

## WDC happy with service

WAITOMO District Council's under fire dog control enforcement has been labelled "satisfactory" by regulatory services manager John Moran.

In recent months, two residents have raised their concerns about the effectiveness of the council's animal control services with the latest questioning public accountability.

In a letter to the *Waitomo News* last week, following an article about sheep being killed in Brook Park, Te Kuiti resident Don Lemieux wrote: "I would like to know how many fines have been levied against dog owners for these types of offences in the last five years (sheep attacks) as well as those who break the leash by-law. I wrote a letter to John Moran, WDC manager, regulatory services, in March of 2012 regarding the lack of public accountability in terms of reporting of the activities of the past dog control officer, such as number of callouts, fines given or received. I assert that there continues to be a lack of means to publically and objectively evaluate whether animal control ordinances are being enforced and to their effectiveness or lack thereof."

The council's statistics for the 2012/2013 year show 45 dog control infringement notices were issued with seven cancelled and 38 owners prosecuted. Infringement penalties ranged from \$100-\$400.

Mr Moran says once an infringement notice is issued, which can be for offences ranging from failing to register a dog to failing to keep a dog under control, the offender has 30 days to pay the fine direct to the council or the matter is referred to the district court.

"The difficulty is that the courts are happy to put in place arrangements where people can pay a certain amount each month and the money is drip fed over a long period of time.

"One of the problems we had in the past is that our contractor managed that process and although the money came through to us, it wasn't split down directly in terms of what it was for.

"So it wasn't easy to pull out the amount of income we've received from fines, but it will be easier now that we are managing that process ourselves."

### NEW OFFICER

Former contractor Rod McLeod retired in March and has been replaced by Lucas Koroheke who is employed by the council.

Regarding dog control enforcement, Mr Moran says he is satisfied with the level of service considering the "limited resources".

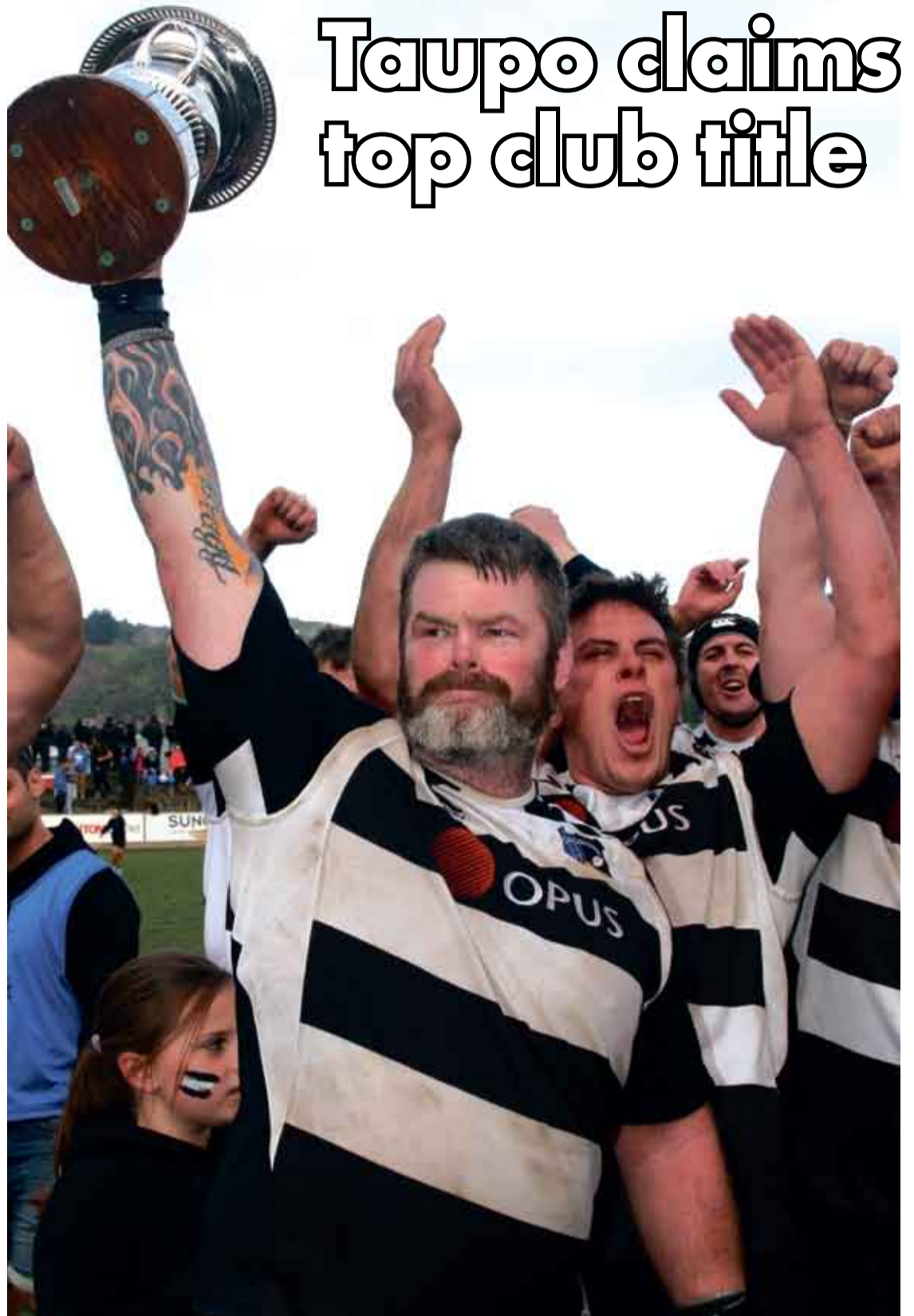
"We only have one animal control officer covering the entire district and he can't be everywhere at once.

"Invariably if he is down in Mokau sorting out a problem and there's a dog complaint in Te Kuiti, then we just can't be there immediately.

"But Lucas is new, he's excited about the job, he's really looking forward to it and making his presence felt so we're hoping to be more proactive than we have been in the past."

The council's next annual animal control report will be released in September and will be available online.

A public notice will also be advertised in the *Waitomo News* prior to its release.



## Taupo claims top club title

**AT LAST:** Taupo Sports captain Bruce Braggs holds aloft the Challenge Trophy after his team beat defending champions Waitete 44-24 in the King Country club rugby final at Rugby Park in Te Kuiti on Saturday. Taupo last won the title in 2002. STORY P3

## This week's Super Specials!

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