

DOG CONTROL POLICY AND PRACTICES REPORT 2023 – 2024 Financial Year

Section 10A of the Dog Control Act 1996 (**Act**) requires that Council reports on its dog control policies and practices over the financial year.

DOG CONTROL POLICY

Section 10 of the Act requires Council to develop a policy on dogs and sets out specific requirements for how the policy is to be adopted and what it must cover. The Council's current policy was adopted on the 25th of June 2020. The policy establishes Council's criteria to be followed regarding controlling dogs.

Policy – Key Aspects:

- The requirement for all dogs classified as menacing and dangerous to be neutered.
- Dogs must be on a leash in public places except Rural General Zones or any dog exercise area (generally, most Council Controlled Tracks and Reserves). However, these two exceptions do not apply to playground or cemeteries.
- The expectations for dog owners to maintain owner responsibility during an emergency.
- That any probationary and disqualified owners shall be classified for the maximum period, unless they can demonstrate to Council's satisfaction that the full period is unnecessary.
- The criteria for issuing a multiple dog licence have been clarified.
- Fees for dog registration have been set to recognize and reward dog ownership behaviour that complies with the Act.

MICRO-CHIPPING

All dogs registered for the first time on or after 1st July 2006 (excluding working dogs) and all dogs classified as dangerous or menacing since 1st December 2003 are required to be microchipped.

At the end of the 2023/24 registration year, there were 190 dogs without microchip numbers compared to 169 in 2022/23. The Animal Control Officer's (**ACO**) have observed that most dogs they deal with are microchipped. We have reached out to owners of registered dogs without microchips and working towards compliance in accordance with the QLDC Enforcement Strategy and Prosecution Policy.

DOG REGISTRATION

Council registration fees are set out to recognise and reward responsible dog ownership and provide a discounted registration fee to dog owners that classify in the low-risk category. For example, if the dog's property is fenced, the dog is neutered, and the dog has positive history e.g. no impounding history.

There was a 0.82% decrease in the number of registered dogs from 6099 in 2022/23 to 6046 in 2023/24. Historically there has generally been a 5% increase in new dog registrations each year and this is the first time we have seen a decrease in several years.

Council was notified of 418 deceased dogs and 460 dogs that were transferred out of the Queenstown Lakes District. This is a 15% total increase from 388 deceased and 358 transferred in 2022/23.

Category	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Total number of Registered Dogs	5388	5728	5962	6099	6046
a) Dangerous by owner conviction under s.31(1)(a)	1	1	0	0	0
b) Dangerous by sworn evidence under s.31(1)(b)	3	3	4	3	3
c) Dangerous by owner admittance in writing under s.31(1)(c)	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of Dangerous Dogs	4	4	4	3	3
a) Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) – Behaviour	17	13	13	14	12
b) Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii) - Breed characteristics	0	0	0	0	0
c) Menacing under s33C(1) - Schedule 4 Breed/Type	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of Menacing Dogs	17	13	13	14	12
Total number of Probationary Owners	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of Disqualified Owners	1	1	0	0	0

DISQUALIFIED AND PROBATIONARY DOG OWNERS

There was no probationary or disqualified dog owners classified in 2023/24.

MENACING AND DANGEROUS DOGS

There was one newly classified menacing dog and two newly classified dangerous dogs for 2023/24 registration period.

The menacing classification was classified Menacing under S.33A for an attack on a dog.

Both new dangerous classifications were classified under S.31(1)b, one for an attack on a person and the other for attack on a dog.

There were three menacing dogs notified as deceased. One dangerous dog was notified as deceased, and one transferred out of the district. As a result, the total overall figure for dangerous and menacing has decreased.

DOG CONTROL RESPONSE

This section describes the number and type of complaints received and the way Queenstown Lakes District Council (**Council**) has responded to address the complaints and general issues regarding dogs over the last year.

Category of Complaint	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021 – 2022	2022-2023	2023 - 2024
Dog attack on people – Minor	8	14	12	24	7
Dog attack on people – Serious	0	2	2	3	3
Dog attack on animal – Minor	44	25	25	39	34
Dog attack on animal – Serious	9	9	10	12	15
Dog attack on stock (Worrying stock)	1	4	2	4	3
Dog rushing	31	37	29	42	31
Roaming dogs	506	552	463	611	457
General concern	28	66	61	94	74
Lost dogs	242	256	180	222	199
Barking	164	251	268	267	184
Fouling	17	22	30	17	10
Total complaints	1050	1238	1082	1333	1017

ATTACKS

When an attack occurs on a person or animal, the incident can be extremely distressing for all parties, and it is imperative that there is a fast response to such matters. Over the previous registration year, there has been a decrease in reported dog attacks from 78 in 2022/23 to 59 in 2023/24. In relation to the number of dogs in the district, proportionally the number of attacks has slightly decreased from 1.27% in 2022/23 to 0.97% in 2023/24.

ROAMING DOGS

Roaming dogs can frighten, intimidate, or annoy others, in addition to attacking other animals and people. The number of roaming dogs has decreased from 611 in 2022/23 to 457 in 2023/24. In relation to the number of dogs in the district there is a reduction of roaming dogs from 10% in 2022/23 to 7.5% in 2023/24. Our Animal Control Officers have provided education about residential area compliance expectations which may have contributed to the decrease in roaming dogs.

LOST DOGS

The number of lost dogs reported to Council has decreased from 222 in 2022/23 to 199 in 2023/24.

BARKING DOGS

The number of complaints received for barking dogs has decreased from 267 in 2022/23 to 184 in 2023/24. Council continues to provide the free use of anti-bark devices to dog owners as required. Council has been working with the community by offering free training classes to dog owners which may have assisted dog owners being pro-active in this space.

IMPOUNDINGS

There has been a decrease in the number of impounded dogs from 67 dogs in 2022/23 to 58 in 2023/24, This is a decrease even when you compare it to the relative reduction in number of dogs in our district.

ACO's continue to issue infringements for second time offences for impounding, however where appropriate, on first offences the ACO will return the dog home and provide education to the owner.

PROSECUTIONS

There were two prosecutions in 2023/24. The first was a dog attack on a person in January 2022. The person in charge of the dog at the time of the attack was prosecuted, the judge found there were no exceptional circumstances, therefore the court ordered the destruction of the dog on the 4th March 2024. The dog owner appealed this decision, and the appeal was subsequently dismissed by the high court on the 20th June 2024. This attack occurred in January 2022.

The second was a dog attack on two children in March 2023. The dog owner was prosecuted on the 21st May 2024, however the judge found exceptional circumstances in this case to avoid the destruction of the dog.

There is one further active prosecution currently going through the courts, this will be reported on in due course.

GENERAL CONCERNS

Council received 74 general dog concerns in total for the 2023/24 registration year. The general dog enquiries have remained consistent to last year, from 51 in 2022/23 to 56 in 2023/24. Welfare concerns have significantly decreased from 51 in 2022/23 to 18 in 2023/24. Our ACO's have a good relationship with the SPCA and pass on any welfare concerns to them as the lead agency on welfare. Our community may be reporting welfare concerns direct to SPCA.

INFRINGEMENTS

The number of infringements issued remains consistent from 99 in 2022/23 to 97 in 2023/24.

Most of these infringements have been issued for failure to register dog (64) or failure to keep dog under control (22). There were five issued for failure to keep dog control or confined on owner's property, four issued for failure to comply with any bylaw authorised by the section and two issued for failure to comply with classification. Of these two, one is for failing to comply with dangerous classification requirements and one is for failing to comply with menacing classification requirements.

Of the total 97 infringements, six were reversed; five for failure to register and one for Failure to keep dog controlled/confined on owner's property.

A total of 17 were waived; one for failure to keep dog controlled or confined on owner's property and 16 for failure to register were waived once we received compliance from owners.

Offence	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023 - 2024
Failure to comply with classification	0	0	0	0	2
Failure to register dog	43	36	39	39	64
Failure to advise of address change	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to keep dog controlled/confined on owner's property	3	3	5	14	5
Failure to keep dog under control	4	4	3	10	22
Failure to carry a leash in public	0	0	0	0	0
Falsely notifying death of dog	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to supply owner information	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to comply with any bylaws authorized by the section	0	0	4	1	4
Failure to implant microchip transponder in dog	0	0	38	35	0
Failure to comply with barking dog abatement notice	3	0	0	0	0
Total	53	43	89	99	97