

Wellington City Council **Annual Dog Control Report 2016-2017**



1. Introduction

The Wellington City Council, as a territorial authority, is required to manage and enforce provisions pursuant to the Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act) and subsequent amendments in 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2010.

S10A of the Act requires the Council to report annually to the Secretary of Local Government on its Dog Control Policy and practices.

This report fulfils this statutory requirement for the dog registration year: 1st July 2016 to 30 June 2017.



2. The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices

2.1 Policy objectives

The Council adopted a Dog Policy in December 2009 making provisions relating to the control of dogs in public places, which are enforceable under the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw 2008 - Part 2: Animals.

The objectives of the policy are to:

- Ensure that the owners of dogs comply with their obligations under the Act, that dogs are well cared for and Wellingtonians are able to enjoy dog ownership;
- Prevent any danger caused by dogs to the public and to wildlife and natural habitats;

- Minimise the risk of distress and nuisance caused by dogs to the public and to wildlife and natural habitats;
- Actively promote the responsible ownership of dogs; and
- Provide for the reasonable exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

A review of the Policy was undertaken during 2015/16. The Council adopted the finalised Dog Policy on 17th August 2016 and also agreed on areas where dogs can exercise off-leash.





The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices

2.2 Fees

Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees contribute approximately 70% to the cost of dog control in Wellington City. The Council also operates a Responsible Dog Owner scheme which provides a discounted rate for dog owners who meet the relevant criteria. Dog registration fees are set by council resolution.

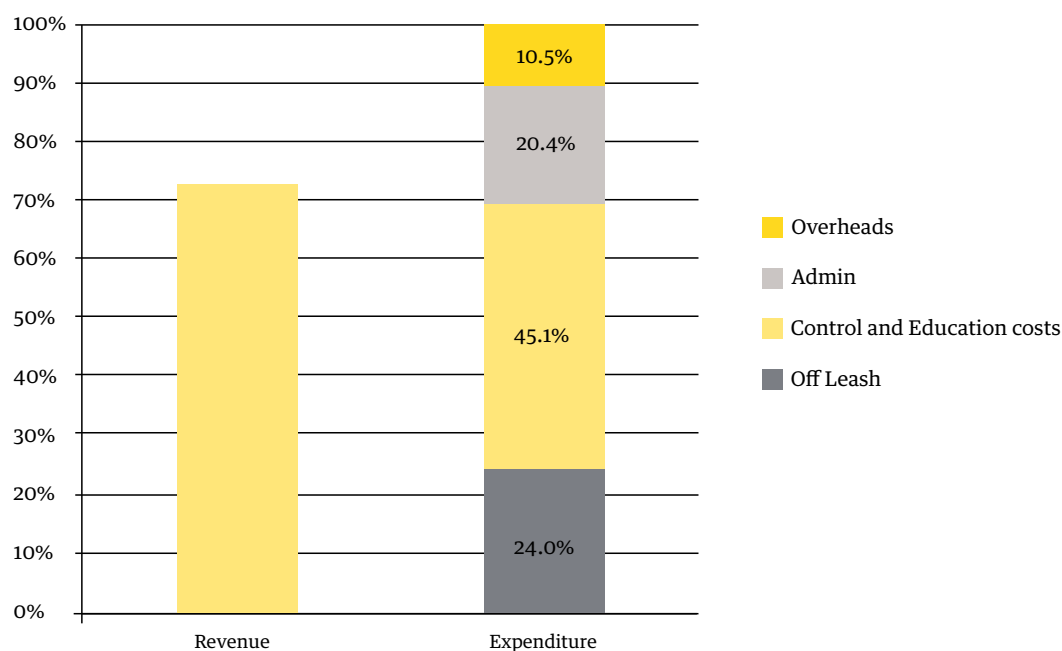
Fees are used for:

- Dog control activities including law enforcement, patrols and complaint investigation.
- Education programmes for schools, community groups and businesses.

- Signs and promotion of the Council's Animal Bylaw and Dog Policy.
- Providing shelter facilities.
- Running the dog registration programme - this includes forms, printing, tags, maintaining the national dog database and related promotional material.

The graph below sets out the level of income and expenditure in relation to dog control activities during the year:

Dog revenue and expenditure - 16/17





3. Key Achievements

Wellington City Council contracts the management of its animal management functions to Hutt City Council and has a team based solely in Wellington for the delivery of animal management within the boundaries of Wellington City.

By having this contract both councils are able to share services such as staff, equipment, animal shelters and have experienced specialist teams available within animal management.

Responding to complaints

By having dedicated staff assigned to the wards within Wellington city we have been able to respond with local knowledge to requests for services. 91% of our urgent complaints have been responded to within 1 hour.

We were also able to respond to requests and complaints out of business hours by having a dedicated after hours response unit

Community Engagement

For this reporting period our community engagement programme was utilised to include the use of our community engagement caravan which was used in various community fairs, festivals and community dog walks.

By having our animal management staff on site with these facilities, we are able to offer mobile microchipping, dog registration and behavioural advice to dog owners.

The feedback from dog owners about having this mobile facility has been very positive and we continue to increase our presence in the community by attending other community and city wide based events where dog owners are attending.

Emergency management

The Wellington and Hutt City animal management teams recently recruited more animal services volunteers to assist with emergency events that may occur within the city where dogs are often displaced and need relocating in disasters.

Wellington City has a full team which has undergone training in basic handling of animals and have taken part in mock disaster scenarios to test their skills.

Extra equipment has been purchased and an evacuation plan put in place for the Moa Point Animal Shelter in the event of a tsunami or other disaster where it becomes necessary to relocate dogs from that shelter. We are confident we have a team we can rely on in any disaster that may occur.

Rehoming programme

We continue to promote our very popular Facebook rehoming for dogs programme and have been successful at rehoming a number of dogs for owners that have had difficulty doing so. We have also used our Facebook page for rehoming our own unclaimed dogs over the past year.

Impounded dogs

The number of impounded dogs has reduced from previous years and we believe our solid community based education based programmes designed to assist dog owners is a direct result of less dogs being left to roam uncontrolled.

We have not had to issue as many infringement notices to dog owners as previous years - again we believe Council's desire to work with dog owners to achieve a better community is working, (which is backed up by our statistics).

Training

The animal management team will continue to work alongside dog owners experiencing problems in an effort to resolve those problems by engaging them in our free community dog training programmes. We also offer behavioural advice to dog owners at their own properties, checking in on those owners at a later date to assess progress.

Community partnerships

Council continues to work closely with our partner agencies, the Wellington SPCA, HUHA animal rescue, the police and neighbouring councils' animal management units.

The benefits of working with our dog owning communities are shown as a noticeable trend downwards in complaints and requests for service from our animal management team. We believe that being accessible for our dog owners is the key to gaining a better, safer and more informed dog owning community.

Neutering menacing dogs

On 22 September 2016, the Associate Local Government Minister Louise Upston announced a new national action plan to reduce the risk and harm of dog attacks.

Under the action plan, high-risk dogs and their owners will be subject to stricter controls. The law changes to give effect to such controls will complement a renewed focus on education about dog owner responsibility and safety around dogs, as well as new work with local government on best practice guidance for councils.

As a result of the Minister's action plan, the Department for Internal Affairs launched a nationwide campaign for the neutering of menacing dogs. In January 2017 we were successful in obtaining a DIA grant to fund the neutering of all dogs in Wellington classified as menacing. Under the Act, a dog may be classified as menacing if it belongs to a breed and type currently banned from importation, or if the local authority considers the dog poses a threat to people or animals on the basis of its behaviour.

We are working alongside our SPCA partners to contact the owners of menacing dogs and arrange for neutering to take place.



4. Dog Control Statistics

4.1 Dogs registered

2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
11398	11039	10716	10480

4.2 Dangerous and Menacing Dogs

Number of dogs that have been classified as dangerous this year (S31 Dog Control Act 1996):

Category	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Dangerous by owner conviction S31(1)(a)	1	0	8	1
Dangerous by sworn evidence S31(1)(b)	6	5	0	1
Dangerous by owner admitting in writing S31(1)(c)	0	0	2	2
Total dangerous dogs	7	5	10	4

Number of dogs that have been classified as menacing this year (S 33A and S33C):

Category	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Menacing by behaviour (S33A(1)(b)(i))	4	14	7	11
Menacing by breed characteristics (S33A(1)(b)(ii))	16	23	7	5
Menacing by Schedule 4 breed S33C(1)	19	36	28	32
Total menacing dogs	39	73	42	48

4.3 Number of infringement notices issued:

2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
117	125	169	150

4.4 Probationary owners and disqualified owners:

We have not disqualified or applied probationary classifications on any dog owners during this period.

4.5 Number of dog owners prosecuted by Wellington City Council:

We undertook one prosecution this year.



4.6 Dog related complaints: Response to service requests:

The target time for responses to service requests is within one hour for urgent requests and 24 hours for non-urgent requests:

Urgent dog complaints responded within 1 hour - 91% (target 100%)

Category	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Attacks on people	39	51	39	52
Attacks on animals	68	73	66	96
Barking dogs	627	809	593	867
Uncontrolled dogs	775	785	735	976
Miscellaneous	796	1020	937	1135
Total number of dog related complaints	2305	2738	2370	3126

For this reporting year, miscellaneous complaints can be broken down into the following categories:

Category	2016/2017
Challenging (dog may be on a lead but moves towards person/animal)	95
Education (giving advice to owner)	14
Fouling	50
Relinquishing a dog (handing dog over)	1
Stray pickups	633
Concerns for welfare	3
Total	796

