



# Annual Dog Control Report 2024-2025

September 2025

**Absolutely Positively**  
**Wellington City Council**  
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

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# 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: 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

## 2. The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practises

A review of the current Policy was undertaken during 2023/24. The Council adopted the finalised Dog Policy on 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

To clarify these changes, we also updated our website by adding images of parks, accessibility, and parking details and undertook a review of off-leash area signage for visibility and effectiveness.

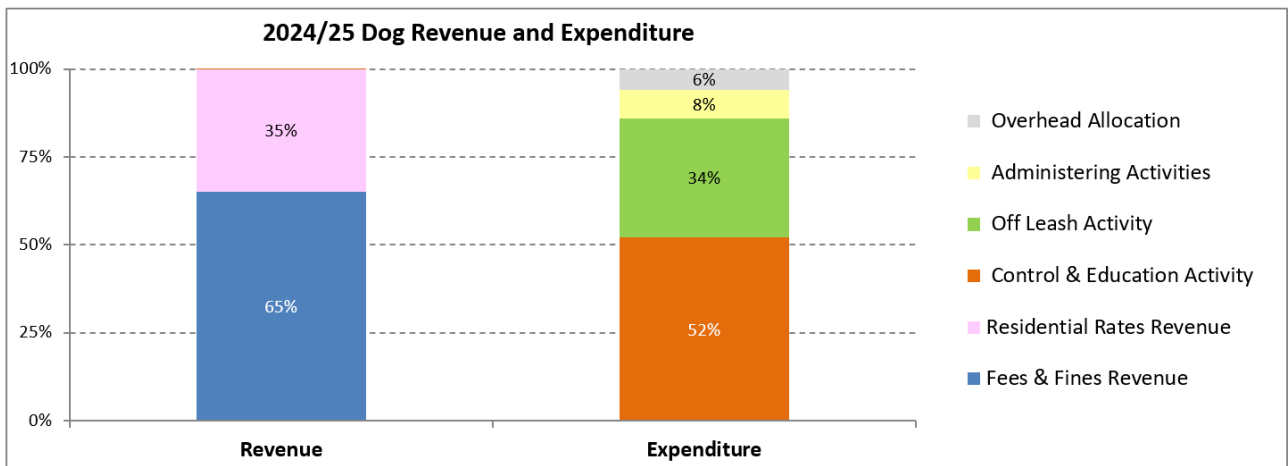
### 3. Fees

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 this year:





## 4. Animal Services team

On 28<sup>th</sup> March we launched our newly formed Animal Services team, bringing new processes, technologies and a larger team to better serve Wellington. This new team are more visible, responsive, and focused on education and proactive animal management, this new service is being delivered at a lower cost. Previously, dog control (dog compliance and enforcement) activities within Wellington city were contracted out to Hutt City Council Animal Services.

Improvements to the new Animal Services function include:

- **Increased staffing** – we added an extra officer to the team to increase our coverage of the city
- **Dedicated, localised patrol zones** – Each Animal Control Officer is assigned to their own patrol area across Pōneke. This will strengthen our ability to identify locations of interest, such as kororā nest sites and other situations where animal compliance or enforcement can help protect wildlife and indigenous biodiversity. After hours, the on-call Animal Control Officer will respond to urgent incidents such as dog attacks
- **Increased patrolling hours** – the team are now available to respond to issues at the weekend and in the summer months earlier in the morning and later in the evening when people are walking their dogs
- **After hours cover** – after hours the on-call Animal Control Officer responds to urgent incidents such as dog attacks
- **Holistic focus on animal management** (including stock and biodiversity eg native birds)
- **An increased focus on public education** – we plan to introduce a schools education programme, visiting schools across Pōneke to raise awareness with children how to behave safely around dogs

WCC's Animal Services team



## 5. 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 roaming dogs, inadequate confinement, and dogs being walked off lead.

There continues to be 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.

We have also tightened up our processes around assessing dog attacks so that there is consistency across the team when deciding when the outcome of an attack should be no further action, an infringement, a menacing or dangerous classification or a prosecution.

### Capital Kiwi

In conjunction with our urban ecology team, we continue to collaborate with Capital Kiwi and to stay aligned on our shared goals and activities around messaging around dogs in wildlife sensitive areas. Here is more information about the project:

[Home - The Capital Kiwi Project](#)

### Penguin Aversion Training

This year saw an increased focus on protecting our wildlife from dogs. In response to an increase in attacks over previous years we supported penguin aversion training. Wellington's coastline is home to many kororā (little penguins) who often choose to nest on beaches. Sadly, off leash dogs that roam the area are one of the biggest threats to these manu with far too many kororā lost to dog attacks. More details about this training programme can be found here:

[New training programme helps protect world's smallest penguin - News and information - Wellington City Council](#)

A good dog Evie at Aversion Training



## 6. Community Engagement

### Public Engagement and Events

Throughout the year, our dedicated Animal Control officers actively participated in three significant public events, fostering community awareness and promoting responsible pet ownership.

#### Open Day at Otari Wilton's Bush (September 2024)

Officers shared crucial information on the importance of keeping dogs on leads in public areas, especially in wildlife-sensitive spaces and the need for compliance with policies and bylaws related to responsible dog ownership.

#### Penguin Aversion Training (August 2024 and February 2025)

The team provided support and advice to dog owners attending the penguin aversion training course, emphasising the importance of the role dog owners must play in helping to protect our local wildlife.

#### Petone Fair (February 2024)

In collaboration with the Hutt City Animal Control team, officers focused on responsible dog ownership, offering advice on a range of dog related matters.

Animal Services at the Petone fair





## 7. Training and Education

In addition to public events, our team delivered essential training sessions to enhance community safety and professional development:

### Professional Dog Walkers Courses

- Two courses were conducted to equip professional dog walkers with the knowledge and skills needed for safe and responsible dog handling.

### Training for Workers at Risk

- Two training sessions were held for workers who may encounter dogs in their jobs, such as postmen and meter readers, ensuring they are prepared and safe in their roles.

Our commitment to community engagement and education continues to be a cornerstone of our efforts to promote responsible dog ownership and ensure the safety of both animals and people in our community.

## 8. Proactive Patrols

Animals Control Officers undertook 467 hours of proactive patrols in problem areas across Wellington. Most of these patrols are where regular reports of bylaws breaches are highlighted in shared or high use areas. For wildlife sensitive areas, rules around dogs off lead are strictly enforced and infringements issued on every occasion.

## 9. Accredited dog owners (ADOs) Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership

The Accredited Dog Owner (ADO) program is a Wellington City Council (WCC) initiative designed to encourage responsible dog ownership. It offers a discounted annual registration rate to dog owners who comply with the bylaws and the Dog Control Act 1996. Dog owners can apply for ADO status by meeting WCC criteria and submitting their application by April 30 each year.

### Qualification Process

To qualify for ADO approval, dog owners must:

- Submit an application to the council.
- Provide proof of attendance at an approved training course.
- Obtain a pass certificate upon completion of the course.
- Pass a property inspection

### Training and Education

Our Animal Services team offers a free training course aimed at educating dog owners. This 'dog-free' course covers extensive information on:

- Dog ownership and owner responsibilities.



- Wildlife-sensitive areas.
- Dog control laws and council bylaws.

During the 2024/2025 registration period, Animal Services conducted two ADO training courses:

- **August 2024:** Held at Khandallah Town Hall.
- **April 2025:** Held at Akau Tangi in Kilbirnie.

Approximately 80 people attended these courses.

- Dogs are securely contained within their property.
- Kennel and housing conditions meet WCC criteria.

## Property Inspections

Between September 2024 and May 2025, Animal Control officers carried out 134 property inspections for ADO applicants. These inspections ensure that:

- Dogs are securely contained within their property.
- Kennel and housing conditions meet WCC criteria.

Only four inspections resulted in a decline due to inadequate fencing.

## Looking Ahead

We are committed to continuing these popular courses in the future, as they receive excellent feedback from attendees. Our goal is to further promote responsible dog ownership and ensure the safety and well-being of both dogs and the community.

# 10. Dog Control Statistics

## 10.1 Total registered dogs in Wellington City

Dogs on the register for the year 2024/2025 year: **15,347**

Dogs registered for the year 2024/2025: **13,498**

It should be noted that previous reports of registered dogs have recorded *number of dogs on the register* (ie National Dog Database) rather than the *number of registered dogs*. Historically, these numbers have been different due to there being dogs on the Wellington register that should have been removed (for example when they have died or relocated to another district)

This decline in registration numbers compared to previous years is not due to a decline in dog ownership. This year the team commenced a comprehensive review of our data to ensure our records are completely up to date. This included finalising the records of dogs that have died and removing dogs that have transferred to other areas. We aim to complete this review during the 25/26 year so this discrepancy should be significantly reduced in next year's report

It should be noted that whilst dog ownership continues to rise due to population growth, the rate of growth has slowed since the post covid period.

Previous years:

Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Number	16119	15812	14260	12751

## 10.2 Dangerous and menacing dogs

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

Previous years					
Category	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Dangerous by owner conviction s31(1)(a)	0	0	0	0	0
Dangerous by sworn evidence s31(1)(b)	3	3	5	20	8
Dangerous by owner admitting in writing s31(1)(c)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total dangerous dogs</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>

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

Previous years					
Category	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Menacing by behaviour s33A(1)(b)(i)	15	5	7	18	2
Menacing by breed characteristics s33A(1)(b)(ii)	6	16	16	39	19
Menacing by schedule 4 breed s33C(1)	13	6	16	0	6
<b>Total menacing dogs</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>27</b>

### 10.3 Probationary owners and disqualified owners:

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

### 10.4 Number of dog owners prosecuted by Wellington City Council:

We have not undertaken any prosecutions this year.

### 10.5 Number of infringement notices issued:

We issued 211 infringement notices this year.

Previous years:

- 2023/24: 204
- 2022/23: 357
- 2021/22: 135
- 2020/21: 114

## 10.6 Dog related complaints:

Category	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Attacks on people	70	72	65	63	37
Attacks on animals	116	92	78	94	65
Barking dogs	402	390	446	370	527
Uncontrolled dogs	717	710	697	512	529
Miscellaneous	568	562	605	510	574
Total number of dog related complaints	1873	1826	1891	1549	1732

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

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Challenging (dog may be on a lead but moves towards person/animal)	102	106	107	105	94
Education (giving advice to owner)	69	0	3	2	11
Fouling	23	20	17	29	24
Relinquishing a dog (handing dog over)	22	39	21	6	0
Stray pickups	329	354	398	385	440
Concerns for welfare	3	2	16	4	5
Stocks at large	20	41	43	50	81
Total	568	562	605	581	655



