

2. PROPOSED DOG REGISTRATION AND RELATED FEES FOR 2002/2003 DOG LICENSING YEAR

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The purpose of this report is to finalise dog registration and other related fees for the 2002/2003 dog licensing year.

INTRODUCTION

The Dog Control Act 1996 requires that all dogs over three months old be registered by 1 July each year and that the fees for dog registration set by the Council be publicly notified in the newspaper at least once in the month prior to the commencement of the registration year.

It is common practice for territorial authorities to send an application for dog registration to each known dog owner in their area. In Christchurch these forms are pre-printed with the dog and owner details, the dog registration fees and information required by the Dog Control Act. While the responsibility to register a dog rests with its owner and the Council is not required to post applications, it is considered an advantage to do so in an effort to have dogs registered by 1 July of each year. In order for the application forms to be printed for processing and posting in mid-May, it is necessary for the Council to set the fees no later than its April meeting each year.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Councillors will recall consideration of an earlier report on this matter at the Budget meeting held on 22 February 2002. At that meeting the Committee decided that an amnesty on unregistered dogs should be introduced in an effort to account for unregistered dogs. The Committee also decided to recommend to the Annual Plan Subcommittee that all dog registration fees be raised by \$10 per category, and that the funding policy be changed to reflect a 7.6% general benefit, rather than the current 5%. These recommendations were adopted by the Annual Plan Subcommittee on 27 February 2002, with a minor amendment in that the Subcommittee rounded the rates component up from 7.6% to 8%.

As noted in the earlier report to the Committee, the net cost for animal control has increased by \$104,000 since last year. Revenue is down in the current year and is unlikely to reach budget target. As at 1 July 2001 the Dog Control account had an opening balance of \$119,969 in deficit. This deficit will continue to increase unless dog registration fees are raised and/or the rates subsidy for dog control is increased.

The attached schedule of proposed dog registration fees for 2002/03 shows an increase of \$10 across all categories. The one exception is the fee for dogs classified as dangerous, which has increased by \$15 (from \$105 to \$120). In addition to the \$10 increase, it is also proposed to increase the penalties for late payment. The Dog Control Act requires that these late payment fees not exceed 50% of the first fee.

The following table sets out the proposed fees, with the previous fees shown in brackets.

Dog Control Fee (Per Dog)	Fee if paid on or before 30/6/02	Fee if paid between 1/7/02 and 31/7/02	Fee if paid on or after 1/8/02
Owner Granted Responsible Dog Owner Status			
First Dog	\$47.00 (\$37)	\$70.00 (\$50)	\$100.00 (\$75)
Second And Subsequent Dogs	\$32.00 (\$22)	\$70.00 (\$50)	\$100.00 (\$75)
Spayed/Neutered Dogs		\$70.00 (\$60)	\$100.00 (\$90)
Dogs classified as Dangerous		\$120.00 (\$105)	\$150.00 (\$135)
All Other Dogs		\$80.00 (\$70)	\$110.00 (\$100)

In order for staff to meet the timeframes described earlier in this report, it is now necessary for the Committee to formally adopt the fees and forward this recommendation to the next Council meeting.

Finally, please note that the report on possible time payment options for dog owners and an update on internal charging, as requested at the meeting of 15 February 2002, will be available for the Committee meeting set down for 12 April 2002.

Recommendation: That, pursuant to the provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996, the Council adopt the schedule of dog control fees contained in the attachment for the registration year commencing 1 July 2002.