

5. ANIMAL CONTROL INITIATIVES

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Corporate Plan Output: Dog Control	

The purpose of this report is to advise that in April this year two reports were submitted to the Environment Committee covering a review of the Animal Control Service and desexing of dogs. At the following Council meeting on 26 April 2000 it was resolved that a seminar meeting of all Councillors be held to discuss the issues involved before any fresh recommendations were submitted to the Council. That seminar was held on 18 August, and this report outlines the outcomes.

REVIEW OF ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICE

As reported to the Committee in April, a comprehensive review has been undertaken of the animal control service with the aim of meeting current levels of service for less money. Key results of the efficiency review are:

- through improvement of current processes and the introduction of work flow management technology, the animal control team will be able to exceed current levels of service for reduced cost;
- an improved roster (as suggested by Animal Control Officers) will increase patrol hours at weekends;
- the animal control service will be centralised with the animal control shelter at Dyers Road;
- savings of \$200,000 plus per year can be achieved with the reduction of 5 FTEs.

In April the Committee resolved to retain the current fees for the 2000/2001 year because savings arising from the review will be needed to purchase new technology and to relocate the administration team to the animal control shelter. Capital costs for this are anticipated to be approximately \$180,000.

UTILISATION OF SAVINGS

Councillors at the recent seminar were in favour of reducing the responsible dog owner fees by \$5 (from \$40 to \$35) in the 2001/2002 financial year with a foreshadowed further reduction of \$3-5 in the following year.

Councillors also expressed support for more “doggy do” bins and disposal bags. Officers are currently investigating a trial of bag dispensers and accompanying disposal bins in some parks and dog parks. The results of this trial will be reported back to the Committee.

Another suggestion which is now being investigated by staff is that of a voucher system for payments, whereby customers can purchase vouchers at any time during the year which can be presented at payment time for dog registration.

A further initiative suggested was the establishment of a capped fund to enable the desexing of problem dogs in the community known to Animal Control Officers, as well as a voucher system enabling the owners of rehomed dogs to have them desexed at a suitable time once the dog has become accustomed to its new environment.

Education continues to play a major role and has in fact been enhanced with the creation of an Education Officer position (.75FTE) committed to the delivery of education and awareness programmes. A strategy is currently being developed to heighten awareness of animal control issues and provide education from kindergarten level through to secondary school. This education includes bite prevention, animal care and welfare, and responsibilities and obligations of dog owners. At the adult level, the strategy will also promote responsible dog ownership, the provision of more dog parks and “doggy do” disposal bins and bags.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council aim to reduce the registration fee for responsible dog owners by \$5 in 2001/2002 and by \$3-\$5 the following year.
 2. That tenders be sought from local veterinarians to desex dogs.
 3. That staff report back to the Environment Committee on the results of the tender process together with a recommendation regarding the establishment of a capped fund for desexing problem dogs in the community and for providing vouchers for desexing rehomed dogs.
 4. That the Parks and Recreation Committee be requested to consider the provision of additional funding for “doggy do” bins and bag dispensers in parks.

Chairman’s Recommendation: That the officer’s recommendation be endorsed.