

REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S POLICY AND PRACTICES IN RELATION TO THE CONTROL OF DOGS FOR THE YEAR 1 JULY 2008 TO 30 JUNE 2009

DOG CONTROL IN THE GORE DISTRICT

The total number of registered dogs in the Gore District as at 30 June 2008 was 3221. This is 29 dogs more than what was recorded at the same time the previous year. The majority of these dogs are pets domiciled in the urban areas of the Gore District.

Dog control in the Gore District is performed by an independent contractor. This contractor, Mrs Rae Evans, employs one Animal Control Officer to assist her in delivering an effective dog control service to the Gore District.

DOG CONTROL ENFORCEMENT PRACTICES

During the year under review the Council received two formal complaints both in regard to the behaviour of dogs and/or their owners. The two complaints concerned dog bites. The complaints were the subject of an investigation and action to address the concerns of the complainants was implemented.

One complaint involved two dogs, namely a Mastiff Cross and an American Bulldog, rushing out from a property in Gore and attacking a Jack Russell Terrier that was being walked on a leash on the footpath. The terrier was quite badly bitten and required veterinary attention. Both dogs were declared dangerous at the time but have since moved to a rural property in the district.

Another incident involved a man entering a property in Gore and being bitten by a pitbull terrier. The bites required hospital attention.

The pitbull was classified as dangerous at the time of the incident. However following a letter from the owner and the local veterinary stating that as the dog had given birth to 16 pups the day before its behaviour was likely to be more possessive/protective than aggressive, the existing classification of menacing was reinstated.

A report from Gore Hospital disclosed how a 6 year old girl was treated for dog bites to her arm. The owner of the dog refused to hand it over to Animal Control. In the absence of anybody prepared to make a statement over the incident which took place on private property, the Council was unable to proceed any further with its investigation.

There was an incident in Gore where a dog killed a number of sheep. The dog was subsequently caught and taken to the vets to be euthanased.

The Councils contractor is impounding an increasing number of dogs that are not being claimed by their owners due to the cost of registration and pound fees. These dogs are rehoused if they are suitable otherwise they are taken to the vet for euthanasing.

During the year a total of 76 infringement notices were issued. Infringement notices were issued to owners who failed to microchip their dogs. The Council instigated a tougher line for repeat offenders who did not register their dogs. Warrants were obtained from the Courts and with the aid of Police the dog owners were visited and informed that their dogs were being uplifted for non registration, in most cases the registration fees were paid and the dogs were left with the owners.

No prosecutions were initiated by the Council for breaches of the Dog Control Act.

DOG REGISTRATION AND OTHER FEES

A comparison of the dog registration fees for the year ending 30 June 2009 with the previous year is as follows:

	07/08	08/09
Registration Fee – Urban Dog	\$110.00	\$110.00
a. Less - fenced on a controlled property	-\$20.00	-\$20.00
b. Less - no dog complaints, impoundments or infringements within a two year period	-\$30.00	-\$30.00
c. Less – neutered or spayed	-\$7.00	-\$7.00
Registration Fee inclusive of a, b and c	\$35.00	\$35.00
Licence Fee – three or more dogs	\$100.00	\$100.00
Registration Fee – Rural Dog	\$11.00	\$11.00
a. Add – dog complaints, impoundment or infringement within a 2 year period	\$15.00	\$15.00
Late Registration Fee	\$15.00	\$15.00
Urban Dog	\$5.00	\$5.00
Rural Dog		
Poundage		
First impoundment	\$80.00	
First impoundment: dogs with current GDC registration		\$50.00
Unregistered	\$150.00	\$150.00
Every subsequent impoundment	\$50.00	\$50.00
Destruction costs for known owners of dogs		
Sustenance – per day	\$10.00	\$10.00
Additional Fee for impounding or releasing dogs at weekends, public holidays or outside Council office hours	\$30.00	\$30.00

The Council takes a vigilant approach in regard to non-registration of dogs. Dogs not registered are the subject of prosecution under the Dog Control Act should owners not heed the urgings given via letter, personal visit and the issue of an infringement notice prior to these proceedings being instituted

DOG EDUCATION

The Council's contractor issues owners with information on how to prevent dogs barking incessantly and also offers advice on how to keep dogs from wandering. The Council's Staff and Contractor put a concerted effort into clamping down on unregistered dogs in the District especially in the Matura area where wandering and unregistered dogs seem to be an ongoing problem. More regular patrols were carried out in Matura which appear to have made a positive difference with wandering dogs in the area.

MENACING AND DANGEROUS DOGS

In the year under review, two dogs in the Gore district was deemed to be dangerous after a complaint was received from a resident after his dog was attacked by two dogs while walking on the footpath, the dog required veterinary treatment.

There are twelve dogs in the district classified as menacing under Section 33C (by breed) of the Dog Control Act 1996 and four under Section 33A (by behaviour).

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Pursuant to Section 10A(2)(a) of the Dog Control Act 1996, attached is a schedule detailing relevant statistics covering dog control issues in the Gore District for the year ending 30 June 2008.

Stephen Parry
CHIEF EXECUTIVE