

Wellington City Council

Annual Dog Control Report

2017-2018

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 2017 to 30 June 2018.





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 current 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 75% 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.

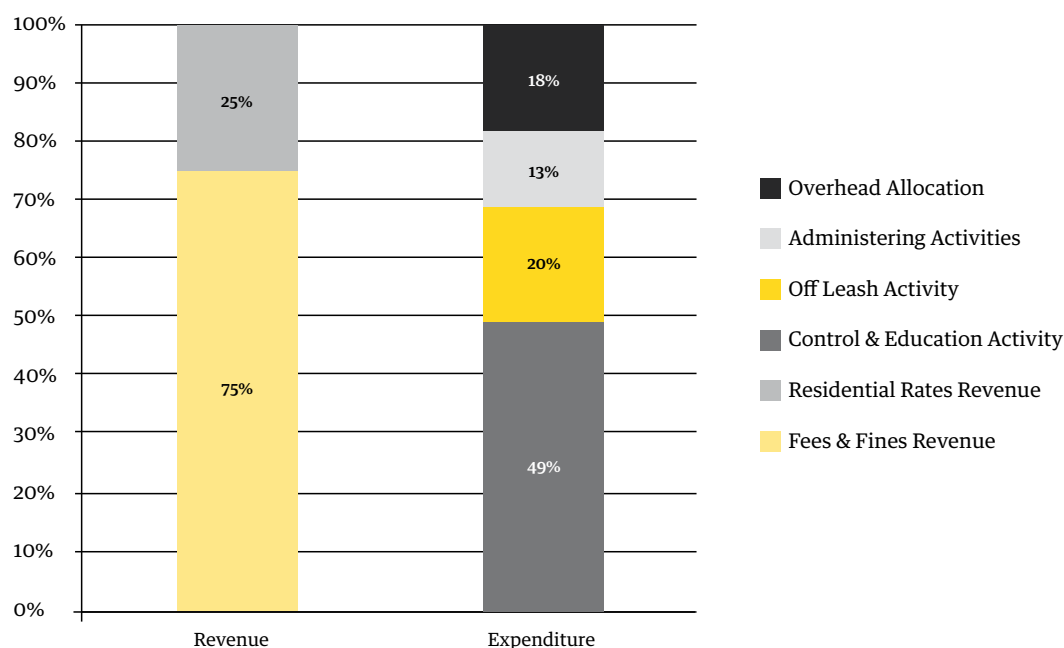
Fees are used for:

- 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 - 2017/18





3. Key Achievements

The Wellington City Council contracts the management of its animal management functions to Hutt City Council and has a team of animal management officers based at the Wellington Animal Centre at Moa Point.

There have been many advantages to council in having this contract with Hutt City Animal Services as we have been able to participate in the community engagement programmes that have been successfully run by Hutt City for many years now.

The animal services team have officers dedicated to various wards in the city which allows for the officers to interact with dog owners and the general public in those areas.

By having the local knowledge of each ward area, the officers are able to respond to complaints and requests for service in a very timely way.

Community Engagement

The community engagement programmes that have been organised by our animal services team this past year have received enormous support and following on social media with dog owners and others acknowledging support and appreciation for the team in going out into the communities.

Over the past year we have increased our involvement in community Christmas parades, dog clubs and fundraising events. We have participated in local community fairs with our pop up displays promoting on the spot microchipping and dog registration. We have also provided dog training advice as well as guidance on behavioural issues.

A number of councils from around the country have recently contacted our animal management team to review our community engagement programmes which we have been running for some 7 years. The benefits of working closely with our dog owning community has realised definite advantages in reducing repeat complaints regarding uncontrolled dogs.

Training

The team has continued with our dog awareness programmes by speaking to groups that interact with dogs on a daily basis such as meter readers, nursing staff and council officers. Many of these organisations have now incorporated this training into their health and safety programmes for their employees.

Animal Services staff also participated in behavioural training with the internationally acclaimed dog trainer Mark Vette who worked with our teams earlier this year to bring them up to date with the latest training techniques. We have then passed this knowledge onto our dog owners, particularly those who have been experiencing behavioural problems with their dogs.

Rehoming

We have continued with our very popular dog rehoming programme shared with Hutt City and enjoy high levels of interest on Facebook with this programme, resulting in dogs being rehomed all over New Zealand.

Complaints

There has been serious concern in recent months over uncontrolled dogs that have mauled penguins in various areas of the city. As a consequence extra patrolling has been carried out in those areas with a focus on identifying owners who do not have proper control of their dogs.

Complaints have also been received from dog owners who have experienced attacks from other uncontrolled dogs in reserve areas of the city, and patrolling of these areas is also undertaken with more signage being put in place to remind dog owners of their responsibilities.

We remain committed to working with our dog owners in our protected wildlife areas with the focus on ensuring that dogs are under control, are not left to attack wildlife or become a nuisance to other users of these areas.

Neutering menacing dogs

In 2016 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 have been working alongside our SPCA partners to contact the owners of menacing dogs and arrange for neutering to take place.

During this year 4 dogs were neutered under this initiative. All were neutered as a result of their breed.



4. Dog Control Statistics

4.1 Dogs registered

2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
11615	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	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Dangerous by owner conviction S31(1)(a)	0	1	0	8	1
Dangerous by sworn evidence S31(1)(b)	1	6	5	0	1
Dangerous by owner admitting in writing S31(1)(c)	0	0	0	2	2
Total dangerous dogs	1	7	5	10	4

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

Category	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Menacing by behaviour (S33A(1)(b)(i))	7	4	14	7	11
Menacing by breed characteristics (S33A(1)(b)(ii))	0	16	23	7	5
Menacing by Schedule 4 breed S33C(1)	12	19	36	28	32
Total menacing dogs	19	39	73	42	48

4.3 Number of infringement notices issued:

2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
110	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 did not undertake any prosecutions during this period.



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 - 93% (the target is 100%)

The 100% target was not achieved due to our online reporting system not relaying the complaint details directly through to the animal control officers - this has now been fixed.

Additionally, complaints were lodged in inboxes that were only monitored during office hours - we have now amended information on our website directing people to contact the main council website for out of hours complaints

Category	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014
Attacks on people	48	39	51	39	52
Attacks on animals	80	68	73	66	96
Barking dogs	651	627	809	593	867
Uncontrolled dogs	805	775	785	735	976
Miscellaneous	783	796	1020	937	1135
Total number of dog related complaints	2367	2305	2738	2370	3126

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

Category	2017/2018	2016/2017
Challenging (dog may be on a lead but moves towards person/animal)	106	95
Education (giving advice to owner)	5	14
Fouling	32	50
Relinquishing a dog (handing dog over)	7	1
Stray pickups	632	633
Concerns for welfare	1	3
Total	783	796



