

Hutt City Council

Annual Dog Control

Report

2023–2024



1. Purpose of Report

Hutt City Council is required to manage and enforce provisions under the **Dog Control Act 1996 (the Act)** and subsequent amendments in 2003, 2004, 2006, 2010 and 2024

Section 10A of the Act requires the Council to report annually on its dog control policy and operations. This section requires the Council to report on several statistical aspects of its dog control policy and practices and to make the report publicly available.

This report fulfils the statutory requirement for dog registration year 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

2. Dog Control Policy and Practices

In May 2005 the Council adopted a Dog Policy which provides a practical framework for the care and control of dogs in the city. The policy was revised in 2015, and the Council adopted the final Dog Policy on 15 December that year. The policy and its amendments are enforceable under the HCC Bylaw 2015 effective 8 February 2016.

The Hutt City Council Dog Control Bylaw 2015 (Part 4 – Dog Control) recognises that most dog owners in Hutt City are responsible and that most interaction between dogs and the public is positive.

The Hutt City Animal Dog Control Bylaw 2015 was amended on 28th May 2024 to include prohibiting dogs from Bird Protection Areas (BPAs) at Sorrento Bay, Whiorau Reserve, CL Bishop Park and HW Shortt Park. The Bird Protection Areas were required to be established part of the consent conditions for the Tupua Horo Nuku project which is a 4.4km seawall and shared path along Marine Drive between Ngau Matau (Point Howard) and Eastbourne.

The creation of the BPAs requires new fencing and signage to inform the public of the new restrictions. Increased patrols by Animal Control Officers will occur once all the fencing and signage is completed.

It also gives legal powers to enforce the bylaw and determines requirements for keeping dogs in a way that:

- protects the public from nuisance
- maintains and promotes public health and safety

- safeguards the welfare of animals

3. Animal Services Teams

- a) The Hutt City Council Animal Services Team serves Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai / Lower Hutt and Moa Point, and has since 2012 delivered animal services functions for Wellington City Council under contract.
- b) The Lower Hutt team comprises of a Team Leader, a Principal Animal Control Officer, a Senior Animal Control Officer, 3 Animal Control Officers and a Shelter Officer. They are based at 21 Meachen Street, Seaview.
- c) The Hutt City Animal Administration team comprises of a Team Leader, two full-time administrators, a part-time administrator, and a casual administrator employed for the re-registering of dogs.
- d) The Wellington team consists of a Team Leader, a Senior Animal Control Officer and three Animal Control Officers. They are based at the Moa Point Shelter.
- e) Hutt City Council has a memorandum of understanding with Upper Hutt City Council which gives UHCC Animal Control Officers access to the Seaview shelter to house its dogs which are seized after hours. All veterinary, sustenance, shelter and other services are charged back to UHCC.

4. Fees

Dog registration fees and impound fees contribute approximately 70% to the cost of dog control in Lower Hutt. Dog registration fees are set by Council resolution and were increased from the 1st July, 2024. A standard dog registration fee increased from \$168 to \$178 (3.57%) to reflect inflationary increases.

Dog registration fees cover a range of different services that allow us to provide a safe and healthy community for all residents and dogs. The fee increase was necessary in order for us to deliver various services that include:

- promoting care and control of over 12,000 dogs in Lower Hutt
- patrolling public areas and enforcement of the Dog Control Bylaw
- encouraging responsible dog ownership – we have over 1,600 dog owners with Responsible Dog Owner status in Lower Hutt
- maintaining national dog database records
- responding to public inquiries about dogs – [Report a problem](#)

- providing education to schools and other groups free of charge
- maintaining dog parks and off-leash exercise areas including the Les Dalton Dog Park

Our fees are set in accordance with Section 37 of the Dog Controls Act 1996 and are available for public submissions before being considered and ratified by the Council ([Section 37: Dog Control Act 1996](#)).

The Council's Responsible Dog Owner scheme provides a discounted rate for dog owners who meet the relevant criteria.

The current year fees can be found here: [Fees and Charges](#)

After a procurement process, after-hours urgent requests were contracted to Armourguard Ltd from the 15 May 2024. They respond to requests from 5pm to 8am weekdays, weekends and public holidays. Urgent requests cover attacks on animals or people, aggressive roaming dogs, dogs secured by members of the public, and dogs on roadways impacting traffic.

Hutt City Council is contracted to manage the operations of WCC's animal management functions, and has a team of five ACOs based at Moa Point Animal Control Shelter.

5. Key achievements

The Animal Services team has officers dedicated to six city wards which allow for the officers to interact with dog owners and the public in those areas. By having the local knowledge of each ward, the officers can respond to complaints and requests for service in a very timely way.

SPCA was hosted at the Seaview pound for their annual de-sexing clinic. 36 dogs were desexed and an additional 12 vouchers were given to owners unable to be accommodated during the clinic.

A new co-operative initiative has been launched with SPCA to specifically target de-sexing dogs to reduce the number of dogs resulting in unwanted litters, straying, and aggressive behaviours from some un-desexed dogs in the community. These un-desexed dogs often have poor welfare outcomes, and there can be a risk to the public's safety. Desexing has been proven to improve these outcomes and encourage responsible pet ownership.

Animal Services was consulted on the establishment of Bird Protection Areas under the Tupua Horo Nuku project, and has worked with the project team on ensuring signage is updated and installed. As each Bird Protection area is completed, Animal Control officers will increase monitoring. An education approach will be taken with flyers handed out to dog owners. After a period of monitoring results this may then move to warnings and/or infringements for breeches.

6. Rehoming programme

Officers continue to run a very successful rehoming programme for Wellington and the Hutt Valley. The [Animal Services Hutt City](#) Facebook page is well-received nationwide and has a huge following of almost 16,000 followers. Dogs are rehomed throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, and are carefully assessed to ensure their suitability for adoption.

Nine dogs were re-homed, and 17 dogs were transferred to either SPCA, HUHA or Ellies Rescue in 2023-2024.

Hutt City Council officers have run workshops for other Animal Control Officers in the Wellington region, sharing their knowledge on temperament testing and re-homing practice. They have recently been invited to present a training workshop at the Annual General meeting and Training Conference for NZIAM.

7. Community engagement

Animal Control Officers continue to build positive relationships with our dog owners, which includes dog behavioural and training advice via home visits on requests.

Due to the increase in people walking their dogs, there has been an increase in dog roaming, threatening behaviour and attack reports which kept our Animal Control Officers very busy.

Animal Control Officers continue providing an education programme to schools on dog bite prevention and training for those persons who interact with dogs during their day-to-day work out in the community.

Animal Control Officers attended workshops to learn and practice skills in conjunction with the SPCA and HUHA, creating emergency animal shelters.

Our online registration system for new and previously registered dogs has received positive feedback as simple and effective to use. There has been good increase in update of electronic invoicing.

We will continue with our mobile phone text alerts to dog owners for registration reminders, river algae warnings in the summer months, and any 1080 operations by the Department of Conservation.

Hutt City Council has 45 Dog Bag Dispenser Locations around Hutt City to keep our city free from dog “land mines”.

Animal Control Officers represented Animal Services at the Hutt City Council stalls at the Petone Rotary Fair and Te Whiti Park events.

8. Dog Welfare

We have responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 1996 to ensure that all dogs are cared for and provided with the necessities at all times.

We work alongside SPCA and HUHANZ officers in most cases to ensure that dogs are receiving the care required and, in some cases, will seize those dogs where owners have failed to adhere to warnings previously.

9. Responsible dog owner ([How to be a responsible dog owner](#))

You will be recognised as a responsible dog owner (RDO) if you meet the following conditions and requirements:

- your annual dog registration fees are paid on time
- your dog has free access to a fully enclosed containment area on your property (this doesn't have to be a fully fenced garden or yard)
- in the last year, your dog has not been impounded, been the subject of a substantiated public complaint, or received an infringement notice
- you have not received any convictions under the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw: Part 2 – Animals; the Dog Control Act 1996; or the Animal Welfare Act 1999

Where you can take your dog to exercise (See all [Dog exercise areas](#))

In designated dog exercise areas, your dog doesn't need to be on a lead but you need to have one with you. Even when you're exercising off-lead, you must keep your dog under control at all times.

In public places, your dog needs to be on a lead.

If you're taking your dog out in public, it's your responsibility to clean up after it. Used litter bags can be placed in public rubbish bins on the street.

Where you can't take your dog (See all [Prohibited Areas](#))

Unless your dog is a guide dog, hearing ear dog, companion dog, or a working dog being used by the police or a security company, you can't take your dog to:

- public libraries
- playgrounds
- council swimming pools
- kindergartens and play centres
- marked sports fields
- special events, where advertised

Microchipping is enforced. ([Dog Control Act 1996 Section 36A](#))

Dog registration and microchipping are not the same thing: You must register your dog each year, but you only need to microchip your dog once.

Microchipping is a simple procedure. A microchip is a tiny chip with a unique ID number that is inserted into your dog's neck. It only takes seconds to insert. The chip can then be scanned at vet clinics and animal shelters to identify your dog.

All new puppies and any dogs registered from 1 July 1996 (except working farm dogs) in Aotearoa New Zealand for the first time must be microchipped within two months of being registered.

139 dog owners were sent infringement notices in 2023-2024.

10. Dog Control Statistics 2023/2024

Dogs registered for the year:

10,369

Probationary owners and disqualified owners:

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

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

5

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

By deed - 29

By breed -16

The number of infringement notices issued:

- We have issued 191 infringement notices for either breeches of the Animal Control act or Hutt City animal control bylaws
- 139 infringements were issued for failing to microchip
- 877 dog owners outstanding registration fees were sent to debt collection

Dog related complaints

Complaint	Total
Barking dogs	711
Dogs attacking people	124
Dogs attacking animal	108
Dogs threatening	221
Uncontrolled dogs	1238
Roaming dogs	712
Lost dogs	202
Found dogs	278
Total	3,594

Miscellaneous	Total
Roaming Stock	53
Dogs returned to owner	253
Welfare Investigations	79
Microchipping	114
Boarding dogs	32
Adoptions	8

Transferred to another TA	17
Impounded dogs	423
Total	979

Number of owners prosecuted by Hutt City Council

Hutt City Council completed a prosecution against a dog owner for breach of section 57(2) of the Dog Control Act 1996 Dog Attacks a Domestic Animal and a breach against section 33EC(1) of the Dog Control Act for failing to comply with the effects of a menacing dog classification. The owner pleaded guilty on both charges, and was convicted and discharged on both charges. An order for destruction was sought by Council, however this was unsuccessful in court.

The same defendant is currently up on two additional charges against 57(2) and 32(2) (failing to comply with the effects of a dangerous dog classification). These charges were laid in May 2024, and currently has a hearing on 2/10/24.

11. Appendices

None

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