

Annual Dog Control Report

2023-2024



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: 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices

A review of the current Policy was undertaken during 2023/2024. The Council adopted the finalised Dog Policy on 18 April 2024 and reviewed areas where dogs can exercise off-leash.

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.

The proposed changes to the policy had one of the biggest response rates we have ever seen,

demonstrating that Wellingtonians were passionate about how and where they walk their dogs.

Some key changes in the new policy are as follows:

- Dog owners are now required to carry effective means of picking up their dog waste, (such as poo bags). Failure to do so may result in a \$300 Fine.
- We have introduced a 'Dog-Friendly Wellington' section, which provides guidance to businesses interested in establishing dog-friendly spaces in the city.
- We have added/extended 8 new dog exercise areas throughout Wellington.

In addition to these changes, we're also working on the following:

- Investigating the possibility of providing an off-leash area that has sections for dogs with different energy levels.
- Undertaking and audit of the number and placement of bins in dog walking areas to improve the convenience of disposing of dog waste.
- Continuing to look at options for an off-leash area in Miramar.
- Investigating options to support a 'fencing installation programme' with a focus on sites adjacent to roads to enhance safety and usability.
- Updating our website by adding images of parks, accessibility, and parking details.
- Evaluating off-leash area signage for visibility and effectiveness.
- Adding off-leash areas to Google Maps, including descriptions and operating hours.
- Assessing the advantages of installing "etiquette boards" in popular exercise areas that remind dog owners (and their dogs) of appropriate behaviour in dog parks.



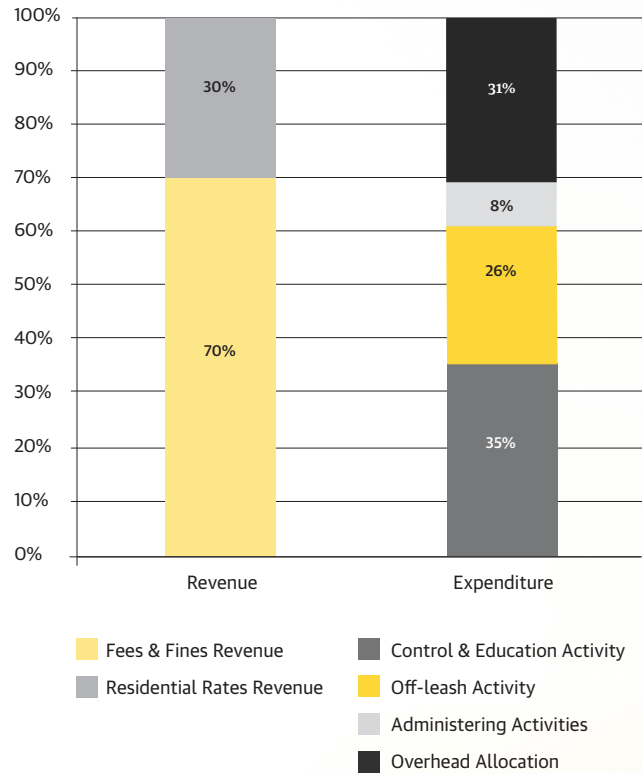
Fees

Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees contribute approximately 70% of the cost of dog control in Wellington City. The Council also operates an accredited 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 issuing tags, maintaining the national dog database and related promotional material, maintaining our accredited dog owners programme, and responding to queries from dog owners.

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



Dog Walkers and Trainers

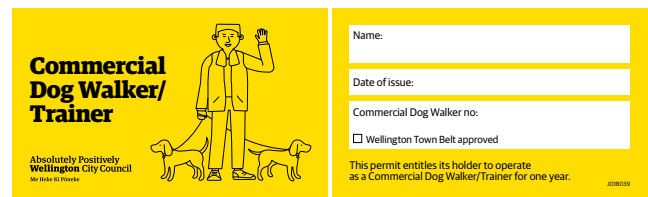
On 1 July 2022 the Council's Trading and Events in Public Places Policy came into effect. One requirement of this new policy is to formally 'licence' commercial dog walkers and trainers who walk and train their dogs on public land.

In order to obtain a licence, applicants must pass a 2-part test. The test comprises of a 1-hour knowledge session covering a range of issues such as understanding the laws, policies and bylaws that apply to the control of dogs, along with instruction covering dog walking etiquette and provides an overview of wildlife sensitive areas around Wellington. At the end of the training session, participants are required to complete a questionnaire which tests their knowledge. Once they have passed this test, applicants then undertake a practical session when one of our animal control officers accompanies them out on a walk with their dogs to assess their ability to control the pack.

Since the initiative was launched, the Animal Control Officers, in conjunction with WCC, have held two 'Commercial Dog Walkers' and Trainers' courses, hosting approximately 25 attendees, 18 of which have completed their practical assessment demonstrating their dog handling competence and understanding of the legislation in a public setting.

Once qualified, dog walkers and trainers receive a permit which they must carry with them, along with stickers to identify their vehicles:

Our dog walkers and trainers' licences have attracted a high level of interest from other Councils who are currently considering similar licensing requirements in their own districts.



An assessment taking place in Wellington.



Going Paperless

This is the first-year dog registration can be completed online. Dog owners can also change dog and owners' details online, notify council of a deceased dog, and order a replacement tag via a simple online process.

Coupled up with the One Tag, our dog registration processes are now smooth and easy, providing a great user-friendly experience for our customers.

Dog Attacks

We are still receiving reports of high numbers of dog attacks and/or aggressive dog behaviour. This appears to be an issue nationwide. Contributing factors are possibly due to the rising dog population, roaming dogs, inadequate confinement, and dogs being walked off lead.

There has also been increased reports of dogs attacking penguins during breeding season around the Wellington shorelines. As a result, we are working with the appropriate agencies and our urban ecology team to create a greater awareness for dog owners by erecting fencing around these wildlife sensitive areas and increasing our signage.

Community Engagement

The Dog Control Team Dog attended the Petone Fair where they provided information and materials to members of the public outlining the reasons dogs are required to be on leads, promoted the Council bylaws, and provided both behavioural and general advice.

The Team also attended Otari Wilton's Bush Open Day where the focus was on the requirements for dogs being on lead in wildlife sensitive areas, as well as being actively involved with both the Karori Residents Association, and Capital Kiwi.

Proactive Patrols

During the past 12 months officers spent over 249 hours carrying out 454 proactive patrols mostly in our wildlife-sensitive locations. These patrols were conducted between the hours of 7 am -6pm. Officers identified 152 compliance breaches and were able to take enforcement action on 128, ranging from verbal warnings, written warnings, and infringements for these incidents. During these patrols Officers sighted 1130 dog owners behaving responsibly and abiding by the WCC bylaws.

Accredited Dog Owner Training

To qualify for accredited dog owner approval, dog owners are required to submit an application to council, providing proof that they have attended training courses, and obtained a pass certificate on completion.

Wellington City Council received 182 ADO applications that required property inspections.

Our Animal Services team provides a free training course focussed on educating dog owners. The course is 'dog free' and covers extensive information regarding dog ownership, owner responsibilities, wildlife sensitive areas, dog control laws and council bylaws.

The Team ran 3 courses between August and April with a total 100 attendees. The courses were well received, and feedback has been that this a great customer service and education tool. It also provides an opportunity for dog owners to meet animal control officers in positive learning environment.

We are committed to running more of these courses in the future as they prove to be very popular, and we receive excellent feedback from those that attend.



A pop-up education activation, in collaboration with Capital Kiwi.

Dog Control Statistics

Total registered dogs in Wellington City

Year	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020/2021	2019/2020
Number	16,119	15,812	14,260	12,751	12,328

Dangerous and menacing dogs

Number of dogs that have been classified as dangerous this year (s31 Dog Control Act 1996):

Category	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020/2021	2019/2020
Dangerous by owner conviction s31(1)(a)	0	0	0	0	0
Dangerous by sworn evidence s31(1)(b)	3	5	20	8	4
Dangerous by owner admitting in writing s31(1)(c)	0	0	0	0	0
Total dangerous dogs	3	5	20	8	4

Number of dogs that have been classified as menacing this year (s33A and s33C):

Category	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020/2021	2019/2020
Menacing by behaviour s33A(1)(b)(i)	5	7	18	2	0
Menacing by breed characteristics s33A(1)(b)(ii)	16	16	39	19	9
Menacing by schedule 4 breed s33C(1)	6	16	0	6	14
Total menacing dogs	27	39	57	27	23

Probationary owners and disqualified owners

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

Number of dog owners prosecuted by Wellington City Council

We have two prosecutions in process this year, under section 57 of the Dog Control Act 1996.

Number of infringement notices issued

Year	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020/2021	2019/2020
Number	204	357	135	114	103



Dog related complaints

Category	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020/2021	2019/2020
Attacks on people	72	65	63	37	53
Attacks on animals	92	78	94	65	99
Barking dogs	390	446	370	527	455
Uncontrolled dogs	710	697	512	529	650
Miscellaneous	562	605	510	574	731
Total number of dog related complaints	1,826	1,891	1,549	1,732	1,988

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

Category	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020/2021	2019/2020
Challenging (dog may be on a lead but moves towards person/animal)	106	107	105	94	79
Education (giving advice to owner)	0	3	2	11	44
Fouling	20	17	29	24	50
Relinquishing a dog (handing dog over)	39	21	6	0	4
Stray pickups	354	398	385	440	544
Concerns for welfare	2	16	4	5	10
Stocks at large	41	43	50	81	41
Total	562	605	581	655	772



Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council

Me Heke Ki Pōneke