

4. DOG BIN TRIALS

Officer responsible Parks and Waterways Manager	Author Rodney Chambers, DDI 941-7540
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The purpose of this report is to inform the Council on the recent dog bin trial and to make recommendations for future use of these bins.

INTRODUCTION

The Parks and Waterways Unit provides a number of styles of bins to encourage dog owners to pick up their dogs' droppings. A new style is currently being marketed in New Zealand by Mr Stephen Visser.

The Visser, 'Dog Duty Stations' have been on trial at four coastal locations since July 2002, at:

- Larnach Street beach access, Broad Park
- New Brighton, in the south car park
- Cave Rock, Sumner
- Head Street, Sumner

This trial was carried out to see if this style increased the compliance rate of dog owners to pick up their dogs' droppings as these areas all had a history of complaints about dog fouling.

BACKGROUND

Dog fouling has long been recognised by city parks staff in general, and by coastal beach parks managers, in particular, as being a major source of complaints and dissatisfaction for beach and park users. Past 'doggie' bin designs that identified the issue of fouling to dog owners had proven to be insufficiently robust to withstand vandalism and new ideas to deal with the problem were being canvassed.

'Dog Duty Stations' were chosen for trial in response to an approach made by Mr Visser, who had seen the product in use in Europe and was keen to market a tool to deal with the problem he also recognised in Christchurch. The 'Dog Duty Stations' provide functional biodegradable paper bag poop scoops, and a bin for their disposal. The metal construction means they are some what resistant to vandalism such as fires and impact. The supply of paper bags helps to set an example of sustainability by reducing the amount of non-biodegradable material going to landfill.

SUPPLY AND COSTS

The promoter, Stephen Visser, has the New Zealand licence for the dog duty stations trialed. The units are made locally in Christchurch and are being marketed to the rest of the country and Australia.

Cost of trial, 2002/2003

Purchasing dog duty stations x 4 units (at \$1,275 each)	\$5,100
In the first 12 months of operation, the four bins have used 33,840 poop scoop bags	\$7,791
The service contract for four bins will cost (estimate)	\$4,000
Total	\$16,891
Ongoing cost of annual contract for four bin service:	\$11,791

Projected asset life (harsh coastal sites) five years before replacement or refurbishment of bins required due to rust.

Servicing the bins is presently being funded out of the Coast Care operating budget but this cost can not readily be sustained from present levels of operational funding.



Dog duty station

RESULTS

It is difficult to quantitatively measure if the dog duty stations actually increased the pick up rate of dog droppings. However, due to their high profile locations, staff feel the awareness of dog fouling has been increased. Qualitatively the feedback on the stations has been positive, with some comments suggesting a perceived reduction in the level of fouling in the vicinity of the units and clearly showing an appreciation by the public that the Council is actively doing something to reduce dog fouling. Letters and personal comments have been received from:

- Shirley Fairhall, Sumner Residents' Association, July 2003
- Jean Bagrie, New Brighton Residents' Association (Inc), 11 February 2003
- Tania Hartland, 19 May 2003

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- Initially, the door hinges rusted very quickly. Manufacturers replaced these with stainless steel hinges, and no further problems were encountered.
- One purposely lit fire resulted in some minor damage but the unit still remained operational.
- Minor graffiti on some of the bins. Still readable. Stickers can be replaced.
- To be effective, the stations need to be highly visible. This can detract from the park or garden landscape.

OTHER BINS

Other styles of dog bins, are installed at other sites and dog exercise areas around the city including, The Groynes, Styx Mill and Victoria Park. They are cheap to run, and work well in these areas. Some have been modified to include holders which can store bags, usually recycled plastic bread or shopping bags. The plastic 'doggie' bin units are however not as practical in high profile public areas prone to vandalism, and due to their shape, their purpose is easily identified.

These plastic styles do have a lower purchase cost and lower maintenance costs.



CONCLUSION

The current styles are satisfactory in most local situations. Given this, the problems outlined above and the cost implications, dog duty stations cannot be recommended for wide use.

- Recommendation:**
1. That existing dog duty stations be retained and maintained.
 2. That dog duty stations be installed where they can do the most good, in high use, high profile sites, and areas where there is a history of complaints, eg Sumner Foreshore.
 3. That ongoing servicing costs be incorporated in the contract budgets.
 4. That consideration be given to installing further dog duty stations at other high use sites depending on need and budget availability.
 5. That additional information be provided to owners on the hazards of dog fouling to encourage the removal of dog droppings from public places.
 6. That opportunities be pursued to fund units through appropriate commercial sponsorship.