

Report on Animal Advocacy Hui held on 8 June 2018

Introduction

A hui for animal advocacy groups and individuals was held at Manurewa Marae in South Auckland on 8 June 2018. The hui was called for by Hon Meka Whaitiri, Associate Minister of Agriculture, with responsibility for animal welfare. The objective was to give animal advocates an opportunity for direct and open dialogue with the Minister, and for them to hear from Government coalition partners.

Attendees

109 individuals registered their interest in attending the hui and 66 people arrived on the day. Of the 66 people in attendance, 37 took the opportunity to speak. A full list of attendees is attached as Appendix 1.

Opening addresses

Minister Whaitiri welcomed attendees and stated that the hui was an opportunity to build relationships between animal advocate groups and the coalition Government. The Minister acknowledged that the animal welfare sector presents a range of interests that she has to take into account, and the hui was about the attendees' views and priorities.

Mark Patterson MP touched on his background in farming and community rodeos. He addressed his thoughts around the dialogue between advocates and industry, and the differences he notices between private conversations and what is said to the media and on social media.

Gareth Hughes MP covered issues with rodeos, greyhound racing, mislabelling of free range eggs, the Out of Labs re-homing petition, and farrowing crates. He stated his goal to work confidently with coalition partners to deliver the best outcomes for animals.

Grant Shackell, chair of the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee (NAEAC) and member of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) acknowledged different views on animals, and spoke briefly about the work of the independent ministerial advisory committees.

Issues raised by attendees

All attendees were given the opportunity to speak at the hui. Some themes arising from the presentations are outlined below.

- Urging for the establishment of an independent commissioner for animals, and/or NAWAC and NAEAC better representing the views of animal advocacy groups.
- Improving transparency from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), NAWAC, NAEAC and animal-based industries.

- New Zealand needing to move away from animal-based industries for the benefit of animals, the environment and human health—with Government providing financial and psycho-social support for farmers to make the transition.
- Addressing the culture of treating animals as disposable.
- Improving the codes of welfare so they work better across all species and types of animal use.
- Needing to address the issue that some types of animal use will always be unacceptable.
- The need for better resourcing, for actions and initiatives on the ground, animal shelters, and government, to improve animal welfare.

Specific animal issues raised included:

- *Intensive farming*: lameness in meat chickens; use of farrowing crates in the pig industry; multi-tiered aviary systems and colony cages for layer hens; removal of calves from mothers in the dairy industry, and treatment and slaughter of bobby calves.
- *Certain types of animal use and practices*: e.g. “factory” farming; cetaceans in captivity; export of live animals (including for breeding purposes); fireworks; animals in circuses; rodeos (instead, offer alternative community events); tethering of goats; life chaining of dogs; use of 1080; electric collar use in dogs.
- *Selective breeding*: physical characteristics of some cat and dog breeds are not compatible with good lives, e.g. brachycephalic dogs, Scottish fold cats.
- *Unregulated “back yard breeding”*: there was support for regulation and more protection around breeding of companion animals.
- *Concerns with the Dog Control Act*: dogs dying in pounds, and ‘breed-specific legislation’ – discriminating against dogs on the basis of breed rather than temperament of the individual.
- *Cat management and cats being viewed as pests*: the inclusion of cats in Regional Pest Management Plans under some Regional Councils, leading to the treatment of cats as pest; concern that stray cat management required a comprehensive cat welfare framework and support at a national level.
- *Defining sentience in the Act*: including a definition would mean people have a duty of care to provide animals with positive experiences.
- *Use of animals in research, testing and teaching*: continued use of animals for education, where there are alternatives available; need to encourage rehoming of laboratory animals as an alternative to euthanasia; use of animal models for medical research where it is shown that they are not valid.
- *Welfare issues associated with*: farmed and caught fish, stranded cetaceans, animals in emergencies, and animals used in racing (horses and greyhounds), domestic violence including violence against pets, and the need for shelters to take families with their pets.

Minister's summary

The Minister acknowledged Radio Waatea for live-streaming the hui and thanked attendees for their participation. She concluded that there was still work to do to achieve a truly world class animal welfare system in New Zealand, and expressed her commitment to working together to accomplish this. Views from attendees, officials and members of the independent advisory committees were welcomed.

The Minister highlighted the key areas she would like to focus on:

- an independent body for animals;
- strengthening codes including codes of welfare (e.g. for on-farm animals, animals used in entertainment, animals in captivity, companion animals, animals used in research, testing and teaching), so they best uphold the Act;
- greater transparency across the animal welfare system, including MPI, SPCA, NAWAC, NAEAC and animal-based industries; and
- resourcing issues, including for MPI and SPCA inspectors, and animal rescue and shelters.

Next Steps

The Minister agreed to report back to hui attendees by the end of June and include a draft plan for comment, on the way forward for animal welfare.

The Minister indicated that she will raise awareness of animal welfare with her Cabinet colleagues via a paper, which would look to address the key areas highlighted above.

This report will be made available on MPI's website.

Appendix 1 – Attendee list

Speakers in order:

Amanda Rutherford – NZ Bulldog Club Combined Taskforce

Amanda Sorrenson – Vegan Society

Peter Dunne – Dogs NZ

Becky Murphy – Dogs NZ

Bridget Thompson – Goat Welfare NZ

Bunty Condon

Carolyn Press-Mckenzie – Helping You Help Animals (HUHA)

Bianka Atlas – NZ Companion Animal Council

Claire McRae – Auckland Vegan Actions/Auckland Animal Save

Sam La Hood – Auckland Vegan Actions/Auckland Animal Save

Craig Dunn – Paw Justice

Elaine McNee – World Animal Protection

Deidre Sims – Direct Animal Action

Dr Michael Morris

Catherine Stewart – Voice for Animals

Helen Beattie – New Zealand Veterinary Association

Rochelle Ferguson – New Zealand Veterinary Association

Ingrid Visser – Orca Research Trust and Whale Rescue

Kimberly Matucci – Orca Research Trust

Jasmine Gillespie-Gray – Wellington Animal Rights Network

Ian Walker

Ian Robertson – Guardians Lawyers

Josie Rogers – Bay of Islands Animal Rescue

Summer Johnson – Bay of Islands Animal Rescue

Metz Tea – Bay of Islands Animal Rescue

Linda Nunn – Animal Re-homing Charitable Trust

Anne Batley-Burton – NZ Cat Foundation

Lyal Cocks – NZ Rodeo Cowboys Association
Lynley Tulloch – Starfish Bobby Calf Project
Lynn Charlton – Anti Rodeo Action NZ
Pam Douglas – Huntly & District Kennel Club
Shanti Ahluwalia
Shawn Bishop – The Animal Sanctuary
Steve Glassey – Animal Evac New Zealand
Arnja Dale – SPCA
Tara Jackson – The New Zealand Anti-Vivisection Society
Christine Breen – Chained Dog Awareness

Other attendees:

Avalua Tavui – Auckland Vegan Actions
Beth Warman – Dogs NZ
Daniel Rutherford-Smith
Debbie Matthews – FarmWatch
Diego Casanova
Dr Sarah Baker – NZ Bulldog Club Combined Taskforce
Gordana Sokorac – Auckland Re-homing Charitable Trust
Gail Blankley - NZ Versatile Hunting Dog Test Association & Auckland & Regions
German Shorthaired Pointer Club
Hartley Holder – Auckland Cavy Care Guinea Pig Rescue
Isabelle Maloret – Helping You Help Animals (HUHA)
Julie Anne Luckens
Kath Worsfold – Animal Re-homing Charitable Trust
Kirsty Bruce – Direct Animal Action
Leona Tavui – Auckland Vegan Actions
Lisa McEwan – AUT University
Lucy Campbell
Marianne Macdonald – SAFE
Sudesh Kissun – Dairy News

Nathan Roberts – Vegan Society

Rae Wilkins – Chained Dog Awareness

Raylene Holder – Auckland Cavy Care Guinea Pig Rescue

Romina Marinkovich – Direct Animal Action

Roz Holland – Direct Animal Action

Sara Sergejew – Unitec

Shaun Ireland - NZ Versatile Hunting Dog Test Association & Auckland & Regions
German Shorthaired Pointer Club

Sophie Shrimpton

Summer Wright – Direct Animal Action

Tania Bermudez – Speak Up for Animals (SUfA)

Tom Davidson – NZ Anti Rodeo Coalition

Zarene Gerbich – New Zealand Institute of Animal Management Officers

Not present but provided materials:

Carlie Jackson – New Zealand Animal Police