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# **Domestic Animal Policy**

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## 1 Introduction

This Policy has been developed to support the responsible care of animals and promote animal welfare, minimise incidents of harm and nuisance relating to domestic animals, and to aid the implementation of the Animal Bylaw. It sets out:

- the legal framework and key requirements for animal owners
- goals for animals in Wellington
- what the Council does
- where you can go for further information.

As part of the Policy the Council also has developed factsheets for pet owners, their neighbours, and Wellingtonians. They include general information for animal owners and others to look after their pets, as well as tips for people who have issues with a neighbour's pets. They also include sources of further useful information.

## 2 Legal framework

The Council adopted the revised Animal Bylaw in August 2016. Amongst other things, the Bylaw requires animal owners and people in charge of animals to:

- ensure their animal has adequate physical wellbeing through acceptable nutrition, environmental, health, behavioural stimulus, and adequate mental well-being; and
- not cause a nuisance to any other person.

These Bylaw requirements are aligned with obligations in the Animal Welfare Act 1999, which also apply to owners and persons in charge of animals.

Dogs and designated dog off-leash areas are covered separately in the Dog Policy, developed under the Dog Control Act 1996. Non-domestic animals in Wellington are largely managed through Our Natural Capital - Wellington's Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan and Greater Wellington Regional Council's Regional Pest Management Strategy.

## 3 Goals for animals in Wellington

Animals in Wellington are entitled to lead healthy and happy lives. Five domains need to be satisfied to ensure that animals are leading happy lives:

- nutrition: animals are provided with suitable nutritious food and clean water
- environment: animals have a safe home in an appropriate environment with suitable shelter
- health: animals are physically healthy and have access to veterinary care
- behaviour: animals participate in satisfying and engaging activities and play
- mental state: animals experience positive emotions.

Keeping animals in poor conditions and in unmanageable quantities can lead to animal welfare issues. This can create a wide variety of issues for communities and can also have public health impacts.

Animals that roam are more likely to be injured and could potentially cause nuisance to other people in the neighbourhood and to wildlife.

The Council strategy Our Natural Capital: Wellington's biodiversity strategy & action plan aims to protect and restore our indigenous biodiversity. To meet this aim we promote the role of responsible pet ownership in protecting wildlife in our open spaces.

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### ***Emergency preparedness***

All pet owners should make plans to care for their animals during emergencies as part of a wider household emergency plan. Animal owners should plan to have:

- at least 7 days' worth of food and water per animal and any necessary medications
- a carrier, leash or other appropriate means to transport a pet to a safe a location, in case of a need to evacuate
- a backup plan in case primary caregivers are unable to take care of animals.

The above is not an exhaustive list and will need to be tailored depending on the type of pet that an owner has.

### **4 What the Council does**

To support owners and the welfare of animals in Wellington, the Council:

- investigates and responds to public complaints and queries
- works closely with the SPCA and community partners to encourage responsible animal care
- assists animal owners to meet their responsibilities through education,
- supports the gradual reduction of stray cat numbers through humane management practices.

Under the Bylaw, the Council may seize any domestic animal (other than domestic cats) found at large and not on their owner's property. If a seized animal is unable to be returned to its owner after 7 days, the Council may sell, re-home, or otherwise dispose of the animal.

The Council will endeavour to return any seized animal to their owner, including scanning animals for microchips.

The Council works with community partners, such as the SPCA, to ensure that suitable arrangements are made for each animal.

### ***Ill-treatment of animals***

In Wellington City the SPCA enforces the Animal Welfare Act 1999. The Council endeavours to support them in this role, and may share information and resources in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993.

### ***Feral animals***

Releasing any deer, pig, goat, chamois or tahr is an offence under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977. Management of feral animals in Wellington's high native biodiversity value areas is covered by the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Regional Pest Management Strategy. For detailed information about feral animals, contact Greater Wellington Regional Council.

### **5 Further information**

Wellington City Council (2016), Wellington Consolidated Bylaw: Part 2 - Animals

Greater Wellington Regional Council, Regional Pest Management Strategy

Ministry for Primary Industries (2007), Companion Cats: Code of Welfare

National Cat Management Strategy Group (2016), Draft New Zealand National Cat Management Strategy Background Document

Biosecurity (National American Foulbrood Pest Management Plan) Order 1998

