

Wellington City Council
**Annual Dog Control Report
2019-2020**





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 2019 to 30 June 2020.



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 17 August 2016 and also set areas where dogs can exercise off-leash.

3 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 and were increased during this year by 2.03% to reflect inflationary increases.

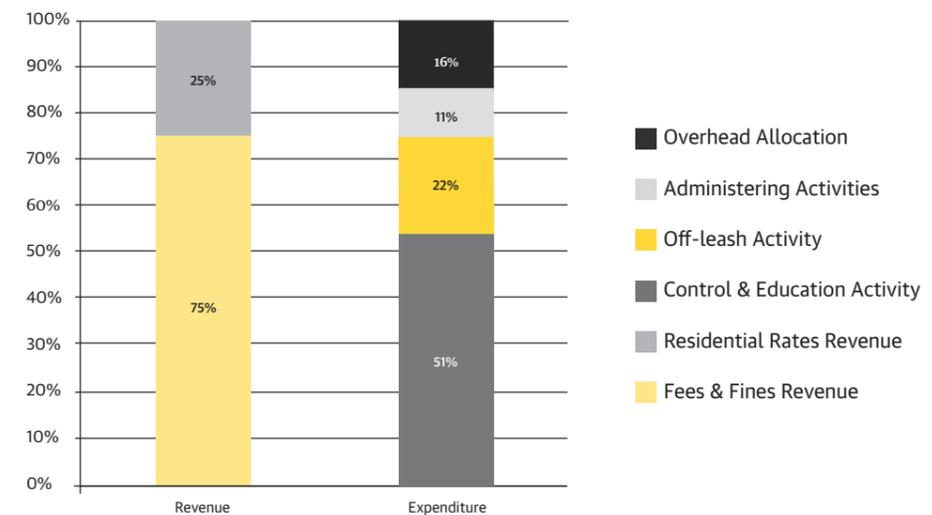
Fees are used for:

- 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:

2019/20 Dog registration - revenue and expenditure





Key achievements

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

Key achievements

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

This year's community engagement programmes organised by our animal services team received enormous support and following on social media. Dog owners and other members of the public voiced their appreciation for the team's efforts and their community work.

The team continued to be involved in community Christmas parades, dog club events, community pool events ("Dogs in Togs"), and a concert for dogs on the Wellington waterfront. We also activated our mobile pop-up display offering on-the-spot dog registration and dog training advice as well as behavioural assistance for dogs to owners.

The team continued with our dog awareness programmes through speaking to groups that interact with dogs on a daily basis such as communication providers, mobile nursing staff and other Council officers. Dog awareness training is now a key part of the health and safety programmes for these workers.

We continued with our very popular dog rehoming programme shared with Hutt City Council and have seen lots of interest on Facebook in relation to this programme. As a result, we rehomed dogs to people all over New Zealand and our profile for this programme is very high. We continue to participate in community events, educating dog owners and assisting with dog training and advice where needed, as we believe

that education is the key to gaining improved dog management and a safer, more informed community.

Patrols

Due to numerous complaints from the public about uncontrolled dogs in city reserve areas, the team put together a new patrol schedule that was trialled over the early summer period and then extended to the end of summer. This consisted of early morning and evening patrols six days a week in popular parks and reserves such as Mt Victoria, Polhill Reserve, Makara Peak, Otari-Wilton's Bush, Khandallah Park and Wellington waterfront as well as sportsfields and coastlines. Many dog owners were spoken to and educated on bylaws and issues around wildlife-sensitive areas and most of the dog owners not observing the rules received a written warning with only a few receiving an infringement.

Although patrols over the winter months continued, these started later and finished earlier due to there being fewer daylight hours to conduct the patrols. The team will be looking at repeating the early morning patrols again as we get closer to the summer months.

Responsible dog owner training

This year we organised four responsible dog owner courses in various parts of the city at:

- The ASB Centre, Kilbirnie - 55 attendees (October)
- Khandallah Town Hall - 32 attendees (November)
- Johnsonville Community Hub - 48 attendees (March)

The fourth course which was scheduled for Miramar Community Hall was cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

These training courses have been a huge hit with dog owners and the feedback has been very favourable.

The effects of COVID on our services

March, April and May 2020 were very strange months for all New Zealanders as Covid-19 hit our shores.

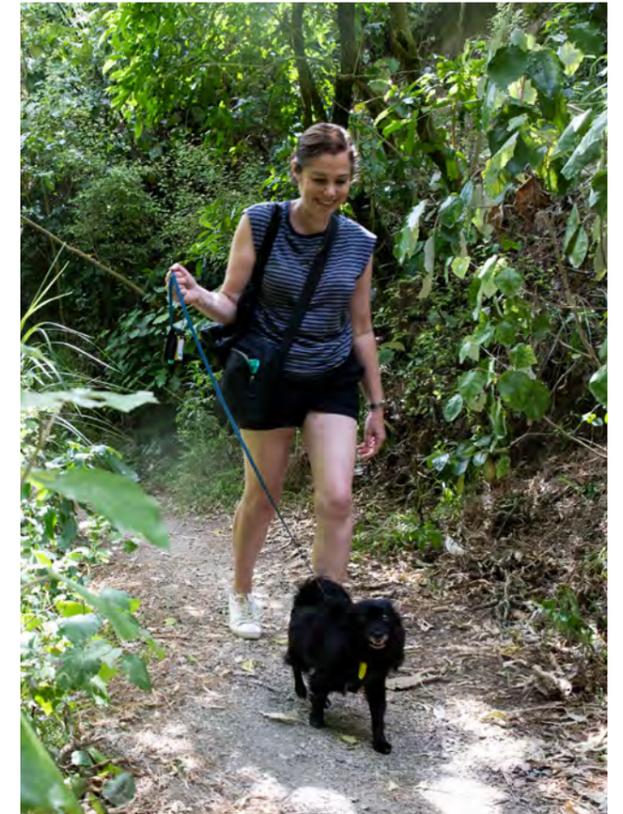
A level 4 lockdown forced all work places including Council to change the way they worked. The animal services team worked remotely from home with each officer still responding to issues in their wards but via the phone only, responding in person only to urgent or emergency calls.

Initially the workload slowed as the whole country went in to lockdown, but as walking dogs became the favoured pastime, officers became busy again with an array of bylaw breach issues. Off-lead dog attacks spiked to an unprecedented high. Thankfully most of these were minor attacks.

During levels 4 and 3 of the lockdown period officers also spent their time checking the details of around 990 microchip numbers which were not recorded on our database and updating any details that were incorrect. Many dog owners were happy to provide chip details over the phone or direct the officer to the local vet to provide. This exercise proved to be a great opportunity for dog owners to talk to animal services officers about any questions they had.

During lockdown we closed our pound at Moa Point and shared the pound facilities at Seaview with Hutt City Council. This was so we could focus on one premises and ensure that all the lockdown rules were covered. If our officers found dogs wandering the street they endeavoured to return them directly to the dog owner rather than impound them. We also registered any new dogs free of charge during the lockdown period (which was the last quarter of the registration year) - this was to ensure that we were able to enter the dog's details immediately onto the National Dogs Database.

This year our invoices were issued a month later than normal. They were sent out in June 2020 when we were in Alert Level 2. We discouraged people from queuing at the Service Centre or Moa Point to pay their invoices and promoted online payments via our website, internet banking or by cheque in the mail.



When we issued our invoices we also sent out an information sheet to all registered dog owners reminding them that our little blue penguins were starting to become braver during lockdown and were venturing out into areas normally filled with people and their dogs. We included a leaflet from *Places for Penguins* which explains how being a responsible dog owner can save the lives of our kororā.



New dog park

This year we created a new fenced dog exercise area at Mount Albert Park. The park is located off the Southern Walkway, near the junction of Volga Street and Mt Albert Road. It is popular with dog walkers, who currently have access to on-leash tracks as well as a large, unfenced off-leash area. This project provided a new area for the Southern suburbs, benefiting not only the local community but also people coming from further afield to use the park.

Neutering menacing dogs

In 2016 the Department of 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 or type listed in the Act, or if the local authority considers that the dog poses a threat to people or animals on the basis of its behaviour.

During the year we worked alongside our SPCA partners to contact the owners of menacing dogs and arrange for neutering to take place. Overall seven dogs were neutered this year under the programme.



Aerial view of Mount Albert Park

4. Dog Control Statistics

Dogs registered for the 2019/20: 12,328

Year	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016
Number	11,897	11,615	11,398	11,039

4.1 Dangerous and menacing dogs

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

Category	2019/20	Previous years			
		2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Dangerous by owner conviction S31(1)(a)	0	0	0	1	0
Dangerous by sworn evidence S31(1)(b)	4	5	1	6	5
Dangerous by owner admitting in writing S31(1)(c)	0	0	0	0	0
Total dangerous dogs classified	4	5	1	7	5

Number of dogs that have been classified as **menacing** this year (S33A and S33C):

Category	2019/20	Previous years			
		2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Menacing by behaviour S33A(1)(b)(i)	0	2	7	4	14
Menacing by breed characteristics S33A(1)(b)(ii)	9	15	0	16	23
Menacing by Schedule 4 breed S33C(1)	14	5	12	19	36
Total menacing dogs classified	23	22	19	39	73

4.2 Number of infringement notices issued:

We issued 103 infringement notices.

Previous years:.

2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016
101	110	117	125



4.2 Probationary owners and disqualified owners:

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

4.3 Number of dog owners prosecuted by Wellington City Council:

We initiated a small number of prosecutions against dog owners during this year - although none were finalised in this reporting period.

4.4 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 complaints responded to within 1 hour: 94% (the target is 100%)

The 100% target was not achieved due to our complaint logging system not relaying some complaint details through to the animal control officers - this is an intermittent issue which is being investigated. Additionally, some complaints were emailed to inboxes that are only monitored during office hours - we have now amended information on our website encouraging people to contact the Council by phone for after-hours complaints.

Category	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Attacks on people	53	56	48	39	51
Attacks on animals	99	77	80	68	73
Barking dogs	455	660	651	627	809
Uncontrolled dogs	650	731	805	775	785
Miscellaneous	731	655	783	796	1020
Total number of dog-related complaints	1988	2179	2367	2305	2378

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

Category	2019/20	2018/19	2018/19	2016/17
Challenging (dog may be on a lead but moves towards person/animal)	79	95	106	95
Education (giving advice to owner)	44	0	5	14
Fouling	50	55	32	50
Relinquishing a dog (handing dog over)	4	2	7	1
Stray pickups	544	501	632	633
Concerns for welfare	10	2	1	3
Total	731	655	783	796



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Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council

Me Heke Ki Pōneke