



WAIMAKARIRI DISTRICT COUNCIL

WHERE THE DOG REGISTRATION FEES GO

July 2008

The Dog Control Act 1996 and its recent amendments changed the emphasis of the Animal Control Officer's work from treatment and monitoring dogs for the prevention of hydatids, to dog registration and record keeping, owner education, control and ranging duties. There are now greater costs for the Council with responsibilities to administer the Act, its dog policy and bylaw and to hold records in the format required by the National Dog Database.

The dog control budget, which includes operating the dog pound, is funded totally from dog registration fees. There is no subsidy from general rates. The registration fee structure allocates the costs of dog control and registration as closely as possible to where they are incurred.

Administration Fee

The costs of registration including maintaining the registration records, issuing tags and the first response to public inquiries is covered by the administration fee. This cost is the same for each owner and does not increase as the number of dogs owned increases.

Dog Fee

The Dog Fee covers costs that can be associated with the dog, for example ranging, complaints, movement control and impounding. A separate fee is paid for each dog, with different charges for pet dogs, working dogs and neutered dogs. The stepped scale makes an allowance for the amount of time and resources required to control each class of dog, and provides an incentive to owners to neuter their dogs.

The administration fee is paid once and the dog fee is paid for each dog being registered. This reduces the overall cost of registering the second and subsequent dogs and recognises the fact that the fixed owner charges are incurred at the same level regardless of the number of dogs owned.

The following is a summary of functions paid for by the dog registration fee. (Percentage figures have been rounded).

Registration of Dogs and Maintenance of Dog Register (14%)

The Council is required by Section 34 of the Dog Control Act to keep a register of all dogs registered within its District.

Costs of registration include purchase of tags, printing notices and envelopes, postage, advertising fees and payment dates, receipting fees and issuing registration tags

Keeping the dog register up to date involves monitoring dogs in and out of the district, answering inquiries from the public, following up unregistered dogs and sending reminders to dog owners. The dog register also helps us reunite lost dogs with their owners.

Public Awareness, Education and Training (12%)

Educating the public and dog owners about the responsibilities that come with being a dog owner, the role of animal control officers, and the statutory obligations of the Council in regard to dog control is an important part of the Animal Control Officer's work. This includes visits to schools and interested groups when requested.

Staff are also involved in training to keep up to date with new developments in their industry, customer service, new technology and other work related skills.

Enforcement and Prosecutions (1%)

The final step in the enforcement process is action through the Court. This includes the prosecution of owners of unregistered dogs.

Ranging and Response to Complaints (25%)

Regular patrols are made to monitor dog control, including special attention to problem areas (beaches etc) during holiday periods .

Follow-up of public complaints regarding dog control, noise, wandering dogs and dangerous dogs.

Pound and Pickups (14%)

Registration fees meet the cost of maintaining and operating the dog pound, including collection and care of impounded animals. A new dog pound was completed in 2005. Impounding fees are also credited to this account to cover the cost of looking after impounded dogs. Animal control rates pay for the Officer's time spent on control of stock.

Property Inspections (3%)

Property inspections are made where the Dog Control Act or Bylaw requires it, or a licence is necessary to keep more than two dogs in urban areas. A separate licence fee is also charged in these cases.

Administration, Computer and Management (15%)

This includes a share of the Council's computer costs for the dog register, office space, administration services such as typing, photocopying, collection of fees, postage (other than bulk postage) and part of the Council management costs.

National Dog Database (5%)

All Councils are required to pay a levy to the Government to cover the cost of operating the National Dog Database administered by the Department of Internal Affairs.

