Hutt City Council

Annual Dog Control Report (2025/26)



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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 2025 to 30 June 2026.

2. Dog Control Policy and Practices

The Council adopted a Dog Policy and Dog Control Bylaw in May 2005 which provides a practical framework for the care and control of dogs in the city. It is revised every 10 years.

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

- encourages responsible dog ownership and support the needs of dog owners, and
- supports the right for people to move freely around the city without experiencing danger, distress, or nuisance from dogs.

In 2025 Council reviewed and updated the Dog Control Policy and the Dog Control Bylaws.

Key changes include:

- A license requirement for commercial dog walkers in the Bylaw.
- A limit of four dogs under one person's control in public spaces, as outlined in the Bylaw (this does not apply to commercial dog walkers with demonstrated experience); and
- Updated summertime restrictions in the Bylaw regarding dog access to certain beaches (using specified dates rather than the more ambiguous 'daylight saving' - i.e. 1 December to 31 March).
- Provision of additional dog exercise areas and improvements to maps showing dog exercise / parks and prohibited areas.

Full details can be found on the Hutt City website: [Dog laws in Lower Hutt | Hutt City Council]

2.1. Dog Control Policy and Practices

The Hutt City Dog Control Bylaw 2015 was amended on 28th of May 2024 to prohibit 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 4.4-kilometre seawall and shared path along Marine Drive between Ngau Matau (Point Howard) and Eastbourne.

3. Animal Services Teams

a) Animals Services is based at 21 Meachen Street, Seaview. The team comprises of;
   - Manager of Animal Services
   - Animal Control Officer Team Leader
   - Principal Animal Control Officer
   - Senior Animal Control Officer (part time)
   - 3 Animal Control Officer
   - Kennel Officer
   - Administration Team Leader
   - 1 Administrator
   - 2 Administrators (part-time)
   - Casual administrator employed for the re-registering of dogs

b) Hutt City 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 60% to 79% to the cost of dog control as set out in HCC Revenue and Financing Policy Dog registration fees are set by Council resolution and were increased from the 1st of July 2025.

- The registration fee for de-sexed dogs paid before the 31st of July 2025 of $133 and was not increased from 2024/2025.

- The registration fee for an entire dogs increased from $174 to $189 to reflect inflationary increases and the impact of entire dogs on the production of unwanted puppies, roaming and aggressive behaviour.

- The 2025/26 fees are shown in the following table:

Entire dog	$189
De-sexed dog	$133
Responsible dog Ownership	$90
Classified dangerous	$220
Disability / Services dogs	$ zero
Working Dog	$90

The current year fees (2026/2027) can be found here: Fees and Charges

How fees are used

Dog registration fees cover a range of different services that allow us to provide a safe and healthy community for all residents and dogs.

- promoting care and control of over 10,000 dogs in Lower Hutt
- patrolling public areas and enforcement of the Dog Control Bylaw
- encouraging responsible dog ownership - we have over 1,500 dog owners with Responsible Dog Owner status in Lower Hutt
- maintaining national dog database records
- administration associated with registering dogs and other services.
- operation of Animal Shelter at Seaview, Petone
- maintaining a livestock paddock for impounded animals.
- 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.
- Training for staff to respond in natural disasters to animal welfare emergencies.
- Re-homing suitable dogs after completion of temperament and behaviour testing
- Providing dog poo dispensers and signage

- Enforcement action under the Dog Control Act 1996 and the HuttCity By-law 2025 including impounding, classification of dogs and prosecutions.

  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 also operates a responsible dog owner scheme which provides a discounted rate for dog owners who meet the relevant criteria.

  Hutt City Council has an Animals Service Manager, 6 ACOs, 2 full-time Administrative Staff members, 2 part-time administration officers, and 1 full-time Kennel Officer.

  The Officers are responsible for dog control activities throughout the Hutt City precinct.

  After hours urgent requests are contracted to Amourguard Ltd. They respond to requests from 5pm to 8am on weekdays, weekends and on 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.

5. Key achievements

The animal services team has officers dedicated to 6 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 manner.

Hutt City Animals Services provides free dog de-sexing through SPCA voucher system. This is to specifically target de-sexing dogs to reduce the number of dogs resulting in unwanted litters, straying, and aggressive behaviors from entire dogs in the community.. The partnership involved HCC Animal Control officers targeting specific dog owners whose dogs had been causing complaints or the owners faced financial difficulties preventing them getting their dogs de-sexed.

The Commercial Dog walking license became fully operational with companies becoming fully licensed to have more than 4 dogs under their control. The license sets standards in regard to knowledge and compliance with the Dog Control act

and Hutt City bylaws, minimizing the impact of walking packs on other users of public spaces and supporting best practice in terms of dog welfare.

6. Roaming and Dog attacks

During early 2026, Hutt City Animal Services trialled proactive after-hours roaming dog patrols focused on identified hotspot locations. The patrols operated during evenings and weekends and used GPS-based complaint data and officer intelligence to target areas with elevated roaming dog activity. The initiative attracted positive media coverage and demonstrated a proactive approach to addressing roaming dog concerns. While roaming complaints remained a challenge, the patrol operation formed part of wider improvements in dog control outcomes and provided valuable intelligence on roaming dog behaviour. The results were considered sufficiently positive for management to explore future targeted proactive patrol operations.

7. Rehoming program

Officers continue to run a very successful rehoming program. The Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/AnimalServicesHCC is well-received and has a huge following of almost 17,000 followers. Dogs are rehomed throughout New Zealand. Dogs are carefully assessed to ensure their suitability for adoption.

In 2025/2026
171 dogs were returned to their owners
15 dogs were re-homed through HCC adoption programme
29 dogs were transferred to either SPCA, HUHA or other organisations for adoption.

8. 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 request.

A “Cheap as Chips” discount was offered to all dogs that have not already been microchipped, for a discounted fee, to encourage compliance.

A new online “change you details” form was launched in May 2026. It covers changing ownership, contact details, leaving Lower Hutt or NZ, updating

microchip number, updating de-sex details and advising when you dog has passed away. This lets dog owners submit all the information and documents on one form saving time and stress.

The popular newsletter to dog owners is its second year. It features advice for dog owners, recent dog adoptions and events.

Animals Services has a vet partnership with CareVets Wainuiomata and Valley Cottage Vets, Stoke Valley. Certificates for vaccination, de-sexing and when dogs pass away are shared with Council. This ensures certificates do not go missing making it easier for dog owners when registering their dogs. It also supports dog owners during the difficult time when their dog has passed away.

Animal Services has supported the penguin diversion training offered by Willy Marsh from Kiwi Avoidance Training for the second year running. This training is well recognised as being highly effective in reducing the risk of dog attacks on Kororā (Little Blue Penguin).

9. Community engagement (cont.)

Animal Control Officers continue providing an education program to schools and organisations on dog bite prevention.

- 1290 School children over 9 schools
- 2 library talks
- New Zealand Post and Kianga Ora staff
- One special session for school kid with neuro-divergent needs

Our online registration system for new and previously registered dogs is continuing to be the most popular method for dog owners to receive their invoices.

We will continue with our cell 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.

10. Dog Welfare

We have responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 1996 to ensure all dogs receive proper care and attention and is supplied with proper and sufficient food, water, and shelter

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.

SPCA have new powers regarding dogs being tethered or chained up. Animal Control Officers work directly with SPCA Officers to report any cases of this happening and provide relevant information so action can be taken.

11. Responsible dog owner (How to be a responsible dog owner)

The Responsible Dog Ownership application process was made easier for dog owners. This recognises the majority of Hutt City Dog owners care and take responsibility for their dogs.

There is now an online questionnaire to complete. A property inspection and a demonstration may be required if an Animal Control Officer deems it necessary.

Additionally, as a responsible dog owner (RDO) you are to meet the following conditions and requirements:

- Your dog is vaccinated and microchipped.
- 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 Hutt City Council Dog Control By-law 2025, the Dog Control Act 1996; or the Animal Welfare Act 1999.
- Your dog has been registered with HCC for at least 1 year.

12. 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-leash, 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.

13. 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.

14. Microchipping is enforced. (Dog Control Act 1996 Section 36A)

Dog registration and microchipping are not the same things. 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 New Zealand for the first time must be microchipped within two months of being registered.

15. Dog Control Statistics 2024/2025

Dogs registered for the year:

- 8258 as of 1 September 2026

Active dogs recorded with Hutt City Council

- 9928 as of 1 September 2026

16. Probationary owners and disqualified owners

No Probationary owners

Disqualifications

- A dog owner was disqualified for 5 years under S58 Dogs causing serious injury. The owner pleaded guilty and was convicted. The dog was surrendered by the owner, and it was destroyed.

- A dog owner was disqualified for 5 years. After committing 3 separate infringement offences within a 24-month period

17. Dogs that have been classified as dangerous (S31 Dog Control Act 1996)

- Under Section a: 0
- Under Section b: 3
- Under Section c: 8

18. Total number of dogs that have been classified as menacing (S33A and S33C)

- By deed: 11
- By breed: 60

19. The number of infringement notices issued

- 856 - S42 Failure to register Dog
- 203 – failure to implant micro chip
- 54 – Other offences

20. Other Matters

1190 dog owners with outstanding registration fees were sent to debt collection.

21. Dog related complaints

On the 1st of October Hutt City council moved to a new reporting system which allows the public to accurately GPS locate where the complaint occurred. This enables Animal Services to identity hotspots and target resources more effectively.

Complaint	Total	Change from 2024/2025
Barking dogs	634	+70
Dogs attacking people	84	-24
Dogs attacking animal	88	-30
Dogs threatening	104	-108
Uncontrolled dogs	1352	+100
Roaming dogs	781	-7
Lost dogs	216	+24
Found dogs	303	+25

Miscellaneous	Total
Roaming Stock	31
Dogs returned to owner	168
Welfare Investigations	65
Microchipping	78
Adoptions	14
Transferred to other adoption agency	29
Impounded dogs	395

22. Prosecutions by Hutt City Council

Probationary Owners	0
Disqualified owners	2
Prosecutions carried over from 2025/2026	1
Prosecutions this financial year*	1
Number of appeals	0

*Hutt city Council completed a prosecution against a dog owner for breach of section 58 “Dog causing serious injury” of the Dog Control Act 1996. The owner pleaded guilty and was convicted. The dog was surrendered by the owner, and it was destroyed.

Author: Justin Roberts

Head of Environmental Protection



Approved By: Andrea Blackshaw
Director of Environmental and Sustainability