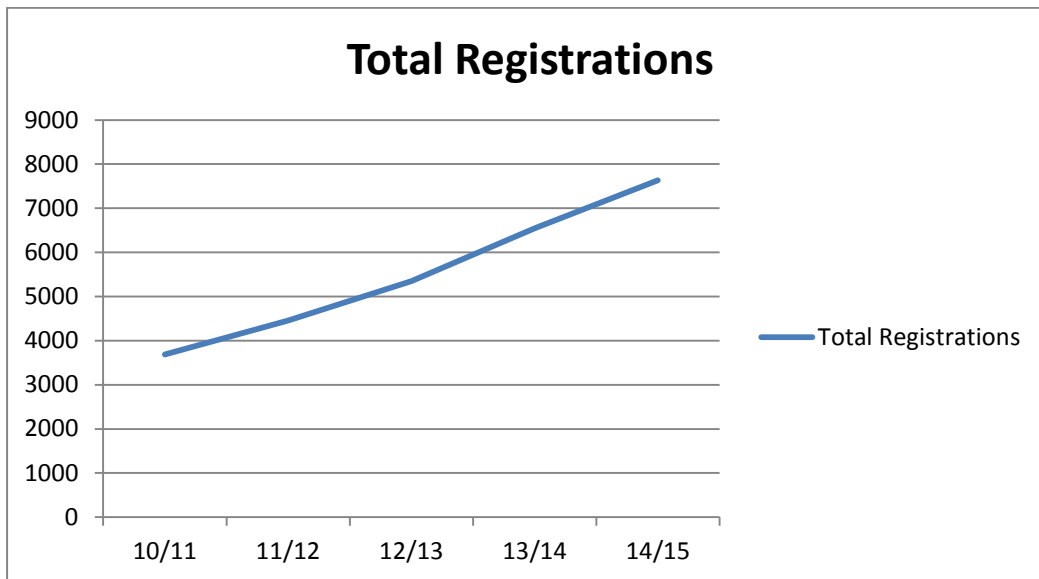


Fig 1
Dog Registration Trend

Fig 1 shows that the enforcement approach relating to unregistered dogs has been effective as the number of registered dogs continues to trend upwards. Programmes such as street walking are finding a large number of unregistered dogs within the City.

During this year's dog registration period registrations are at 7,635. This is up by 1093 from the previous period.

Of these:

- 4 dogs were classed as Dangerous.
- 139 dogs classed as Menacing
- 314 Classified as Working Dog

2.2 Dog Licences

Under the Bylaw 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.

For this period the city issued 1086 owners with licences for multiple dogs.

2.3 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.

An Animal Control Officer may revoke the privileges associated with this category and remove the owners classification if they have good reason to believe that the terms of the classification have not or are not being complied with. The owner concerned will then be ineligible for reassessment for inclusion as a Responsible Owner for a two year period.

The Council charges a lower registration fee to those owners within this Category to recognise their high-quality dog ownership history.

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 2,527 complaints were registered as a Request for Service (RFS) from the public for this period. Refer to Fig 2

3.1 Complaints

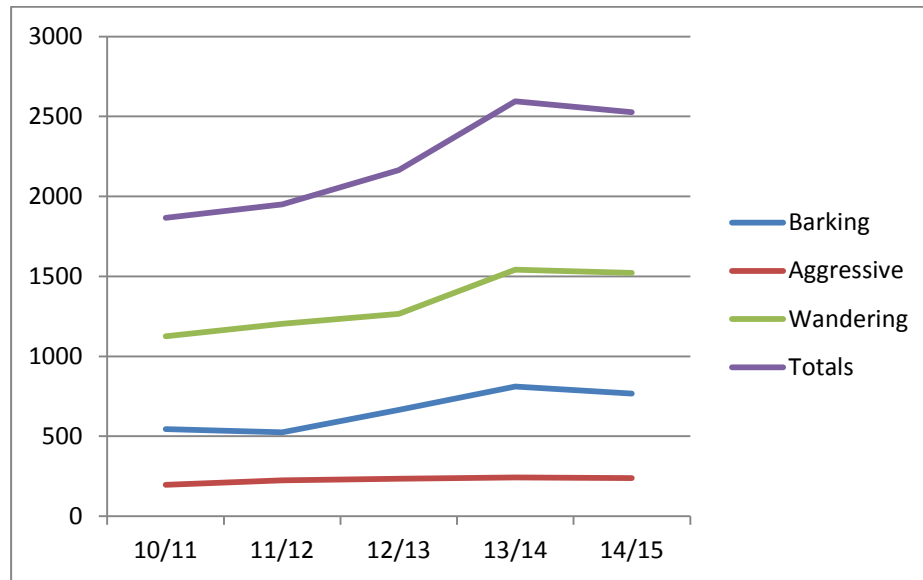


Fig 2 Dog Complaint Trend: Request for Services for Barking, Aggressive, and Wandering Dogs

Over this period a concerted effort has been put into programmes aimed at improving public safety and reversing the upward trend in complaints. As Fig 2 shows complaints since 10/11 period have continued to trend upwards but for this period a downward trend can be seen. This is a pleasing result as it indicates that the enforcement programmes are having a positive impact

3.3 Impounding

The total number of impounded dogs increased significantly this period. Refer to Fig 3.

The new care facility has enabled the service to impound a greater numbers of dogs. As the old facility had limited kennels this prevented the service implementing such activities as routine patrols for wandering dogs as we simply did not have the space to house any dogs picked up during such operations.

This has also had a positive financial outcome for the Care Facility as indications are that the facility can break even in terms of income and expenditure.

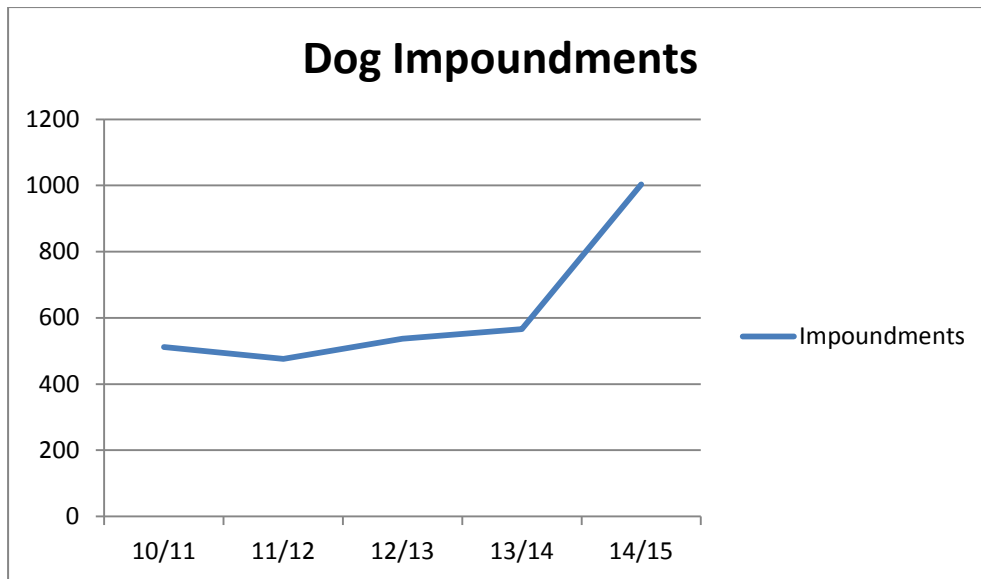


Fig 3: Impounding Trends

3.4 Legal Action

3.4.1 Court Proceedings:

Three (3) matters were referred to the District Court during this period. The outcome being:

- 2 sentenced with fines.
- 1 owner disqualified for five years.

3.4.2 Infringements

- 465 Infringements were issued during the year.
- Of those 82 exemptions were given after compliance was achieved.

3.4.3 Classification of Dog Owners

Upon verification, via the National Dog Database (NDD), a Territorial Authority may classify a dog owner as probationary or disqualified following the commitment of an offence(s).

The Council has no Probationary Owners with 1 Disqualified Owner, as referred to in 3.4.1 above.

4. FUTURE DIRECTION

For the 2015/16 period the following will be undertaken

- Maintain the emphasis on street walking and other methods to ensure we achieve the target of 9000 registered dogs
- Review of fees - as we increase the number of registered dogs this provides an opportunity to reduce fees and/ or provide increased incentives for desexing or responsible ownership.
- Move away from what has been largely an enforcement model to a service model that places more focus on education.

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.