

Dog's death a warning

CHARLOTTE TRUNDLE

Last week one of the best search dogs in the country was shot by a farmer after being discovered in a sheep paddock.

Zeplin was owned by Callum Grant, a Treble Cone ski patroller, mountain guide and volunteer member of Aspiring Avalanche Dogs and New Zealand LandSAR dogs. Callum had gone to Wellington and left his dog with friends when it got loose. "It is a tragic situation and unfortunate for everyone involved, they are all gutted," Aspiring Avalanche Dogs manager and New Zealand LandSAR Dogs regional co-ordinator Matt Gunn said.

Matt is telling the story to educate dog owners to be vigilant and make sure their dogs don't roam. "I hope this will save others from the heartbreak of losing their best mate - then Zepp's demise will not be a total loss," he said.

Farmers have the right to

shoot dogs that are bothering stock. "Ultimately the responsibility lies with the dog owners and the farmers are just at the pointy end," Matt said. "All dogs have a strong desire to roam and it is impossible to control them 100 percent of the time. Indeed none of us are perfect, but I believe people need to be switched on to this issue and many dog owners need to lift their game because roaming dogs are a big problem. If you don't care that your dog roams then you are letting your dog and all responsible dog owners down."

Callum hopes to find a puppy from a SAR dog litter to start training before next winter. "Zepp will be missed greatly. He was a real character, with strong drive and huge desire to please, a gentle and friendly soul," Matt said.



Callum Grant and Zeplin.

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