

Hon Meka Whaitiri

MP for Ikaroa-Rāwhiti

Minister of Customs
Minister for Veterans

Associate Minister of Agriculture (Animal Welfare)
Associate Minister of Statistics



MINOIA21-0022

03 MAY 2021

Barry Garrick
fyi-request-14826-8fe2b172@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Barry

Thank you for your email of 3 March 2021 requesting advice I have received regarding animal welfare in zoos. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested the following:

What advice have you received on animal welfare in zoos? I would like to request any advice you have received.

To date, I have not received any advice on animal welfare in zoos, therefore your request is declined under section 18(g) of the OIA - as the information requested is not held by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

*Are you satisfied with the level of care NZ zoos provide to their animals?
Please advise why or why not?*

People responsible for the welfare of animals in zoos (including animal parks and aquariums, and wild animals held for rehabilitation) need to comply with the general provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act), and the minimum standards in the code of welfare for zoos.

The Act is the principal legislation on animal welfare in New Zealand and requires owners and people responsible for animals to ensure that the animals' physical, health, and behavioural needs are met, and that appropriate treatment is provided for any ill or injured animals under their care. Failure to meet these requirements is an offence under the Act.

This Act enables me to issue codes of welfare which include rules that people must follow to make sure that the needs of their animals are met. All codes of welfare are available on the MPI website: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/animals/animal-welfare/codes/all-animal-welfare-codes/>.

The Act is enforced by animal welfare inspectors from MPI and the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). It provides powers for these inspectors to execute search warrants, investigate offences under the Act,

and seize or take custody of animals that are suffering unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress.

My officials have advised that MPI holds compliance records from 2017 when a new data system was introduced, through to the current time. MPI has received 14 complaints in total from 2017 through to March 2021 regarding the welfare of animals in New Zealand zoos. Of these 14 complaints, eight were unsubstantiated upon investigation, three were not determined an animal welfare issue and were resolved by treatment or procedure, one was administratively resolved and the remaining two were transferred to SPCA New Zealand. The nature of these two complaints sat within the responsibility of the SPCA, as per the understanding between MPI and SPCA.

I have confidence in MPI's and SPCA's ability to enforce compliance with animal welfare obligations under the Act.

Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with my office. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143 or at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



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