

20 July 2023

Peter Pointon

§ 7(2)(a)

Susan Sales

Senior Advisor Official Information and Privacy
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Our reference: LGOIMA

Dear Peter

Request for Information – Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA)

We refer to your official information request dated 27 June 2023.

You have asked for information about dog registrations, for the year ending 31 March 2022. The information you have requested is provided below.

1. *What was the total revenue collected from dog registration fees for the year and was this adequate to meet all outgoing costs and investment?*

Dog registration fees start on the 1 July and end on 31 June each year. The total dog registration fees revenue for the year-ending 31 June 2022 was \$1,231,611.74

2. *What was the balance of the account at year end?*

The total operating expenditure from dog registration fees each year is 100%, the shortfall is covered by a mix of ratepayer, subsidies grants and other funding with registration fees making up the bulk of the funding.

3. *How many dogs are registered to the HCC?*

In 2021/22, 12,906 dogs were registered.

During each year these numbers increase/decrease due to several reasons, e.g. dogs that die/go missing, owners getting new dogs, dog owners moving in or out of the city, etc.

4. *What is your estimate of un-registered dogs in the city?*

We are unable to estimate the number of unregistered dogs, as people (and their dogs) move in and out of our city daily. Unregistered dogs only come to the Council's Animal Services attention when they receive a complaint, pick up a roaming dog while patrolling, or when dog owners apply to register their dogs for the first time etc.

5. *What is the number/% of owners that pay the fee?*

The number changes daily as dog owners pay their fees at different times during the year. The number of debtors we sent through to debt recovery for collection in February 2023 for unregistered dogs was 798.

6. *What action is taken against those that do not re-register their dog?*

Before 1 July 2021, only infringement notices were issued to those that didn't register or re-register their dog(s). Those who didn't re-register their dog(s) before 1 July 2022 and 1 July 2023 are handed over to a debt recovery agency after they have received two reminder invoices.

Dogs may be seized and impounded when dog owners refuse to pay their dog registration fees.

7. *How many dogs were impounded over the last year and what happened to these dogs?*

Between 1 July 2021 and 31 June 2022, 300 dogs were impounded.

Between 1 July 2022 and 31 June 2023, 423 dogs were impounded.

Dogs are impounded for several reasons, e.g. aggressive dogs (attacking people/other dogs), roaming dogs, nuisance dogs (continues barking/howling), etc. Most dogs are returned to dog owners, and some dogs are rehomed. Aggressive dogs and dogs that are not suitable to be rehomed get euthanised.

8. *What was the overall costs of dog patrols over the last year and are their suburbs that require a higher level of patrols? (Cost and % of budget)*

Dog patrols, responding to public inquiries about dogs, impounding wandering dogs, and investigating dog attacks, are not recorded separately. However, different areas, e.g., Petone Beach, Hutt River Bank, Avalon Park, Muritai Beach, Days Bay Beach, Williams Park, etc. require different levels of patrols.

No area can be singled out as dog owners from different parts of the Wellington region take their dogs for exercise in our area.

9. *How many dog education sessions were provided to schools? What other groups receive free dog education sessions?*

Between 1 July 2021 and 31 June 2022, there weren't any dog education sessions due to COVID restrictions that were in place, especially from August 2021. However, 42 welfare visits were undertaken by Animal Control Officers.

Between 1 July 2022 and 31 June 2023, 49 educational sessions and 70 welfare visits were undertaken.

10. *What is the total cost (and % of budget) of signage and advertising on dog related issues?*

The total cost of signage and advertising was \$8,559 (0.69%).

11. *What is the cost of the excellent dog poo bag scheme?*

We have spent \$23,931.55 for the 1 July 2022 to 31 June 2023 period of the bag scheme.

12. How many instances of legal action were taken over the last year and how many of these actions resulted in a successful outcome for the council? What was the total cost of these actions?

Legal action comes in different forms, including infringement notices, disqualifications, dog classifications, and court action. We advise that the following action was taken in the last year:

- Infringement Notices issued = 306
- Disqualifications = 0
- Dog classifications = 27
- Court action = 1 - There was no additional cost to the legal action that was taken in this instance.

13. After evaluating the 2022 'dog service programme' what (if any) changes/initiatives has the council implemented in 2023?

We introduced the debt collection process for those dog owners who did not pay for their dogs' registrations.

The Saber portal was also introduced. Dog owners can now register on the Saber portal (the same way as ratepayers do) to check their dog fee balances.

Thank you for your suggestion of 28 June 2023 that the information we have supplied above be made available publicly. We will take your suggestions in consideration when we send out our next registration flyer. Meanwhile, our response to your information request will be published on Hutt City Council's website, so will be available publicly through that platform.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



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