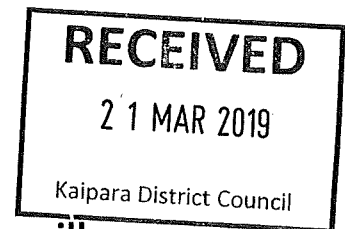


## **Submission re Petition**

**Your Worship, and Councillors**

**My name is Graham Jones, a retired resident of Dargaville**



In supporting the petition that was supplied to Council on the morning of 28 February, I protest that this has been held over until today. My request was that copies be delivered to Councillors that day, as I was aware they would be present for the monthly meeting.

It had nothing to do with the agenda for the day, but was compiled to illustrate the urgency of the situation regarding uncontrolled dogs.

I believe the petition, which was signed by more than a hundred people in a very short time, gave ample notice of the dissatisfaction regarding the dog control procedures in and around Dargaville.

In particular I refer to an incident I experienced in mid January when I was confronted by a pack of five dogs on the grounds of Dargaville High School. I have the presence of an umbrella to thank for preventing a serious attack.

As I saw the oncoming confrontation I managed to get a short video of the rushing dogs, who barked furiously then began growling, which to me suggested an attack was imminent. Using the umbrella I managed to get through the exit to upper Kauri Street, where I saw an open door at one of the flats. I spoke to the lady tenant and warned her not to let her own small dog outside because of the danger. To give her great credit, she grabbed an umbrella and managed to chase the dogs away down Kauri Street.

I called Dog Control and received what appears to be the typical type of message: "This is the answering service, I will pass your message on when an operator is available". I mentioned that I had a video of the dogs and would make this available if desired.

About an hour later a person on Ranfurly Street photographed the dogs being loaded into a vehicle. That photograph was available as well.

Later that day I wrote an email to Council about the incident and asked for prompt action. I also offered the video.

That email was not replied to.

Some days later I asked Council to advise me what had happened: the reply I received was rather dismissive, saying a response to me was not required, but "staff are working to support the family ..."

Since then I asked numerous times for information, and in particular (a) what happened to the dogs and (b) what happened to the owner.

After some time I received a letter from the Regulatory Manager saying the dog situation in Dargaville had deteriorated and was causing concern and extra measures were being put into place. It did not answer my specific questions, so I contacted the Manager and asked again for the information. He said he would be meeting with the contractor the next day and would come back to me the day after that.

I received no contact for over a week so contacted the manager again. He said he had delegated the call to another staff member. That call didn't take place either.

Once more I contacted the manager and was rather alarmed to be told 'action has been taken, the matter is closed'. When I remonstrated I was accused of being frustrating, however he did tell me three of the dogs had been put down, the other two not being considered dangerous unless in a pack situation. He said the owner 'has been infringed'. I asked if that could be put in writing (email would suffice) and he said that would happen.

It hasn't.

I apologise for the extent of this commentary but I suggest it illustrates the quite unsatisfactory situation regarding uncontrolled dogs in the borough and, more importantly, the dismissive behaviour of Council staff and the failure of the contractors to provide an adequate service. Incidentally I have since called Dog Control several times, on each occasion being told 'this is the answering service, please leave a message or call back later'.

The Council website publicises the service as being available 24 hours, seven days a week.

If Councillors want more information I will be happy to provide it.

The petition speaks for itself.