

1. Introduction

The Wellington City Council, as a territorial authority, is required to manage and enforce provisions pursuant to the Dog Control Act 1996 and subsequent amendments in 2003, 2004 and 2006.

Section 10A 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 2006 to 30 June 2007.

2. The Council's Dog Control Policy and Practices

2.1 Policy objectives

The Council adopted a Dog Control Policy in September 2004 making provisions relating to the control of dogs in public places, which are enforceable under the Wellington City Council's Animals Bylaw.

The objectives of the policy are:

- To ensure that the owners of dogs comply with their obligations under the Act
- To prevent the danger caused by dogs to the public and to wildlife and natural habitats
- To minimise the distress and nuisance caused by dogs to the public and to wildlife and natural habitats
- To actively promote the responsible ownership of dogs
- To provide for the reasonable exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

2.2 Dog Exercise Areas

The Council provides 48 designated off-leash exercise areas across the city. Several beach exercise areas are also provided. The criteria used to determine these areas include an assessment of:

- other predominant uses
- assessment of size and access to the area
- the presence of wildlife
- consideration of lines of sight
- potential risk to other groups
- adjoining uses.

2.3 Dog prohibited areas

Dogs are prohibited from certain specified areas. In determining the levels of access for dogs, consideration is given to the intensity of public use and the associated risk posed to other groups and the public who use the area. The following criteria are used in assessing prohibited areas:

- is it a children's play area
- is it a sports field
- is it ecologically sensitive.

Regular patrols were carried out in areas where dogs are prohibited. Publicity on beach restrictions took place during October to December in 2006 to alert dog owners and the general public about variations in dog exercise areas in the summer months. Signage is installed and maintained at sensitive prohibited areas.

All of the City's parks and recreation areas were regularly patrolled by Animal Control Officers during the 2006/07 year. Particular attention was paid to the Central Business District and the City's beaches during the summer holiday season. The majority of dog owners spoken to were aware of the rules and of their obligations.

2.4 Fees

Dog registration fees, fines and impound fees are used to fund dog control in the city. A discounted dog registration fee is offered to those who register their dogs by 1 August. The Council 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.

3. Dog Control Statistics

3.1 Section 10A (2) information

The following information is required under section 10A (2) clauses a – g.

a. Number of registered dogs in Wellington

Category	2005/06	2006/07
Total number of registered dogs	8582	8558

b. Number of probationary and disqualified owners*

Category	2005/06	2006/07
Total number of probationary owners	0	0
Total number of disqualified owners	1	1

The Act allows Council Officers, under delegated authority, to classify any person as a probationary owner for a period of 24 months, or to disqualify a person from owning a dog for up to five years where, the owner has been convicted of an offence under the Act, or has received three infringement notices in 24 months.

The disqualification provision has been applied to an owner that received 11 infringements over a period of six months for failing to keep the dog on their property. The dog when not confined to the property, continually challenged members of the public compromising public safety.

c. Number of dogs classified as dangerous (Section 31)

Category	1 July 2004 - 30 June 2005	As at 1 July 2005 - 30 June 2006	1 July 2006 - 30 June 2007
Dangerous by Owner Conviction Under s31(1)(a)	0	0	0
Dangerous by Sworn Evidence s31(1)(b)	15	12	17
Dangerous by Owner Admittance in Writing s31(1)(c)	0	0	3
Total # Dangerous Dogs	15	12	20*

*Three dogs that were classified as dangerous were subsequently destroyed by either the owner or Council's Animal Control contractor after surrender of the dog to Council, during the period 01 July 2006 - 30 June 2007.

d. Number of dogs classified as menacing (Section 33A & 33C)

Category	1 July 2004 - 30 June 2005	As at 1 July 2005 - 30 June 2006	1 July 2006 - 30 June 2007
Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(i) - by Behaviour	25	44	20
Menacing under s33A(1)(b)(ii) -by Breed characteristics	0	0	45*
Menacing under s33C(1) by Schedule 4 Breed.	73	72	23*
Total # Menacing Dogs	98	116	88

*Note that in 2006-07 the Menacing classifications were updated to reflect the nature of the classification – due to the introduction of a 'dogs module' in the Council's administration software.

e. Number of infringement notices issued

Category	2005/06	2006/07
Number of infringement notices issued	415	343

f. Number of dog related complaints

Category	2005/06	2006/07
Number of dog related complaints	2404	2360
Attacks on people	47	33
Attacks on domestic animals	63	65
Challenging	93	117
Barking dogs	558	574
Bylaw (excludes roaming dogs)	38	40
Roaming dogs	1418	1351
Miscellaneous: (education / advise / breed id / beaches)	187	180

All complaints of dog aggression were investigated during the year. These are compared with previous years, as follows:

Category	1 July 2004 - 30 June 2005	As at 1 July 2005 - 30 June 2006	1 July 2006 - 30 June 2007
Rushing People	125	93	117
Domestic Animal attacked	65	63	65
Person Attacked	36	47	33
Total number of attacks	101	110	98

771 dogs were impounded in the 2006/07 period. This includes dogs roaming, captured, trapped or seized. 655 dogs were released, 78 were destroyed and 38 dogs were adopted or transferred.

g. Prosecutions

Category	2005/06	2006/07
Number of summary prosecutions	0	0

Other enforcement options were effectively employed, e.g. infringements (see number of infringements issued in e. above), meaning that summary prosecution was not required.

4. Other Information

4.1 Dog Education and Dog Obedience courses

- Education presentations were made to three Wellington schools reaching 346 children. All Wellington schools were offered a free presentation and every school was visited who had requested a visit. The remainder of the schools who accepted the offer were scheduled for visits from July 2007 onwards.
- Dog Owner Community Training was provided in November 2006 where free dog training and assessment classes were provided to 130 dog owners. An educational presence was provided at the Sevens Parade and the Cuba Street Carnival of 2007.
- A series of dog educational brochures are available and were distributed. This material is focused on bite prevention in the community.
- A copy of the Dog Control Policy and Animal Bylaw is available for every dog owner through the Council website, and information regarding Dog Exercise Areas is also available through the Council Website. A copy of the Dog Control Policy is included in every dog owner's original registration pack.