

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS



Te Tari Taiwhenua

# **Survey of Territorial Authorities on Dog Control Issues – Final Report**

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**Local Government Policy**

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## **SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### *Survey Background*

- A two-part survey on dog control issues was sent to all 74 territorial authorities on 12 February 2003. Part A of the survey asked councils about their experience with dog control problems, probable causes and possible solutions to these problems, as well as their perceptions of the effectiveness of the current Dog Control Act 1996. Part B sought a range of statistical information for each of the last six and a half years (up to 31/12/2002).
- 73 responses to the survey were received. One of these responding councils was unable to provide any statistical data.

### **Data Accuracy**

- The number of responses to different questions varied and the number of councils responding to some questions is relatively small. In addition, the way in which councils recorded information varied, with some councils providing detailed figures, whereas others were only able to provide aggregated totals or estimates. For these reasons, some of the results reported should be treated as indicative, rather than conclusive, and should not be treated as representative of all 74 councils.
- Despite the limitations of the information recorded in this document, the results provide useful indications of dog control problems and issues experienced by a range of councils when implementing the legislation.

### **Major Changes From Interim Report**

- In March 2003 an interim report on this survey was released. This final report updates the findings in the interim report, using the information received from all the councils that responded to the survey, and presents some additional information.
- This report includes the following information that was not included in the interim report:
  - an analysis of attacks on people attributed by councils to unregistered dogs
  - information for the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 years on dog attacks resulting in a visit to a public hospital
  - information on the months of the year in which people were discharged after being hospitalised as a result of dog bites (as an indicator of the time of year when dog attacks occur)
  - details of probationary and disqualified dog owners as defined in the Dog Control Act 1996
  - information on dogs classified as "dangerous".

- In Part A, responses from six extra councils have been added. These largely reflect the comments made by the 67 councils that were reported in the interim report. Hence the findings in section 3 have not substantially changed.
- In Part B, the addition of 14 councils' responses has not changed the trends that were reported in the interim report. The main exceptions to this are:
  - In the interim report rural councils were reported as having a higher rate of dog rushing incidents, compared with urban councils, in 2001/2002. This rate is now the same for rural and urban councils.
  - The interim report noted that the number of visits to public hospitals from dog attacks remained relatively constant during 1995/1996 – 1999/2000. The new figures for the years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 show an increase in hospitalisations resulting from dog attacks for these years. This increase can also be seen in the figures for these two years for the relative rates of dog bites for both children under 10 years of age, and males.
- Another change is the way in which reported dog attacks are attributed to cross-breed dogs. In this report, dog attacks attributed to cross-breeds have been separated out from those attributed to a "single breed".

#### *Summary of Part A Findings*

#### **Dog Control Problems**

- When asked about the general nature of problems experienced with dog control, councils frequently identified the following broad areas:
  - dog owners
  - difficulties with enforcement
  - legislative provisions
  - the courts.
- Dog Owners: The problem most frequently reported by councils with regard to owners was the failure to register dogs. A high proportion of respondents also cited dog owners' attitudes as a key part of the problem, and suggested solutions that focused on the need for educating owners about their responsibilities.
- Enforcement: Councils consistently identified the lack of any preventative power of entry and seizure as a major impediment to dealing with dog control problems, along with the inability of councils to seize unregistered dogs that are under the control of the owner or on private property. Comments regarding other enforcement problems illustrate frustration with the costs and length of the judicial process.
- Legislation: Councils' comments about the legislation centred on difficulties interpreting the Act. A number of respondents also identified a lack of powers to take proactive, preventative measures as a problem.

- Courts: Comments relating to the court systems generally expressed dissatisfaction with both delays in the process and the low penalties imposed.

#### **Adequacy of the Current Dog Control Act 1996**

- When asked about the adequacy of the current Dog Control Act in respect of different issues, councils:
  - considered that the Act provides adequate powers for:
    - ensuring all dogs are registered
    - enforcing breaches of the Act
    - punishing owners of dogs for breaches of the Act
    - preventing repetition of incidents involving the same dog
    - making bylaws for the control of dogs
  - were divided over whether or not the Act had adequate powers for:
    - identifying potentially dangerous dogs
    - preventing repetition of incidents involving the same owner
    - preventing dangerous dog incidents
    - seizing dangerous dogs.

## *Overview Part B Analysis*

### **Total Numbers of Dogs**

- 61 councils reported a total of 422,545 registered dogs in 2001/2002.
- Extrapolating this figure for the whole of New Zealand, using estimates of the reported ratio of dogs per person, gives a conservative estimated total of 500,000 dogs.
- The average reported number of registered dogs per 1,000 people increased from 1996/1997 to 2001/2002 (from 106 to 117 registered dogs per 1000 people). Most of this increase occurred from 1996/1997 to 1998/1999. A slight drop was recorded from 2000/2001 to 2001/2002, with 118 registered dogs per 1000 people recorded for 2000/2001 and 117 for 2001/2002.

### **Dog Attacks on People**

- 58 councils reported a total of 3,020 dog attacks on people in 2001/2002.
- Extrapolating this figure gives a nation-wide estimate of 3,435 dog attacks on people for 2001/2002.
- This estimate is well below the number of recorded Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) claims relating to dog injuries, which was 8,677 in 2001/2002. It appears that not all attacks that result in an ACC claim are reported to councils.
- The total number of dog attacks reported to councils has declined since 1999/2000 (from 3,326 to 3,020).
- The number of attacks by dogs on people reported to councils in relation to both the number of people and the number of registered dogs appears to be trending downward since 1999/2000. In 1999/2000 the rate of reported dog attacks across New Zealand was 1.24 per 1,000 people (based on responses from 42 councils), compared with 0.87 per 1,000 people in 2001/2002 (based on responses from 58 councils).
- Information from the New Zealand Health Information Service (NZHIS) shows that the number of dog attacks requiring a visit to a public hospital has increased since 1999/2000. In 1999/2000 there were 349 visits to hospital as a result of dog attacks (excluding day patients), while in 2001/2002 this number was 420. The number of hospitalisations for dog bites gives an indication of the level of "serious" dog attacks nationally, and the figures suggest that the number of serious attacks is rising.
- 25 councils reported 376 attacks by unregistered dogs in 2001/2002, which was 46% of the total attacks reported by these councils. From the survey data it is estimated that around 6% of all dogs are unregistered. This indicates that unregistered dogs have a disproportionately high rate of attacks on people, relative to their numbers.

### **Characteristics of Dog Attack Victims**

- Information supplied by the NZHIS indicates that in the seven years between 1995/1996 and 2001/2002 a total of 2,736 visits (including day patients) were made to public hospitals for treatment of dog bites. Of these visits:
  - 34% (943) were by children 0-10 years, and
  - 60% (1,652) were by males
- The figures for both of these groups are disproportionately high, relative to the figures for everyone.
- Information about when people hospitalised as a result of dog bites were discharged from public hospital over the 7 years from 1996/1997 to 2001/2002 indicates that the number of dog attacks peaks in the summer months of December to February. Over these seven years, 284 attacks occurred in the month of January, compared with 194 attacks in the month of July.

### **Expenditure on Dog Control**

- 54 councils (representing 87% of the total population) provided data on their total expenditure for dog control in 2001/2002. Total expenditure on dog control by these 54 councils was \$19,793,726.
- Average expenditure on dog control appears to have increased over the 1997/1998 to 2001/2002 period. This increase occurs when the average is calculated per person and per registered dog.

### **Breeds of Dog Involved in Attacks on People<sup>1</sup>**

- 29 councils identified the breed of dogs involved in attacks on people in the period 1996/1997 to 2001/2002. Less than a fifth of all reported dog attacks on people included information about the breed of the dog(s). There is no standard procedure for identifying breeds and there is inconsistency in the terminology they used by councils to describe breeds. In addition to this, information about who assessed the breed was not collected by the survey. Because the information about the breeds of dogs is based on a small dataset, these results should be treated as indicative and not representative of all councils or all dog attacks.
- Of the attacks on people where councils reported a "breed" of dog, cross-breed dogs were the type of dog identified most commonly. The cross-breeds identified most commonly were relatively consistent over the years surveyed and were:
  - Labrador Crosses
  - Staffordshire Bull Terrier Crosses
  - German Shepherd Crosses
  - Bull Terrier Crosses.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer Section 13 for comments as to the accuracy of breed information.

- When councils identified a single breed of dog, the most commonly identified breeds involved in attacks on people were relatively consistent over the years surveyed and were:
  - German Shepherds
  - Rottweilers
  - Bull Terriers
  - Labradors.

**Probationary and Disqualified Owners Under the Dog Control Act 1996**

- 41 councils (representing 58% of the total population) reported a total of 85 probationary dog owners (under the Dog Control Act 1996).
- 39 councils (representing 48% of the total population) reported a total of 15 disqualified dog owners (under the Dog Control Act 1996) in 2001/2002.

**Dogs Classified as Dangerous Under the Dog Control Act 1996**

- 52 councils (representing 74% of the total population) reported a total of 278 of dog classified as dangerous (under the Dog Control Act 1996) in 2001/2002/

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND**

### ***2.1 The Survey***

A two-part survey on dog control issues was sent to all 74 territorial authorities on 12 February 2003.

Part A of the survey asked councils about their experience with dog control problems and the effectiveness of the Dog Control Act 1996. Part B sought statistical data, for each of the last six and a half years, on numbers of registered and unregistered dogs, numbers of recorded dog attacks (on people and animals), including the breed of the dog, where known, numbers of rushing incidents recorded, infringement notices issued, and other information on the administration and enforcement of the current legislation. A copy of the survey form is attached as Appendix A.

73 responses to the survey were received. One of the responding councils was unable to provide any statistical data.

Other dog attack information from the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), the New Zealand Health Information Service (NZHIS) and the Ministry of Justice, has been included in this report.

In addition to the survey sent out to all councils, an abbreviated version of Part A was sent out to several stakeholder organisations for their impressions about the effectiveness of the Dog Control Act 1996. Four organisations responded to the survey but their comments have not been included in Part A, as this report focuses on the responses of councils.

### ***2.2 Notes to the Report***

The overall response rate to the survey was high (99%, or 73 out of 74 councils). Not all councils were able to answer all of the questions and the number of councils responding to some questions was relatively small. In addition, the way in which councils recorded information varied. This was most evident for records of the breed of dogs involved in attacks on people (see Section 13). In some cases, councils provided detailed breakdowns of their figures, whereas others provided aggregated totals or, in some instances, estimates. For these reasons some of the results reported should be treated as indicative, rather than conclusive, and should not be treated as being representative of all 74 councils.

Despite the limitations of the information and data recorded in this document, the Department believes that the results provide useful indications of the dog control problems and issues associated with implementing the legislation that are experienced by a range of councils.

### ***2.3 Changes from the Interim Report***

In March 2003 an interim report on this survey was released. The late receipt of a number of survey responses at that time allowed only 67 councils to be included in the Part A analysis of the interim report and only 59 in the Part B analysis. This final report updates the findings of the interim report, using the information received from all the councils that responded to the survey, and presents some new information.

#### *New Information*

This report includes the following information that was not included in the interim report:

- an analysis of attacks on people attributed by councils to unregistered dogs (refer section 6.3)
- information for the years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 from the New Zealand Health Information Service (NZHIS) on dog attacks resulting in a visit to a public hospital (refer section 8)
- information on the months of the year in which people were discharged after being hospitalised as a result of dog bites (as an indicator of the time of year when dog attacks occur - refer section 8)
- details of probationary and disqualified dog owners under the Dog Control Act 1996 (refer Section 16)
- information on dogs classified as "dangerous" (refer section 17).

#### *Changes to Information*

The responses from an additional six councils (representing an additional 153,090 people) have been included in Part A of this final report. These responses are mostly consistent with the comments made by the 67 councils that were reported in the interim report, and so the findings in section 3 have not changed.

In Part B, a further 14 councils' (representing an additional 538,390 people) responses had been included in this final report. The addition of these councils' responses affects the reported totals. For example, in the interim report 51 councils reported a total of 352,201 registered dogs for 2001/2002. In this final report 61 councils report a total of 422,545 registered dogs for 2001/2002.

Generally, the responses of the extra councils have not changed the trends reported in the interim report. For example, in the interim report the reported rate of dog attacks per 1,000 people in 2001/2002 was 0.88 (from 48 councils responding to this question). In this final report this rate is 0.87 (from 58 councils' responses).

The main examples of trends that have changed from the interim report are:

- The relative rates of reported dog rushing incidents for urban and rural councils (refer Figure 7). In the interim report, for 2001/2002 rural councils were reported as having a higher rate of reported rushing incidents than urban councils. After adding in the extra responses the rate for rural and urban councils are virtually the same.
- The rates (and numbers) of visits to publicly funded hospitals resulting from dog bites (refer section 8). The interim report noted that the number of visits to public hospitals from dog attacks remained relatively constant during 1995/1996 – 1999/2000. New figures from NZHIS for 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 show an increase in dog attack hospitalisations in these years. This increase also occurs in the relative rate of reported dog bites for children under 10 years of age and for males.

Another change is the way in which reported dog attacks are attributed to cross-breed dogs. In the interim report, attacks by dogs identified by councils as being crosses of a particular breed were included in the figures for dogs identified as being solely of that breed. A number of animal control professionals and other animal groups questioned this approach. In this report, dog attacks attributed to cross-breeds have been separated out from those attributed to a "single breed" (refer section 13)<sup>2</sup>.

#### ***2.4 Future Dog Control Statistics***

The difficulties a number of councils experienced in providing the statistical information sought by the survey, and the variable and incomplete nature of the data provided, raise issues about the effectiveness with which local authorities measure and monitor public safety outcomes in relation to their dog control function.

The importance of such outcomes at the national level, as well as in local communities, suggests that it would be desirable to adopt a standardised method of recording dog control statistics. To this end, the Department of Internal Affairs is currently investigating issues relating to recording better information, including the feasibility of a national database. However, it should be noted that there are inherent limitations to statistical data on dog control, as many attacks are unreported and much of the information has an unavoidable element of subjectivity.

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<sup>2</sup> The reader's attention is drawn to the notes in section 13 highlighting the limitations of the data on breeds.

## SECTION 3: PART A RESULTS - COUNCILS COMMENTS ON DOG CONTROL ISSUES

### 3.1 General Problems with Dog Control

Part A of the survey asked councils what general problems they had experienced with the Dog Control Act 1996, and what they viewed as the causes of such problems. Councils were also invited to suggest possible solutions.

The broad range of problems identified by councils is summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Problems with Dog Control Identified by Councils**

Identified problems	Number*	%
Owners	39	53
Enforcement	29	40
Courts and Penalties	21	29
Legislation	16	22
Dogs	14	19
Staffing Issues	4	5
Other	4	5

*\*Number of Councils identifying this factor as a problem (out of 73 responses)*

Dog owners were most frequently identified as the source of dog control problems, while difficulties of enforcement, legislative provisions, and the courts also ranked highly. The category labelled as 'dogs' refers to issues relating to dogs in general. The categories of ownership, enforcement, legislation, and courts are explained in more detailed below. Staffing issues included aspects such as training for dog control officers. Other problems included, for example, dogs visiting from other local authority areas during holiday periods.

Six of the councils that responded reported having few major problems with dog control, although most of these councils offered opinions on nation-wide problems.

### **3.2 Problems with Dog Owners**

The problem with owners most frequently cited by councils was the failure to register dogs:

*Hard to achieve 100% registration. People and dogs move address and council is not informed.*

*Approx 10% of dog owners failing to register. Irresponsible attitude.*

*The people who often have dangerous dogs are the people who do not or avoid registration of the dogs. Dogs must be registered so at least the authorities know where the dogs are and can provide some on-the-spot education.*

Specific statutory amendments sought by councils as a solution to ownership problems involved confirmed identification of owners and more stringent fencing requirements:

*No legal powers to acquire the personal particulars of the owner. Should require ID to establish dog ownership.*

*Dogs on unfenced properties pose a significant risk or threat to anyone visiting or passing the property on a public walkway.*

A proportion of respondents cited the attitudes of dog owners as a key part of the problem. The attitudes described by councils ranged from a lack of knowledge about what is "good dog ownership", to a more general disregard for the law, compounded by a lack of judicial deterrence.

Many councils attributed the inappropriate behaviour of some owners to a failure to recognise that all dogs are inherently dangerous animals.

*People have a habit of the interpreting law as they see it - my dog is safe, so I don't need it on a leash.*

*Dog owners not understanding what is necessary in socialising and training of pups and young dogs.*

*Lack of social responsibility in some dog owners, coupled with a lack of education of some dog owners re nature of the dog, its potential impact on others and of general responsibilities.*

*Irresponsible owners who allow their dogs to behave in an unacceptable manner.*

*Not many people like to be told what to do with regards to their dog.*

*A minority of dog owners are ignorant or negligent of their responsibilities or choose not to act responsibly. Stronger penalties are sought.*

*Frequently, dangerous dogs are owned by individuals who are able to avoid prosecution or other penalties by intimidating witnesses.*

Some councils suggested that socio-economic factors may contribute to irresponsible dog ownership:

*Largely associated with the lower socio economic group - lack education/poor attitude.*

*Grown up youths with limited income, cannot take proper care of dogs in rental accommodation.*

It should be noted that 58% of responding councils indicated that the existing limitations and obligations on dog ownership were adequate.

Other suggested measures focused around the need for educating owners about their responsibilities, increasing awareness of the need to register dogs, more stringent requirements before a person owns a dog and the need to tighten legislative requirements around probationary and disqualified owners. The use of microchip identification of dogs was also suggested:

*Greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring that dog owners know and understand their responsibilities. Consideration should be given to better education, more publicity and the registration or licensing of owners including the need to demonstrate the requirements of responsible dog ownership at a national level.*

*Dog owners should be made to pass a written test that qualifies them to be a dog owner. As dogs are potentially lethal weapons in the wrong hands similar to a vehicle or a firearm, it makes logical sense that a person wanting to own a dog should also pass some kind of responsibility test.*

*May be no solution under Dog Control Act except to tighten criteria in relation to classification of probationary owners (Sect 21) and disqualification of owners (Sect 25).*

*Possible micro-chipping of dogs for ID purposes and as part of registration.*

### **3.3 Problems with Enforcement**

Many responses appeared to reflect a degree of uncertainty or ignorance about the powers of entry conferred by the Dog Control Act 1996 upon councils:

*Uncertainty as to the right of council/police to forcibly enter a dwelling to remove an animal from its owner as directed by the court or empowered under the Act.*

*Ability to seize dogs from private property when time has elapsed between incident and officer arriving, i.e. fresh pursuit.<sup>3</sup>*

Councils consistently identified the lack of any preventive power of entry and seizure as being a major impediment to dealing with dog control problems, along with the inability of councils to seize unregistered dogs that are under the control of the owner or on private property:

*Unable to take preventative action on "potentially" dangerous dogs.*

*Power of entry to private property - ability to seize dogs under this section is restricted under subsection (b). The Act has no "other provisions" allowing seizure of a dog that has the potential to cause injury.*

*It would be nice to be able to be proactive, i.e. - to impound or seize a dog, which has shown signs of aggression before it actually bites.*

*Unable to uplift unregistered dogs from public places when under control of owner.*

*Unregistered dogs and not being able to either uplift dogs or prosecute quickly<sup>4</sup>.*

Comments regarding other enforcement problems appear to illustrate frustration with the costs and length of judicial processes:

*The probationary and disqualification process is lengthy so not used.*

*Time for prosecutions particularly with dangerous dogs - can take up to 6 months.*

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<sup>3</sup> The requirement of fresh pursuit only applies to the power of entry into a dwelling house.

<sup>4</sup> Dog Control Officers can inspect a dog on private property where they have good cause to suspect an offence against the Act has been committed, but cannot remove the dog from private property purely by virtue of non-registration.

*Many dogs that are seized under section 42 or under section 57 are euthanased. It is too expensive and difficult for councils to take legal action to recover any outstanding pound fees incurred. The legal options in recovering such fees, i.e. Civil Jurisdiction, is too onerous and the ratepayer ends up with paying for the cost.*

It was also reported that the attitudes and behaviour of dog owners could discourage enforcement by dog control officers in the absence of police:

*Physical practicality of enforcement re dangerous dogs on private property. Aggression and intimidation by the owners.*

*...the mere nature of dog control induces conflict.*

Other comments from councils included:

*Clarification of forced entry and seizure provisions of the Act to empowerment of police and councils to be able to legally enter a dwelling and remove a dog as required by the courts or authorised under the Act.*

*Lack of national coordination and consistency in implementation and collation of meaningful statistics and information.*

*The Act should be amended so that councils can take action against dog owners, such as requiring muzzling or fencing, where in the view of the dog control officer a danger is likely to exist to the public. It should be accepted that dog control officers can make these judgements based on their own experience and observation of the dog.*

### **3.4 Problems with the Legislation**

Generally, councils' comments about the legislation suggest that interpretative difficulties arise from the extent of cross-references between provisions in the Act, which, in turn, generate difficulties with enforcement. Responses also seem to identify a lack of power to take active preventative measures as a problem with the legislation:

*The legislation is written in a complex style, inhibiting enforcement because of the strong possibility of procedural error.*

*Procedures under the Act are too cumbersome, particularly in relation to the requirement to obtain witness statements, etc.*

*Legislation does not assist in the prevention of incidents that lead to endangerment, physical harm and damage to property. It is difficult to obtain evidence at the required threshold, particularly in relation to the identity of owners. Many problem owners (and their dogs) are transient. There is a low level of cooperation from other agencies.*

Other comments related to basic or interpretative problems with specific provisions/offences:

- Section 57, dogs attacking persons, animals or rushing at vehicles:

*Unable to uplift a dog that has rushed at passers-by and has returned to its property.*

*The term “attack” is interpreted as physical contact. Should extend to attempt to attack.*

- Section 55, barking dogs:

*Section 55 barking dogs - very messy section, needs rewriting.*

*Interpretation – define what "loud and persistent" means.*

- Section 31, classification of dangerous dogs:

*Needs to provide for the dog to be held in the Pound while owner complies with fencing and neutering requirement.*

Other individual suggestions included:

*Make appropriate changes to clarify the legislation.*

*Define within the Dog Control Act the terms ‘persistent’ (barking) ‘possession’ (owner is a person who has a dog in their possession) ‘serious injury’ and ‘serious attack’.*

*Inconsistent application of the Dog Control Act provisions between local authorities, particularly section 42 and section 57.*

*Create an offence of threatening dog with real powers to dispose of a dog, as it is only a matter of time before it will escalate to a more serious problem.*

### **3.5 Problems with the Courts**

Comments relating to the court systems generally expressed dissatisfaction with both delays in the process and the levels of penalties imposed:

*Judiciary are not applying the maximum penalties under the Act.*

*High costs of taking prosecutions and low fines imposed by judges when convicting offenders.*

*Lengthy legal processes. ‘Justice delayed’. Infringement notice appeals for example can take 6 to 9 months.*

*Courts imposing minimal penalties and/or waiving fines against dog owners despite the cost and hassle to Council in undertaking enforcement and legal action.*

*There is a feeling that legal action is not cost effective. Minimal court penalties when compared to cost of prosecution.*

*Legal fees much greater than resulting fines making it uneconomic to take legal (action).*

**Other suggestions included:**

*Amend the Act to allow courts to order payment of impounding fees and other alternative means of collection of infringement offences (such as decriminalising the collection process and making civil recovery options available i.e. private debt collection firms).*

*Rather than incur the delay and cost of action and appeals to the district court, allow to be dealt with by Justice of the Peace or Disputes Tribunal.*

*Raise the penalties that can be issued by the courts and encourage Judges to administer them to the fullest extent.*

*It is accepted that the penalties as levied against dog owners for offences under the Act must be consistent with those imposed for other offences, e.g. common assault on human. In lieu of the total wavering of monetary penalties, the Court's imposition of realistic, punitive alternatives, possibly including the forfeiture of dogs to council and denial of dog ownership for an appropriate period, would reinforce the authority and efforts of the local authority.*

### ***3.6 Adequacy of Current Legislation***

Councils were asked to rate the adequacy of the current legislation in a number of areas and the results are summarised in Table 2.

Overall, councils considered that the Dog Control Act 1996 provides *adequate*<sup>5</sup> provisions for the purposes of:

- ensuring all dogs are registered
- enforcing breaches of the Act
- punishing owners of dogs for breaches of the Act
- preventing repetition of incidents involving the same dog
- making bylaws for the control of dogs.

Generally, responding councils were fairly evenly divided over the adequacy of the legislation in relation to:

- identifying potentially dangerous dogs (57% adequate compared with 43% inadequate)
- preventing repetition of incidents involving the same owner (54% adequate compared with 46% inadequate)
- preventing dangerous dog incidents (46% adequate compared with 54% inadequate)
- seizing dangerous dogs (42% adequate compared with 58% inadequate).

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<sup>5</sup> Adequate powers is defined here as 60% or more of responding councils rating the area as having "adequate powers" or "more than adequate powers".

**Table 2: Rating of Aspects of the Dog Control Act**

Does the Dog Control Act provide adequate powers to:	Council Responses (%)		No. of councils*
	Less than adequate powers	Adequate powers/ More than adequate power	
Ensure all dogs are registered	25	75	72
Prevent dangerous dog incidents	54	46	72
Identify potentially dangerous dogs	43	57	67
Seize dangerous dogs	58	42	73
Enforce breaches of the Act	22	78	72
Punish owners of dogs for breaches of the Act	32	68	72
Prevent repetition of incidents involving the same dog	36	64	72
Prevent repetition of incidents involving the same owner	46	54	72
Make bylaws for the control of dogs	6	94	72

\* *Out of 73 responding councils*

## **SECTION 4: PART B RESULTS - IMPORTANT NOTES**

### *Introduction*

The responses of the 73 (out of 74) territorial authorities that returned survey forms have been included in the analysis for Part B. One of the responding councils was unable to provide any statistical data.

The data collected in Part B includes:

- the number of dogs (including the number of registered dogs and an estimate of the number of unregistered dogs)
- the number of dog attacks on people
- the number of rushing incidents
- expenditure on dog control
- full-time equivalent (FTE) dog enforcement officers
- information on the number of offences involving dogs
- information on the number of infringements involving dogs
- the number of dogs involved in attacks on people where the breed of the dog has been reported
- the number of probationary and disqualified owners under the Dog Control Act 1996
- the number of dogs classified as dangerous under the Dog Control Act 1996.

### *Time period*

Councils were asked to supply data on the above variables for each financial year (ending 30 June) since 1996/1997, up to and including the six months ending 31 December 2002. Not every council was able to supply data for all of these years. In order to compare figures based on different numbers of responses, the data have been standardised (e.g. rate of dog attacks per 1,000 people – see below for a more detailed explanation). Population estimates were obtained from Statistics New Zealand. However, population data were not available for the six months ending 31/12/2002 and so the data from councils for this period are not included in the time series data. Additionally, in most cases it would be inappropriate to present half-year data alongside full-year data (for example, the number of dog attacks).

### *Standardisation*

Not all councils were able to provide data for all the survey variables and not all were able to supply complete data for every year. In order to present time series data it has been necessary to standardise numbers, so that the overall trend is evident despite the

missing data for some years. For example, the 3,326 reported dog attacks on people in 1999/2000 was the total from responses of 42 councils, whereas the 3,020 reported dog attacks on people in 2001/2002 was calculated from the 58 councils responding for that year.

No direct comparison can be made between the two figures because of the different number of respondents. To compensate for this, data has been standardised by converting them to a per capita rate. This allows comparisons between years (e.g. councils reported 1.24 dog attacks per 1,000 people in 1999/2000, compared with 0.87 per 1,000 people in 2001/2002). The council population data is Statistics New Zealand's estimates of intercensal council populations (for the year ending 30 June) for the relevant years. Standardising the data on a per capita basis allows all the data supplied to be used in the analysis.

Time series data has also been calculated as a "per dog rate" (e.g. there were 7.6 attacks per 1,000 dogs in 2001/2002). In some cases, fewer respondents supplied dog population figures than supplied data for the variable being examined (e.g. dog attacks on people) and so these calculations are based on the smaller of the two figures. For example, 42 councils reported the number of dog attacks on people for 1999/2000 but only 38 councils supplied both the number of dog attacks on people and the number of registered dogs for that year.

#### *Data Interpretation*

As a guide to interpreting the data, a dotted line is used in the graphs presented in this section to denote where the number of councils reporting data for that year is too small (i.e. below 20 councils) for a valid trend to be established (this often occurs for the 1996/1997 year).

#### *Urban and Mixed Urban/Rural definitions*

An *urban* and *mixed urban/rural* (abbreviated to mixed/rural in the rest of the report) split is used to present some of the results in this section. *Urban* has been defined as all councils with more than 50% of their population classified by Statistics New Zealand as living in a "main urban area" or a "secondary urban area". Caution should be used when interpreting these results, as the figures are based on sub-sets of the data, and so results for councils should be treated as indicative, not as conclusive. Appendix B lists the territorial authorities classified as urban and as mixed/rural.

#### *Data Accuracy*

Not all of the councils were able to provide all of the data requested and so some of the information in Part B may be subject to non-response bias. This also means that some of the information presented in Part B is based on relatively small datasets. This is particularly the case for information about: the breed of dogs involved in attacks; penalties and fines; education expenditure; and disqualified and probationary owners. The results for these topics, therefore, should be treated as indicative, rather than conclusive, and should not be treated as being representative of all 74 councils.

*External data sources*

Also presented in this section is information for New Zealand from other sources including data on:

- number of ACC claims as a result of dog attacks – from ACC
- number of hospitalisations as a result of dog attacks – from NZHIS
- court cases involving dog-related offences – from the Ministry of Justice.

In most cases the information from these external sources is not directly comparable with the survey data. Nevertheless, it provides useful and informative comparisons and reference points for the survey data.

## **SECTION 5: THE SIZE AND NATURE OF THE DOG ATTACK PROBLEM IN NEW ZEALAND**

### ***5.1 Total Reported Number of Registered Dogs***

Councils were asked to report the number of registered dogs in their area since 1996/1997, as well as provide an estimate of the number of unregistered dogs.

Councils providing data on the numbers of registered dogs for full financial years ranged from 28 for 1996/1997 to 61 for 2001/2002. In the 2001/2002 period, 32 of the 61 councils were urban authorities and 29 were mixed/rural authorities. The 61 councils represent 3,600,440 people, or 91% of the total New Zealand population in 2001/2002. Of this total, the 32 urban authorities represented 3,022,600 people (84% of the population of responding councils) and the mixed/rural councils represented the remaining 16%.

The 61 councils reported a total of 422,545 registered dogs in 2001/2002. Of these, the 32 urban authorities reported a total of 282,851 registered dogs (67% of the reported registered dogs).

The highest number of registered dogs in 2001/2002 for any of the responding councils was 26,830 (a large city council) and the minimum was 344 (a small rural council).

The total number of dogs appears to have increased from 1999/2000 to 2001/2002 (Table 3). However, the greater number of councils providing data throughout the later periods distorts this trend.

**Table 3: Total Reported Number of Registered Dogs, 1999/2000 – 2001/2002**

<b>Year (as at 30 June)</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>
Number of reported registered dogs	390,057	403,924	422,545
Number of councils*	52	57	61

\* *Out of 73 responding councils*

## 5.2 Estimated Total Numbers of Dogs

A crude measure has been used to estimate the total number of dogs, based on the reported number of registered dogs and a reported estimate of unregistered dogs provided by councils (see explanation below Table 4). The estimated total number of dogs in New Zealand in 2001/2002 was around 500,000.

**Table 4: Estimated Total Numbers of Dogs: 1999/2000 – 2001/2002**

Year (as at 30 June)	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
Total number of registered dogs – reported*	390,057	403,924	422,545
Total estimate of unregistered dogs – reported*	26,587	27,777	26,515
Total number of registered dogs – estimated**	463,967	469,181	469,245
Total estimate of unregistered dogs – estimated**	33,866	34,876	32,453
<b>Total dogs (registered dogs + unregistered dogs) - estimated**</b>	497,833	504,057	501,698
<i>Number of councils responding***</i>	52	57	61

\* As actually reported by responding councils.

\*\* The populations of the responding councils were summed for each of the “mixed/rural” and “urban” groups. The total population for each of these two groups also was summed. The totals for the responding councils were then subtracted from the totals for their respective sub-group. The difference between the totals for each group was then multiplied by an estimate of the ratio of dogs per person, also calculated separately for the “mixed/rural” and “urban” groups. This measure gives a proxy for the missing data of non-responding councils by the “mixed-rural” and “urban” groupings.

The ratio of dogs per person is the number of registered dogs divided by the population of the councils that supplied data on the number of registered dogs.

The reported number of registered dogs was added to the estimated number of registered dogs to give an estimate of the total number of registered dogs. This was done for each year (i.e. 1999/2000 through to 2001/2002).

This method was also used to calculate the total number of unregistered dogs.

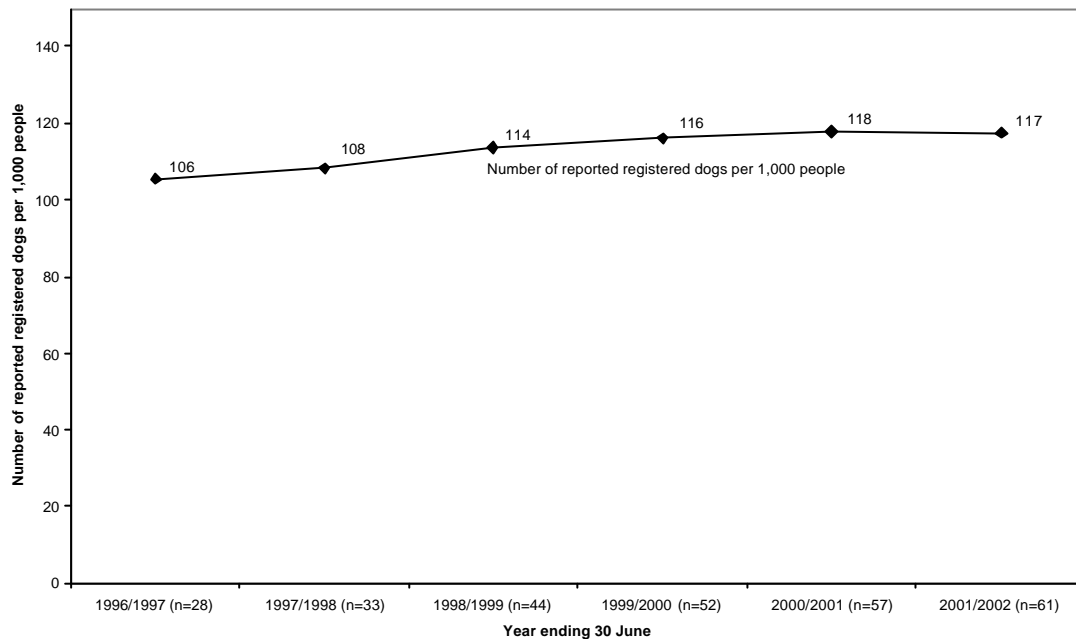
Calculating estimates separately for the “mixed/rural” and “urban” groups partly accounts for the different characteristics of the non-responding councils. However, if the non-responding councils were predominantly councils with higher rates of registered or unregistered dogs (and therefore with a higher rate of dogs per person), then the total figure would be higher.

\*\*\* Out of 73 responding councils

### 5.3 Reported Registered Dog Ownership

The average number of registered dogs per 1,000 people increased in the time period shown in Figure 1. Most of this increase occurred from 1996/1997 to 1998/1999. A slight drop was recorded from 2000/2001 to 2001/2002, with 118 registered dogs per 1,000 people recorded for 2000/2001 and 117 for 2001/2002.

**Figure 1: Reported Registered Dogs per 1,000 People: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**

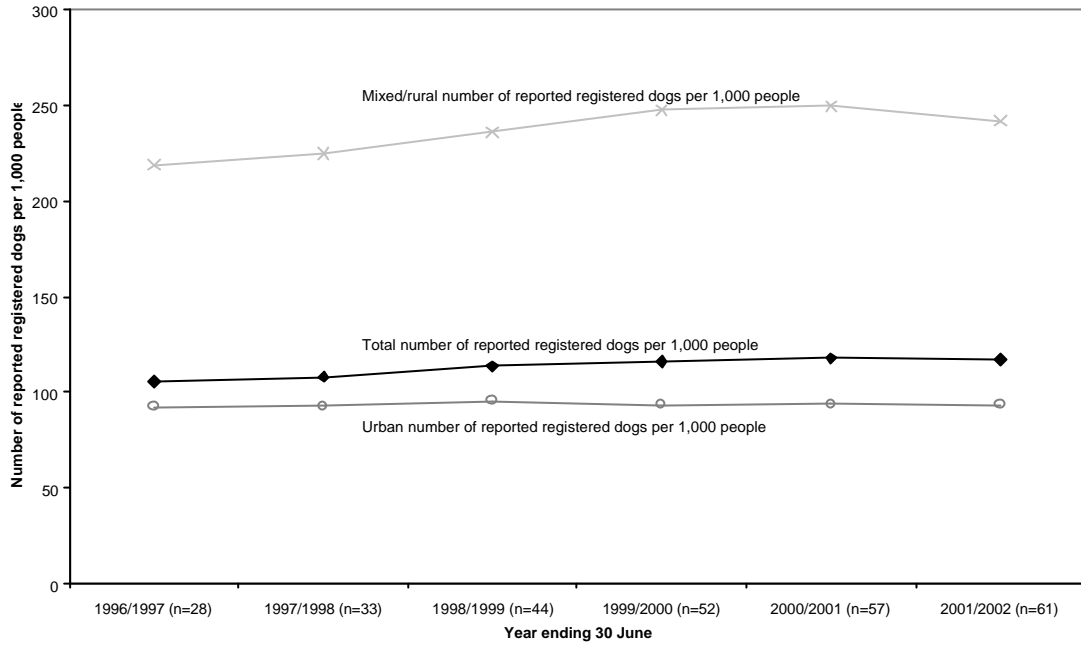


#### Urban and Rural Differences<sup>6</sup>

The mixed/rural councils appear to have a greater number of registered dogs per 1,000 people than the urban councils (Figure 2). Between 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 the number of registered dogs per 1,000 people for urban councils was consistent at between 93 and 94 dogs per 1,000 people, compared with between 250 and 242 dogs per 1,000 people for mixed/rural councils.

<sup>6</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting information based on these two sub-sets, as the number of respondents in each sub-set is relatively small and so the results should be treated as indicative, not as conclusive.

**Figure 2: Reported Registered Dogs per 1,000 people in Urban and Mixed/Rural councils: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



## SECTION 6: REPORTED DOG ATTACKS ON PEOPLE

Councils were asked to report the number of dog attacks on people reported to them since 1996/1997.

The number of councils providing data for the years within this time period ranged from 23 for 1996/1997 to 58 for 2001/2002. Of the 58 councils for 2001/2002, 30 were urban authorities, and 28 were mixed/rural authorities. These 58 councils represent 3,465,250 people, or 88% of the total New Zealand population. Of these, the 30 urban authorities represented 2,853,650 people (82% of the population of responding councils) and mixed/rural councils represented the remaining 18%.

### 6.1 Total Reported Dog Attacks

The total number of dog attacks on people reported by the 58 councils was 3,020 in 2001/2002. Of these, the 30 urban authorities accounted for 2,551 attacks (84% of the reported attacks) and 28 mixed/rural councils accounted for the remaining 16% of reported attacks.

The total number of dog attacks reported to councils has declined since 1999/2000 (Table 5), despite an increase in the number of councils reporting over the period (from 42 in 1999/2000 to 58 in 2001/2002).

In 2001/2002 the highest number of reported dog attacks on people was 524 (a large city council) and the lowest was no attacks (recorded by two small-sized, rural councils).

**Table 5: Total Reported Dog Attacks on People: 1999/2000 – 2001/2002**

Year (as at 30 June)	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
Total number of reported dog attacks	3,326	3,206	3,020
Number of councils responding*	42	49	58

\* Out of 73 responding councils

The total number of dog attacks in New Zealand in 2001/2002 is estimated at approximately 3,400 (Table 6). This figure and those in preceding years are lower than those recorded by ACC. This could be because, if a dog bite incident is “bad enough” to be recorded by the local council, it is reasonable to assume that it may require being looked at by a GP. However, all the bites that result in an ACC claim may not be reported to councils. There could be many reasons for this non-reporting. For example, if the “family dog” caused the bite, the family may be reluctant to report it.

**Table 6: Number of Dog Bites/Attacks in New Zealand: 1999/2000 – 2001/2002**

Year (as at 30 June)		1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
Total number of attacks on people (Source: Survey)	Reported*	3,326	3,206	3,020
	Estimated**	4,757	4,313	3,435
Number of new ACC claims resulting from dog bites*** (Source: ACC)		6,300	8,711	8,677
Number of visits to public hospitals resulting from dog bites**** (Source: New Zealand Health Information Service)		349	407	420

\* Actual number from councils that responded to the survey.

\*\* Estimated total for all councils based on extrapolating the results of responding councils using a similar method to the one described in the notes for Table 4.

\*\*\* Definition of a dog bite was: if the person was diagnosed under “readcode TE60 – Bite (Dog)” - or was diagnosed as “a contusion (intact Skin) including Crushing or Laceration - Not Infected” or “Laceration Infected with external agency” with external agency being a live dog and contact being “kicked, butted or bitten” where “bitten” was narrowed via the aforementioned diagnoses.

\*\*\*\* People who have multiple hospitalisations for a single dog bite will be counted multiple times in these figures. Owing to variations in how different hospitals code accidents/external injuries, some admittances resulting from dog bites may not be included in these figures. Figures exclude day cases (a zero day stay and a routine discharge).

As may be expected, the figures relating to public hospital visits are lower than council and ACC claim figures, as these would only include the most serious incidents. Using this assumption, in 1999/2000, approximately one in 18 new incidents for which an ACC claim was made were serious enough to require hospital treatment. In both 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 this rate had dropped to 1:21. This ratio suggests fewer attacks than the ratio of 1:16 that has been estimated in another New Zealand study<sup>7</sup>.

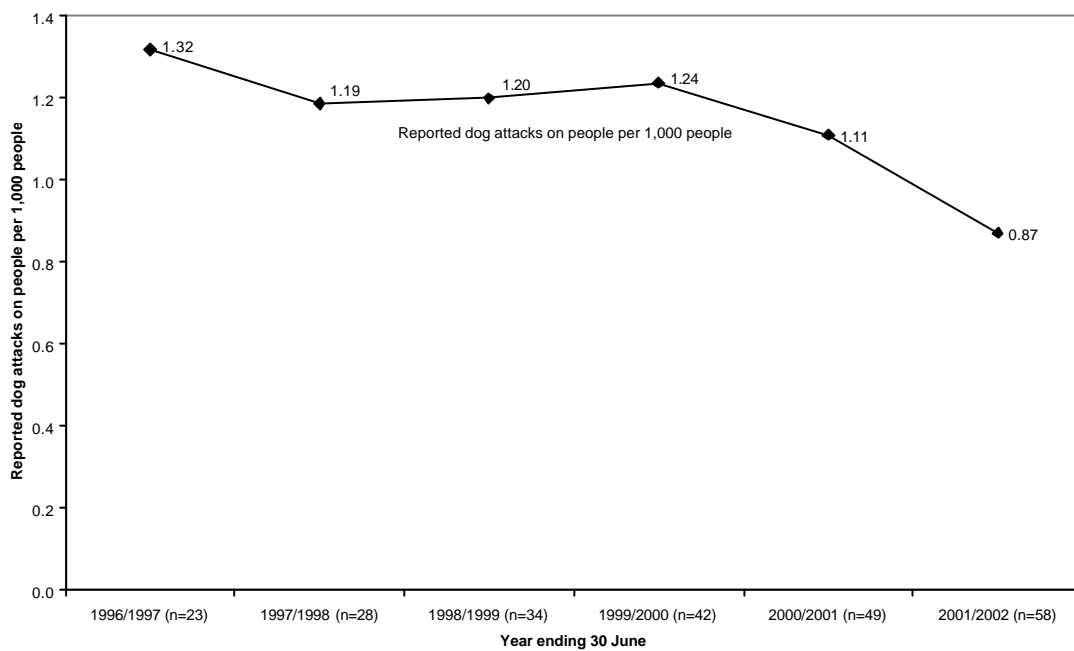
<sup>7</sup> Langley, J. “The incidence of dog bites in New Zealand”. *New Zealand Medical Journal*, February 1992

## 6.2 Incidence of Reported Dog Attacks

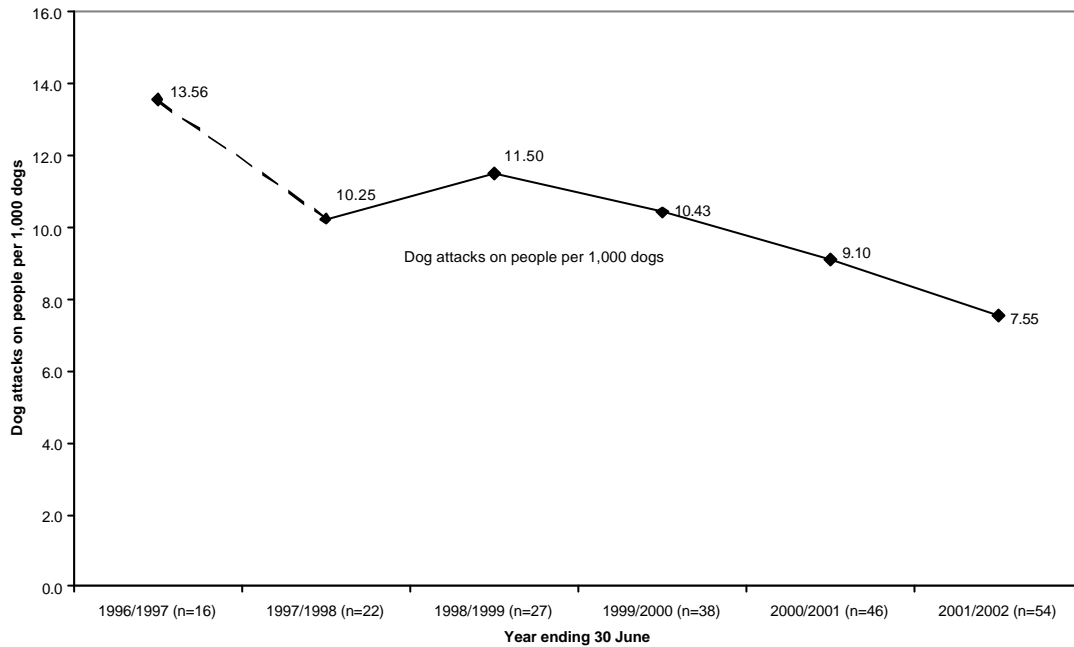
The number of attacks by dogs on people reported to councils in relation to both the number of people (Figure 3) and the number of registered dogs (Figure 4) appears to be trending downward over the time period, particularly since 1999/2000.

The rate of dog attacks per 1,000 people across the 42 councils was 1.24 per 1,000 people in 1999/2000. By 2001/2002 this had dropped to 0.87 per 1,000 people across 58 councils.

**Figure 3: Reported Dog Attacks on People per 1,000 People: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



**Figure 4: Reported Dog Attacks on People per 1,000 Reported Registered Dogs: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



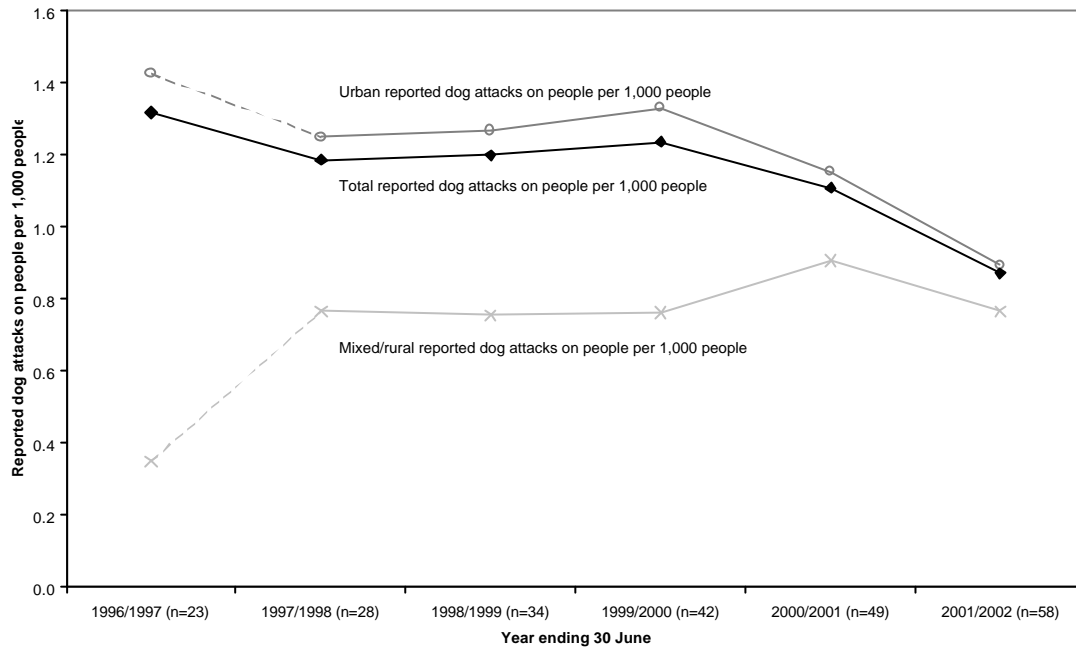
*Note: Figure 4 only shows those councils that provided data for both expenditure and registered dog numbers for that year. As such, the number of responding councils in any given year may be lower for Figure 4 than for Figure 3.*

*A dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.*

Urban and Rural Differences<sup>8</sup>

Urban councils appear to have a greater rate of dog attacks per 1,000 people than mixed/rural councils over the time period (Figure 5). However, the gap between these two rates appears to be converging. It is not clear why this convergence is happening.

**Figure 5: Reported Dog Attacks per 1,000 People in Urban and Mixed/Rural Councils: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



Note: A dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.

<sup>8</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting information based on these two sub-sets, as the number of respondents in each sub-set is relatively small and so the results should be treated as indicative, not as conclusive.

### **6.3 Reported Dog Attacks by Unregistered Dogs**

Councils were asked to estimate the number of attacks on people by unregistered dogs since 1996/1997.

The number of councils responding to this question ranged from 6 for 1996/1997 to 25 councils for 2001/2002. The number of councils that provided information for 1997/1998 to 2000/2001 was too small to analyse with confidence. The 25 councils that provided information in 2001/2002<sup>9</sup> represent a total population of 1,393,020 people (35% of the total population).

The 25 councils that gave information for 2001/2002 reported a total of 809 dog attacks on people, of which 376 attacks (46% of attacks) were by unregistered dogs. Given that the estimate of unregistered dogs is 6% of the total (refer Table 4), this suggests that unregistered dogs have a disproportionately high rate of attacks on people, relative to their numbers. However, it must be stressed that this is only a one-year snapshot and that other factors may play a role in this result.

Of the 25 councils that gave information for 2001/2002:

- the average number of attacks on people by unregistered dogs was 15
- the minimum number of attacks on people by unregistered dogs was zero
- the maximum number of attacks on people by unregistered dogs was 124.

<sup>9</sup> The results from these 25 councils should not be treated as being representative of all 74 territorial authorities. Please treat these results as only indicative, and not as conclusive, due to the small sample size.

## SECTION 7: REPORTED DOG RUSHING INCIDENTS

Councils were asked to identify the total number of rushing incidents on an annual basis for each year since 1996/1997. A rushing incident is defined in section 57 of the Dog Control Act 1996 as:

- Rushing or startling any person or animal in such a manner that any person is killed, injured, or endangered, or any property is damaged or endangered; or
- Rushing at any vehicle in such a manner as to cause or be likely to cause an accident.

The number of councils providing data on dog rushing incidents ranged from 13 for 1996/1997 to 42 councils for 2001/2002. Of the 42 councils for 2001/2002, 22 were urban authorities and 20 were mixed/rural authorities. These 42 councils represent 2,507,860 people, or 64% of the total New Zealand population. Of these, the 22 urban councils represented 2,047,000 people (82% of the responding councils' population) and mixed/rural councils represented the remaining 18% of the population.

### *7.1 Total Reported Dog Rushing Incidents*

The total reported number of dog rushing incidents for the 42 responding councils was 3,618 in 2001/2002. Of these, the 22 urban authorities reported 2,952 rushing incidents (82% of reported rushing incidents) and the rural authorities reported 666 rushing incidents (18%).

**Table 7: Total Reported Dog Rushing Incidents: 1999/2000 - 2001/2002**

Year (as at 30 June)	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
Reported dog rushing incidents	2,969	3,066	3,618
Number of councils*	31	36	42

\* Out of 73 responding councils

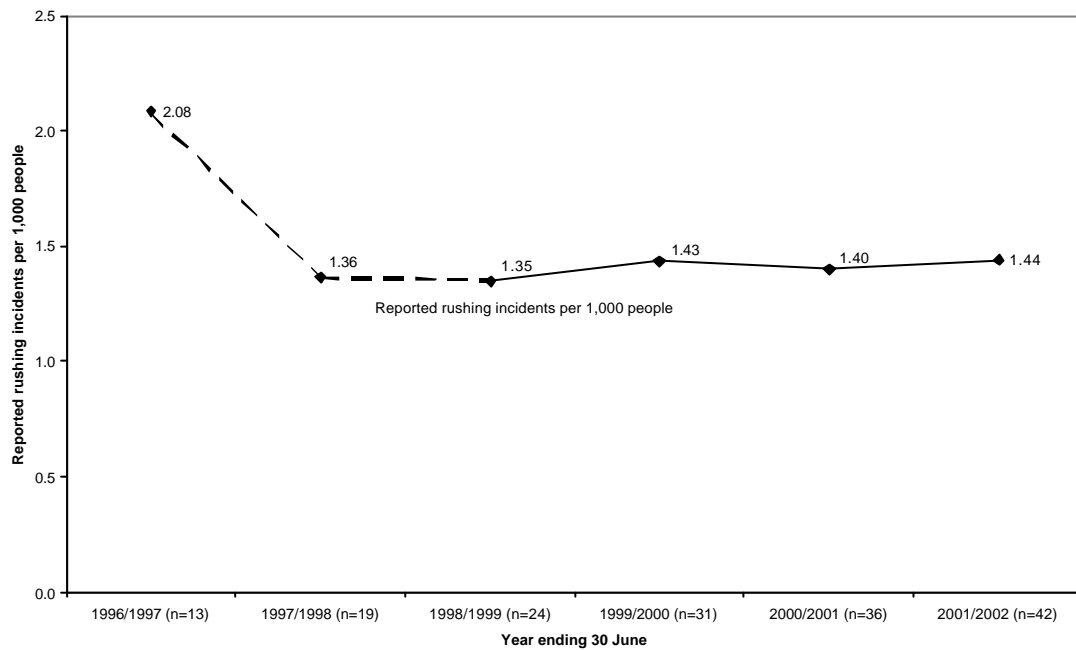
In 2001/2002 the highest number of reported dog rushing incidents reported by a council was 470 (a large city council) and the minimum was one (a small rural council).

## 7.2 Incidence of Reported Dog Rushings

The number of reported dog rushing incidents per 1,000 people appears to be trending slightly upward over the 1998/1999 – 2001/2002 period (Figure 6).

In 1998/1999 the number of dog rushing incidents per 1,000 people reported by councils was 1.35 per 1,000 people. In 2001/2002 this figure was 1.44 per 1,000 people.

**Figure 6: Reported Dog Rushing Incidents on People per 1,000 People: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**

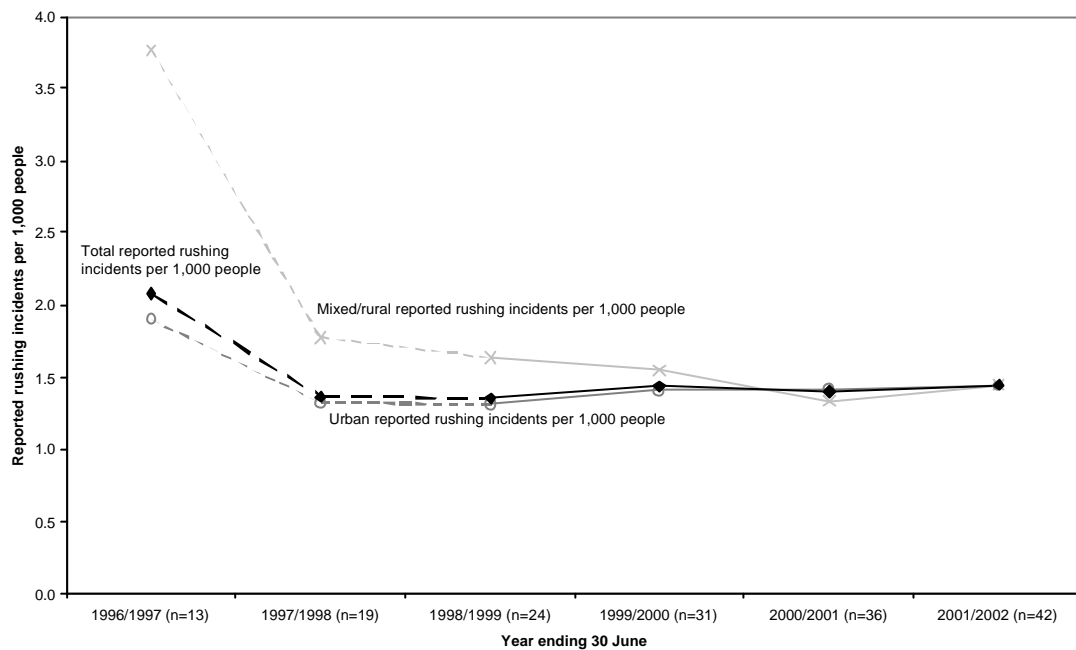


*Note: A dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.*

*Urban and Rural Differences*<sup>10</sup>

In 2001/2002 mixed/rural councils appear to have a similar rate of dog rushing incidents per 1,000 people as urban councils (Figure 7). In 2001/2002 the rate of recorded dog rushing incidents per 1,000 people for the mixed/rural councils responding to the survey was 1.45 per person and for urban councils it was 1.44.

**Figure 7: Reported Dog Rushing Incidents per 1,000 People in Urban and Mixed/Rural councils: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



*Note: A dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.*

<sup>10</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting information based on these two sub-sets, as the number of respondents in each sub-set is relatively small and so the results should be treated as indicative, not as conclusive.

## SECTION 8: CHARACTERISTICS OF DOG ATTACK VICTIMS

The only New Zealand source of information that the Department was able to obtain that gives details of the age and sex of victims of dog attacks was supplied by NZHIS. This dataset shows visits to publicly funded hospitals resulting from dog bites between 1995/1996 and 2001/2002. The numbers of hospitalisations for dog bites gives an indication of the level of 'serious' dog attacks nationally.

In the seven years between 1995/1996 and 2001/2002, 2,376 visits were made to public hospitals (excluding day patients) as a result of dog bites. This equates to an average of 339 visits per annum. The number of serious dog attacks appears to be rising since 1998/1999 (Table 8).

**Table 8: Total Admittances to Public Hospitals Resulting from Dog Bites 1995/1996 – 2001/2002**

Year (as at 30 June)	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02
Total admittances to public hospitals resulting from dog bites*	339	355	319	346	394	470	513
Day patients**	31	38	31	59	45	63	93
Total admittances less day patients	308	317	288	287	349	407	420

Source: New Zealand Health Information Service

\* People who have multiple hospitalisations for a single dog bite will be counted multiple times in these figures.

\* Owing to variations in how different hospitals code accidents/external injuries, some admittances resulting from dog bites may not be included in these figures.

\*\* Day patients = a 0 day stay and a routine discharge.

Table 9 shows that, in the seven years from 1995/1996 to 2001/2002, 2,736 visits were made to public hospitals as a result of dog bites (including day patients). Of these visits:

- 34% (943) were made by children 0-10 years, and
- 60% (1,652) were made by males.

**Table 9: Visits to Publicly Funded Hospitals Resulting from Dog Bites: 1995/1996-2001/2002**

Year	Sex	Total	Mean stay	Daypatients	Age Group																	
					0-	5-	10-	15-	20-	25-	30-	35-	40-	45-	50-	55-	60-	65-	70-	75-	80-	85+
1995/1996	Total	339	2.9	31	87	38	23	20	26	23	18	18	15	12	15	7	10	7	4	5	1	
	Male	199	2.7	20	46	27	12	13	15	16	15	11	13	6	4	5	6	6	2	1	1	0
	Female	140	3.2	11	41	11	11	7	11	7	3	7	2	6	11	2	4	4	5	3	4	1
1996/1997	Total	355	2.6	38	80	52	28	15	17	26	23	14	10	21	19	12	15	6	5	5	4	3
	Male	202	2.5	24	44	32	16	14	12	17	15	8	7	10	6	7	3	2	3	2	2	2
	Female	153	2.8	14	36	20	12	1	5	9	8	6	3	11	13	5	12	4	2	3	2	1
1997/1998	Total	319	2.6	31	77	56	22	19	16	24	21	13	8	18	7	9	5	7	5	7	1	4
	Male	196	2.6	20	48	35	13	11	8	17	15	9	6	8	5	6	2	5	1	5	1	1
	Female	123	2.7	11	29	21	9	8	8	7	6	4	2	10	2	3	3	2	4	2	0	3
1998/1999	Total	346	3	59	83	52	16	23	17	21	19	28	17	13	17	9	5	11	6	6	1	2
	Male	221	2.9	35	51	34	13	17	12	13	12	20	14	4	10	4	3	8	2	4	0	0
	Female	125	3.3	24	32	18	3	6	5	8	7	8	3	9	7	5	2	3	4	2	1	2
1999/2000	Total	394	2.9	45	93	49	24	16	24	27	21	20	20	22	16	8	11	17	9	5	4	8
	Male	242	3	27	56	34	16	15	17	15	15	10	15	12	7	2	7	8	6	4	0	3
	Female	152	2.7	18	37	15	8	1	7	12	6	10	5	10	9	6	4	9	3	1	4	5
2000/2001	Total	470	3.1	63	74	55	20	26	27	37	36	19	31	28	22	24	17	7	16	17	11	3
	Male	275	3.0	38	42	34	15	18	19	25	27	6	22	9	12	12	11	4	10	5	3	1
	Female	195	3.4	25	32	21	5	8	8	12	9	13	9	19	10	12	6	3	6	12	8	2
2001/2002	Total	513	3.6	93	86	61	34	39	36	31	37	31	35	27	17	12	13	14	10	15	8	7
	Male	317	3.4	60	48	39	18	30	29	24	30	24	20	15	7	5	9	6	5	5	3	0
	Female	196	3.8	33	38	22	16	9	7	7	7	7	15	12	10	7	4	8	5	10	5	7

Source: New Zealand Health Information Service

Notes: People who have multiple hospitalisations for a single dog bite will be counted multiple times in these figures.

Owing to variations in how hospitals code accidents/external injuries, some admittances resulting from dog bites may not be included in these figures.

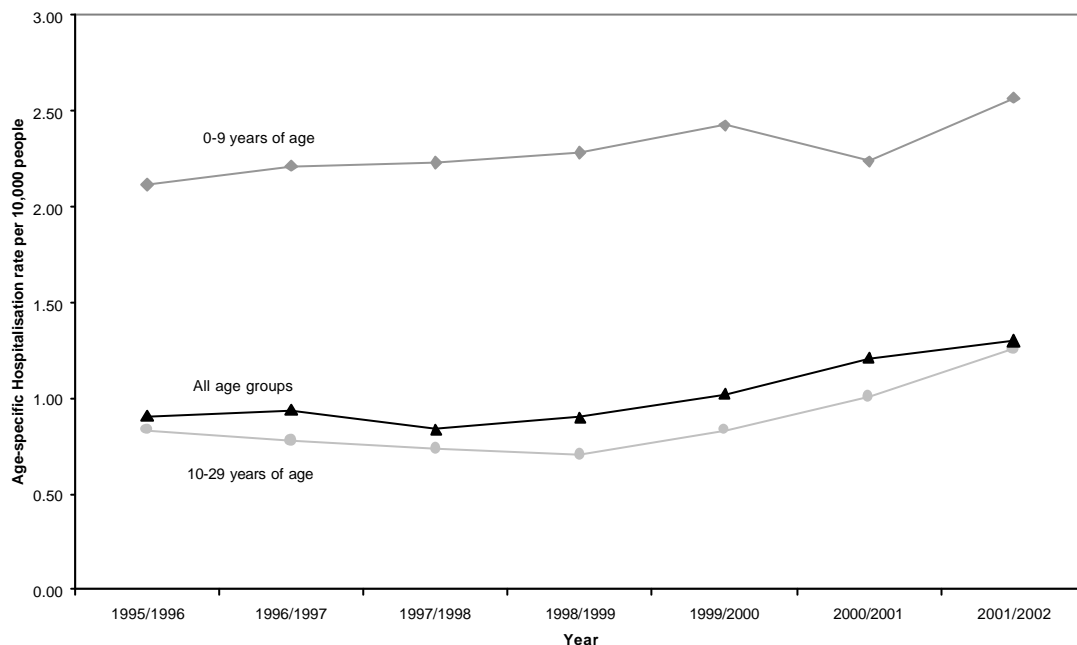
Day patients = a zero day stay and a routine discharge.

Children under the age of 10 years (Figure 8) and males (Figure 9) have disproportionately high rates of hospitalisation for dog attacks, relative to the rates for everyone. This is true throughout the 1995/1996 to 2001/2002 period. These findings are consistent with research available from overseas jurisdictions<sup>11</sup>.

In 2001/2002 the rate of hospitalisation (including day patients) for children between 0-10 years was 2.57 per 10,000 people (in this age bracket). This rate when taken over the total population was 1.30 per 10,000 people.

In 2001/2002 the rate of hospitalisation (excluding day patients) for males was 1.33 per 10,000 people, whereas the figure for females was 0.81 per 10,000 people.

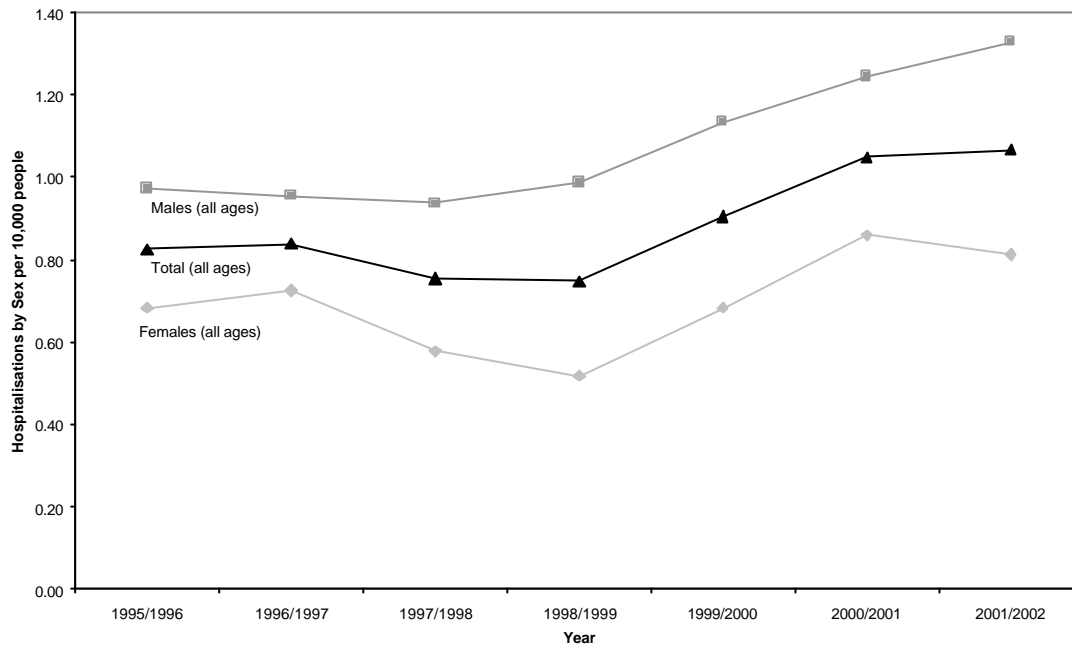
**Figure 8: Age-Specific Rates of Hospital Visits per 10,000 People: 1995/1996 – 2001/2002**



Note: Rates based on visits to publicly funded hospitals resulting from dog bites – including day patients.

<sup>11</sup> See: Shewell, P.C. and Nancarrow, J.D., Dogs that Bite. *British Medical Journal*, Dec 1991.

**Figure 9: Hospital Visits by Sex per 10,000 People: 1995/1996 – 2001/2002**



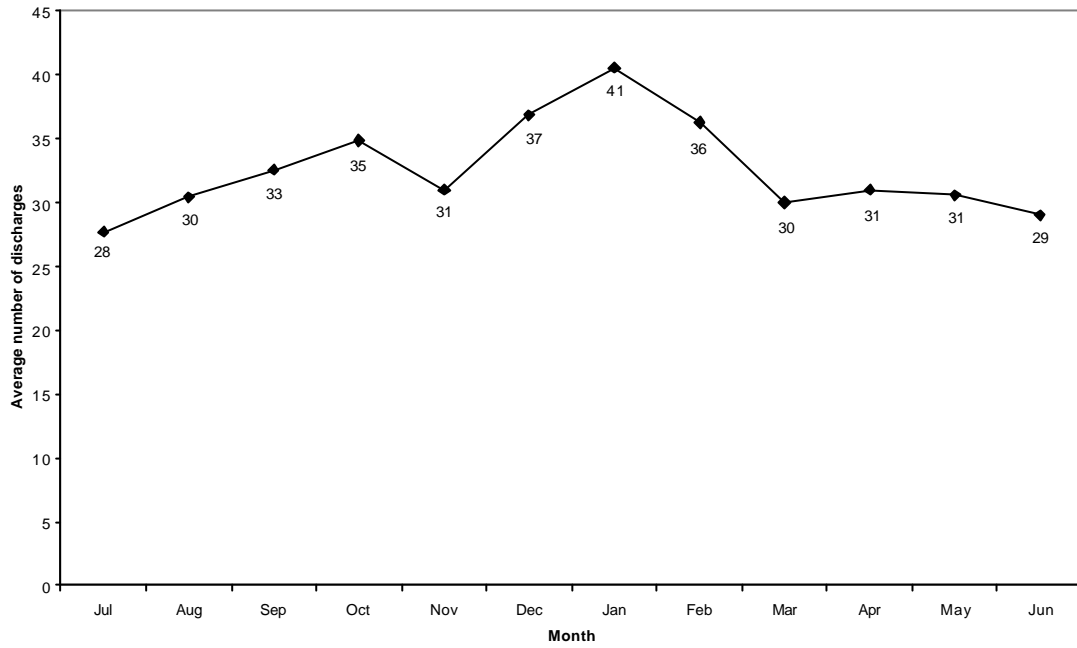
Note: Rates based on visits to publicly funded hospitals resulting from dog bites – *excluding* day patients.

Figure 8 and Figure 9 also show that the rates of hospitalisation resulting from dog attacks for both children under the age of 10 years and males increased between 2000/2001 and 2001/2002.

*When do most attacks occur?*

Figure 10 shows the month in which people hospitalised as a result of dog bites were discharged from public hospital over the 7 years between 1996/1997 and 2001/2002. Given that the average stay in hospital for these cases was around 3.0 days (i.e. well short of a month) this table indicates that the number of dog attacks peaks in the summer months of December to February. Over these seven years, 284 attacks occurred in the month of January, compared with 194 attacks in the month of July.

**Figure 10: Average Number of Discharges for Dog Bite Hospitalisations by Month for Combined Years 1995/1996 – 2001/2002**



Source: New Zealand Health Information Service

## **SECTION 9: REPORTED DOG CONTROL EXPENDITURE**

Councils were asked to report their respective total expenditure on dog control since 1996/1997<sup>12</sup>. They were also asked to provide a breakdown of expenditure on enforcement, prosecutions and education.

The number of councils providing data for this question ranged from 20 for 1996/1997 to 54 councils for 2001/2002. Of the 54 councils in 2001/2002, 29 were urban councils and 25 were mixed/rural authorities. These councils represent 3,426,130 people or 87% of the total New Zealand population. Of these, the 29 urban councils represented 2,880,650 people, or 84% of the population of the responding councils, and the mixed/rural councils represented the remaining 16%.

### ***9.1 Total Reported Dog Control Expenditure***

In 2001/2002 the total reported expenditure on dog control was \$19,793,726. Of this total, the 29 urban authorities accounted for 76% of the reported expenditure (\$15,106,013) and mixed/rural councils the remaining 24%.

In 2001/2002 the maximum total expenditure on dog control reported by a responding council was \$2,041,000 (a large city council) and the minimum was \$6,000 (a medium-sized mainly urban council).

**Table 10: Total Reported Expenditure on Dog Control: 1999/2000 – 2001/2002**

<b>Year (as at 30 June)</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>
Total Expenditure on Dog Control.	\$15,742,956	\$16,716,858	\$19,793,726
Number of councils*	42	46	54

\* Out of 73 responding councils

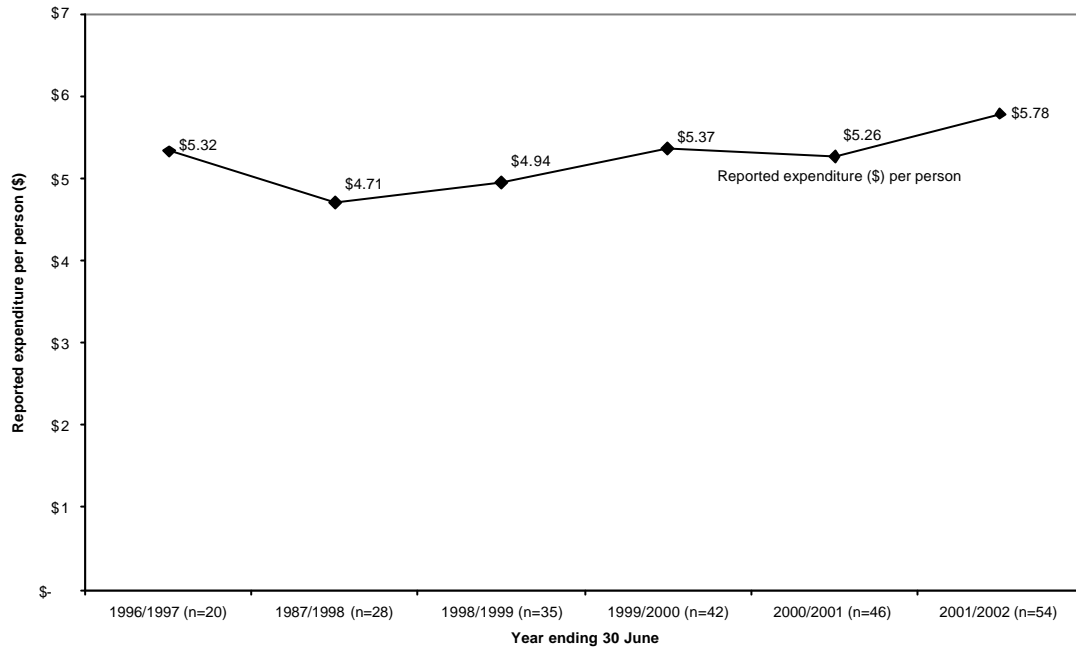
### ***9.2 Trends in Reported Dog Control Expenditure***

The average expenditure on dog control in relation to the number of people (Figure 11) and the number of dogs (Figure 12) appears to be trending upward over the time period.

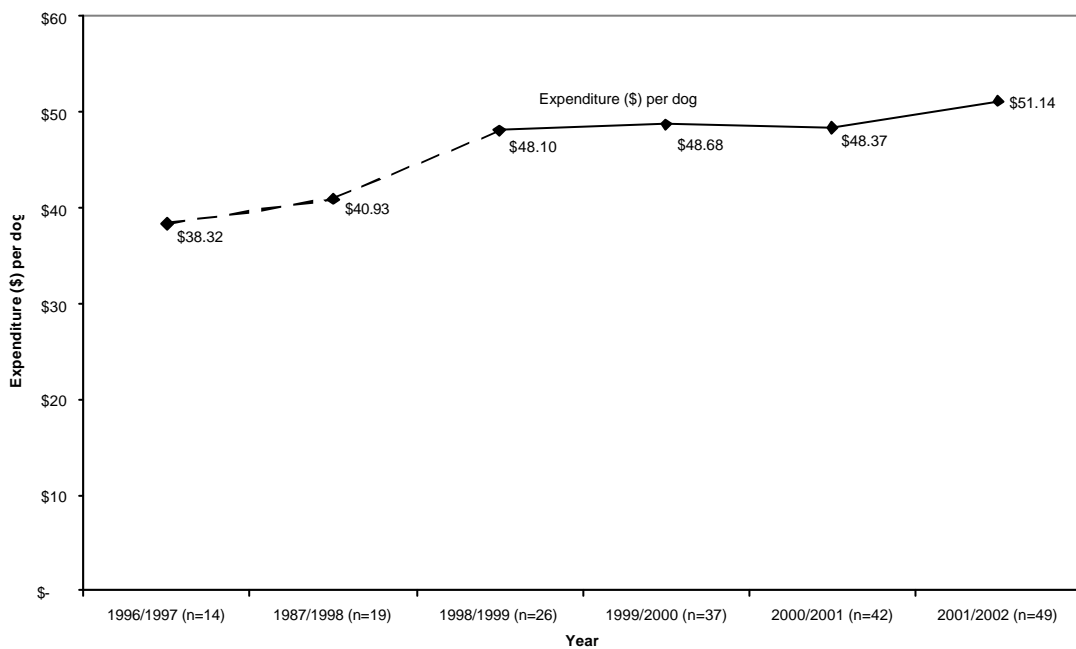
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<sup>12</sup> Note: figures provided by councils are unlikely to include adjustments for inflation.

**Figure 11: Average Reported Expenditure on Dog Control per Person: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



**Figure 12: Average Reported Expenditure on Dog Control per Registered Dog: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**

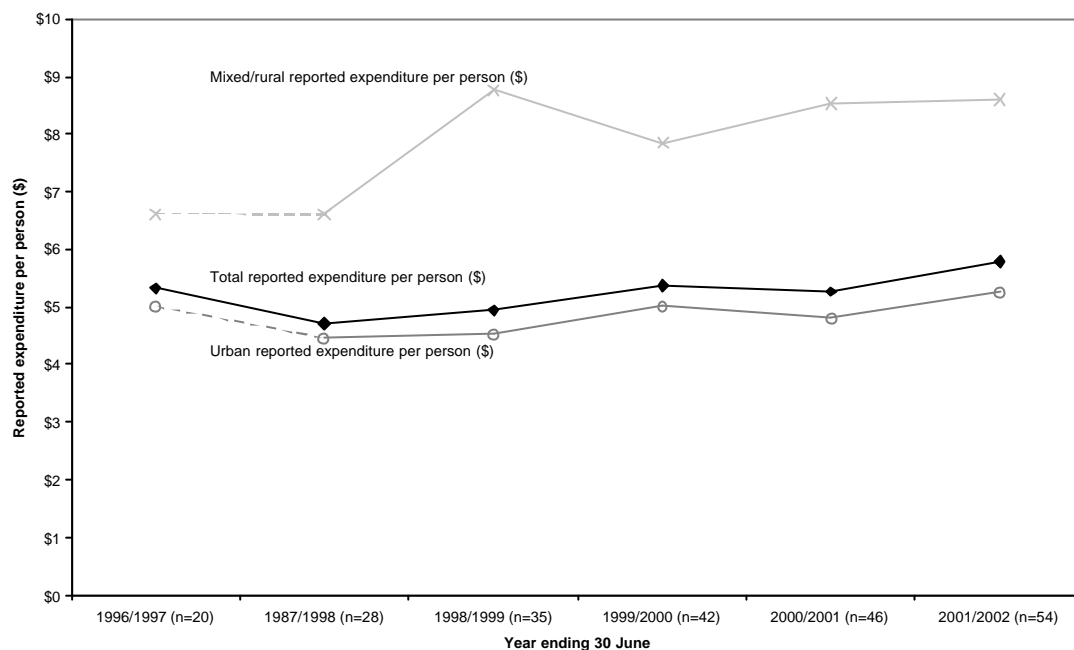


*Note: Figure 12 only charts those councils that have provided data for both expenditure and registered dog numbers in the same year and so the number of responding councils in Figure 12 may be lower than in Figure 11.*

### Urban and Rural Differences<sup>13</sup>

Mixed/rural councils reported spending more on dog control per person than urban councils (Figure 13). Expenditure, by both urban and mixed/rural councils, appears to have increased over time. In 2001/2002 urban councils spent \$5.24 per person, while mixed/rural councils spent \$8.59.

**Figure 13: Reported Dog Control Expenditure per Person for Urban and Mixed/Rural Councils: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



Note: A dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.

### Highest and Lowest Levels of Expenditure on Dog Control

Of the councils that provided both expenditure and dog attack data, the 10 councils with the lowest dog control expenditure (per person) in 2002 had a combined population of 1,352,800 and a reported combined number of attacks on people of 1,039 – a rate of 0.77 attacks per 1,000 people.

By comparison, the 10 councils that had the highest dog control expenditure per person in 2002 had a combined population of 246,030 and a reported combined number of attacks on people of 262 – a rate of 1.06 attacks per 1,000 people.

<sup>13</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting information based on these two sub-sets, as the number of respondents in each sub-set is relatively small and so the results should be treated as indicative, not as conclusive.

While these figures may indicate that councils having a lower rate of dog attacks spend comparatively less on dog control, it must be stressed that this is only a one-year snapshot and other factors (such as possible economies of scale and urban/rural differences) may influence these results.

## SECTION 10: REPORTED DOG CONTROL OFFICERS (FTE’S)

Councils were asked to report how many full-time equivalent<sup>14</sup> (FTEs) council and/or contract staff they had employed for dog control enforcement purposes since 1996/1997<sup>15</sup>.

In Part A of the survey, councils reported whether or not they outsourced their dog control functions; 47% (34 out of 72) of councils did outsource. For the purposes of this section, dog control enforcement FTEs refers to the total number of FTEs in a council, whether they are council employees or contractors.

The number of councils responding to this question ranged from 45 for 1996/1997 to 59 for 2001/2002. Of the 59 responding councils in 2001/2002, 29 were urban councils and 30 were mixed/rural councils. These 59 councils represent 3,280,030 people, or 83% of the total New Zealand population. Of these, the 29 urban authorities represented 2,699,550 people (82% of the population of responding councils) and mixed/rural councils represented the remaining 18%.

### 10.1 Total Reported Dog Control Enforcement FTEs

In 2001/2002, the total number of dog control enforcement FTEs for the 59 responding councils was 183.3<sup>16</sup>. Of this total, the 29 urban councils accounted for 127.3 dog control enforcement FTEs (69%) and mixed/rural councils accounted for the remaining 56 (31%).

In 2001/2002 the highest number of dog control enforcement FTEs reported was 17 (a large city council) and the minimum was zero (by two rural councils).

**Table 11: Total Number of Reported Dog Control Enforcement (FTEs): 1999/2000 – 2001/2002**

Year (as at 30 June)	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
Number of reported dog control FTEs*	175.9	176.7	183.3
Number of councils**	53	54	59

\* Includes both council employees and contractors.

\*\* Out of 73 responding councils.

<sup>14</sup> Full-time equivalent is based on a person working an 8-hour day, five days a week.

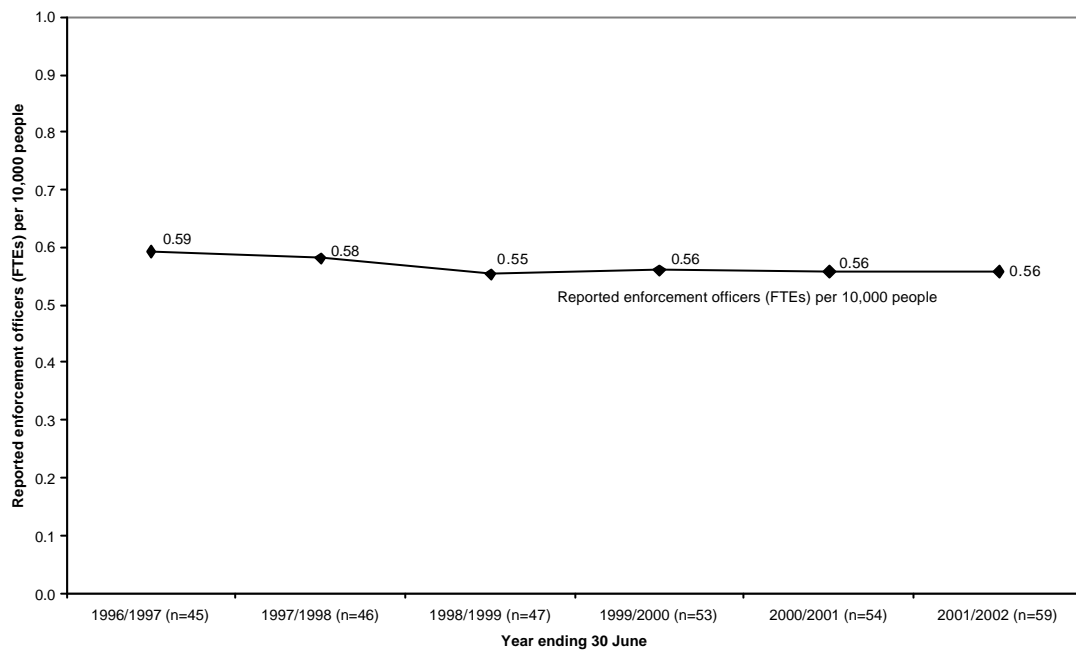
<sup>15</sup> Time spent on administration by dog control officers is excluded from the reported number of FTEs.

<sup>16</sup> In instances where different territorial authorities contract out dog control enforcement to the same contractor, there may be some ‘doubling up’ of enforcement FTE figures.

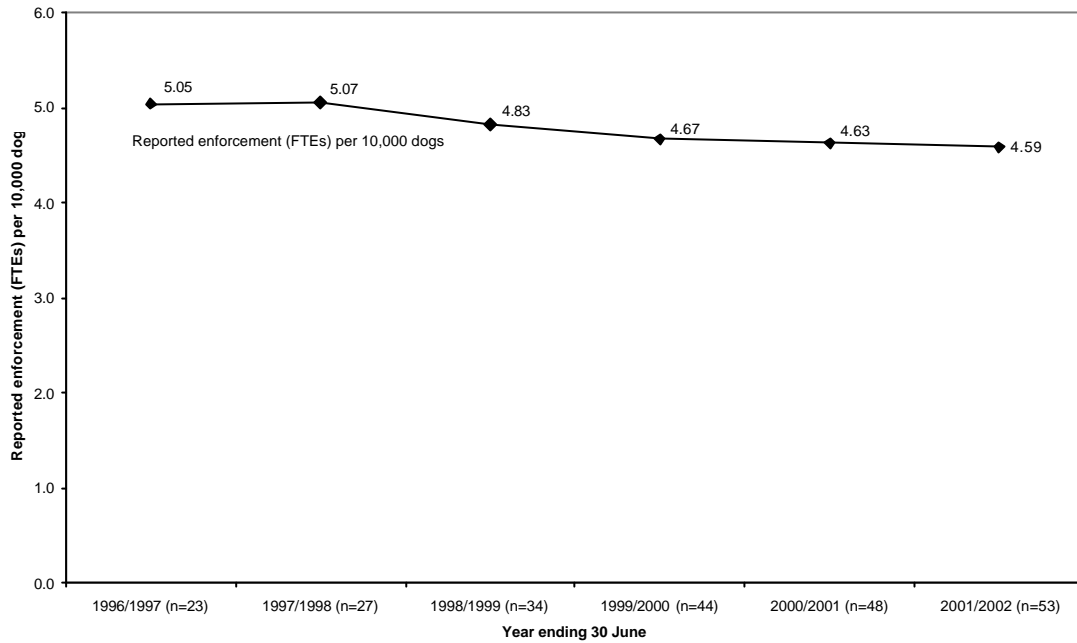
## 10.2 Trends in Dog Control Enforcement FTEs

The average number of dog control enforcement FTEs in relation to both the number of people (Figure 14) and number of dogs (Figure 15) appears to show little change since 1999/2000.

**Figure 14: Reported Dog Control Enforcement FTEs per 10,000 People: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



**Figure 15: Reported Dog Control Enforcement FTEs per 10,000 Reported Registered Dogs: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**

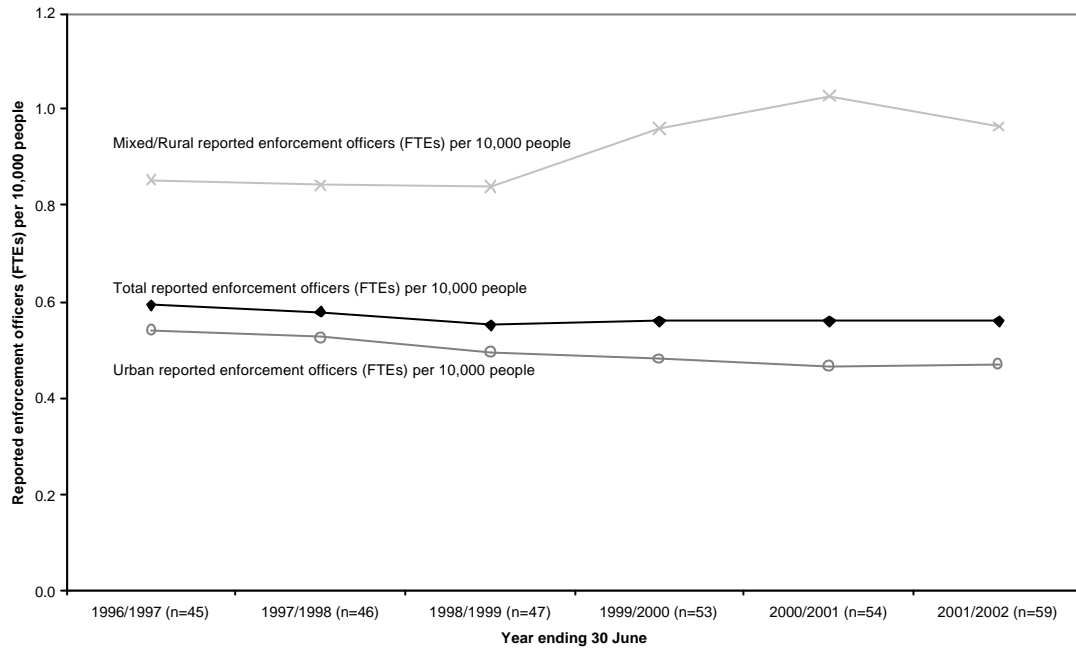


*Urban and Rural Differences*<sup>17</sup>

Mixed/rural councils appear to have a greater number of FTEs per 10,000 people than urban councils (Figure 16). This has widened over time, with the rate for urban councils declining slightly, while the rate for mixed/rural councils has increased overall.

<sup>17</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting information based on these two sub-sets, as the number of respondents in each sub-set is relatively small and so the results should be treated as indicative, not as conclusive.

**Figure 16: Reported Dog Control Enforcement FTEs for Urban and Mixed/Rural Councils per 10,000 People: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



#### *Highest and Lowest Levels of Dog Control Enforcement Officers*

Of the councils that supplied data on dog control enforcement FTEs and dog attack information for 2001/2002, the 10 Councils that reported the highest rates of dog control enforcement FTEs per 10,000 people had a combined population of 148,430 and a reported combined number of attacks on people of 197 – a rate of 1.33 dog attacks per 1,000 people.

By comparison, the 10 responding councils that reported the lowest rate of dog control enforcement FTEs per 10,000 people had a combined population of 1,461,200 and a reported combined number of attacks on people of 1,033– a rate of 0.71 dog attacks per 1,000 people.

While these figures suggest that councils having a lower rate of dog attacks have fewer dog enforcement officers per head of population. It must be stressed that this is only a one-year snapshot and that other factors (such as possible economies of scale and urban/rural differences) may influence this result. However, the findings suggest that greater levels of control problems require higher levels of enforcement resources by councils.

## **SECTION 11: OFFENCES TAKEN TO COURT**

Councils were asked to report the number of dog control offences taken to court since 1996/1997. The survey did not ask for any other details about the nature of the offences, and so offences could include dog attacks as well as such offences as not providing a dog with sufficient food, water or shelter.

The number of councils responding to this question ranged from 17 for 1996/1997 to 45 for 2001/2002. Of the 45 responding councils in 2001/2002, 20 were urban councils and 25 were mixed/rural councils. These 45 councils represent 2,218,380 people or 56% of the total New Zealand population. Of these, the 20 urban councils represented 1,719,800 people (78% of the population of responding councils) and mixed/rural represented the remaining 22%.

### ***11.1 Total Reported Court Offences***

#### *Survey Response for Dog Offences*

In 2001/2002 the total number of court offences reported by the 45 responding councils was 1,983. Of this total, the 20 urban councils reported 1,472 court offences (74% of those reported) and the mixed/rural councils reported the other 588 court offences (26%).

In 2001/2002 the highest number of court offences reported by a council was 416 (a large city council) and the lowest was zero (by a number of rural councils).

**Table 12: Total Reported Court Offences: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**

<b>Year (as at 30 June)</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>
Reported offences taken to court	1,766	2,132	1,983
Number of councils*	34	38	45

\* Out of 73 responding councils

*Ministry of Justice Data for Serious Dog Attacks*

A more accurate picture of the number of offences taken to court relating to serious dog attacks, as opposed to all dog related offences, is given in Tables 13 and Table 14. These tables show the total number of prosecutions under section 57 ('dogs attacking persons or animals or rushing at vehicles') and section 58 ('dogs causing serious injury') of the Dog Control Act 1996. There was a combined total of 260 such prosecutions in 2001.

**Table 13: Outcome of Cases Prosecuted Under Section 57 of the Dog Control Act 1996: 1997 - 2001**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Convicted	344	244	186	170	154
Youth Court proved <sup>1</sup>	1	0	0	0	0
Section 19 discharge <sup>2</sup>	2	2	6	5	4
Not proved <sup>3</sup>	194	138	102	70	86
Other <sup>4</sup>	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>244</b>

*Source: Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Justice.*

*Notes:*

- 1. Proved charges involving young offenders that are finalised in the Youth Court.*
- 2. Discharge without conviction under section 19 of the Criminal Justice Act 1985.*
- 3. Cases that were withdrawn, dismissed, discharged etc.*
- 4. Uncoded outcome.*

**Table 14: Outcome of Cases Prosecuted Under Section 58 of the Dog Control Act 1996: 1997 - 2001**

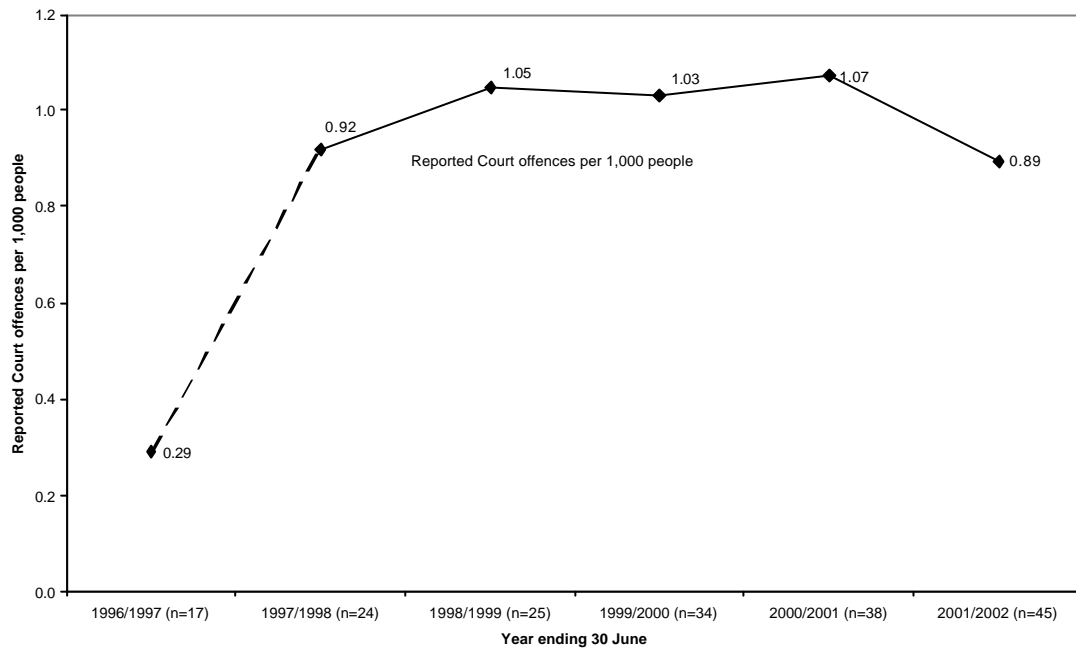
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Convicted	4	6	6	8	12
Not proved	3	0	3	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>

*Source: Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Justice.*

### 11.2 Trends in the Rate of Offences Brought to Court

Figure 17 shows the average total number of court offences in relation to the number of people, as reported by councils. In 2001/2002 the average rate of court offences for the councils responding to the survey was 0.89 per 1,000 people.

**Figure 17: Reported Court Offences per 1,000 People: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**

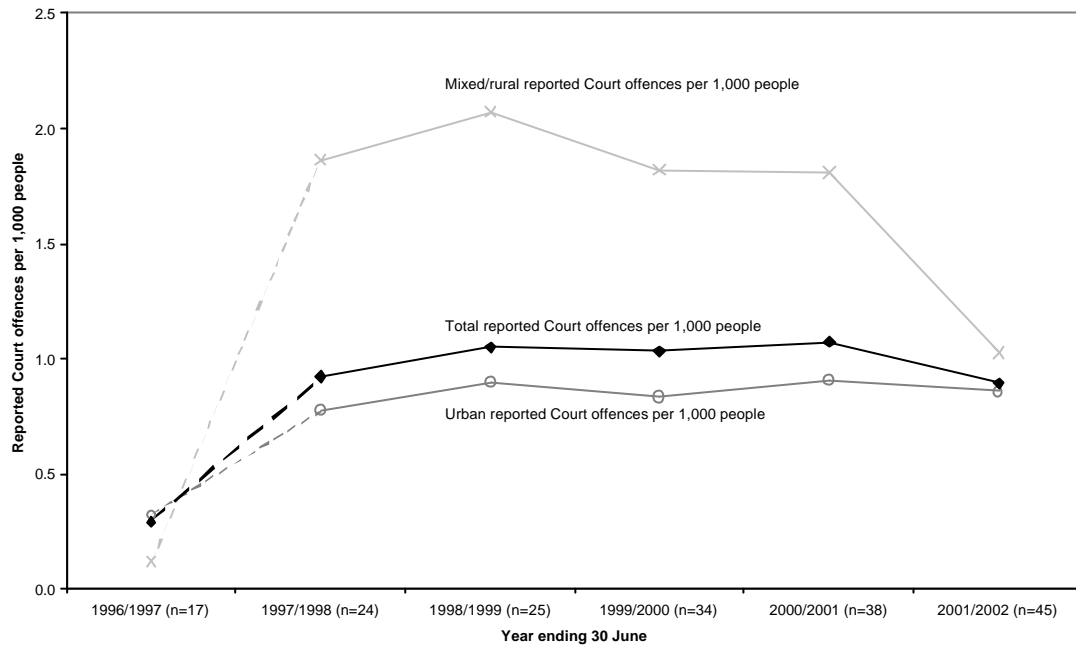


*Note: A dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.*

Urban and Rural Differences<sup>18</sup>

In 2001/2002 the number of recorded offences taken to court per 1,000 people for the urban councils was 0.86 and for mixed/rural councils it was 1.02.

**Figure 18: Reported Court Offences per 1,000 People For Urban and Mixed/Rural Councils: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



Note: A dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.

<sup>18</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting information based on these two sub-sets, as the number of respondents in each sub-set is relatively small and so the results should be treated as indicative, not as conclusive.

## **SECTION 12: REPORTED INFRINGEMENT OFFENCES**

Councils were asked to report their respective total numbers of infringement offences recorded since 1996/1997. The survey did not ask for any other details about the nature of the infringements and so the reported infringements could include a range of offences such as keeping an unregistered dog and wilful obstruction of a dog control officer.

The number of councils responding to this question ranged from 17 for 1996/1997 to 54 for 2001/2002. These 54 councils represented 3,148,330 people, or 80% of the total New Zealand population. Of the 54 responding councils in 2002/2001, 28 were urban councils and 26 were mixed/rural councils. Of these, the 28 urban authorities represented 2,563,800 people (81% of the responding councils) and the mixed/rural councils represented the remaining 19%.

### ***12.1 Total Reported Infringement Offences***

In 2001/2002 the total number of infringement offences reported by the 54 responding councils was 14,797. Of this total, 28 urban councils reported 11,612 infringement offences (78% of these offences) and 26 mixed/rural councils reported 3,185 (22% of these offences).

In 2001/2002 the highest number of infringement offences reported by a council was 1,548 (a large rural council) and the lowest number was zero (a small rural council).

**Table 15: Total Reported Infringement Offences: 1999/2000 – 2001/2002**

<b>Year (as at 30 June)</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>
Total reported infringement offences	11,813	13,958	14,797
Number of councils*	45	48	54

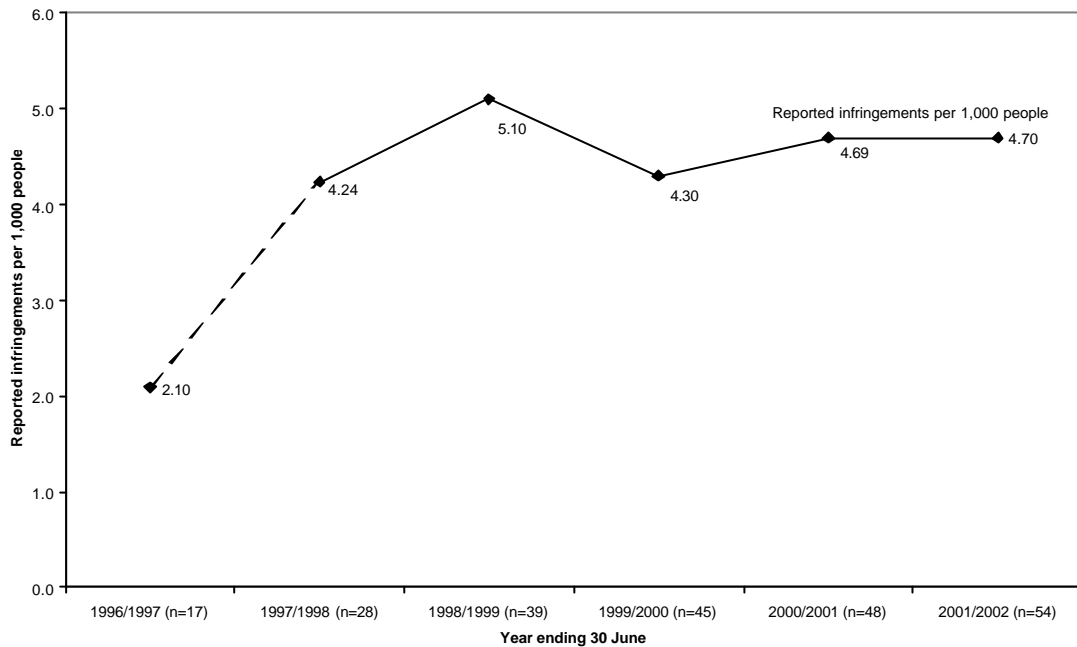
\* Out of 73 responding councils

### ***12.2 Trends in the Rate of Reported Infringement Offences***

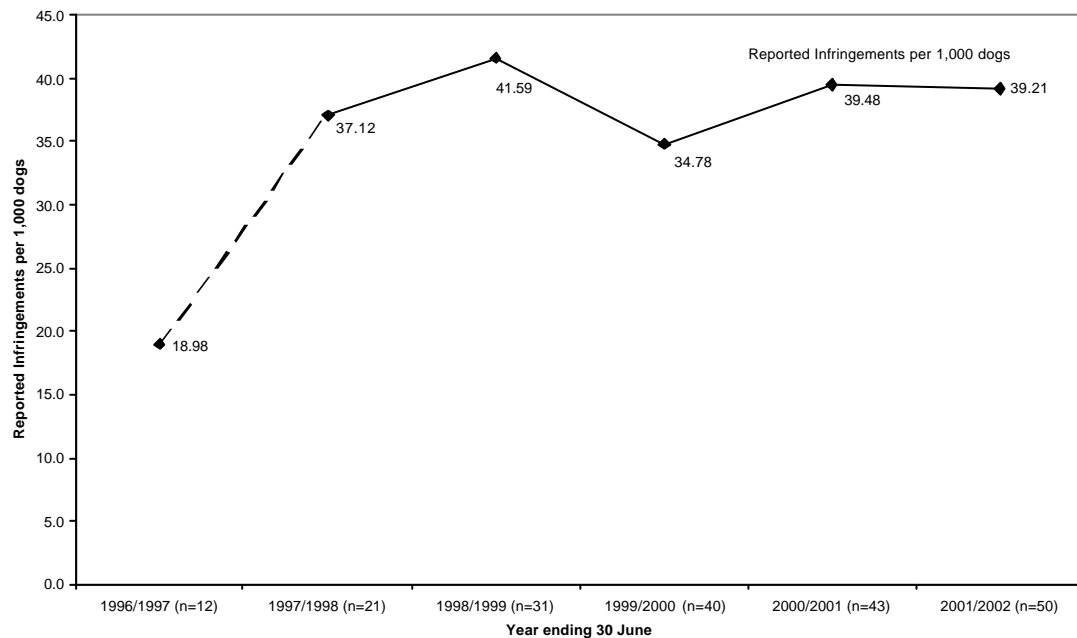
The average number of infringement offences in relation to the number of people (Figure 19) and the number of dogs (Figure 20) appears to be trending upward since 1999/2000.

In 1999/2000 the average number of infringement offences recorded by councils was 4.30 per 1,000 people. By 2001/2002 it had risen to 4.70.

**Figure 19: Reported Infringement Offences per 1,000 People: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



**Figure 20: Reported Infringement Offences per 1,000 Registered Dogs: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



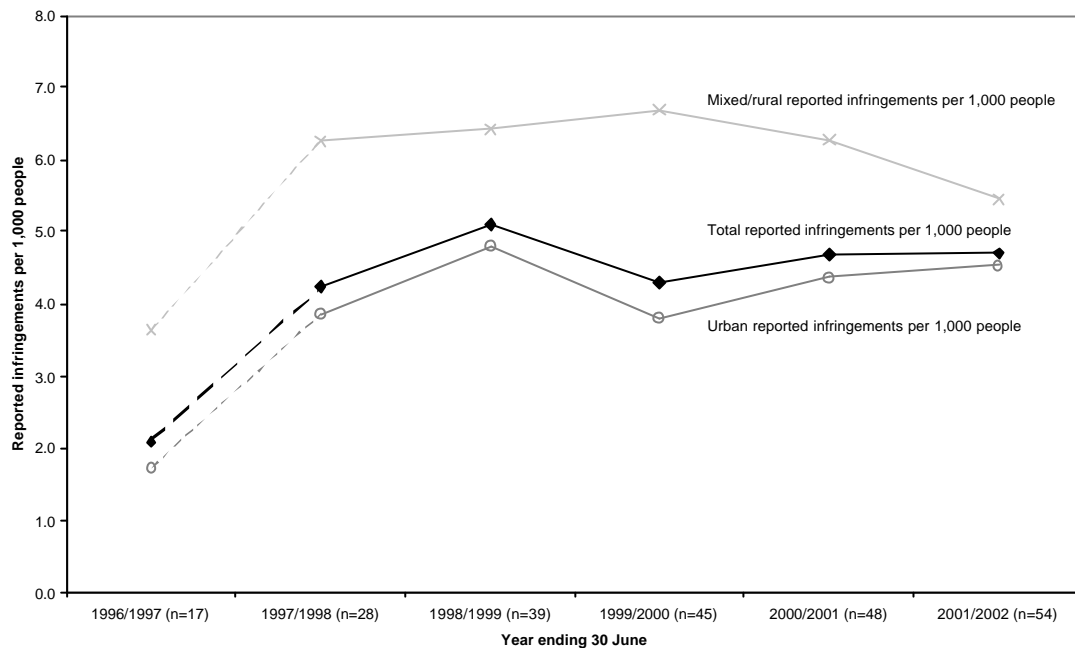
*Note:* In Figures 19 and 20 a dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.

Figure 20 only charts the councils that provided both expenditure and registered dog numbers in the same year. The number of responding councils in any given year may be lower than in Figure 19.

### Urban and Rural Differences<sup>19</sup>

In 2001/2002 the number of recorded infringement offences per 1,000 people for the urban councils responding to the survey was 4.53 and for mixed/rural councils it was 5.45.

**Figure 21: Reported Infringement Offences per 1,000 People for Urban & Mixed/Rural councils: 1996/1997 – 2001/2002**



Note: A dotted line is used to denote where caution is advised in interpreting time series data, due to a low number of respondents (i.e. less than 20) providing complete data/responses.

### Highest and Lowest Levels of Infringement Offences

The 10 responding councils with the highest rate of infringement offences per 1,000 people in 2001/2002 had a combined population of 421,320 and reported 390 dog attacks on people – a rate of 0.93 dog attacks per 1,000 people. By comparison, the 10 responding councils with the lowest rate of infringement offences per 1,000 people had a combined population of 405,210 and reported 171 dog attacks on people – a rate of 0.42 dog attacks per 1,000 people.

While these figures indicate that councils having a lower rate of dog attacks have a lower rate of infringement offences per 1,000 people, it must be stressed that this is only a one-year snapshot and that other factors (such as urban/ rural differences) may influence this result.

<sup>19</sup> Caution should be used when interpreting information based on these two sub-sets, as the number of respondents in each sub-set is relatively small and so the results should be treated as indicative, not as conclusive.

## **SECTION 13: REPORTED BREEDS OF DOG INVOLVED IN ATTACKS ON PEOPLE**

Councils were asked to report the breeds of dogs involved in attacks on people each year since 1996/1997. The number of councils that provided these data ranged from seven for 1996/1997 to 29 councils for 2001/2002. The 29 responding councils in 2001/2002 represented 1,796,540 people, 46% of the total New Zealand population.

The data presented in Table 16 show the number of dogs involved in attacks on people reported to councils where the breed of the dog was also reported. The breed of the dog(s) was mentioned in relation to less than a fifth (18%) of all dog attacks on people that were reported to councils.

**Table 16: Total Reported Dog Breeds Involved in Attacks on People: 1999/2000 – 2001/2002**

<b>Year (as at 30 June)</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/2001</b>	<b>2001/2002</b>	<b>6 months to 2001/2002</b>
Number of attacks reported with breed information	380	323	569	273
Number of reported attacks on people*	3,326	3,206	3,020	1,557
Percentage of reported attacks with breed specified**	11%	10%	19%	18%
Number of councils***	18	24	29	26

\* *Out of all councils reporting dog attacks on people*

\*\* *Out of total reported attacks to councils*

\*\*\* *Out of 73 responding councils*

### *Reliability of Breed Data*

There are several problems with the integrity of the breed-related data. There is no clear or standardised procedure for identifying breeds and councils were inconsistent in the terminology they used to describe breeds.

In addition, information about who assessed the breed was not collected by the survey. However, even when carried out by a qualified professional, breed classification may have an element of subjectivity.

Councils mainly used the following terms to describe breeds:

- single-breed dogs (e.g. Pit Bull Terriers, Labradors)
- mixed-breed dogs (e.g. Pit Bull Terrier Cross, Labrador Cross)
- specified mixed-breed dogs (e.g. Pit Bull Terrier/Labrador Cross).

Not all councils used all of these three categories when reporting the breed of dog and other descriptions were used by some councils.

The figures in Table 17 show, by number of reported attacks, the ‘breeds’ of dog most commonly identified by councils as being involved in attacks on people, where breed has been attributed. All mixed breeds have been included in the “cross-breed” category in Table 17. More detailed information for the cross-breed category is shown in Table 18.

It should be noted when reading Table 17 and Table 18 that the total population of each breed within council jurisdictions was not obtained. Therefore, the percentage of attacks relative to each breed population cannot be calculated.

#### *Change from interim report*

The way in which this final report presents reported dog attacks by breed of dog has changed. In the interim report, attacks by dogs identified by councils as being crosses of a particular breed were included in the figures for dogs identified as being solely of that breed. A number of animal control professionals and other animal groups questioned this approach. Some comments made to the Department said that it would be inappropriate to separate cross-breeds down into ‘component breeds’ and that all cross-breed dogs should be reported as cross-breeds without further breakdown. However, in this report dog attacks attributed to cross-breeds have been separated out from those attributed to a ‘single breed’.

The reader should note that separating dogs identified by councils as being cross-breeds, does not necessarily imply that the remaining dogs are pure-breeds. Rather they are dogs identified by councils as being a single breed (as noted above there was inconsistency in the terminology used to describe breeds and breed classification may have an element of subjectivity, even when carried out by a qualified professional).

**Table 17: ‘Breeds’ of Dogs Most Commonly Identified by Councils in Relation to Attacks on People (where type of ‘breed’ has been reported): 1999/2000 – 31/12/2002**

Reported Breed	2000 (n=18)		Reported Breed	2001 (n=24)		Reported Breed	2002 (n=29)		Reported Breed	Six months ending 31/12/02 (n=26)**	
	Reported attacks on people (N)	Reported attacks on people (%)		Reported attacks on people (N)	Reported attacks on people (%)		Reported attacks on people (N)	Reported attacks on people (%)		Reported attacks on people (N)	Reported attacks on people (%)
Breed unknown/not reported	2,946	88.6%	Breed unknown/not reported	2,883	89.9%	Breed unknown/not reported	2,451	81.2%	Breed unknown/not reported	1,284	82.5%
Cross-breed	175	5.3%	Cross-breed	85	2.7%	Cross-breed	165	5.5%	Cross-breed	96	6.2%
German Shepherd	45	1.4%	Bull Terrier	39	1.2%	German Shepherd	61	2.0%	German Shepherd	32	2.1%
Staffordshire Bull Terrier	28	0.8%	German Shepherd	37	1.2%	Rottweiler	58	1.9%	Pit Bull Terrier	31	2.0%
Labrador	24	0.7%	Staffordshire Bull Terrier	29	0.9%	Bull Terrier	52	1.7%	Staffordshire Bull Terrier	20	1.3%
Rottweiler	23	0.7%	Labrador	23	0.7%	Labrador	42	1.4%	Bull Terrier	19	1.2%
Fox Terrier	14	0.4%	Rottweiler	23	0.7%	Pit Bull Terrier	35	1.2%	Rottweiler	17	1.1%
Border Collie	12	0.4%	Pit Bull Terrier	21	0.7%	Fox Terrier	20	0.7%	Labrador	16	1.0%
Bull Terrier	9	0.3%	Fox Terrier	9	0.3%	Staffordshire Bull Terrier	16	0.5%	Fox Terrier	8	0.5%
English Bull Terrier	9	0.3%	Boxer	7	0.2%	American Pit Bull Terrier	13	0.4%	American Pit Bull Terrier	6	0.4%
Pit Bull Terrier	8	0.2%	English Bulldog	6	0.2%	Terrier	10	0.3%	Mastiff	5	0.3%

\*Where breeds have been recorded.

\*\*Note the last column of this table includes information for six months only.

**Table 18: Breakdown of Types of Cross-breed Dogs Most Commonly Identified by Councils in Relation to Attacks on People (where type of cross-breed has been reported): 1999/2000 – 31/12/2002**

2000 (n=18)			2001 (n=24)			2002 (n=29)			Six months ending 31/12/02 (n=26)**		
Reported Cross-breed Type	Reported attacks by Type	% reported attacks on people	Reported Cross-breed Type	Reported attacks by Type	% reported attacks on people	Reported Cross-breed Type	Reported attacks by Type	% reported attacks on people	Reported Cross-breed Type	Reported attacks by Type	% reported attacks on people
Labrador X	37	1.1%	Labrador X	47	1.5%	Staffordshire Bull Terrier X	37	1.2%	Staffordshire Bull Terrier X	39	2.5%
Staffordshire Bull Terrier X	31	0.9%	Staffordshire Bull Terrier X	47	1.5%	Labrador X	36	1.2%	German Shepherd X	12	0.8%
Bull Terrier X	29	0.9%	German Shepherd X	20	0.6%	German Shepherd X	17	0.6%	Labrador X	12	0.8%
German Shepherd X	19	0.6%	Bull Terrier X	19	0.6%	Bull Terrier X	15	0.5%	Bull Terrier X	8	0.5%
Rottweiler X	16	0.5%	Rottweiler X	17	0.5%	Rottweiler X	12	0.4%	Rottweiler X	6	0.4%
Terrier X	11	0.3%	Pit Bull Terrier X	12	0.4%	Terrier X	12	0.4%	Terrier X	6	0.4%
Fox Terrier X	10	0.3%	English Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier X	10	0.3%	English Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier X	9	0.3%	Pit Bull Terrier X	5	0.3%
English Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier X	10	0.3%	Terrier X	9	0.3%	Pit Bull Terrier X	7	0.2%	Mastiff X	3	0.2%
Mastiff X	3	0.1%	Rhodesian Ridgeback X	6	0.2%	Mastiff X	6	0.2%	English Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier X	2	0.1%
Pit Bull Terrier X	3	0.1%	Fox Terrier X	4	0.1%	Rhodesian Ridgeback X	5	0.2%	*	1	0.1%

"X" refers to cross-breed. Note the last column of this table includes information for six months only.

\* One attack was reported for three cross-breeds: Fox Terrier X, Boxer X and a Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Mastiff X.

## **SECTION 14: REPORTED PENALTIES/FINES**

Councils were asked to report the average level of fines awarded (by the courts) since 1996/1997.

The number of councils responding to this question over full financial years ranged from 11 for 1996/1997 to 20 for 2001/2002. The number of councils that provided information for 1997/1998 to 2000/2001 was too small to analyse with confidence. The 20 councils that provided information in 2001/2002<sup>20</sup> represent a total population of 1,689,260 people (43% of the total New Zealand population).

For the 20 councils which gave information for 2001/2002:

- The average (mean) fine was \$212
- The minimum fine was \$70<sup>21</sup>
- The maximum fine was \$560.

### ***14.1 Ministry of Justice Data for Penalties Awarded***

A more complete picture of the penalties awarded by the courts for serious dog attacks is given by data based on information from the Ministry of Justice (Tables 19 to 21).

These results show, among other things, that the average fine imposed for cases brought under section 57 of the Dog Control Act 1996 ('dogs attacking persons or animals or rushing at vehicles') ranged from \$234 in 1997 to \$300 in 2001. It should be noted that the maximum penalty that can be awarded under section 57 is a \$1,500 fine.

While not shown in the tables, the average fine imposed in cases brought under section 58 of the Dog Control Act 1996 ('dogs causing serious injury') over 2000 and 2001 was \$475. The maximum penalty that can be awarded under section 58 is three months imprisonment and/or a \$5,000 fine<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> The results for the 20 councils should not be treated as being representative of all 74 territorial authorities. Please treat these results as only indicative, and not as conclusive, due to the small sample size.

<sup>21</sup> Some councils reported that the penalties imposed involved community work and no financial fine.

<sup>22</sup> Excludes Court costs.

**Table 19: Most Serious Sentence Imposed For Cases Convicted Under Section 57 of the Dog Control Act 1996: 1997 - 2001**

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Community service <sup>1</sup>	0	0	1	1	1
Fine	203	128	94	94	84
Reparation	66	64	55	45	50
Sentence if called upon	3	0	5	2	1
Conviction & discharge	72	52	31	28	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>154</b>

*Note:*

1. A community-based sentence cannot legally be imposed for such offences. These few cases may be miscoded sentences or offences.
2. Source: Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Justice.

**Table 20: Number of Fines Imposed for Cases Convicted Under Section 57 of the Dog Control Act 1996, by Amount Awarded: 1997 - 2001**

<b>Amount</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
< = \$50	3	1	3	0	1
> \$50 to \$100	41	14	12	8	10
> \$100 to \$200	63	57	33	36	29
> \$200 to \$300	63	23	24	22	22
> \$300 to \$400	14	15	14	16	8
> \$400 to \$500	16	15	6	8	8
> \$500	3	3	2	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>84</b>
Average fine imposed	\$234	\$260	\$257	\$282	\$300

*Source: Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Justice.*

**Table 21: Most Serious Sentence Imposed for Cases Convicted Under Section 58 of the Dog Control Act 1996: 1997 - 2001**

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Custodial	0	0	0	1	0
Periodic detention	0	1	0	0	1
Community service	0	0	0	1	2
Fine	2	4	2	4	6
Reparation	2	1	2	1	2
Conviction & discharge	0	0	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>

*Source: Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Justice.*

## **SECTION 15: REPORTED EDUCATION EXPENDITURE**

Councils were asked to report their level of expenditure on dog control in each of the following areas – enforcement, prosecutions and education since 1996/1997.

The survey did not ask for any other details about education, and so expenditure could include both public education programmes and owner education programmes.

The number of councils responding to the dog control education expenditure question ranged from 10 for 1996/1997 to 28 for 2001/2002. The number of councils that provided information for 1997/1998 to 2000/2001 was too small to analyse with confidence.

The 28 councils that responded in 2001/2002<sup>23</sup> represent a total population of 1,571,390 people (40% of the New Zealand population).

The total education expenditure of the 28 councils for 2001/2002 was \$762,585 with:

- an average reported expenditure of \$27,235
- a maximum reported expenditure of \$133,461
- a minimum reported expenditure of \$0.

<sup>23</sup> The results for the 28 councils should not be treated as being representative of all 74 territorial authorities. Please treat these results as only indicative, and not as conclusive, due to the small sample size overall.

## **SECTION 16: REPORTED DISQUALIFIED AND PROBATIONARY OWNERS**

Councils were asked to report the numbers of dog owners classified as probationary and disqualified under the Dog Control Act 1996, for each year since 1996/1997.

### ***16.1 Total Reported Probationary Owners***

The number of councils responding to this question ranged from 23 for 1996/1996 to 41 for 2001/2002.

The 41 councils that responded in 2001/2002 represent a total population of 2,298,050 people (58% of the New Zealand population).

The total number of probationary owners recorded by the 41 councils for 2001/2002 was 85 with:

- an average number of probationary owners being 2
- a maximum number of probationary owners being 51
- a minimum number of probationary owners of zero.

### ***16.2 Total Reported Disqualified Owners***

The number of councils responding to this question ranged from 23 for 1996/1997 to 39 for 2001/2002.

The 39 councils that responded in 2001/2002 represent a total population of 1,885,150 people (48% of the New Zealand population).

The total number of disqualified owners recorded by the 39 councils for 2001/2002 was 15 with:

- an average number of disqualified owners being 0.4
- a maximum number of disqualified owners being 9
- a minimum number of disqualified owners being zero.

## **SECTION 17: REPORTED DOGS CLASSIFIED AS ‘DANGEROUS’.**

Councils were asked to report the numbers of dogs classified as being dangerous under section 31 of the Dog Control Act 1996 for each year since 1996/1997.

The number of councils responding to this question ranged from 23 for 1996/1996 to 52 for 2001/2002.

The 52 councils that responded in 2001/2002 represent a total population of 2,931,610 people (74% of the New Zealand population).

The total number of dangerous dogs recorded by the 52 councils for 2001/2002 was 278 with:

- an average number of dangerous dogs being 5
- a maximum number of dangerous dogs being 42
- a minimum number of dangerous dogs of zero.

**APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE**

**APPENDIX B: LISTING OF MIXED/RURAL AND URBAN COUNCILS**

<b>MIXED/RURAL COUNCILS</b>	<b>URBAN COUNCILS</b>	
Buller District	Ashburton District	
Carterton District	Auckland City	
Central Hawkes Bay District	Banks Peninsula District	
Central Otago District	Christchurch City	
Chatham Islands	Dunedin City	
Clutha District	Gisborne District	
Far North District	Gore District	
Franklin District	Grey District	
Hauraki District	Hamilton City	
Hurunui District	Hastings District	
Kaikoura District	Horowhenua District	
Kaipara District	Invercargill City	
Kawerau District	Kapiti Coast District	
Mackenzie District	Hutt City	
Matamata-Piako District	Manawatu District	
Opotiki District	Manukau City	
Otorohanga District	Marlborough District	
Queenstown-Lakes District	Masterton District	
Rangitikei District	Napier City	
Ruapehu District	Nelson City	
Selwyn District	New Plymouth District	
South Taranaki District	North Shore City	
South Wairarapa District	Palmerston North City	
Southland District	Papakura District	
Stratford District	Porirua City	
Tararua District	Rodney District	
Tasman District	Rotorua District	
Thames-Coromandel District	South Waikato District	
Waikato District	Taupo District	
Waimakariri District	Tauranga District	
Waimate District	Timaru District	
Wairoa District	Upper Hutt City	
Waitomo District	Waipa District	
Western Bay of Plenty District	Waitakere City	
Westland District	Waitaki District	
	Wanganui District	
	Wellington City	
	Whakatane District	
	Whangarei District	
679,160	3,259,900	<b>Total Population</b>
17%	83%	<b>Proportion of Total Population</b>

Note: refer to section 4 for an explanation of the basis for this breakdown.