



Dog Control Annual Report

For the 12 months ending 30 June 2022

Section 10A Dog Control Act 1996



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What we do

Southland District Council (Council) is required to manage and enforce the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act). Under section 10A of the Act, Council must report each financial year on the administration of its Dog Control Policy and its dog control practices. This report is for the dog registration year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

This activity provides for the control of dogs to protect the public, and promotes responsible dog ownership. It involves registering dogs, investigating complaints about dogs, patrolling, education, monitoring and enforcement.

Why we do it

Dog control contributes to creating safe places (homes, public places and roads), the abatement of nuisances from dogs, and the protection of protected wildlife.

Council recognises that the keeping of dogs is a positive part of the life of many Southlanders. Whether as working dogs or companions, dogs under responsible ownership can have a positive role in society and provide assistance, enjoyment and health benefits to many individuals and families.

Dog control in the Southland District

Council's animal control team is based within the wider Environmental Services group and consists of:

- a manager
- two full time and one part time (0.8 FTE) animal control officers, based in Te Anau, Otautau and Invercargill
- a 0.5 FTE co-ordinator
- an afterhours contractor (Armourguard)
- a shared service with Invercargill City Council.

The animal control team has a close working relationship with key stakeholders in the community such as the Society for the Protection of Animals (SPCA), Furever Homes, local veterinarians, police and other local authorities.

Southland District Council covers a large geographical area, which includes both urban and rural dog owners.

The animal control team operates a seven day, 24 hour service.

Staff believe that resourcing is currently adequate to fulfil its statutory duties. Council also employs a quality management officer who assists with the review and development of the systems used across Environmental Services.

Policy and practices

The Policy on Dogs 2015 and the Dog Control Bylaw 2015 are scheduled to be reviewed in 2025.

Commentary on statistical information

Some commentary on the statistical information in Appendix 1 is as follows:

Complaints received

There has been a significant increase (92%) in the number of complaints received, though the number of complaints received does vary from year to year.

There was a 138% increase in the number of barking complaints. Increased numbers of people working from and isolating at home due to Covid 19 may be one reason why an increased number of complaints was received.

The number of attacks decreased.

Infringement notices

More infringements (59% more) were issued this year; this is to be expected with more complaints received. The majority of the extra infringements were issued for unregistered dogs.

Classified dogs and owners

The numbers of dogs classified as menacing or dangerous are staying reasonably steady. Factors that affect these numbers include dogs moving to or leaving the district or dogs passing away.

There are currently no probationary or disqualified owners. Owner classifications are time limited and expire.

Working smarter

We've built further on the work started in 2021 to improve the customer experience and streamline the process with online registration by fine tuning the processes used and the documentation sent out to dog owners.

Attacks

A questionnaire is included in Council's systems to drill down into the circumstances behind dog attacks. The following bar graph summarises injury by victim category:



The first serious attack on a person involved an attack on a 6 year old by 3 pig hunting dogs. He was put into an induced coma but has since recovered. The team chose not to prosecute because:

1. The three dogs involved were destroyed immediately by the owner.
2. The level of responsibility shown by the owners. The dogs are usually kept in a cage, within a contained property. It's not known what caused the dogs to attack when the two children let the dogs out.
3. The attack took place on the dog owner's property.
4. The family were very distraught.
5. Cost vs benefit. Public awareness can be achieved through education, as well as via prosecution.

The second serious attack on a person was where a dog attacked its owner and another dog while they were trying to protect a 3 year old child from the dog (which wanted the food the child was eating). The owner required surgery on tendons in both arms and the other dog required vet attention. The team chose not to prosecute because:

1. The dog involved was voluntarily euthanised by the owner.
2. The attack took place on the dog owner's property.
3. It was considered that the family had endured much pain and concern over the recent weeks and that they had learnt from this terrible incident.
4. Cost vs benefit. Public awareness can be achieved through education, as well as via prosecution.

The attacks on dogs caused injuries only and infringements were issued where possible.

Dog registration fee discounts/ classes

Registration fees are set by Council. We currently have two dog types, which are:

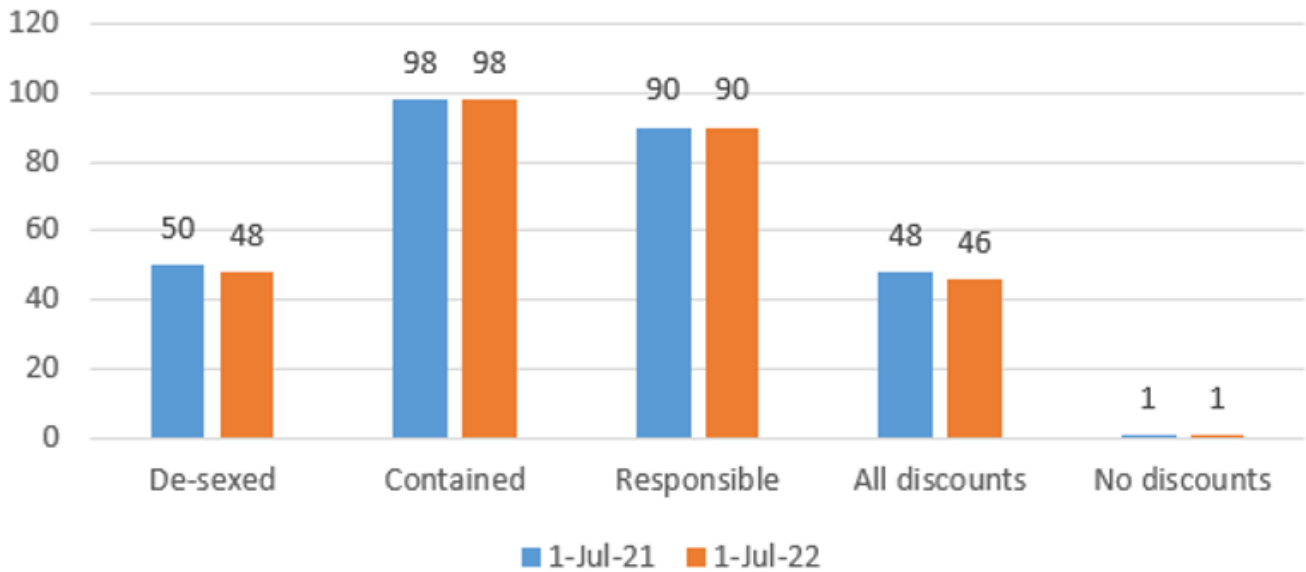
- working dog
- non-working dog

Working dogs include stock dogs (which are kept principally for the purposes of herding or driving stock) and other working dogs (which include seeing-eye dogs, government dogs, guard dogs and pest control dogs).

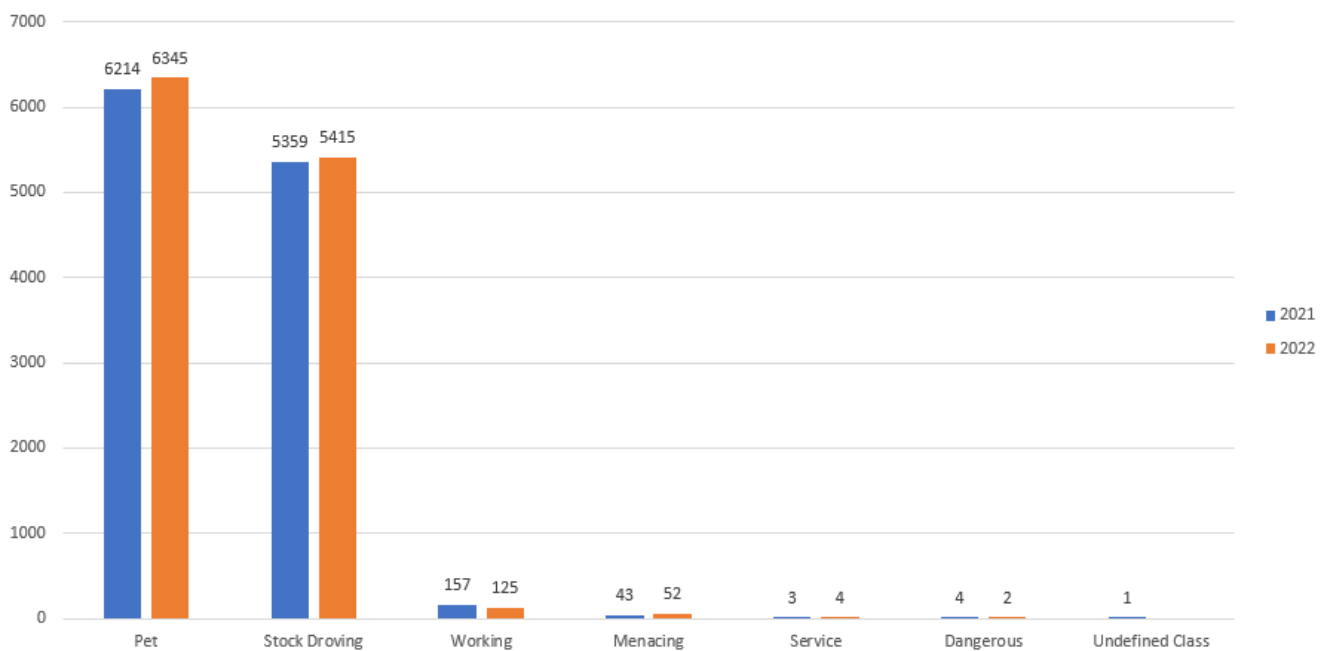
Those non-working dog owners that meet the criteria receive a discounted registration rate (responsible owner and microchipped dog, dog is in a fenced/controlled property, dog is spayed/neutered).

The number of non-working dogs that qualified for the discounts is shown in the graph below, and the number of dogs per class, are represented in the following graphs:

% OF NON-WORKING DOGS DISCOUNTS



NUMBER OF DOGS IN CLASSES



The numbers of both pet dogs (2.1% increase) and stock dogs (1% increase) have increased slightly since last year.

Dogs may also be classified as menacing or dangerous. Menacing dog numbers remain relatively low overall but have increased this year (9 more dogs or 21% increase); dangerous dog numbers have decreased (from 4 to 2).

Dog control officers continue to follow up on the unregistered dogs in the district, with 33 on record remaining unregistered at the end of the period. These dogs are likely to have moved from their registered address without notification.

Dog education

Dog education is achieved in a number of ways, including during the registration process, patrols, site visits, articles and Facebook. The team also places promotional material in Council's First Edition which is sent quarterly to all ratepayers in the Southland District Council area.

Collaboration

The team is active in the New Zealand Institute of Animal Control Officers, with Mrs Munro being the branch president.

Council has a close working relationship with Furever Homes, who rehome Council's impounded dogs.

Council operates a combined dog control facility with ICC. Five of the 28 kennels are dedicated for use by Council. SDC paid a one-off capital contribution and has an arrangement for paying for ongoing expenses and a daily tariff for each kennel when in use by SDC.

Free microchipping

Council continues to offer free microchipping for dogs registered with it. Council spent \$2,366 on microchips in 2021/2022 (excl. GST).

Observations from the dog control officers

The officers have noticed that there are more dogs being dumped, surrendered, or given to Furever Homes directly for rehoming in the last year. This is presumed to be as a result of increased financial pressures.

The increase in complaints, and particularly barking complaints, has been noticeable. This may be due to more people either working from home or being at home due to illness or isolating.

Free microchipping still continues to be well received and the officers use these sessions to educate new dog owners on the responsibilities of owning dogs and answer any questions they may have. The service increases compliance and the proportion of owners that receive the responsible owner discount.

Where possible providing an educational approach to dog owners has improved actions of many dog owners within the community, whereby they have tried to act more responsibly whilst with their dog in a public place.

Te Anau being a tourist hotspot has posed and will continue to be at times a destination where visitors sometimes have a less responsible approach with their dogs. Praise must be given to the local population for being tolerant and communitive with the local officer in trying at times to aid in an educational approach to those less responsible with their dogs.

Erin Keeble

Acting Manager Environmental Health

Appendix 1 - Statistical Information

CATEGORY	FOR PERIOD 1 JULY 2020 TO 30 JUNE 2021	FOR PERIOD 1 JULY 2021 TO 30 JUNE 2022
Registrations for dogs	Approximately 11,781 as at 30 June 2021	Approximately 11,944 as at 30 June 2022
% pet dogs	53%	53%
Probationary owners	0	0
Disqualified owners	1	0
Dangerous dogs - still active	4	2
Menacing dogs - active	43	52
Infringement notices	81	129
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obstructed a dog control officer or dog ranger 	0	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failed to comply with bylaw 	1	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failed to comply with disqualification 	0	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fail to comply dangerous dog classification 	0	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kept an unregistered dog 	45	93
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failed to keep dog controlled or confined 	30	28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failed to keep dog under control 	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to provide proper care 	0	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to comply with menacing dog classification 	0	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing false particulars 	1	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to comply with barking abatement notice 	0	0
Complaints received	384	739
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dog attacks 	36	33
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barking dogs 	139	331
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • found dogs 	71	89
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dog rush/threaten (nil bite) 	28	37
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wandering dogs 	110	249
Number of prosecutions	0	0